

PRISCA of PATMOS



HENRY C. Mc COOK





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PRISCA OF PATMOS



A Fair Rower in Patmos Harbor

PRISCA *of* PATMOS

A TALE OF
THE DAYS OF ST. JOHN

By

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"The Latimers," "Tenants of an Old Farm,"
"Old Farm Fancies," "Quaker Ben,"
etc., etc.



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PREFACE

THE writer of the following pages ventures upon the author's privilege to present a preface. He begs simply to emphasize the fact that this is a work of fiction, and not of critical research. He is not ignorant of what those have to say who oppose the Johannean authorship of the Fourth Gospel, in support of their theories; attributing it to another John ("the Elder"); putting the martyrdom of John of Zebedee, the Apostle, in Jerusalem along with his brother James; or under the Emperor Nero, instead of Domitian; etc., etc. Nor is he disposed to quarrel with those sincere minds who judiciously assert the right to try all things in a scientific spirit, without prejudice, and to cleave only to such as can be justified by fair knowledge and interpretation of ascertained facts in history and nature, as well as Holy Scripture.

Yet he has felt constrained, for his own personal faith, and as the background of this story of the First Century, to accept the

traditional view that the Fourth Gospel, as well as the Apocalypse, was written by John the Evangelist and "beloved disciple," in Asia Minor, toward the close of a long life, and in the reign of the Emperor Domitian, somewhat as represented in the tale which follows.

In many, indeed, in most respects, the writer hereof has tried to be true to the facts of the natural topography of the places, and the reasonable historicity of the times, in the individuals and incidents introduced. He has sought to give a fairly correct picture of the conditions under which Christianity was introduced, and the methods of and reasons for its rapid propagation, and the opposition thereto in the days of St. John, in Asia Minor.

Nevertheless, he wishes his readers to keep in view that his work is confessedly fictitious, and that its details are not to be tried by the strict canons of historic criticism, but by the just license of a tale that makes claim to no more than a reasonable probability.

Henry P. M. Cook

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PRISCA OF PATMOS

CHAPTER I

A FAIR ROWER IN PATMOS HARBOR

OFF the coast of Asia Minor, about twenty-four miles westward from Miletus, and some twenty miles south of the island of Samos, lies the island of Patmos. It is one of that remarkable group which dot the Ægean Archipelago between Asia and Europe, in that section known as the "Icarian Sea." Of these islands it was counted in a special group known as the "Sporades."

It is not large, perhaps twenty-five miles in circumference; is bare and rocky, its sea-face rising flush from the water into bold and well-nigh precipitous cliffs, some of which are over nine hundred feet high. The sea-wall is deeply indented, forming harbors, one of which, now known as Port Scala, ranks as one of the best in the Ægean.

Out in this harbor on a fair morning of the year 93 of the Christian era, a small vessel lay

at anchor, rising and falling with the gentle swell of the sea. On its deck stood two men watching the approach of a small boat that had just pushed out from the harbor pier. It was rowed by a woman, young and fair; a fine type of the handsome women for whom Patmos, in the first century, at least, was somewhat famous.

Her beautiful brown hair was parted in the middle, with a slight roll in front, and wound round to the back so as to conceal the upper part of the ears, and tied in a plain knot or coil at the nape of the neck. Her soft brown eyes gleamed under well-arched brows, and lit up a face that was soon aglow with the warm blood that the hearty exercise of rowing forced to her cheeks.

Her outer tunic was girded up at the waist, and its short sleeves left free her arms, sun-browned and plump, but not unduly large, with hands that seemed too small for the work then put upon them. Yet so lightly the oars were plied that the watchers from the vessel got less the impression of labored effort than of graceful ease and enjoyment of an agreeable exercise. Something of womanly ornament had been retained despite the roughness of her

task. A broad, plain band of silver girdled the top of the head near the brow; and an eardrop of gold, with a pendant image of the goddess Diana, hung from each ear.

The skiff soon reached the ship's side, and as the maiden ceased rowing, the younger of the two watchers reached over and held the boat steady with a bronze hook, while the elder put out his hand and helped the rower upon deck, though her lithe and nimble limbs needed little of such aid.

"What is it, my daughter?" he asked, as he kissed her ruddy cheek.

"This packet came this morning addressed in your care for the centurion," was the reply in a voice soft and musical, with a bit of quavering therein. "And as it seems to be an official document, mother thought he ought to have it before you sailed. So, as there was no other messenger at hand, I pulled out to bring it."

With a smile and a slight genuflection, she handed the letter to her father, who said simply, "It was well done, Prisca!" and passed the packet to the man at his side, who broke the seal and began to read. The note was brief and was soon finished; but while he

stands there with the parchment in his hands, let us mark the reader's appearance.

Quintus Flavius Decimus, at the age of twenty-four, was serving on his first detail of duty as a Roman centurion or military captain, in charge of the island of Patmos and of the political exiles banished thereto under Domitian, then reigning as emperor. As he stood there on the sunlit deck, clad in the uniform of a Roman officer, he was a comely figure. He was slightly above medium height, strongly and symmetrically built, with every organ apparently in a high state of training by exercise. His eyes were a dark blue-gray, large and set widely apart, with a typical Roman nose between. His lips were full and closely set, but delicately turned, indicating a refined temperament, unmarred as yet by coarse indulgence. The strong and squarish chin and firmly set jaws gave token of a forceful character. On the whole it was a manly and prepossessing face, cleanly shaved after the Roman custom of the time.

Prisca and her father had withdrawn a little way and were chatting while Quintus read. Presently the centurion spoke:

“Captain Philip, I must go ashore. I have

orders from the tribune to proceed at once to Ephesus with a quaternion, to arrest and bring to Patmos some more Christians. Will we ever have done with that pestilent sect, I wonder? It is one of their head men or high priests that I am now to bring over, whom the Emperor has banished from Ephesus. I can go ashore in Prisca's skiff and bring back my four soldiers in a larger boat."

"Very good!" replied Philip, who was the owner and captain of the vessel. "I will send a sailor with you to row the skiff. And meanwhile I will pull the ship nearer to the pier."

"No, father!" Prisca interposed. "Keep your sailor here, and let me row the centurion back! It will be no harder work returning than it was coming. The sea is unusually calm; the harbor is smooth as a mill pond; and I love the exercise!"

"As you wish!" said Philip. "If Quintus consents, I will not object."

"Of course, Quintus will consent!" Prisca remarked, bowing to the officer with an air that left no room for denial, as she moved toward the side of the ship, and prepared to descend to the rowboat.

Plainly Quintus had no objection, for he

gallantly helped Prisca down the ship's side, and after she had taken the oars, followed into the skiff and took the rudder at the stern.

And now as he sat face to face with the fair rower, and turned the course shoreward, he watched with a bright countenance and pleasant smile the maiden's graceful movements, and her cheeks reddening with the exercise, perhaps taking a ruddier tinge under the admiring gaze of the handsome young officer before her.

"Shall I not relieve you at the oars?" Quintus asked.

"It is nought, sir; indeed it is nought!" Prisca replied. "You know how I love it, and that I am used to the exercise."

She rested her oars for a moment or two, and looked up brightly, but with a modest glance, into the centurion's face. Then she continued, but with a sharp change of subject, as the feathered oars hung dripping in their locks:

"You are to go to Ephesus for more Christians, you said. Do your orders say who and how many are to be banished?" Down dropped the oars, and with a vigorous shove the boat resumed its way.

“Yes; more Christian exiles!” Quintus replied indifferently. “My orders name but one, the Apostle John, a chief pastor or bishop of the sect. How many others, if any, I will learn later.”

“Well, for my part, I cannot see,” said Prisca—and her strokes seemed a bit more vigorous—“what harm these Christians do, that they should be banished, despoiled, scourged, imprisoned and slain! Now there are our two lodgers, Rufus and Phoebe; what harm is there in them? I’m sure I never met kinder, quieter or more harmless people. So with all the Christians I have known. Their chief desire and aim seem to be to do good. I do not understand it at all! And if you do, I would be glad to have you explain it.”

“You forget, my good Priscilla,” said Quintus, speaking softly, and using the pretty diminutive of Prisca’s name, “you forget that they are atheists. That is one of their chief offenses. They rail against the gods, and try to get people to abandon their worship. That would overturn the foundations of society. The great majority of our people believe in and adore the gods. It is in defence of the public interests that these Christian

atheists should be punished and suppressed."

"Yes—I see!" remarked Prisca. "It would be hard times indeed—for the priests and the manufacturers of gods, and shrines, and jewelry, and statuary, were the worship of the gods to cease. But as to Christians being atheists—no, I doubt that! Did you ever know more devout persons than Rufus and Phoebe, our lodgers? They seem never to be weary in serving their God. To be sure, He is not one of *our* gods; but"—

"Oh, it is not that!" Quintus interrupted. "No one objects to them worshipping their own God. I would be quite willing to do that myself. One God more or less in our pantheon would make little difference. But the trouble is, they are not content with that, but would stop all the rest of us from the service of our ancestral and state deities. And they denounce us as idolatrous and superstitious for doing what our fathers have always done."

"Yes, I see! That appears just and fair enough, as you put it. But it seems quite another thing when I hear Phoebe talk."

"There it is!" exclaimed Quintus, with more earnestness than he had shown hereto-

fore. "It is said that these Christians are in league with evil spirits, and have strange power to deceive and delude those who listen to them. Take heed, Prisca, that your Christian lodgers do not mislead you! Mayhap they have already betrayed you into their own false doctrines!"

"Oh, no!" cried Prisca hastily. "No one could persuade me to forsake the worship of our great and glorious Diana of the Ephesians. But, it is hard to believe evil of those who are only and always good; or to think that they should be punished, as criminals and dangerous citizens, who are always denouncing crime; whose laws require righteousness and enjoin obedience to the powers that be; and who live a life far more saintly than our own people, or even our priests. But see!" she cried, suddenly changing the tone of her voice, "you are heading the boat up the shore instead of directly to the pier! Surely you have not forgotten how to steer?"

"Oh, no!" replied Quintus with a smile, still holding the rudder to the wrong course. "I know quite well what I am doing. My present duty will be none the worse for a little delay; and it may be long ere I shall have

another chance to spend such a pleasant season alone with you. Meanwhile, I have been enjoying it immensely, and will not cut it off too quickly." He looked fondly at the maiden, and reached out one hand and laid it lightly upon Prisca's hands as they came together in the recovery of oars after the stroke.

For just a moment the maiden held her hands still ere the outthrust of the next stroke; and, as she lifted her eyes to the centurion's face, there was in them a glint of tenderness, as though in response to his slight demonstration; and a blush suffused her cheeks, reddening down to the bare neck, and tingling even through the arms. It was a crucial moment in Prisca's life, and so she felt it, and her heart throbbed with a glad emotion. But other thoughts—memories of other events—flashed through her mind; and, as if with a sudden revulsion of feeling, she flung out her hands, dipping them, however, to avoid rudely striking away the centurion's; and caught the water with her oars, and bent to the blades with all her strength. Her gaze dropped. The color forsook her cheeks. An expression of painful yet determined purpose gathered upon her features.

“Quintus,” she said, speaking slowly and with constrained firmness, “thou knowest that thy mother has forbidden me to listen to words of tenderness from thee. Do not give me the pain of repelling thy advances. While thy mother, the Lady Julia, keeps her present feelings toward me, words of love may not pass between us. I beg thee to turn the boat’s bow toward the pier.”

Quintus sighed, and slowly swung the little bark around. His face was overcast. Sadness and anger were struggling within him for the mastery. At last he replied:

“Be it as you say! But do not think that I have changed, or will change. I can wait; and be you sure, my Priscilla, that I will not suffer an unreasonable prejudice to wreck my happiness. Much as I love and honor my worthy mother, there are some things wherein my own wishes and choice must take leave to direct my life.”

There was an answering sigh from Prisca’s bosom, but not a word further was spoken until the boat touched the pier. Then the centurion swiftly sprung out, and had the thrill of a handclasp as with a courteous “Permit me!” he helped the maiden he loved to step

from the boat, which he fastened to the pier. Then, having stowed away the oars, he walked up the sloping road with her to her home, which adjoined the one in which he and his mother, the Lady Julia, lived.

CHAPTER II

A CENTURION'S LOVE AFFAIR

AS Quintus entered his house, his mother met him with a welcome more stately and less demonstrative than usual, though there was not lacking that cordiality of maternal love which she, a widow of several years standing, felt for her only son.

"I was sitting at the window," she said, "looking out upon the harbor, when I saw you walking up the hill with the shipmaster's daughter; and wondered what had brought you back, and how Prisca had come to be associated with your coming?"

Thereupon Quintus took the stool at his mother's feet, a favorite seat, especially in his moments of fond and leisurely converse; and told the nature of his orders, and his purpose to leave immediately for Ephesus.

"And Prisca must needs carry the message!" remarked Lady Julia, with a softness of speech that rather emphasized than concealed the irony of her words. "As though

there were no one else to bear it! It was a bold step, and I doubt not was designed to catch an interview with you under conditions favorable to her own plans."

The centurion's cheeks flushed, and his eyes flashed; but he controlled himself, and rising from his seat at his mother's feet, looked down with a vexed countenance upon the matron's face.

"Mother mine," he said, "I am pained by that remark!"

His tone and manner were most respectful and affectionate, but there was in them an element of firmness and self-assertion that led the lady to look up with a glance of more than ordinary concern.

"It is quite unjust, I know," he continued; "but it seems to me unkind and therefore unworthy of my noble mother. Listen to me! On my way from the ship to the quay, I allowed my feelings for Prisca so far to carry me away as to make some slight demonstration of them. In the most gentle and courteous way, but with a decision of manner that left no doubt of the fixedness of her purpose, she repelled my advances, and required me to desist. You may wonder, but will believe me when I say

that, in brief and modest phrase, she told me that no word or token of love could she ever receive from me while my mother was opposed thereto. And she bade me at once to steer for the shore, for I was diverting the course in order to prolong the interview. Thereafter our way was in silence until we exchanged quiet farewells at the door. Surely that does not justify your suspicion!"

"It was fittingly done!—a right maidenly act!" was Lady Julia's comment, "and I regret and recall my words."

"That is well, mother. In truth, her coming was an act of great kindness to me. Had it not been for Prisca's promptness in coming, there being no other messenger at hand, we would have been off on our trip to Samos without the imperial orders; for we were just about to sail when she came, and the delay might have had serious consequences to me.

"And now, my good mother, I take leave to think that the time has come when my relations to Prisca must be settled by myself alone, and without regard to what I must hold as your unwarranted prejudice. I beg to say, what you already know, that I love the

maiden, and only her refusal will hinder me from making her my wife."

Lady Julia rose. "O my son!" she exclaimed, "recall that rash resolution! Think who you are! Think of the long and noble lines of ancestors, both paternal and maternal, from whom you have descended. Think of what our Roman kindred and friends will say, when they learn that you have married a humble sailor's daughter; without culture, without education, without that social standing and training which the woman should have who is to be the wife of a Flavius, a kinsman—remote, it is true, but real—of the Emperor himself! Is not something due to family pride?"

A sarcastic smile played over the young man's face as he replied: "Mother, I have thought of all that. And I have this to say: My noble kindred wedded without consulting me; they followed their own choice. Why should not I do the same? I owe them nothing that their opinions should weigh with me in such a matter, or any other. What have they done for you? Nothing. The only one of the family to whom I am indebted is my own beloved mother. What good reason is

there, therefore, that I should sacrifice my happiness for 'family pride'?

"You remind me of my noble descent. Yes, it is noble; so truly so that it will enable me to ennoble the woman whom I may make my wife. I would count it of little worth could it not do that.

"I know the Roman maidens, and I know that there are among them those who are worthy of highest regard; for was not my own noble mother once one of them? But I never yet have met the woman in Rome or among the highest ranks of Roman colonial society, who has stirred my heart as Prisca of Patmos has done. Have I not been taught that love is a gift of the gods, and shall I not count this state of my feelings as a token of a divine hand and will?"

"But do not forget, my son," Lady Julia answered, "that Cupid, the god of love, is one of the most frisky and tricky in his deeds of all the immortals. He needs continually the restraints of Minerva, to keep both gods and men from confusion and misalliances by her wisdom and serious thought. I will offer sacrifice to her in your behalf; and when she grants you cooler judgment, I beg you to

consider what I say: You are a centurion now, in a lonely island command. But the time will come when you will hold a far higher place, and will mingle with the most refined and exalted circles of the empire. What will be your feelings then? How can you present a peasant wife to the society of which you will be the head, and of which she should be the leader and ornament? That would be mortifying to you; it would be unjust and humiliating to her. Think of that, my son; think well and long, ere you take a step that you cannot honorably retrace!"

"But, mother," said Quintus, "I have thought of that, too. And this I say, that for beauty of person and grace of manner Prisca may well compare with the fairest in the best society. I should never be ashamed of her on that account."

"That I admit. But in the higher circles to which my son may aspire, beauty cannot atone for lack of social culture."

"But, my mother," Quintus rejoined, "Prisca is as intelligent as she is beautiful. I have seen this tested in many ways; and have admired and marvelled at her power to adapt herself quickly and completely to the

various conditions of life. She has a native taste, and faculty, and refinement of spirit that will enable her to rise easily to the duties of any station to which the Fates may allot her. Be assured that neither you nor I would ever have occasion to blush for her, in any estate, should she become my wife.

“It seems presumptuous, perhaps, for me to suggest it, but do you not overestimate the value of such things in forming a happy home? Think, my noble mother, of the higher virtues—the unsullied life, the affectionate and loyal nature, the simple, industrious and capable habits, the pure and healthful body—all those gifts which give woman the power to be a true helpmate and companion to her husband, and which Prisca undoubtedly possesses. Then compare these with the shallow, loose and frivolous characters of the maidens of those so-called higher circles from which you would have me choose a wife. And tell me truly, my mother, do you not think that my chances for a wholesome home and a happy life with a wife like Prisca would be far better than with one of those Roman featherheads, whose training and mode of living have unfitted them, both in temper and habits, for

the responsibilities of home-making and home-keeping?"

"Well, my son, I am not yet convinced," was the matron's response, "but I see that your mind is made up. The arrows of Cupid have overshot all bounds of prudence within you; and I suppose I will have to submit, and pray that Hymen may be gracious to you. We have never before had a serious difference of opinion, and I trust that this may not build a barrier between us!"

Her voice trembled, and there was a softness and yielding in the tones that spoke, even more clearly than words, the tender maternal love that would bend the proud Roman spirit before her son's will and the prospects of his happiness. The centurion opened his arms, and the Lady Julia laid her head upon his broad breast; and as he kissed her brow, the mother's tears flowed down upon his bosom, a touching token of both the greatness of her affection and the keenness of her sacrifice.

Quintus was deeply moved. "Mother dear," he said, "I will do nothing rashly or hastily. I will take no further steps at once in that matter, and no step without consulting with you. All that I now ask is that you try

hereafter to think of and look upon Prisca with a kindlier eye, and to put aside the influence of the old prejudices which have heretofore hardened you against her. And now I must away. Vale, vale! And may all the gods bless you and keep you! I need not say 'Pray for me,' for I know that you never have failed and never will fail to do that. Farewell!"

He was gone. From the projecting window of the house the Roman matron watched, as long as she could, his receding form. Then she knelt down before a domestic shrine of Pallas Minerva, in a corner of the room, and prayed fervently, weeping freely between her petitions. When she arose, she repeated half aloud a phrase from her son's last words:

" 'Old prejudices,' he said! Has my world grown 'old' to him? Is it indeed so new a world upon which my boy has entered? It has been but a decade since he put on the toga virilis; and surely he has not grown out of the sphere of my thought and feeling so soon! I have long known that his sweet boyhood days were gone, alas! But this is the first time since his manhood that I have really felt him slipping away from me. 'Old prejudices,' quoth he! Well, it is perhaps un-

reasonable to ask young hearts to look on life through old eyes. But for all that, it is hard to see my own dear boy, the son of my love and cares, and hopes and fears, passing surely out of the sphere of my own life. Oh, the pain of it! Alas, poor heart, cease that wild throbbing! Great Jove, grant me submission to thine irresistible decree! The world's progress and the course of nature may not be stayed for one lone matron who already has run a large part of life's career. Alas, poor mother! O ye gods, hear me, and prosper my son's career, whatever ye may decree for me!"

CHAPTER III

IN EPHEBUS WITH QUINTUS

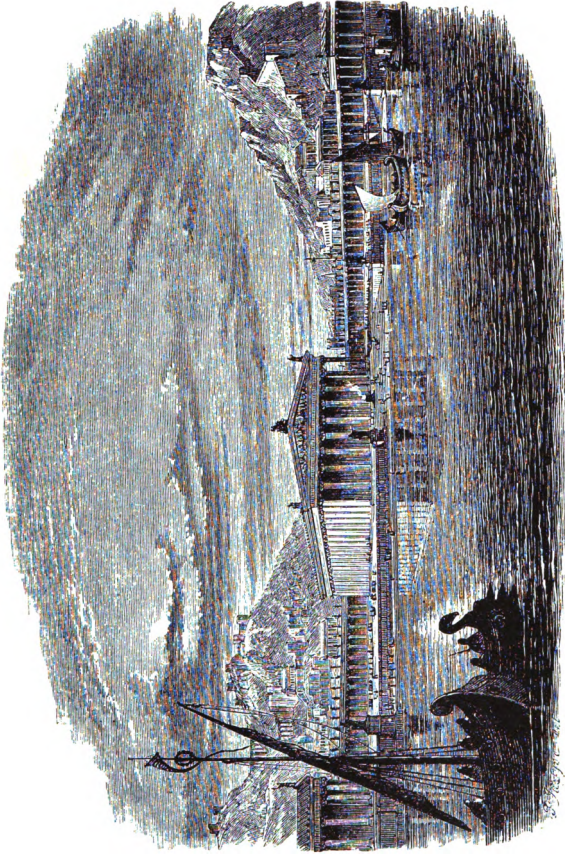
WITHIN an hour, Quintus was on the Patmos quay with his quaternion of Roman soldiers armed and ready for active duty. Meanwhile, Captain Philip had brought his vessel further into the port, and had hailed the shore and shipped eight additional oarsmen to propel his ship; for the wind had not yet risen, and the one great sail that hung limp to the mast planted near the middle of the hull, had been brailed up, being useless as a motor.

The centurion and his squad were soon on board, and Philip took his place at the rudder, on the platform beneath the high curved stern. There he acted not only as chief pilot ("rector") but did the duty of "hortator" on a ship of war, and managed the rowers. His little ship was manned by only eight oarsmen on each side; but the headway which they made through the quiet sea was satisfactory; and in a brisk wind, with the sail set, the "Gull,"

as the yacht was called, had won the reputation of a fast sailer.

She was often employed, as on that occasion, in the service of the Roman government, and although not enrolled in the imperial navy, was reckoned as a volunteer craft attached thereto, and as such had a semi-official standing as a messenger boat, and was employed and paid accordingly. That connection, unofficial and partial as it was, had been a source of profit to its owner, both directly and indirectly, so that among the simple folk of Patmos, Philip the shipmaster was reckoned as well-to-do.

As Philip sat in his place at the rudder, he was a fine-looking specimen of the sturdy sailor of the Icarian Sea. He wore a Phrygian cap (which Americans know as a "Liberty Cap") of the same pattern as worn by his crew, but of finer fabric and different color of wool. It had been knit by the deft fingers of his daughter Prisca, who had also embroidered on the front a sea gull in flight. His beard, after the Grecian style, was unshaved, but trimmed closely. His was an open, kindly, strong and serious face, slightly furrowed and well weatherworn by long sea service. His hands



The Temple of Diana on the Panormus or outer port of ancient Ephesus, on the river Cayster.

were small for a man of his size and occupation, but there was no trace of effeminacy in them. They were brown and muscular, and grasped the tiller with a firm and nervous grip.

The evening was well spent when the Gull reached the mouth of the Cayster river, and leaving the sea, began pulling up the stream against the strong current. The opening spring in that soft and genial climate had already clothed the riversides with verdure. Engineers had raised a great bank or mole at the mouth, in the vain hope to control the quantities of silt which the stream brought down and prevent the obstructing of the channel. As none of the military members of the company (save Quintus) had been to Ephesus, the scenery was new, and the vessel's small deck was occupied by curious gazers upon the fair landscape. Night had fallen and the moon arisen ere they reached the outer and larger harbor of Ephesus, known as the "Panormus," and pushed through a crowd of vessels to find good anchorage at the quay. The harbor was a huge rectangular body of water, an artificial adaptation of the river with a lagoon formed by a sharp horseshoe bend or elbow of the river Cayster.

The ancient city of Ephesus was, at the period of this story, one of the two chief towns of Proconsular Asia, that peninsular projection of the continent into the Ægean known as Asia Minor, but which in Bible geography is simply Asia. This city was in the midst of the fertile valley of the Cayster, the "Caystrian meadows" of Homer and Virgil. It was located at a point which gave it easy command of the main highways into the East, and had grown greatly in population and importance under Roman administration. It had a large trade with the neighboring parts of the Levant.

Its port was some twenty-five stadia (three or four miles) from the river's entrance into the sea, and was elaborately constituted, though the heavy alluvial deposits of the Cayster caused serious hindrances, which, when the period of decadence set in, with its accompanying neglect, converted it into a vast malarial morass. The site of Ephesus is now an immense concourse of ruins. Its splendid temple and other public structures massed near it and grouped together after a fashion that is being advised and adopted in some modern cities on the score of both beauty and

utility, have for ages been the quarry from which building marbles for regions round about have been dug and deported. The great gaping cicatrices thereby made; the silent detrition of centuries; and the active assail of Nature's forces of flood and vegetable growth, have wrought over the whole site of hill and plain an unsightly waste. But when Quintus landed therein the hum of commerce and trade and manufactures was heard through all its busy streets and along its wharves. On the morning after his arrival his first visit was to the proconsular office, where he received his final instructions from the military tribune, Caius Proculus. He found that his chief duty was to arrest the Apostle John and transport him to Patmos. Therein he was to use his own judgment as to the best mode of proceeding.

"There is some danger of kindling a riot," he was told. "For the Apostle is greatly loved and venerated by his own party, though Christians are not well liked by other citizens. It will take but little to stir up a mob. But we have a force here sufficient to put down any ordinary rising, and it will all come to your aid if required. But we trust your prudence to avoid that."

On his way back to the port, Quintus passed the famous temple of Diana which the ancients held to be one of the "seven wonders of the world." According to Pliny it was four hundred and twenty-five feet long by two hundred and twenty feet wide, and his statement has been corroborated by modern investigations. It contained one hundred and twenty-seven marble memorial columns sixty feet high, the gifts of princes and persons of distinction. Of those, thirty-six were ornamented with color, gilding and metal, and were richly carved by skilled sculptors, one of whom was the celebrated Scopas, who wrought one column, which may have served as a model for the others.

Quintus walked up its imposing decastyle portico with its quadruple rows of columns, and passed through the pronaos, or vestibule, into the great open-air nave (Cella Hypæthros)* and offered a prayer before the beautiful altar, the work of the great Grecian

* The temple of Diana was classed as "hypæthral," that is, open to the air. The temples of the inferior deities were covered; but those of the superior gods, with whom Diana ranked, were generally hypæthral, having openings in the roof to permit the deities to visit their shrines, and pass back into the heavens, for they could not be contained within walls.

sculptor, Praxiteles. His prayer was brief, for thought the young officer:

“This is an hour for duty, not for devotion or sentiment. May the goddess who makes this her most honored abode give me wisdom to conduct rightly this delicate enterprise upon which I have been sent, and upon whose tactful conduct the welfare of many human beings, as well as my own future destiny, may largely depend!”

He had marked out in his thoughts a plan which he would at least try. It was based upon what he had heard of the character and principles and acts of the venerable Apostle, whom he was to carry into exile, and upon the sensitiveness of his numerous flock in all pertaining to him. That plan he had been gradually maturing, and by the time he reached his ship he was fully resolved upon it.

He removed his sword and shield, and retained only so much of his uniform as needed to mark his service and rank. Then he started out alone to the Christian quarters on the hill known as Mt. Pion, in the older and upper part of the city. It was a walk of between two and three miles. He made his way quietly to the house of Drusiana, which was

the home of St. John, and asked the porter at the door if he could see and consult with the Apostle. He was at once admitted; the more readily, perhaps, because the porter thought him one of the inquirers after the Faith, among whom Roman soldiers and even officers were not rare.

He was shown into the atrium or receiving hall, and he waited with beating heart; for, in truth, though he was fearless of ordinary mortal dangers, he had heard strange tales of the Christians, and especially of the supernatural powers of St. John. And he was not without anxiety as to how he might be received and what occult powers his errand to the Apostle might call into play. Such feelings may seem trivial and unmanly to one of our generation; but in that age, and in Ephesus especially, a belief in magic and magical powers was a very real and sincere conviction among all classes.

He had not long to wait. The sound of footsteps startled him, and from an adjoining apartment there entered a tall, spare man, with long hair and a beard as white as snow. He was clad in a spotlessly white linen garment with wide flowing sleeves, over which was

thrown an outer seamless robe of white linen. There was that aspect of dignity and authority in his face and bearing, combined with an almost angelic gentleness and sweetness, which led Quintus to rise from his seat and bend before him in a reverent salaam.

“Peace be with thee, my son!” said the Apostle, returning the centurion’s salutation with a gentle, graceful bow, and with right hand uplifted. “And may the Lord God Almighty and His Divine Son, the true Word, dwell ever in thy heart by His Holy Spirit! What can I do for thee? Hast thou come to learn the way of life through Him who is the Life of the World? If so, thou art most welcome!”

“Holy and reverend sir,” Quintus responded, expressing deep respect in both manner and words, “I regret to say that my errand is one of a far different sort, and one so disagreeable that I would fain escape it, if I could. I am a Roman centurion, and have been entrusted with the office of carrying out an imperial order to arrest you, and take you into exile on the island of Patmos. I have been told that the entire force of Roman legionaries stationed in Ephesus will be at my

service to aid in the arrest, if necessary. But I do not wish to appeal to force, nor does the Proconsul. I have considered that to call out the soldiers, or to make any show of violence might excite your friends and fellow-worshippers, as well as those hostile to them, and lead to scenes of tumult and bloodshed in which many innocent people, and mayhap those dear to you of your own faith, would be hurt, or slain, or made liable to arrest and punishment. All this I would avoid, and I have concluded to appeal to your well-known charity to aid me therein. Here, venerable sir, is the order of the imperial master Domitian concerning you. I beg you to read it that you may see that I do not misstate my authority."

The Apostle took the document and read it over carefully. Not a sign of emotion showed in features or manner, except a slight quickening of blood upon his white brow and temples. He handed the parchment back to Quintus, and with a voice without tremor or excitement, said:

"Sir, the order is duly signed and sealed, and I am the person therein designated. What wouldest thou have me to do, my son?"

He turned upon the youth his large eyes, tender and full of a yearning softness, yet with a something in reserve that reminded one of the eagle which tradition has made his emblem, and of that "Son of Thunder" which the Master saw latent in his nature. Then he stood motionless and waited for the answer.

"Holy father," said Quintus, speaking deliberately and reverently, "my ship in the port Panormus is all fitted up and ready to sail to Patmos. I propose that you go there with me quietly, as though we were upon some peaceful errand. Then we will slip away as quietly, leaving your friends and disciples to learn the news under conditions that will not tempt them to violence, which would be as vain as distressing. For nothing, we know, can avail against the power of the Roman Emperor."

"Nothing save the power of the Almighty God, my son!" the Apostle interjected.

Quintus bowed reverently at the sacred Name, and without further noting the remark, went on:

"It is my wish to treat you with all kindness and honor; and unless I am compelled to do otherwise by resistance among your

people, that I will do. Not a hair of your head shall be harmed. If you have wife or daughter whom you would like to take with you, or follow after you, it will be allowed."

"I have neither!" was the quick response. "I am a celibate."

"If you have slaves whom you would like to take as your personal servants, two, at least, will be permitted."

"I have none such. I am myself a bondsman to my Lord and Saviour Jesus the Christ, and all who love and serve Him are my brethren."

"Well, then," Quintus went on, "if you have neither family nor servants to take with you, I may assure you that, nevertheless, you need not lack for due attention. For you can find good and faithful servants in Patmos, and accommodations suitable to your age and rank. And to that end my services and my authority will be at your command."

"I thank you, young sir," said St. John, with the tone and manner of a prince, "for your noble courtesy and considerate kindness! It seems to breathe forth the spirit of a true Christian, which I sincerely hope you are, or by God's grace may become, ere long!"

“Most reverend sir!” Quintus rejoined, “I worship the gods of my fathers, and I seek no others. But were I to have my way, no one should be disturbed for his faith or worship, so long as he lived as a good citizen. I would leave all men free to follow their own judgment and taste in matters of religion.”

“Nevertheless, my son,” said the Apostle, “thou wilt not object to an old man’s blessing, which I give thee in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One Living and True God.”

“A good man’s blessing is always to be received with thanks,” said Quintus, and reverently bowed before the patriarch’s outstretched hands.

“And now,” he continued, after a slight pause, “if it please you, I will be glad to leave at once. I will wait your leisure to provide yourself with money for the journey. Such personal baggage and books as you may wish to take with you, I will send for, and will cheerfully transport as much as you can reasonably wish.”

St. John turned to leave the room. “Wilt thou go with me, or await here my return?” he asked.

A flash of suspicion crossed the centurion's mind. There were strange stories abroad of the Christians' ways. He was alone and unarmed. Should the Apostle escape, Quintus Flavius would be dishonored and ridiculed. Had he not better——. But no! he would trust that venerable and gracious face! He dismissed his suspicion. "Holy father, thy promise to return will suffice!" he said.

"I will surely return and go with thee!" the Apostle replied. "Why should I not? I count it an honor to be permitted to suffer for my divine Master and Saviour, and for His Truth. I go with thee into exile not only willingly, but gladly. Though, indeed, I am not worthy to suffer for His sake."

He raised his eyes and clasped hands toward Heaven. There was a rapturous look upon his seraphic face. He stood a moment bowed in silent devotion. Then he was gone.

In a few minutes he returned. A staff, a small parcel and a parchment roll were all that he had brought with him. His white garment was girded up, and a purse was thrust into the girdle. He wore a squarish cap, and his robe was drawn more closely about him.

"I am ready!" he said. "I have instructed

one of my household to make up a bundle of a few things I shall need, and to bring it down to Panormus without delay. Now I will go with thee."

The two men left the house together, and together walked quietly down the sloping street that threaded Mt. Pion, toward the levels on which the newer city, with its massive public buildings, had grown up. They passed many who reverently saluted St. John, and cast a hasty glance at Quintus; but not the faintest suspicion of the true relation between the two, as prisoner and captor, was aroused.

As they thus moved through the crowded city, they might easily have been taken as true types of the ideas and powers for which they severally stood. The young man would surely have been pointed to as an apt representative of that mighty world-power which had mastered so many nations, and held them with a grip whose vigor seemed exhaustless. The old man, in the judgment of the most part of the Ephesian populace, would have been held as fairly typifying the struggling Christian Faith which the iron hand of Rome was now smiting with a force and fierceness that promised utterly to destroy it from among

men. Who would have been so bold as to reverse these types, and to see in the old man the symbol of Rome's power soon to pass into decay; and in the young man the emblem of that spiritual force, the kingdom of Jesus, which the old man proclaimed, that was to move through the ages in the vigor of youth, and win a large and ever enlarging part of the human race to its discipline? Yet so it was to be! It was the world-kingdom of the vigorous young Roman captor that was moving off the stage, the elements of declining age and decay already working within it. And it was the captive old man who represented the Church of Jesus advancing in the spirit of eternal youth to an "everlasting kingdom."

They passed by the lofty portico and peristyle of the great temple of Diana, then in the height of its glory and power, but doomed to future destruction. Quintus ventured a word of admiration upon the wonderful beauty of its construction, which brought from St. John the remark:

"Yea, but like the beauty of a harlot, dishonored by its uses to corrupt its devotees. How strange that men who were made in the image of a spiritual God should think that

they ought to worship images made by their own hands, or imaginary beings framed by the fancies of their poets and novel-writers, or deified men with like passions as themselves!"

Quintus declined to enter into the argument to which he thus seemed to be invited, and for which he did not think himself qualified. Thus they passed on silently to the Panormus, upon which the temple grounds abutted, and along the crowded quays, sounding with the din of commerce and the shouts of men in every language of Asia Minor, as well as those of Greece and Rome, until they found the pier where the Gull was anchored.

They went on board, and immediately the bustle of preparation for sailing began. Quintus had given strict orders to his quaternion to assist Philip in keeping all the crew in the ship or within easy reach. Several of the oarsmen were found in nearby wineshops, and by the time the Apostle's baggage arrived the ship was ready to put off.

CHAPTER IV

QUINTUS LEARNS FROM ST. JOHN A LESSON IN CHRISTIAN BELIEF

AS the Gull was preparing to leave the wharf it was stayed by the arrival of an officer of the proconsular staff.

"I have been sent," he said, "to inquire how you are progressing with your duty, and to ask if you need military support? It was reported to us that you were seen walking with the Christian Apostle toward Panormus, and so I was sent here."

For answer, Quintus pointed to the venerable form sitting quietly and with apparent content upon the ship's deck, and made the simple comment: "You see we are just leaving port!"

"May I speak to the prisoner?" asked the officer.

"Surely; I will present you." The two Romans walked to where the Apostle sat, and saluted him reverently. He arose and acknowledged the greeting with due courtesy,

and with the blessing of Peace which he was wont to pronounce upon visitors. To the staff officer's expression of satisfaction that the trying duty laid upon them had been accomplished without personal or public violence, or distress to any save himself, St. John replied:

"I rejoice with you, sir, that since it is God's will that I should suffer banishment, my arrest has involved no others in danger or suffering, as it well might have done. I hope that the Emperor's anger may be confined solely to me, and that none of my co-religionists will be called to share my fate. I hold them all as brethren—nay, as my little children in the Lord,—and I view their future with the anxiety of an elder brother or of a father."

The officer simply bowed assent to this expression of interest and feeling, but gave no token of what Domitian's purpose toward the Christian colony might be. After a brief pause for the response that did not come, the Apostle resumed:

"But, however that may turn out, it is fitting that I should say that I appreciate fully the high courtesy and consideration which my captor, the Centurion Quintus Flavius Deci-

mus, has shown me personally. In the whole course of his difficult and delicate task, he has displayed a kindly spirit and a judicious method that reflect great credit upon both his heart and his head. It was his policy which made it possible for me to follow, (what would have been my own most earnest wish,) a course that avoided all occasion for tumult and riotous opposition and to leave Ephesus without exciting my fellow-Christians, or their enemies, and so without occasion to call out the military. I beg you, sir, to say so much to the Proconsul for me; for certainly this achievement will reflect honor upon his administration, and the peaceful execution of Cæsar's will."

"It will be my pleasure to do so!" the officer replied; "and the centurion has well expressed in his method the Proconsul's wishes."

After a respectful farewell, and a brief conference with Quintus, he left Panormus.

The day was not old when the sailors shook out the great sail; for now a fair wind was blowing seaward. Then Philip took the rudder; the rowers were in place on their benches, and slowly, at first, and then more

speedily, the Gull swung out into the harbor and edged its way through the shipping that crowded the place. Once the Cayster river was reached, there was a fair course before them. The current ran with them, and strongly. The rowers pulled merrily; for they were home-bound now; free men, not slaves or prisoners or convicts. The breeze filled the sail till every square of the many-pieced canvas, braced along every seam with a leather strip, showed clear in the sunlight upon the bellying sheet.

So away they sped. The banks of the Cayster seemed to run by them. "Snow-white swans," of which both Homer and Virgil had sung, rose up from reedy lagoons and sailed "through the liquid sky," and "through their long necks poured melodious notes."* So it was not long ere the three or four miles of fresh water were covered, and the little craft felt the swell of the great sea, and rode out upon the Icarian waves as gracefully and buoyantly as the bird whose name she bore.

The venerable captive sat upon the deck in a chair that had been placed for him by the centurion. He breathed in deeply the pure

* Æneid, VII, 699. Also Iliad, II, 459.

sea air; and, apparently undisturbed by the vessel's motion, enjoyed watching the green waves crawling beneath the hull and speeding toward the shore. For a while he gazed in silence, looking away across the deep into the western horizon whereaway lay the seat of his banishment. Then bowing his white head, with a devout expression upon his face, he began a monologue, a rhapsody, a holy meditation or prayer chiefly in the words of Holy Scripture:

“They that go down to the sea in ships, to do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep. For He commandeth, and raiseth up the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the Heaven, they go down again to the depths. Their spirit is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble and He bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. They are glad because they are quiet; so He bringeth them unto their desired haven. Oh that man would praise the Lord for His

goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!* For the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. For He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.† Yes, the world is Christ's by Creation. For in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made which was made.‡

“It is His by gift and inheritance, too. I will declare the decree: The Lord hath said unto me, thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee! Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.§ Aye, and by His Passion upon the Cross, of which I was a witness, the Eternal Son has sealed in suffering and death His claim by Creation and Inheritance to the world and the fullness thereof!

“Lord Jesus, come quickly, and claim Thine inheritance and blood-bought purchase!

*Ps. 107:23 sq.

†Ps. 24:1, 2.

‡St. John 1:1.

§Ps. 2:7 sq.

Why should the world travail so long in bondage awaiting for its rightful Master to possess His own? Even so, come Lord Jesus! Come quickly!"

The ancient man's face, as he went on with his monologue, lit up with a glow of holy rapture which made it to shine like an angel's. Then his chin sank upon his breast, and for a moment or two he seemed to be in silent prayer. He lifted his head and looked around him serenely. Quintus stood near and had listened with rapt attention to this strange act of worship.

He ventured to speak: "Holy father, I am loath to intrude upon your sacred moments; but I fain would know if these words which you have used, which are so beautiful and true to Nature, were quoted from your Christian poets?"

"Our Christian poets?" St. John repeated in a querying tone, as though his mind was not quite familiar with the phrasing. "Yes; it is lawful so to speak of them; for truly we claim them as our own, though they were written by Hebrew prophets. I was quoting from the Book of Psalms, which we allow and use as part of the sacred canon of Scrip-

tures, appointed for the spiritual uplift of souls in all time, and which we read and chant in our meetings. Yes, you speak truly; they are beautiful poems. And true to Nature! Why should it not be so, since both books—Nature and Scripture—are the work of one Mind?”

The day wore on. The wind freshened, though there was no sign of rough weather. The moon arose, nearly full, and spread over the sea a great bridge of golden light that shimmered like myriads of jewels where broken by the curling waves. The air was soft and warm, and the Apostle was again seated on deck. He drew his robe more closely about him as the night advanced; and Quintus brought and placed around him a warm sea cloak.

“Thanks, kindly sir!” the Apostle said. “I am grateful for this filial care. The evening is delightful, and I am inclined to spend it on deck. But my old blood flows thinner now, and my heart beats feebler, I find; and I feel the chilliness of night air as I did not in my younger days. I thank thee, sir! May the Lord recompense thee, now and hereafter!”

Ere long Quintus again approached his captive, and thus addressed him: "I have been thinking much, sir, since my meeting with you, of that religion which you profess, and which, for some reason unknown to me, has been the cause of your banishment to Patmos. I have heard much about Christians and their beliefs, though usually from ill-wishers rather than friends. I would like to learn from one like yourself, who can speak with authority, just what you do believe and preach and practice."

"My son," the Apostle replied, "I am always glad to answer such a question. To begin, then, we believe, as do the Jews, that there is one God only, the Creator and Ruler of all things. He hath not body and parts, nor human passions and infirmities, but is a purely Spiritual Being, infinite and eternal in His Nature, which is perfectly holy and good.

"He has not left Himself without witnesses of His eternal Power and Godhood among all nations; but He chose to reveal Himself especially and more fully to one people, the Hebrews. To them He sent inspired messengers, Moses and the prophets, who declared

His Will for the obedience of them and of all mankind. Through these prophets and some of His written messages, He announced that in the fullness of His own time He would send to them One who would be a Redeemer and Spiritual Ruler among all nations. This promised Saviour was called in the Hebrew tongue the 'Messiah,' which in the Greek is 'Christos,' the Anointed One, the Christ.

"This promise, we believe, was fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, a Prophet mighty in word and deeds. Hence, we who believe in Him as the true Messiah or Christ, are called after Him—Christians. He taught the people throughout Palestine, and wrought many miracles of healing and power to confirm His authority. Him I knew and followed during His public life; for I was one of His twelve Disciples chosen to company with Him as witnesses of His words and works to all mankind.

"But the leaders and priests of the Jews were offended at Him because He rebuked them for their hypocrisy and selfishness, and robbery and oppression of the people. They therefore persuaded the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate to put Him to death, which was done by crucifixion."

“What!” exclaimed Quintus, his mind divided between indignation and surprise. “Could not so mighty a Prophet and Son of God have smitten them and prevented that calamity?”

“He could, indeed!” the Apostle replied. “He could have summoned ten legions of Angels to His aid. But that humiliation He bore because it was thus required to fulfill all righteousness, and to make propitiation for the sins of the people and reconcile them to God; and to exhibit the infinite reach of God’s love to men. He thus became the One Perfect Victim and Sacrifice for all time and people. He is the True Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world. Hence all bloody offerings upon the altar, by earthly priests, have ceased to be needful. For what can be added to the efficiency of a Divine and Perfect Sacrifice and Testimony, such as was made by Jesus the Son of God? Hence our Christian worship is without such offerings and such sacrificing priests; for our great High Priest Jesus, who has passed into the heavens, has forever perfected all such requirements of the Law, and predictions of the prophets, and exhibition of Divine Grace.”

“Then your people have no priests?” queried Quintus.

“No; not in the sense of sacrificers of victims for and from the people,” was the Apostle’s reply. “But in their stead we have ministers, who fill the rôle of prophets, to speak forth God’s righteous Will and Law. I hold up to the people the One Perfect Sacrifice, Jesus the Christ, by faith in and following of whom, Salvation is obtained.

“The Christians therefore worship God, simply in spirit and in truth, rendering spiritual homage to a spiritual Diety. Our oblations are alms for the poor; and gifts for the progress of Righteousness, Truth and Love; and prayers and psalms of praise, all offered up from loving and grateful hearts, in Christ’s name. It is required of Christians that they believe that God is Love; that they trust in the Sacrifice and Intercession of Jesus Christ for their souls’ salvation, and in that alone; and we teach that whosoever thus believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved.

“But this is not all which Jesus taught us, and that we, following Him, teach His disciples. Christ’s teachings covered the whole

field of required human faith and conduct; and therein He spake as never man spake. He taught us that God who is Love, looks upon all the sons of men, without respect of persons, as His own children whom He loves and wishes to befriend. He is our loving heavenly Father and Friend, one that sticketh closer than a brother; and He asks us to look upon Him and love and trust Him as such.

“Nor is this all; Jesus taught us the loftiest rules of moral behavior ever framed. He required His disciples to be pure in heart, to be meek, merciful, humble and forgiving; to be peacemakers; to hunger and thirst after righteousness; to endure persecution for the Truth’s sake, with submission; to love one’s neighbor as one’s self; to love our fellow-believers as brethren; to do good to all men as we have opportunity; to honor the Sovereign; to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s. All these things and more Jesus Christ enjoins upon His disciples, and no one is a true Christian who does not strive after this Holy Life. And as men cannot do all this by their own strength and grace, the help of the Holy Spirit of God is given to them that ask Him for it in Christ’s name.”

“You amaze me!” exclaimed Quintus. “If that be the religion of Christians, every ruler and good citizen should hail their coming, and not only welcome but support their presence in a community. If to be a Christian be such as you have described, then it means to be a good citizen not only, but a citizen of the very best type. I cannot understand why emperors, and councillors, and governors and magistrates, and those in authority should persecute instead of perpetuate such a faith. But I have wearied you, I fear. Another time”——

CHAPTER V

THE GULL ARRIVES AT PATMOS

“**S**AIL HO!” cried the lookout at the prow of the Gull.

Quintus cut short his remark, and went forward and inquired where and what the ship in sight might be? -

“Yonder, sir!” said the sailor, pointing to the north. “It seems to be a war ship of some sort, a trireme probably, and she is bearing straight down upon us.”

Quintus walked back to the stern to consult with Captain Philip. That experienced shipmaster had been examining the newcomer as closely as circumstances would permit, and in the clear moonlight the ship’s general outlines could be made out.

“Can it be a Roman warship?” Quintus asked.

“I know of none that should be in these waters at this time,” was the reply. Then after a pause, during which he surveyed the stranger steadily, he said: “She looks to me

like a pirate; and she comes from the right quarter for one of our Ægean sea rovers. Our waters have been infested by them lately. Our commerce is preyed upon by them continually, and our ports are insecure from their ravages."

"What shall we do? The lookout says she is bearing straight down upon us."

"Aye, sir! and she will pick us up, I fear. There is only one thing for us to do—keep right on at our utmost speed and show her a clean pair of heels—if we can!"

He called a petty officer to the rudder, and went down upon deck. He saw to it that the sail was doing its utmost work; and good work it was, driving the Gull briskly before the wind. Then he called the sailors together and said:

"Lads, yonder ship is a pirate. She is coming our way and will cut across our course. Unless we can run away from her, we are all likely to have our throats cut and our bodies fed to the fishes; or be pressed into a pirate's rowing crew and carried away from our homes. We must do our best to get out of her way. The sail is doing all it can with the wind. I can put on four extra rowers. Who will volunteer for the duty?"

All the crew responded. Philip picked out three whom he knew to be fair oarsmen, and, while he was querying among the others, Quintus stepped forward.

"I will take a bench, Captain," he said, "if you think I will suit. This is no time to stand on rank or privilege, while our lives are in danger."

Philip's face lit up with a smile. He was much pleased; for the centurion had the reputation of a disciplined athlete, and a skilled oarsman.

"Thank you!" he said. "It is most good of you to offer. I will be glad for you to try it, if you think you can stand the strain."

"We will see; if I cannot, I will leave the bench." Quintus stripped to his under tunic, handed uniform and arms to one of his soldiers, and took his place at the oar. His example was inspiring. At first the rowing crew looked askance at him, and took his presence as a joke, or a poor makeshift. One or two grumbled at such an experiment under such serious conditions.

"He will boggle the work, throw us all out of time, and hinder rather than help. The master is mad to put a landsman at

an oar now!" But when they saw the way in which Quintus fell to the work, how well and easily he handled his oar, and with what a steady and vigorous stroke, they changed their view.

"He knows what he is about, it seems!" the grumblers muttered. "But we'll soon tire him out. Ten minutes of this work, or twenty at most, will blow him thoroughly."

But when the ten minutes passed, and then the twenty, and the centurion pulled away as heartily as the best, and indeed quickened his stroke gradually, to the quickening beat of Philip's mallet upon the little table by the pilot's place, the sentiment on the rowers' benches changed to admiration. They caught his quickened pace. They bent to the oars with added vigor. Never in the little bark's history had such prime oar-work been done upon those benches.

Philip, from his seat, cheered them on. The soldiers and sailors on the deck joined their encouraging voices. Thus, with this new stimulus, and under the fresh force, and with the impetus that the danger gave all the rowers, the Gull responded nobly to her master's plans, and sustained her reputation

as one of the fleetest messenger-boats in the Ægean waters.

The pirate ship swerved a little from her course, which crossed the Gull's at right angles, and seemed minded for a while to pursue the yacht. But soon she gave up her purpose—if indeed it had been such—and swept on southward, following the shore line, and was lost to sight as she gradually disappeared below the moonlit sea.

Then Philip called off the volunteer oarsmen. Quintus, after a brisk rub with a dry towel—for he was wet with the heavy exercise—resumed his uniform, none the worse for his venture, but quite fresh, and much to the surprise of the rowers, not in the least “blown.”

The Apostle had watched the incident with keen interest, and with silent prayers for the Gull's success; and when that was assured by the pirate giving up the chase, he shared the satisfaction of the entire crew in their deliverance from a serious, threatened danger. Soon the high coasts of Patmos began to show dimly in the western horizon. Ere long the island was near enough for Quintus to point out to St. John his future abode.

The harbor beacon, which was kindled

on dark nights, was not lighted. But here and there in the village, and from the houses along the hilly streets, the evening lamps began to show dimly; and some of those who watched the flickering lights amused themselves in joyously locating their own homes, and calling up the forms of those who soon would greet them therein!

No such prospect brightened the Apostle's mind. Indeed, he was practicing his Divine Master's injunction to take no anxious thought for the morrow, but to trust the Heavenly Father to cause to-morrow to provide for the needs thereof. "The Son of Man," he reflected, "had nowhere to lay His head. It surely can be no worse for me!"

But the Apostle's case had not been unconsidered by the centurion, who had arranged to take him to his own home for the night, and beyond that had formed a plan which he hoped would solve the problem of his housing, at least until better provisions could be made.

Scarcely had the Gull been made fast to the quay than the news of her coming sped through the village, and kinsfolk and neighbors began to come down to welcome the crew. So early a return had not been expected, and the nature

of her mission was not known. But in the monotony of life on that secluded island, even such an incident was one to attract attention. Philip's wife was there, and Quintus looked in vain for Prisca. But her absence was soon explained.

"The Lady Julia was taken ill with a fever shortly after you left, and Prisca and the Christian deaconess Phoebe have been nursing her."

The centurion turned to St. John: "Reverend sir," he said, "I would gladly have taken you to my house for the night; but this unfortunate happening prevents. Yet I have a private office, or retreat, near by, to which I will conduct you. You will find it secure and comfortable and retired."

He bade one of the soldiers who had accompanied him to procure a lighted torch and precede the prisoner and himself to his grotto; for though the moon was bright, the path lay along the shaded side of the mountain. St. John at first hesitated, and urged Quintus to hasten to his ailing mother's side.

"Nay," was the reply. "My official duty to lodge you securely, and the rites of hospitality have precedence of purely personal

affairs. My mother is in good hands, I learn, and will not be the worse for a little delay in my coming. It is doubtful if I shall be allowed to see her to-night at all. So come with me, sir!"

The torch-bearer led the way up the side of the hill that sloped gradually down to the waterside, forming a level stretch along the beach. His three companions followed as guards on either side and behind Quintus and St. John. After about a mile walk the guide stopped before a rude porch built into the hillside. Quintus entered the portico with his prisoner, and drawing aside a heavy curtain at the farther end, beckoned the torch-bearer to advance.

Thereupon he led the way into a natural cave formed in the rocky side of the hill. It was about twenty feet long and ten feet high. The stone roof showed rough and bare in the torch's light; but the walls were draped with embroidered curtains. Soft rugs carpeted the floor. In one corner was a bed fitted up with skins and rugs. At its head was a branched candlestick set in the stone wall, as though to give light to one lounging and reading on the bed. Other candlesticks

and lampstands were placed in various parts of the grotto, some of which were lit up at the centurion's order. There was a table, several chairs and a divan with cushions.

The Apostle looked around upon these snug and unique quarters, with a surprised, satisfied and grateful expression upon his countenance. His first act was to fall upon his knees, and with uplifted face pray to the God of Heaven. His words were suggested by the unique chamber into which he had been brought, and ran somewhat in this wise:

“O Lord God, Thou art indeed my Rock and my Fortress; neither is there any Rock like our God. Yea, Thou art the Rock of my Salvation. Thy servant is like the conies, one of the Lord's feeble folk, yet Thou hast made for him this house in the rocks. Yea, like Thy servant Moses of old, Thou hast put me in the cleft of the rock. Cover me with Thine Hand, O my Father God, and let me have visions of Thy glory, even here in this rocky refuge in the island of my banishment. I thank Thee for this loving provision for my bodily wants, and I pray for Thy rich spiritual blessings upon this young man who has been as Thine angel in caring for me.

Heal Thou his beloved mother, and thus comfort his heart. For Thy Son's sake. Amen."

As he rose from his knees, his eyes rested upon Quintus reverently bowing at one side of him, while the Roman soldier stood on the other side, with head drooped upon his breast, looking grave and reverent, and holding aloft his torch whose flame illumined the venerable form of the holy Apostle as he knelt there in his white robe; with his long, white beard and hair flowing upon breast and shoulders, and his seraphic face and thin, clasped hands lifted heavenward in rapt communion with the Rock of his Salvation. It was a striking scene, that long remained in the memories of its witnesses.

"And now, holy father," Quintus said, "I will bid you good night, and leave you to yourself. You will find a sentinel on the porch at any time during the night or day, and each soldier has been instructed to give you any aid or attention you may require. Do not hesitate to call upon them for any service. Think of them not so much as your guards, as your friendly attendants. They are forbidden to intrude upon you, or to enter the



St. John thanks God for the Grotto home,
to which Quintus leads him.

grotto except at your request. But at night, and during wet weather they will be permitted to take shelter upon the porch. Good night!"

Thence Quintus went to the barracks and arranged about the continuance and the reliefs of the guard at the cave, and appointed an officer of the guard from among the sergeants. Leaving instructions with him, he hastened to his own house to see how it fared with his mother.

Phoebe, the Christian deaconess, met him and gave him the particulars of his mother's illness and her present condition.

"She was seized with a severe illness almost before your ship was out of sight of Patmos," Phoebe said. "Her maid ran in for me, as she was wholly without experience with sick persons, and was much alarmed. I came in at once and found the Lady Julia in a high fever. It had disturbed her mind somewhat, and she kept calling for Prisca. I thought best to send for her, and she was forthwith established as my assistant in nursing. Her presence seemed to soothe the patient, and she wishes her to be near her. I initiated the maiden into the art of caring for the sick as it is taught among Christians, and she at once

grasped the details, and has taken up the duties with remarkable quickness and efficiency. Though she has been serving for so short a time, she can already be trusted to do many things, under my direction. Your mother, sir, has just been soothed to sleep with much difficulty, after long sleeplessness, and it would not be well to disturb her now. I think you may safely trust her in our hands, and if she awakens soon, I will let her know of your arrival home and call you."

Thus it was arranged; and Quintus retired to his own rooms, where he was presently served with a light repast, and threw himself down for a little sleep. Though somewhat used to the sea, and a fairly good sailor, as he lay down the couch and the room seemed to be moving up and down as though they were on shipboard, tossed by the waves. Soon matters settled down, and he began to run over the incidents of the last few days.

He felt quiet satisfaction at the results of his discharge of a trying service. The removal of the distinguished prisoner had been accomplished under creditable conditions. Their escape from the pirate ship had been a felicitous and rather extraordinary occurrence.

He did not go as far as Captain Philip was inclined to go, and ascribe it to the presence and influence of the Christian Apostle. But he had, after all, a secret feeling that there might have been some connection between the two events.

Then, while the sickness of his mother was unfortunate, it was not without its comforting feature, in the apparent change of the Lady Julia's feelings toward Prisca. Though, indeed, the distressing thought intruded, that perhaps her attack may have been brought on or hastened by the agitation caused by her last interview with him on the subject of his affection for Prisca. His prisoner's recital of the Christian beliefs had started within him a train of thoughts so new and strange and of such intense interest to him that he was fascinated therewith, and could not banish the Apostle and his creed from mind.

But ere long, fatigue, anxiety and all other human weaknesses, emotions, and reflections were lost in Great Nature's sure solace for earthly ills and restoration of life's exhausted forces—wholesome sleep. He was aroused at last from a beautiful

dream, which he could not recall save that Prisca was interwoven with it in a delightful way. A sweet, low voice sounded in his ear. A soft hand was laid upon his brow, and with a start he awoke.

Prisca stood at his side! Was this a continuation of his dream? No! It was the maid herself in bodily presence, as fair to his eyes as ever, but looking pale and somewhat weary with the night's watching by the Lady Julia's sick-bed. The early morning sun shone into his open eastern window, and lay like an aureola upon her head. Hark! She speaks. Verily, it is not a vision, then!

"Arouse thee, Quintus! Phoebe the deaconess has sent me to awaken thee. Thy mother is awake, and wishes to see thee."

She turned, and was gone.

Quintus rose from his couch. He had slept all night in his uniform clothes and without covering, and although the morning was warm, and the air balmy, he felt a little stiff at first; but much refreshed by the long, sound sleep. He bathed his face and neck and arms, and, glowing with youth and health, and hope and love, went into his mother's room.

He knelt at her bedside and kissed her

hand, for brow and cheeks were covered with the wet, cooling linen cloths that had been applied through the night to keep down the fever, and with good effect.

“I am glad to see you back, my son!” said Lady Julia, looking up fondly. “But I am surprised to see you so soon. How fared your business?”

“Well, mother, very well; indeed, extraordinarily well! I have been highly favored, and got through my duty to the satisfaction of my superiors, and of my own mind. I will tell you all about it when you are better, which I am sure you will be very soon!”

“Yes, thank the gods, I feel better. And I thank my good nurses, too, Phoebe and — But where is Priscilla? She was here a moment ago; and she was with me throughout the night, helping to keep the cooling cloths upon my face.”

“She has just gone into her own house for a little rest and refreshment,” Phoebe replied.

“That is well; for she must need it after her night’s watching,” said Lady Julia. “She is truly a good and helpful maid, and has been like a daughter to me!” she added, in a low voice, and giving her son a peculiar look out

of smiling eyes that spoke volumes to the heart of Quintus. The centurion also smiled and again kissed his mother's hand.

Now the deaconess approached to change the face cloths, and at a word of caution from her, Quintus rose, and bidding his mother "Good morning!" went out into the open.

CHAPTER VI

WHICH TREATS OF AN EARLY MORNING'S DOINGS

HOW fairer than ever the landscape seemed; how brighter the morning sun, as Quintus went forth from his house! How fresh and sweet the air! He drew in a deep breath—and again, and again. He inflated his lungs therewith. His spirit appeared to be expanded, too. A great burden had rolled from it. His mother would get well! And she would be friendly to Prisca!

He turned his steps toward his grotto. "The Repose," he had named it, and by that name tradition has brought it down to us as associated with St. John during his stay in Patmos. One sentinel was on guard before the porch, and one was sleeping within it.

"What of my captive?" Quintus asked.

"He is already up, sir, and has gone forth for a morning walk," was the reply. "We did not think well to stay him, or interfere with

his free movements, in view of your orders.”

“Which way did he go?”

“Up the hill, sir, toward the summit. It’s a walk of a mile. You can see him from the other side of the road. Yonder he sits! I kept him in view, though I did not follow.”

Quintus found the venerable man seated upon a great brown rock looking out upon the harbor and the sea, seven hundred feet or more below them. It was a strikingly beautiful view that lay before him, in the early morning sun which was up above the mountain ranges of Asia Minor, lying very dim and hardly discernible, like banks of clouds in the far horizon.

The Apostle was so absorbed in his own thoughts that he did not notice the centurion’s approach, and not until he was addressed did he rise and turn to greet him.

“You are up and out early, father!” said Quintus.

“Yes; I am an early riser. As my years have advanced, I find that sleep forsakes my pillow with the passing of night and the coming of dawn. Sun-up rarely greets me abed. I love to look at the world in the first morning freshness. It seems to me new-washed over

night, and rid of the stains and stress of humanity's cares and toils and sins."

The two men stood in silence awhile, looking upon the scene from their high viewpoint. The sea was quiet; only a gentle swell against the shore, as though the great bosom of ocean, like some living creature, was heaving as it regularly breathed. Lit up by the unclouded sun slanting across the deep, it looked not unlike a sea of molten glass, its deep green aglow with gold and silver hues. The Apostle broke the silence.

"I was thinking," he said, "as you came upon me, that if this present world is so beautiful, what must be that Heaven to which the spirits of God's saints are taken after death!

"Look, now, at this fair flower!" He held up a bunch of heather bloom, which he had plucked from the masses growing all around, as thickly as upon a Scotch mountainside. "It seems to be reckoned here as little better than a weed. But see how exquisitely it is framed! Each blossom is a work of art. Yet it fairly covers the wild and rocky face of this lonely island! If the Creator chooses this to deck even this rugged and secluded spot with

such a wealth of loveliness, what must be the place where He discloses Himself in all His beauty and power?

“It was one of the promises of our Blessed Saviour, ‘I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.’ In His Great High Priestly prayer he said: ‘Father, I desire that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given me: for Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.’”*

“These are inspiring thoughts,” Quintus remarked, “if only one could accept them! I perceive, sir, that you believe in the immortality of the soul.”

“Immortality? Oh, yes, indeed! the immortality of the whole man!” exclaimed the Apostle. “It is a large part of our Faith. As Jesus Christ rose from the dead and ascended up on high, of which I was a witness, even so shall all who believe in Him rise and ascend into Heaven. Death hath no power over them; it cannot quench their spirits.

*St. John 17: 24.

Their Saviour will receive them unto Himself. May we be so happy as to have part with Him in His Immortal Glory! But come! I am ready to return. Let me know first how it fares with your good mother, the Lady Julia."

As they returned down the hill Quintus told the story of his mother's illness and present condition, and of the good service of the Christian deaconess, and of his call at the cave, and how he had chanced to meet St. John on the summit.

"I am glad you came," the Apostle rejoined. "Give yourself no further uneasiness about your mother. She will recover, and ere long; for the power of the fever is already broken."

Quintus could not but wonder why the Apostle spoke so confidently of his mother's recovery; and if his assurance were based upon some supernatural knowledge, and perhaps influence in the work of healing, issuing from himself? Or, was it simply a shrewd judgment, based on long and wide experience of the symptoms of like diseases in their progress to a favorable end?

Quintus stopped at "The Repose," and arranged to send up the Apostle's breakfast

from his own table. As he sauntered down the hillside path, he caught sight of a well-known form strolling along the harbor road. It was Prisca, out for a walk to freshen herself in the soft sunshine and the sweet sea breeze after the night's confinement. Quintus hastened his pace, his heart beating in his breast the while, more quickly than his feet upon the road.

"Good morning, Priscilla!" he called in a cheery tone that reflected the delight which he felt at the meeting.

The maid's response was kindly, but so lacking in the warmth which he himself felt that the centurion was somewhat abashed; especially as she made as though she would go on.

"I will go with you!" exclaimed the young man. "I have somewhat to tell you, as we walk along."

"As you wish!" the maid replied. "But no love-making! Remember that we are on honor still, and above all now that the Lady Julia is ill."

"It was of that I wished to speak," said Quintus eagerly. "I have seen my mother this morning. She told me, with the greatest

satisfaction, of your kindly aid in nursing her during the last three days, and added, with a knowing look and smile which I could not misunderstand: 'She has been to me like a daughter!' I was tempted to answer: 'Shall she not be such, indeed, my mother?' but I forbore, and let the matter rest there for the present. But I am sure she has changed her views! The gods are propitious to my wooing and this illness has brought my mother so near to you, that the barrier to our early union is, I believe, already removed. Are you not glad?"

"It makes me happy to think so," she replied, "and I pray Diana with all my heart that so it may be! But let us not be too hasty, nor count over-much upon the words of a lady made weak and yielding by suffering. Perhaps with her returning strength the old feeling may return! We will wait and see; and then, if all is well"——

"And then, dearest?"

Quintus broke in eagerly, and put out his arm as though to draw her to himself. But she evaded him, and ran along the beach. She jumped upon a volcanic rock on the shore that bulged into the very verge of the water.

Turning back to where Quintus stood, disconcerted by the suddenness of her flight, she waved at him the scarf with which she had covered her head. Standing thus, there in the morning sunlight, against the background of the green sea lipping quietly upon the big, reddish-brown beach-rock, her face wreathed in smiles, she was a figure so fair that the young man stood entranced with admiration. Then he ran down to her.

“Will you be good?” she cried, waving him off, though still laughing.

“Thou beautiful, tormenting sea nymph—yes; I will be good!” replied Quintus. “But, by old Neptune, and all the sea gods, I will not endure this much longer! Mine you shall be!”

“Thine I am, O Quintus, by plighted word!” Prisca replied, twirling her scarf about her head with a graceful twist of the hand, “and thine I will be by the rites of Hymen when thy mother has consented. So rest thee contented; for by the great Diana whom I worship, that is my final word upon the matter.”

“Are all women as hard-hearted to their lovers as thou?” said Quintus, as he leaped upon the rock and stood beside her.



Teasingly waves her scarf at him.

Then they sat down together, and gazed over the curling sea waves running up the harbor, listened to the splash of the billows, and talked of many things, save love, though love was swelling in both hearts, and its silent undertones were beating to the breaking of the sea. So they sat, and felt when they did not speak, until the time came for Prisca to go home. The maid could not deny her ardent lover her hand to help her rise, and he held it until they were quite off the rock and well up the beach. Then he surrendered it unwillingly, and they walked together to Philip's house.

Some enamored swains are said to be able to "live on love," but Quintus was not of that class; for when the servant came in to announce breakfast he went to it with an appetite whetted, not dulled, by the morning's experience. But he did not forget, before eating, to cause a generous portion of food and drink to be made up for the Apostle, and sent to him by the house porter.

He had finished his meal and was quietly sipping a glass of Patmos wine, when Phoebe, the Christian deaconess, came in and sat down to be served with breakfast. She had

been released from duty at Lady Julia's bedside by Prisca, who had come in to relieve her. Quintus was quite primed for a talk on the condition of his affairs, and the mention of Prisca's name gave the clue to his speech.

"I have already expressed my gratitude to Prisca" he said, "for her devoted service to my mother; and now I take occasion to say how much I appreciate what you have done. It was a most kindly service on your part, for which I hope in some fitting way to show my hearty appreciation. I value it all the more as coming from one who is an exile among us, and who might therefore well have been excused for refusing aid to the mother of the officer who represents the government which afflicts her."

"My good sir," Phoebe replied, "one of the commands of the Divine Lord whom I worship and serve is, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be children of your Father which is in Heaven: for he maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good.'*" Personally you have

*Matt. 5:44, 45.

shown us many acts of kindness which have helped much to relieve our imprisonment in Patmos. But were it otherwise, you see that I would be bound to do to you what good I can."

"Well, between you and the Apostle John," said Quintus, "my former ideas of Christians and Christianity are being quite upset. You seem to reverse all the established principles of action heretofore taught among men. To hate one's enemies and injure them to the utmost, is the code that I have learned; and to love and do them good, strikes me as the depth of folly."

"Nay, rather it is the height of heavenly wisdom," Phoebe rejoined, "according to our Saviour's precepts and practice. We are bound to imitate the example of our Divine Master and Chief Prophet Jesus, who gave His life to save His enemies; whose life, indeed, was one long service of blessing to those who, in the end, were to hale Him to the cross."

"In truth, it all quite passes my comprehension!" was the centurion's response. "But our Medicus (the post surgeon) tells me that you are a trained nurse; and further, that the Christian deaconesses have a high reputation

for their skill in caring for the sick. How came this to be so? and what are deaconesses among you?"

"That is a matter easily explained," Phoebe answered. "Christians are bound to follow their Divine Master in seeking to do all the good they can to all who need their services, especially those of their own household of faith. We are taught that pure religion and undefiled before God is to visit the widow and the orphan in their affliction and to keep one's self unspotted from the world. To carry out this duty of Christian service, the Church has appointed certain men to look after the temporal wants of males; and certain women for like offices among females. The men are known as deacons, and the women as deaconesses. I am one of the latter. We are duly trained for our work among the sick, the poor, the suffering and strangers. In course of time our sisterhood has acquired much skill in this service, especially in nursing the sick, and that has been passed on from one to another, each one profiting by the experience of all her predecessors in office and service. Thus the entire Church, and suffering humanity at large, have had the advantage of what

we all have acquired. That is all there is, sir, in our office and work and, as you see, it is a very simple affair. There is nothing strange or magical about our success with the sick. It is a plain matter of intelligence, experience and devotion to duty, which, as you know, are the elements of success in any other field of human service."

"I certainly comprehend your explanation, madam," the centurion said. "It is indeed a simple matter, as you put it, in your modest and self-depreciating way. But, to my mind, the mystery lies in that very spirit of self-denial, and love of one's fellows, and wish to help them, simply for the sake of helping, of which you make so little merit. It is strange to me that persons should take up with such a theory; and still stranger that those who cherish and act upon it should be objects of dislike and persecution by their fellow-men, even by those whom they are striving to benefit by their works of love, and self-denial, and dangerous exposure to disease. You Christians are certainly a puzzle to me! Your creed and conduct alike are quite beyond my comprehension. No philosophy that I know helps me to solve it."

“Most true, O centurion! There is no explanation of Christianity to be found in human philosophy. One must go to a higher source. My Master once said, ‘Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you; for Him hath God the Father sent.’* Every Christian can say ‘By the Grace of God I am what I am!’ The charismata—the gifts and graces of the Christian life, are bestowed by the Holy Spirit. No one can have these, or impart thereof to others, until he is born anew into the Kingdom of God’s Son, Jesus the Christ.”

The deaconess arose, and bidding the centurion a kindly farewell returned to her duty at the bedside of the Lady Julia.

“What strange new ideas and phrases are these?” Quintus wondered, as he sat for a little while, and pondered in mind the words of Phoebe the Christian. “‘Meat that endureth,’ ‘everlasting life,’ ‘the Holy Spirit,’ ‘born again,’ ‘the charismata,’ ‘the Spiritual Kingdom of God’s own Son!’ These are new words and ideas, with meanings that seem

*St John. 6:27

reasonable, and sound familiar and easy in the mouth of that good woman. But I confess that they pass my comprehension. Is it all a delusion? Or am I standing at the gate of a great Truth, and a great discovery?"

He arose and went forth to the barracks; and in the engagements of the day forgot, or seemed to forget, the new ideas that for the moment had assailed him.

CHAPTER VII

QUINTUS APPEARS AS AN ATHLETE

“ANOTHER call to Ephesus, Captain!” said Quintus as he greeted Philip a few days after the above conversation. “We must be off again, and the gods alone know when we shall be back.”

“When do we leave, sir?” Philip asked.

“There is no urgent haste. I will say day after to-morrow. Can you be ready by that time?”

“Aye, sir! To-morrow if need were; or even to-day. But day after to-morrow it shall be. Have you any special orders?”

“Perhaps you had better prepare for a longer stay than usual. My orders are somewhat vague. Valè! I am off for my morning exercise.” And away he went, full swing, along the beach.

Ever since his coming to Patmos, Quintus had kept up his daily walks and runs. His training for the footraces in the Circus Maximus, at Rome, had been thorough and

severe. Under the patronage of the Emperors Nero and Domitian, even the youths of good families had not only taken the training of professional athletes, but themselves had appeared in the arena to compete for prizes in the various games, and that not without occasional success.

Among those who had won for themselves a good degree in the footraces was our centurion. His father had encouraged his natural taste and physical fitness therefor, and Quintus had taken a somewhat conspicuous part therein, and had won much applause, and more than one crown. At the death of his father, and the decrease of the family income, and on the Emperor's whim toward a remote scion of his own house, the young man was promoted to be a centurion, and sent to the distant and secluded island of Patmos.

There Quintus still nourished his love for athletic sports, and kept up his old habits of vigorous exercise. A long stretch of level beach around the harbor gave a fitting natural course. He organized among the soldiers a band of amateur athletes; trained them himself, and encouraged them by establishing

public races with prizes and rewards for the winners.

This was a source of much amusement to him, and helped to while away the hours of what he had regarded as his social banishment to Patmos. In this, and in his military duties, he found his time so fully and agreeably occupied that it had passed rapidly and pleasantly; far more so than he had anticipated. And this feeling was much increased after his meeting with Prisca had developed a strong attachment for that native maid of the island.

This will explain the sort of "exercise" to which Quintus referred in his remark to Philip. The old salt followed him with an eager but amused countenance as he stretched away along the bending harbor beach with a steady and sturdy lope, gradually quickening as he went. The end of the course having been reached, the young man came back thereon with a rapid stride. Then returning home he plunged into his bath, and after a vigorous rubbing that set him into a wholesome glow, he was ready for his day's duty.

His first call was at the barracks, where he chose a sergeant and two quaternions of

soldiers to go with him to Ephesus; and made due arrangements for the routine of service during his absence. Thence he walked up the hill to his grotto.

Here, first of all, he announced to the Apostle that, with his consent, he proposed to turn over "The Repose" to him as his permanent quarters. As this proposition was received with great satisfaction, arrangements were next made for St. John's meals to be served regularly in part at the cave, and in part at the near-by house of a family of Christian exiles, who were also to look after all the Apostle's personal wants, as well as the care of the cave while he lived therein.

"I leave for Ephesus in two days," the centurion added, "and if you have any communication to send to friends there, I will be glad to serve as your messenger."

The Apostle accepted this offer with decided satisfaction, saying that he was anxious to communicate with his spiritual children and to let them know how well he fared, and with what consideration he had been treated by the Roman authority on the island. Thus he would relieve their anxiety as to his fate, compose their spirits, and lessen or silence

their grief and indignation at his removal.

As Quintus was about leaving, the officer of the guard stayed him long enough to relate a rather striking incident that had lately befallen:

“Among the personal baggage brought here by the Apostle was a cage containing a pet red-legged partridge. I soon learned that the venerable prisoner had reared this bird himself, and had taught it many tricks. It was interesting to see the two together—the partridge and the Apostle, and to note how the patriarch played with his trained bird like a child.

“One day, after I had come in from a hunting trip upon the island, I ventured the remark that it seemed a rather odd fancy for one of his venerable age and exalted dignity and high reputation for wisdom and piety to be engaged in an occupation so trivial and boylike.

“‘What is that in thine hand?’ was the surprising question with which he answered me.

“‘That? Why this is a bow, sir?’

“‘But why do you carry it unbent and with the string thus loosened? It will not shoot so, will it?’

“‘Sir,’ I replied, ‘you must know that were the bowstring to be kept always tightly strung, and the bow bent, it would in time lose its spring, and be unfitted for its special work. It might fail me then at the very time I had the greatest need for its service.’

“‘Well, my friend,’ said the Apostle, casting a benignant look upon me, and with a winning smile upon his benevolent face, ‘learn that the human frame is somewhat like your bow. If my body and mind were always to be kept at their highest tension, they also would be apt to lose their spring. Some sort and season of diversion they must have if they would be kept at their best tone for service. To keep in good working trim they must relax betimes. Thus they retain their natural spring and force which, like the bow that is never unbent, they would otherwise surely lose.

“‘Now, my play with this bird is my unbending of the bow; and it is an innocent as well as agreeable pastime. If it may seem to you and to others as a boyish kind of amusement for an old man, I reply that there is always a bit of childhood left in even the most aged. That is one element in our nature that

survives the stress of years. The love of play in some form rarely leaves men; and when that is gone the brightness and joyousness of life, the spirit of youth, are likely to go with it.

“The evils that so often grow out of the relaxations of men arise not from them simply, but from the fact that they choose for their amusement and relaxation objects that in themselves are not innocent and harmless, but sinful and hurtful. Or they push their modes of unbending the bow to such extremes that there is no recreation in their relaxation. See that thou avoid these evils, my son, and thou wilt find that thine hours of diversion will be times of refreshment to both spirit and body.

“‘Now, returning to my own innocent recreation,’ the prisoner went on, ‘I find that I get no injury from companionship with this dumb child of the woods; which might not be true of some human associates. On the contrary I learn much from it of the wisdom and ways of the Good Father in Heaven, who clothes the lilies of the field, and feeds the fowls of the air, and without whom not a sparrow can fall.’”

“Well said!” was the centurion’s comment

on this anecdote. "The Holy Apostle has ripened in wisdom with his years. He knows the material of which our human nature is made, and that in some things a man is only a grown-up boy, and keeps the boy's love of play and his need thereof, as well."*

On the day appointed for the sailing of the Gull to Ephesus, the Lady Julia was so much better that her son took leave of her without any undue excitement or hurtful strain. He left her without misgivings, in the care of Deaconess Phoebe, with such assistance as Prisca continued to give.

Quintus noted with satisfaction the growing interest that his mother took in Prisca, and her increasing pleasure in that maiden's companionship and care. A marked attachment seemed to be ripening between the two, which was strengthened by the modest and efficient help that Prisca gave so cordially, and by her gentle and unobtrusive, but dignified and womanly demeanor.

In the difficult matter of preparing relishing and nourishing dishes for the invalid's delicate appetite—then and long afterwards

*The incident here wrought into the story, one of many incidents which tradition has assigned to St. John, is one that seems most persistent of all, and best worthy of credence.

an almost unrecognized and crudely primitive factor in the care of the sick—Prisca showed herself especially expert, and far in advance of her time. Her deft hands not only prepared, but arranged and served her delicacies in such dainty form, that they appealed to the taste, tempted the appetite, and invited to such partaking, that strength gradually came back to the weakened frame.

One need not be a gourmand, or even have particular fondness for food, to appreciate the culinary art by which so many of our women friends win back our waning appetites to wholesome feeding, by their savory preparations served in our hours of weakness. It is surely a rare endowment; and they who possess it have a most gracious bestowment, and an element of high usefulness in a sick room.

With Prisca this was a native faculty, but also it came by inheritance and training from her own mother, who was a housekeeper of large gifts and experience. Once or twice before Quintus sailed, the Lady Julia had invited him to share with her one of these delicious preparations, which he did with great gusto. And he had enough of the

natural male relish for good eating to find confirmation therein for his opinion of Prisca's high qualifications to be the future mistress of his home. Perhaps the Lady Julia began to share his opinion! So, at least, he fondly hoped.

It was evening when the Gull once more pulled to the quay in the Panormus of Ephesus. The loose women housed in the habitations and in the wineshops along the wharves were soon flocking, after their wont, to the newly arrived vessel, so that the centurion at once set a guard of soldiers to keep the sailors and oarsmen on board, and save them from the harpies, at least until the nature of his orders and the length of their stay should be known.

The next morning when he reported to Caius Proculus, the military tribune at the proconsular office, he learned that it was the case of the banishment of two exiled families that he was to look after. They were wealthy and cultivated people, and Quintus suspected—though silent on that subject—that their religion was rather the excuse for, than the cause of their banishment, as the Roman officials would no doubt be enriched by the spoiling of their goods. This was a form of

“graft” quite familiar with the authorities of that era, and of which the Christians were often their victims.

Quintus held it as a fortunate circumstance that all the preliminary proceedings of arrest and imprisonment had been completed, and his only function therein was to convey the captives safely to Patmos, and securely dispose of them there.

The details of this item of business having been disposed of, the tribune was free to take up the subject of the coming games, which greatly interested him, as they did all the Roman colony in the city. Indeed, the Ephesians themselves were so deeply absorbed in them, that preparation therefor occupied the public mind well nigh to the exclusion of other themes. They were a light-hearted and pleasure-loving people, and had the keenest interest in the games which were a conspicuous part of the May festival in honor of their favorite goddess Diana.

Their enjoyment of the exciting contests of their stadium was mingled with a religious and local pride to bring up their athletic exhibitions as nearly as possible to the standard of Rome, the imperial capital itself.

“By the way, Centurion,” the tribune remarked, as though it were but a passing thought, “I have been told that you were accounted an athlete of some reputation in Rome. Is that correct?”

“I suppose I might admit that much, without seeming to boast,” was the reply. “I had two crowns to my credit for running, when I left the metropolis. I never qualified for other exercise except throwing the javelin.”

“Ah, then,” the tribune continued, “you are the very man we would like to have interested in our Ephesian games! Have you kept up your training to such a degree that you could venture again upon the arena? We Romans here would greatly rejoice to put up one of our own nation and class for the footraces; especially if we thought there were a fair chance to win. What say you to try it?”

“I think I am in as good training,” said Quintus, “as when I last ran successfully in Rome. I enjoy the sport, and would not object to enter the lists; although, in truth, I had supposed that I was done, for good and all, with the contests of the race course. My ambition is turned now wholly into a military channel, and I hesitate to divert it.”

“That is a feeling which I honor, and would not weaken,” the tribune said. “But may it not be that in this case the spirit of patriotism itself summons you to the trial of your skill?—for the honor of Rome, you know!”

“It would hardly be for the honor of Rome, or the profit of Romans, were I to fail,” suggested Quintus. “But even were I willing to try for a prize, I fear it is now too late to enter. Not more than six weeks remain before the commencement of the games.”

“That is an objection, to be sure,” the tribune admitted. “But I fancy it can be overcome, if you consent to enter at once. The Asiarchs who manage the games are anxious to have some experienced runners, and the lists are as yet far from as full as they would like. They would strain a point, if need be, to enter a former victor in the races of the Capital City. There are some strong competitors from Greece and Asia, but your entrance as a Roman would be an attractive feature that they would strongly covet. Say the word, and I will manage it!”

The tribune was so earnest in the matter that Quintus finally “said the word,” and consented to run in the approaching games.

“Only,” he added, “I fear that it may prevent my return to Patmos for this trip. I will need all the time available for the special training before the race, and to return to Patmos would take several days.”

“Oh! we can arrange that easily enough!” returned Caius. And the eagerness and positiveness with which he spoke, left the impression that, after all, the matter of the foot-races at the Ephesian games may have been the chief business for which Quintus had been called to Ephesus.

At all events, it was finally arranged that he should be duly entered, as a competitor in the Dromos or footrace, and that meanwhile he should leave the next morning with the exiles, and return immediately to go into special preliminary training in the gymnasium of the stadium.

CHAPTER VIII

A PIRATE'S RAID ON PATMOS

QUINTUS returned to the Gull and gave orders to prepare to sail back to Patmos at once. "The exiles to be transported will be brought on board without delay; let all be ready to leave as soon as they arrive!"

When the prisoners came, one was found to be a Jewish merchant, Zacur, with his wife Tamar, and two half-grown children; the other a Roman matron with a grown daughter. Both of the latter were closely veiled when they came aboard, and not until the yacht was clear of the river Cayster, and out upon the sea, did the young woman lift her veil to get the full benefit of the fresh sea air. The centurion was standing near at the time, and as the two chanced to look at each other, a cry of recognition escaped from their lips.

"Sylvia!"

"Quintus!"

The young lady added: "We knew you

when we first saw you; but did not venture to address you till we saw how we were likely to be received."

"How could you doubt that?" the young man rejoined as he advanced and warmly greeted her. "When I saw you last, you were in Rome, in the heyday of prosperity. And this is your mother, the good Lady Æmilia? May I ask you to be good enough to explain?"

"Sir," the elderly woman began, "it is a long story, though an old one now; and I will not enter upon it further than to say that shortly after you left Rome, we fell in with an Evangelist, through whom we were converted to Christianity. Not long thereafter there was an outbreak of persecution against those of our new Religion, which was fanned by slanderous stories and false accusations. Many suffered for their faith, and among others our family, though in truth, our chief offense was that we were possessed of some worldly goods that the emperor and his coterie coveted. We were required to sacrifice to the gods, which the Knight Plautus, my husband, and Justus, our son, both refused to do. They were arrested and imprisoned,

our property confiscated, and they were both condemned to death."

"What! And my dear friend and comrade, your son Justus, too?" exclaimed Quintus.

"O sir, he also remained steadfast, and became a faithful martyr for Christ! His bright young life and his fine record as a gallant soldier did not avail. He was a Christian, and his estate was coveted. That was enough! Our own lives, alas, were saved, and beside that, little more than our jewels and some gold in hand. We just escaped being sold into slavery, by the influence of some friends. But we were exiled, and here we are on our way; we know not whither!"

"It is one mercy, at least," quoth Sylvia, "that we find ourselves in the hands of an old friend, and we trust that the ties of other days have not been forgotten by you, and that our change of religion will not alienate your former friendship."

"Ladies, you need have no fear on that score!" Quintus hastened to say. "It has been my duty to deal with a number of Christian exiles, and I have for them nothing but profound pity and even respect. Be sure

that though I may regret your fall into this strange and alluring superstition, you will receive from me nothing but the greatest kindness that my office will allow—and that is much.”

“Thank God for that mercy, in the midst of our tribulations!” the matron exclaimed; to which the maiden responded with a devout “Amen!”

“And may I speak a good word for our companions in suffering?” said Lady Æmilia. “They are Jews, who are almost as bitter against us as the Romans. But they seem to be worthy people; and they are innocent of any wrong, I am quite sure. Pity them, and care for them as kindly as you can!”

“I will not forget them. There is no charge against them but their religion,” said the centurion. “For they are as stubborn as the Christians in refusing to sacrifice to Cæsar and to the gods. Yet I do not quite understand; for their religion is licensed; though yours is not.”

The meeting with Sylvia and her mother was a sad episode and a shock to Quintus; but it had its pleasant features, also. The maid had been to him, in the Roman days, almost

as a sister. Her brother Justus and he had been bosom friends from boyhood and comrades in army service. The parents were warmly attached, and indeed had dreams and even schemes of some day uniting the families more closely by the union of Quintus and Sylvia, and of Justus and a lovely daughter of the Knight Flavius Decimus and Lady Julia, who had been removed by death. All this the breaking up and removal of the Decimus family had, of course, dissipated; and, indeed, it had never been more than a pleasant dream.

And now, as the centurion and Sylvia sat on the little deck, they talked of earlier days, and of the happy times that the two families had spent together; and the old, warm friendship kindled anew. The exiles learned with satisfaction that they would meet the Lady Julia on the island, which would doubtless be something to relieve the anticipated gloom and hardship of their banishment.

And when they heard that the great and good Apostle John was in Patmos, and that they would meet him there, and profit by his ministrations, it added to their hopes of a better fate than they had feared for themselves.

One thing Quintus soon noticed: The attitude of Lady Æmilia and Sylvia toward the memory of their beloved dead was radically different from that of his mother toward her deceased husband and daughter. The gloomy, almost the despairing outlook upon her own final extinguishment from life, and the utter remediless separation from her beloved ones at the quenching of their being in the grave, as taken by Lady Julia, were in sharp contrast with the high, serene and certain anticipation of a blissful meeting in the future, and a firm confidence in the perfect happiness of Heaven upon which their beloved ones had already entered, which marked the attitude of Sylvia and her mother. So also, the Lady Julia's bitter murmuring against the cruelty of the gods for taking away from her the dearest objects of her affection, was so strikingly and painfully different from the sweetly resigned temper before the Divine Will, and the heavenly contentment under affliction, shown by the Christian ladies, that it profoundly impressed the centurion's mind. Their faith comforted them; it buoyed them up, and gave them a spiritual frame widely apart from the overshadowing sorrow and

gloomy view of the future which possessed the Lady Julia.

Here was another fact, or series of facts, which our young Roman philosopher was compelled to face, which seemed to show the superiority of Christianity in shaping the characters and blessing the lives of its devotees, and which buttressed them to bear courageously both the common and the extraordinary ills of life. He began seriously to ask himself: "Is not this the better faith?"

As the Gull pulled up to the Patmos quay in the late afternoon, Captain Philip noted with some surprise that the usual crowd which awaited his landing was absent.

"Something is astir in the village!" he said. "What can it be? No one here to greet us! I never knew that so before."

"There comes some one!" exclaimed Quintus, pointing up the road to where Prisca was seen running in full flight toward the Gull. She reached the ship almost breathless, and greatly agitated. Even before she came aboard, she called:

"Father, there is trouble among the soldiers! The pirates have raided the island; entering by the West Harbor. They are now

crossing the Waist; plundering and capturing as they go. The soldiers are in a panic. The officer in command is young and inexperienced, and cannot control them. They hesitate to go out and meet the raiders, or do aught to resist them and protect the people. They need their centurion—badly—and at once!”

Quintus seized his shield and javelin, girded on his sword, and bidding the squad of veterans on the ship to follow him, sprang ashore.

“Look out for the exiles, Philip!” he called back. “And you had better pull the Gull well into the harbor.”

“I will stay with father, and take the prisoners up to our house,” said Prisca, as Quintus passed her with a hurried greeting. “Haste thou! There is not a moment to lose!”

He was gone; and Prisca stood a few moments watching him until he entered the barracks, a long, low building near the quay. She heard the hearty cheers of the soldiers at their centurion’s unexpected appearance among them. Then, with a gleam of satisfaction upon her face, she stepped upon the yacht.

The first person whom she met was Sylvia.

She gazed upon the Roman maid with mingled admiration and surprise.

"I have never seen a woman so fair as this one. Who can she be? She is beautiful enough to be Venus herself fresh sprung from the foam of the sea. And she looks as gentle and good as she is fair."

So ran Prisca's thoughts; and therewith came just a faint flash of wonder what impression this lovely creature might have made upon her centurion's mind? "And would he continue to care for me after having met this Roman maid?" Perhaps, had she known all the circumstances, a keener and less worthy sentiment might have been awakened within her! And a touch of jealousy might have been pardonable, in that case.

Her speculation was cut short by a loud, fierce yell. A horde of ferocious-looking men in Phrygian caps, with long, scraggy hair and beards, and in ill-assorted apparel, rushed along the beach uttering wild cries, more like a pack of wolves than a company of human creatures. In their front, and their leader, was a handsome young man, well dressed, well favored, tall and trimly built, bearing costly armor of Grecian pattern, a jewel-

hilted sword, and a helmet with golden ornaments. However he may have got his rich uniform, it was becoming, and well set off his shapely form.

The crew which followed this leader swarmed over the Gull, and ere a blow could be struck in resistance, had seized and bound captain, sailors and oarsmen.

Prisca, urged by an impulse of affection and fear, rushed to her father's side as though to defend him. But already he was in the hands of two uncouth freebooters. The maiden seized her father's sword, which had fallen on deck, and springing toward the pirate chief, who was directing Philip's capture, with the vigor and agility of a tigress struck at him a blow that promised to be serious. But he, as agile as his assailant, threw up deftly his Greek shield and warded off the stroke. Then seizing the maid's arm, he fairly shook the weapon from her grasp, and as it fell to the deck, thrust out a foot and pushed it into the sea.

"You call yourself a man, and treat a woman thus?" the angry maiden cried.

"You call yourself a woman, and venture to treat a man thus?" was the good-humored,

but mocking reply. "This is your father, I take it; and one can overlook a good deal from a loving and excited daughter. His life shall be spared, I promise you. And, my fair Amazon, I beg you to curb your passion! There shall nothing worse befall you than to become my bride. And there are Grecian maids enow, and e'en some matrons, I ween, who would not count that so ill a fate."

"Thy bride!" Priscilla cried, concentrating in the phrase all the scorn that was burning within her. "I had as lief mate with a wolf!"

"Oh, well, if that be your taste," replied the chief without sign of vexation, and nodding toward the wild forms around him, "there are wolves enough right here who may yet claim that right. I can turn you over to them if you will; for this is a raid after wives, in sooth. And by Venus! I am in luck, for here is an even fairer face than thine!"

He turned to Sylvia, and made her a low obeisance. "Your servant, fair lady!" he said in gentle tones and courtly speech. "I beg you not to be alarmed! Not a hair of your head shall be harmed. I will take you, and your fair and fierce companion here, under my own special care."

“O spare us, sir, as you hope for God’s mercy!” Sylvia began. But she was interrupted by one of the pirate’s junior officers who approached and said:

“The soldiers are coming, sir!”

The chief’s demeanor instantly changed. The gentle bearing and bantering smile gave way to a stern, even a ferocious look. From a laughing courtier he seemed transformed into an embodiment of a lurking wild beast. He bade the officer, in harsh, staccato words, to take three men and guard the prisoners and the ship, and “mind you,” he added, with a dark scowl, “not a rude hand must be laid upon the women, nor a rough word spoken to them! Until I return they must be counted as my personal booty.”

He sprang ashore, and rallying his men, of whom there were fifty or sixty, led them against the band of Roman soldiers, thirty or forty in number, whom Quintus was leading from the barracks. Their panic had disappeared. The iron military discipline of the Empire had prevailed over all disorganizing elements. They were Roman soldiers, now, fearless and confident, with their own leader at their head.

It was a small but solidly aligned band that moved out against the wild, howling horde that the pirate chief Clearchus (for so he was called) led against them. The combat was fierce, but brief. It was the old, old issue—forever new—of disciplined courage arrayed against the unorganized bravery and enthusiasm of a mob; for, outside of their ship, the pirates were little better than that.

They flung themselves with reckless daring upon the bristling front of the Roman legionaries, but recoiled therefrom, after a few fierce dashes, as a broken wave falls back from a moveless rock. Here and there a fallen form lay still upon the sand; and here and there a wounded man limped forlornly away from the pirate ranks. But not a man of the centurion's band had flinched or fallen; and none was so seriously hurt as to leave the line.

There came a lull in the battle clamor; and there, in the front, face to face, in single combat, stood Quintus the centurion, and Clearchus the pirate chief. They were well matched. The pirate was the taller, the centurion the sturdier of the two. The pirate was clad in an ornate and graceful armor of Greek pattern; the centurion in the plain and serviceable

armor of a Roman officer. As if by mutual agreement both sides ceased from action to watch this duel between the leaders.

The thickly falling blows rang loudly upon the bronze shields. Once Quintus was pressed backward. Twice Clearchus was forced upon one knee, but instantly recovered himself, and renewed the combat with unabated vigor. A third time he was compelled to give back. Then his followers, aroused from the fascination of watching the fight, by fear of their chief's danger, led by Damalis the lieutenant, rushed forward to rescue their leader.

"Charge, my brave Romans!" shouted Quintus. "Forward now, and strike with all your might!"

The solid line swept down upon the broken ranks, smiting and thrusting to right and left. By this time a crowd of villagers had gathered in the broad street, though at a respectful distance, to see the fighting; the men rudely armed and ready to support the soldiers if opportunity served. Suddenly there arose from among them an uncanny, awe-stricken cry that was heard above the clashing of weapons, and arrested the attention of the combatants. They ceased fighting for a mo-



The Apostle laid his thin hand upon the strong man's arm.

ment, and looked around. An astonishing spectacle caught their vision!

There, advancing upon them, straight into the midst of the *mêlée*, was a tall personage, with long, white hair and beard, dressed in a shining robe of spotless white! His face shone; his eyes seemed to shoot forth rays of flame; a corona of light surrounded his head. In the dusk of approaching evening and against the dark background of the hillside road, his whole body appeared to the observers to be luminous.

"A god! A god!" cried the superstitious freebooters; and they wholly ceased to fight, and fell back before this mysterious figure, awed by the unusual sight, and subdued by their fears.

Into the center of the pirate groups advanced St. John—for he it was. He walked up to the captain, who stood with lowered sword, gazing upon him as though transfixed by some weird spell. He seemed stricken with a strange amaze. His face had grown pale; his limbs trembled.

The Apostle laid his thin hand upon the strong man's arm. "Clearchus!" he said, speaking in a low but clear and commanding

voice, "I have come for thee! In the Name of thy crucified and risen Saviour I recall thee to thine allegiance. Come; follow me to the waterside!"

Then occurred something seemingly incredible. At the voice of this unarmed old man the pirate chief, in the midst of his pirate crew, sheathed his sword and followed meekly as a lamb!

"A miracle! A miracle!" the gazing villagers murmured.

"A miracle!" The pirate gang echoed the cry.

And surely it did seem to the wondering beholders a miraculous transformation. By what power had this influence been wrought?

The Apostle moved down to the quay, and stepped aboard the Gull, that lay close to the shore. Prisca stood before him, in the midst of the group of exiles. He took her by the hand.

"I was told of thy bondage, my daughter," he said, "by one who fled for refuge to my cave; and I have come with Clearchus to rescue thee."

Prisca, with nerves wrought to highest tension by this sudden change of fortune,

was weeping violently. A sympathetic sob uttered by Sylvia, who stood close by, attracted St. John's attention to her, and he saluted her:

"Peace to thee, my daughter!"

"Peace, holy father," the maiden murmured, with a low reverence. "Peace in the Name of Christ!"

"What! Art thou a Christian, then?" the Apostle demanded.

"By the Grace of God and the Gift of the Holy Ghost, that is my hope. And I and my mother here, are exiles to Patmos for Jesus' sake."

"Then come thou also with me into freedom from these bonds of violence!" the Apostle said. "Yea, let every yoke be broken and all the prisoners go free!"

"So let it be!" bade the pirate chief to the officer whom he had left in command; and who turned an inquiring and wondering look upon him. In a few minutes the bonds of Philip and all the boat crew were cut, and the sailors and oarsmen joyfully leaped on shore, and hurried away to meet their friends and families and relieve anxiety in their behalf.

"Shall we secure the ship, and push it out

into the harbor?" the young pirate officer asked.

"Nay!" Clearchus replied. "Leave the ship to its owners, and join the crew on shore!" Which was done, reluctantly and sullenly.

Then, more leisurely, the Apostle left the Gull, leading one of the maidens by each hand; mother Æmilia and the Jewish family of Zacur following, and Clearchus, still subdued and bowed, meekly walking after all. And so they went to the house of Philip, where the Apostle left Prisca in the arms of her rejoicing mother, who welcomed also the exiles to the hospitality of her home.

Then he left them with a kindly farewell and his benediction, and turned away with Clearchus, his footsteps bent toward the cave.

CHAPTER IX

THE GOSPEL LEAVEN BEGINS TO WORK IN PATMOS

THE spectacle of the venerable Apostle leading the two young women up the wide street from the harbor, was viewed by soldiers, pirates and citizens with mingled awe and astonishment. The ranks opened to let the strange procession pass through.

All open hostility had by this time ceased, and the parties, lately in mortal conflict, stood peacefully opposite one another, apparently waiting for some intervention by the Apostle, or the pirate chief. Yet still they held to their weapons, and eyed each other with suspicious vigilance.

And now St. John was returning from Philip's house with his stalwart companion. He stopped on the battlefield, and noting several dead bodies lying upon the ground, and some men suffering with disabling wounds, he summoned from the bystanders one whom he knew.

“Marcus, go you to the house of Philip the shipmaster,” he bade, “and say to Rufus, and Phoebe the Christian deaconess, that their services are greatly needed here at once, and that I will await their coming. And come thou also, and some of thy believing companions with thee, to aid in the pious care of these injured men, and in the burial of the dead.”

The messenger sped away, and ere long returned with Rufus and Phoebe and a half-dozen Christians ready for the charitable offices to which they had been called. The attention which otherwise would have been fixed upon them, was diverted by the action of Clearchus. He walked into the midst of his crew, and holding up a hand to stay the cordial cheer with which his coming was received, thus addressed them:

“Men and comrades, you have been wondering, perhaps, what has come over me. I will tell you. I was once a Christian, won to the love and service of Jesus Christ by His great and good disciple, the Apostle John. But I fell into temptation through evil companions, and yielding to the power of Satan, became a robber, and at last what you know

me to have been. My sins were all the greater because I was well born, and well bred, and nurtured in a pious home by a father who died a Christian martyr and confessor, and a mother whose heart I broke by my misconduct and apostasy."

The man's voice here faltered and softened, and he seemed on the point of breaking down. But recovering himself, he continued:

"A little while ago when I saw, what you all saw, coming down the hill road toward us that radiant form, looking like some angel of light, I recognized therein my former Bishop, St. John, whose person and teachings I once had revered, the Disciple whom Jesus loved, and who had taught us the Saving Love of God in the very words of the Divine Master. I was at once smitten to the heart. I was overwhelmed by a Power which I could neither understand nor resist. I believed, and I still believe that it was the Power of the Holy Spirit of God seeking the rescue to Christ and His service of a lost sinner.

"I was speechless; powerless to resist the will and words of the holy man who spoke to me in the Holy Name of Christ, and bade me follow him. There and then I inwardly

vowed that I would follow him again; and I will follow my Lord and him to the end!

“I am done with the bandit’s life, God helping me, forever! The remainder of my days I will devote to repentance, and to works of faith, if perchance I may obtain forgiveness, and undo the wrong of some of the sins wrought during my wicked career. I beg you to forgive me for the evil actions I have encouraged you and led you to do!

“Damalis, the lieutenant, will take charge of you as my successor, as though I had fallen in battle, until you can get back to the ship. Then, I counsel you to disband, and leave at once and forever the wicked and dangerous life we have been living together. Go back to the ways of peaceful and honest industry. They are, in the long run, the happiest, the safest and the most prosperous. Forget all the evil ways into which I have led you, and if you think of me at all, think only of what I am now saying and doing. I will never cease to pray for you. Farewell!”

It was touching to see the rude men crowd around their former chief to speak a parting word. Some of them were in tears. Some declared their purpose to follow him in seeking

an honest life. Last of all came Damalis and the officers. To them he said:

“I surrender all right and interest in my ship. Sell it, and divide the money equitably among yourselves and the men. It will be some little help upon which to begin a new life. Farewell!”

Then the bugle sounded. The pirate crew fell into line, and slowly marched away across the Waist, the narrow isthmus that divided the island like the node of an ant or wasp, to the West Harbor where their ship lay. Quintus watched them, as an act of military prudence, until they were fairly out of sight, and then ordered his soldiers to the barracks, reminding those who had received hurts in the fight to report at once to the Post Medicus for treatment.

Meanwhile, Rufus and Phoebe and their band of Christian helpers, were busy in the burial of the dead and in caring for the wounded pirates. St. John suggested that the latter be taken into the barracks; and as there was plenty of room, Quintus consented. There was some grumbling at this unusual treatment of enemies. But the spirit of good will which the Christian helpers were showing,

the kindly sentiments that the act of Clearchus had stirred up, and the influence of the Apostle, together with the authority of their centurion, were so contagious that the grumblers were but a small number. The men whom but now they so eagerly had sought to kill, and who had striven to slay them, were treated with tolerance by most, and with kindness by many. There is certainly among all human beings a susceptibility to the contagious influence of love and good will. And to this, in some degree, one may attribute the progress of primitive Christianity.

The offices for the living and the dead being completed, or well under way, St. John went to his grotto, taking Clearchus with him. The soldier guards had been withdrawn to meet the pirates' raid, and they were never replaced. The Apostle had passed his word that he would not escape; and that, Quintus knew, was a stronger and safer barrier than even Roman sentinels.

What passed within the Apostle's grotto after the two men entered, no one ever knew. But for days the late bandit lived therein. Then he came out and found lodgings elsewhere. He seemed to be truly a transformed

man. His gentleness and helpfulness to all who were in need, ere long won him the esteem of the community. He was ever going about seeking opportunities to do good; and he never lost an occasion to commend by word of mouth, as well as by deed, the Gospel of his Saviour.

He regularly resorted to "The Repose," the Apostle's grotto home, where he joined in the good saint's prayers, received his pious instructions in Christian truth and duty, and aided him as a private secretary in the labors upon the Apocalypse, which St. John had already begun.

The influence of Clearchus upon the seafaring folk, sailors, oarsmen and fishermen, was especially marked. All this, as well as the other recent events that have been related, gradually wrought in the island community like leaven. Many were inquiring earnestly about the new religion. Some were inclined to favor it, and some openly declared their conviction that it was true, and began to abandon their pagan shrines, and ceased to pray to heathen gods.

These facts were faithfully reported by Clearchus to the Apostle, and he commenced to consider the formal organization in Patmos

of a Christian Church. He had held open-air conventicles on the mountainside opposite the grotto, and on the level stretches by the beach, and had preached to the people the good tidings of the Lord's redemption.

Clearchus, too, was encouraged to exercise his gifts; and his manly, straightforward appeals, in simple phrases and in the language of the people, with its strong savor of sea life, and with that earnestness and fervor which now seemed natural in him, powerfully moved his hearers.

One day, after a religious service of particular interest, he said: "Holy father, ought we not to begin at once to plan for and to build a sanctuary for our worship? The people of the island seem to be quite ready for it, and it would greatly promote our cause, could we gather them into a permanent place of worship."

"But, my son, the problem of money for such a purpose is a serious one," the Apostle replied. "How are we to get the required funds for such a building out of our few and poor people, a small band of exiles, for the most part, who are sorely put to it to get needful food, lodging and raiment?"

“If your reverence favors the enterprise,” Clearchus remarked, “I think I might find a way to provide most of the required funds.”

“In that event I surely would approve,” St. John remarked, with a smile of incredulity.

From the corner of the cave, where it had been stowed away with his gold ornamented helmet, Clearchus brought his jewel-hilted sword and placed it in the Apostle’s hands.

“My father,” he said, “this and the helmet are all that remain of my days of folly and wickedness. And here I believe is the treasury from which we can draw much of the money needed for our new sanctuary. See the jewels on this hilt! They were costly, and must still be of much value. Take them, holy father! Remove them from their place, and send them for sale to Ephesus where they were bought. I devote them to the work of building our little temple to the glory of our Lord and the propagation of His Gospel.”

“This is indeed a timely gift!” the Apostle exclaimed, “and a princely one. I accept it in the spirit and for the purpose given. I verily think there may be a Christian sanctuary within these costly gauds, though I know little of their real value. I accept your

gift as a loving offering to your Lord, in token of your repentance and renewed allegiance.”

So it came about that the needed materials were provided. The little Christian community, according to their rule to lay by them on the first day of the week, aided in the work. Many kindly villagers added their small gifts, that represented large sacrifice, and many contributed largely of the labor of their hands. The building rapidly rose; and ere the wet, blustery winter days came around, it was dedicated with solemn and simple services to the worship of Almighty God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and to the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus, the Divine and Eternal Word, and the Light and Life of men.

Herein, with readings of Holy Scriptures and expounding of the same, and preaching of the Gospel by the venerable and beloved St. John, and prayers and exhortations, and the singing of “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” the worship and work of Christ went on, and the foundations of a Christian Church in Patmos were laid. Scarcely a Lord’s Day passed without some new convert being baptized in the little

sanctuary into the Name of the Lord Jesus.

Among the active and helpful spirits in this work and worship were Lady Æmilia and her daughter Sylvia. They still kept lodgings in the roomy house of Philip the shipmaster, and the friendship between Sylvia and Prisca grew daily stronger. Prisca was readily persuaded to attend the Gospel services, and as she had a sweet, full voice and was fond of singing, she joined with Sylvia, who had taken a sort of leadership therein, in the psalms and Christian hymns which formed an important and delightful feature of the worship of the new sanctuary.

But still Prisca clung to her faith in her goddess Diana of the Ephesians, though with diminishing ardor. At the shrine within her parents' house she continued to offer her daily prayers. The faith and wont wrought into her nature by the teachings and habits of childhood and youth gripped her with a mighty force. The Christian religion seemed true, indeed; at least in many of its claims.

"Its teachings are all so beautiful and good!" she reasoned within herself. "Its followers are the salt of the earth. Think of Lady Æmilia and Sylvia, and their gentle and loving

and lovable ways! And Phoebe the deaconess—how self-denying, how devoted to duty! What lofty principles; what noble actions! The Christians of Patmos, though exiles from home, cut off from friends and business; though they have been imprisoned and plundered and persecuted, yet keep, amidst all trials, their sweetness of temper and life. They are always looking out for opportunities to do good, even to their enemies. When reviled, they revile not again. Their characters are unstained with the faults that mark most of those around them, the followers of the old gods." Thus Prisca reflected, and her mind was strongly moved toward the new religion.

Then, there was that wonderful man—the Apostle St. John! And his wonderful act of reclaiming Clearchus, and rescuing herself and her companions from the pirates and the awful fate which hung over them! Could she ever forget that? Never! That was truly the act of one in whom was the spirit of a god! There must be something in his religion! Yes, it must be true! Thus the leaven of Truth wrought within her.

But—there was Quintus! He did not believe the Christian doctrines! He still

trusted and worshipped the old gods. Were they not good enough for her, too? And suppose she should abandon them, and take up with these new teachings and ways, what would he say? What would he then think of her? Would his love stand such a strain as that?

And the Lady Julia—what of her? She was now able to be about the house once more; though still weak from the late illness. She had been so tolerant of Prisca during the watchings at her bedside—nay, so grateful, so motherly! It really seemed as though her heart had been won, and therewith, perhaps, her willing consent to her son's passion and purpose. But if Prisca were to come out openly on the side of Christ and His despised and persecuted followers, would not the heart of Lady Julia again be locked and double-locked against her?

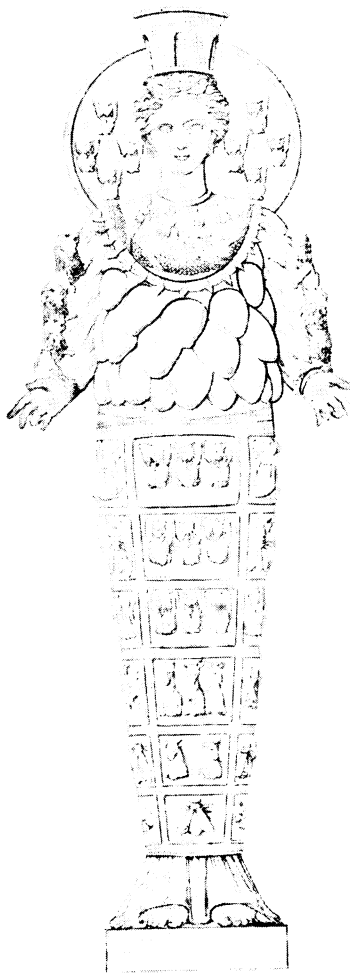
It was a great and bitter struggle that was thus going on in the maiden's bosom. The dearest interests, the tenderest affections, the brightest hopes and prospects of life were at stake. Could she sacrifice all these? Would she? Her father and mother would not cast her off even if she should become a Christian.

She felt sure of that much! But as to all the rest——?

Yes, her course lay within thick mist, and through high breakers and tempestuous winds. Oh, if that Divine Being, of whom the Apostle once told the people, would only take a place within her sorely tossed spirit, and command "Peace" to the storm raging within her, as He did to the waves and winds of the Sea of Galilee, and bring her safely to a sure harbor, then indeed she might believe in Jesus! And, perhaps, be willing to give up all for His sake.

But not yet! not now!

Thus the maiden's heart was tossed and buffeted by inward conflicts that multitudes of souls have experienced during nineteen succeeding centuries of spiritual struggles towards Saving Light and Life. How would it end at last?



The image of the Goddess Diana whose temple at Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

CHAPTER X

THE MAY FESTIVAL TO DIANA OF THE EPHESIANS

IN accord with the plan of Quintus to return at once to Ephesus to begin special training for the foot races at the May festivals in honor of Diana, the Gull had been kept in readiness to sail. But the centurion deemed it his duty to remain over at least one day more, in order to allow matters to settle somewhat into their normal condition, and especially to restore confidence to the hearts and quiet the nerves of his mother and the circle of women in whom he was particularly interested.

The soldiers, too, were somewhat demoralized by the pirates' raid, and their breach of discipline in withholding prompt and valorous obedience to their legatus (lieutenant) at the first coming of the pirates, had yet to be dealt with; although their subsequent good behavior had atoned for it in some measure. Moreover, the day had been fixed, in due course, for one of the series of local athletic games

which Quintus had organized; and on the whole he thought it best to allow the sports to proceed according to the program arranged.

Many of the soldiers were to take part therein; and also some of the younger citizens, who had been admitted to the competition, and whom Quintus had taken some pains to train for the games along with his own soldiers. Among the latter was Lukon, the son of Pothos a boatman, who had a special fondness for and facility in all athletic sports and exercises. He was a handsome, agile, active and aggressive character, a bundle of muscles as tough as whipcord, remarkably nimble in all movements, and one of the fleetest men on the island in a foot race. He had won the crown in the local games from all the soldiers and islanders heretofore; and on one occasion, when Quintus was running, had even beaten him.

On this morning Quintus was again listed among the competitors, and although recent events, and especially his personal conflicts with Clearchus and others of the pirate crew had disqualified him for such exertion, he concluded to let his name stand; for its withdrawal he feared might discourage competitors. He

was not sensitive in the matter of being beaten in his own Patmos games; and he believed that the pleasant excitement of the sports would be a wholesome diversion for the people after the thrilling events of the past day.

When, therefore, the time fixed for the foot race had come, Quintus took his place with the others, and after a close and exciting contest was again beaten by Lukon. He cared little for this, and thought little of it. But Lukon was immensely inflated by his success. He left the longshore race track boasting of his fleetness; made disparaging remarks of his instructor and patron Quintus, and in swelling terms of rhodomontade bragged to all and sundry of his superior powers as an athlete. He avowed his purpose to compete in the Ephesian games; and in order to accomplish it, applied that evening to Captain Philip for a position as sailor in the crew of the Gull, his father being one of its oarsmen. He was accepted; conditioned, however, upon the centurion's approval; for although Philip knew him to be an active, adventurous and skillful seaman, he was ill pleased with the reports of his boastings that had come to his ears. When Philip laid the case before Quin-

tus he was somewhat surprised at his ready assent to Lukon's application.

"But do you know, sir," the captain said, "that he has been declaring his purpose to enter the Ephesian games as a competitor against you on the race course; and has been making loud boasts of his ability to beat you? Perhaps it would make your success less doubtful were you to decline to approve him, and let me keep him at home!"

"By no means!" was the emphatic response. "That would be conduct wholly unworthy of me. I would rather help than hinder him to an opportunity to compete with me. Let him try, and do his best; and may the best man win!"

"As you will, sir!" Philip responded. "But be assured Lukon will be no insignificant competitor. He is as fleet of foot as the beast whose name he bears ("wolf"); and his muscles have been toughened by lifelong toil, without in the least impairing their mobility. He will run well, and hold out well; and after a course of systematic training, will be a dangerous adversary."

"So much the better!" the centurion answered. "The race will be the more ex-

citing, and the credit of winning it all the greater. Besides, the very purpose of these athletic games is to develop the latent abilities of the people for the benefit of the public at large, and to quicken a genuine love of honorable distinction in physical skill and endurance. It would be a breach of honor to hinder this from a purely personal regard for one's own success, of which I am not capable. Let Lukon go and return freely, in consideration of his proposed public service, and exact no equivalent of labor therefor."

Thus Quintus took action to provide for himself a formidable competitor, and to diminish his probable chances for winning Ephesian honors by securing a victory at the great May Festival games in honor of the goddess Artemis, or Diana of the Ephesians. But he kept the assurance that should Fate vouchsafe him victory, it would not be marred by a consciousness that he had stained his laurels by an act of meanness unworthy a man of just and honorable principles.

The old Grecian spirit that had established and maintained the Olympic and Isthmian games, and made them institutions of the first national importance, so that winners

therein attained the rank of national heroes, was strong in the Greco-Asian colonies of Rome, which were dominated by Hellenic ideals and temper, as widely as were the American colonies by British traditions and sentiment, a century and a half ago.

It was therefore natural and inevitable that the methods of the Grecian games should prevail in those of Ephesus and all cities of the Asian province. As Rome had substantially adopted those methods, and for reasons of national policy encouraged them, as contributory to imperial solidarity and harmony, there was a twofold reason why the Ephesian games should have the warm sympathy of and be heartily seconded by the Proconsular Government of Asia.

The several circuses of Rome, as the Circus Maximus, the Circus of Maxentius, the Circus of Flavianus, the Circus of Fiora, were duplicated in the stadium of Ephesus, whose ruins are sufficiently well preserved to our own age to allow accurate restoration of its plan of construction. This shows an open oblong arena more than six hundred feet long, curved and continuous at one end, and enclosed around that end and the two sides

by stone seats rising in tiers one above another, and supported on vaults of mason work strong enough to have stood the stress of the more than twenty centuries that have passed since they were built.

Adown the center of the arena ran a low marble partition known among Romans as the *spina* (backbone), which separated the going and the returning courses of the racers. This *spina* was adorned with a series of ornamental structures—statues, columns, obelisks, altars, shrines, trophies and fountains. Herein also were displayed the crowns which were to reward the victors in the games.

At each end of the *spina* was a row of seven decorated conical columns known as the *metæ*, surmounted by movable marble oval blocks (*ova*, eggs). One of these *ova* was removed after each completed lap during the chariot races, by an attendant who awaited with a ladder to mount the column. Thus a convenient tally was kept, for spectators and contestants alike, of the stage of the race.

Across the open stadium, opposite the curved end, was built a towerlike structure (hence called the *oppidum*), above which were placed state boxes with arches and colonnades,

giving, by their height and position, a fine view of the arena. Underneath these were arranged a series of stalls or chambers (*carceres*) within which the competing horses and chariots were kept until the signal was given for opening the gates (*fauces*), which was done all at once by slaves stationed and trained for that duty. This *oppidum* was pierced in the middle by a vaulted gate called the *Porta Pompæ*, through which the official procession entered the arena before the beginning of the games. The *oppidum* did not close up the entrance end of the stadium, but left an open space on each side (the *vomitoria*) by which spectators gained access to and left their seats.

The morning set for the races opened warm and clear; a typical May day. From the first hours crowds of people, increasing as the day advanced, kept pouring from all quarters of the city into the wide street lined with marble porticos and colonnades, and splendid buildings, both public and private, that extended from the sacred Port Panormus, past the great Temple of Diana, past the city port and its warehouses, the great gymnasium, the *Agora Civilis* or forum; to the stadium near the

base of the hill known as Mt. Pion. Few streets in modern cities could compare in magnificence of architecture and sculpture with this main Ephesian thoroughfare.

And few cities of our land and time could on any gala day turn out a populace of such varied aspect as there and then assembled. The inhabitants of Asia Minor were highly cosmopolitan, and though, by reason of its early colonization, the Greek element predominated, yet the oriental costumes and manners of the Asian races were freely intermingled with the more sober but perhaps not less picturesque dress of Greeks and Romans. The people who crowded along that wide and beautiful highway were not only from Ephesus and the immediate vicinity, but from the teeming cities round about, and up the mountain regions of Asia Minor, and as far away as Antioch in Syria, and from the neighboring islands of the Ægean Sea, and from Greece and Macedonia. Patmos, too, had sent her small contingent, among them the Lady Julia, and Prisca and her parents, and the crew of the Gull.

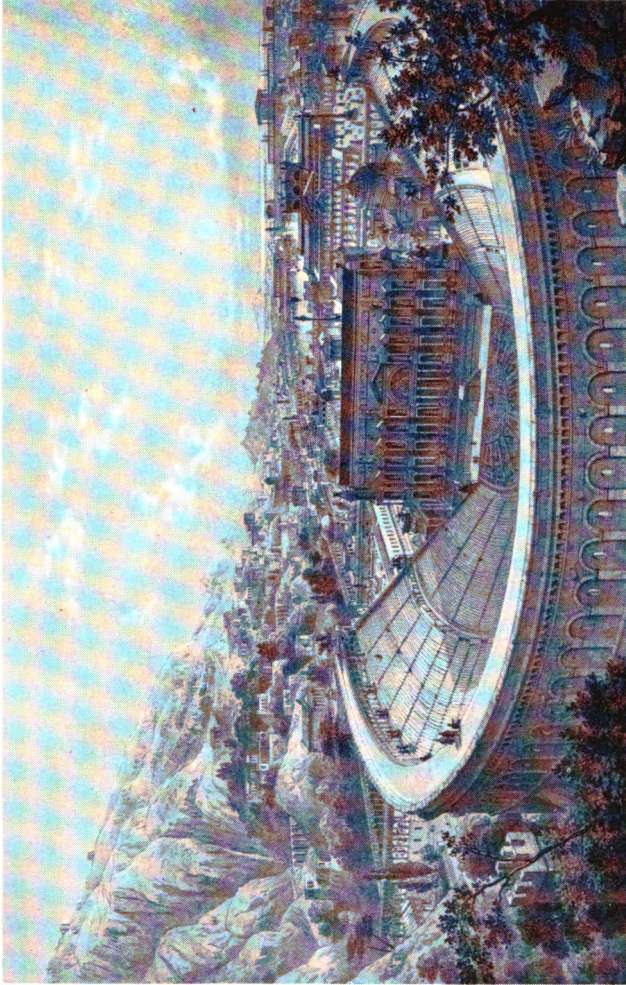
From this miscellaneous company there was one element wanting. The Christians

did not patronize the games. They deemed them, as they were conducted, demoralizing, and tending to undermine Christian faith and holy manners, and as contrary to the humane spirit and letter of their Lord's teachings. Moreover, the Roman circuses, with their "Roman holiday" exhibitions, were associated with the cruel persecutions and horrible deaths of many of their faith, who in numbers had been shipped from the Churches of Asia to make sport for the inhuman spectators who thronged the circus seats of the Capital City, to gloat upon the agonies of men, women and children torn by teeth and claws of ravening wild beasts, or slain by other devices of a cruelty almost inconceivable. With such associations, the stadium and its sports offered no attractions to the Christian element of the population.

But that, as yet, was only a small part of the general community, although the time came—nor was it so far distant—when Asia Minor was a stronghold of Christianity. Now, however, the whole populace seemed to be abroad. Moved by a common impulse the multitude crowded the roads leading to Ephesus, and thronged the streets centering upon

the highway that led up to the stadium at the foot of Mt. Pion.

They were all in high holiday spirit; in that gay and lightsome vein which pervades a throng bent on a day of pleasuring, and which runs from one to another, and infects all who enter and inbreathe the atmosphere thereof, until the whole body of the people is charged with a psycho-electric sympathy that breaks out into laughter, jest, light repartee, joyous greeting and song, as all hasten onward, eager, expectant, flurried.



Ruins of the Stadium in ancient Ephesus, the scene of the foot race.

CHAPTER XI

A FOOT RACE IN THE EPHEBUS STADIUM

IN one of the groups leisurely walking in the warm sunshine along the broad central street were Lady Julia Decimus, and Prisca Agron who accompanied her, and Captain Philip with his wife Marpissa and their second son Astyanax. Small as was the company, their personal interest in the games was keener than that of most of those around them. For, besides the centurion Quintus, the group was represented among the contestants by Pyrrhos, the oldest son of Philip, who was in the ball game, and Lukon the runner, whose father was an oarsman on the Gull. The crew followed their captain at a respectful distance, not straggling, but well bunched together; for, as the captain held the tablet for their reserved seats, they took good care not to be separated from him in the crowd. Their Phrygian caps and short tunics, browned faces and rolling gait readily marked their calling; and as seamen, in all ages, have been

favorites with the populace, these Patmos "Jacks" were everywhere greeted freely and merrily, and their jolly returns kept in their wake a ripple of good-natured laughter and kindly exclamations.

Prisca, whose experience had not heretofore gone beyond her little village and island population, was greatly surprised at the number of people whom she saw. "Surely," she exclaimed, "there will not be room in the stadium for all these! Can any building be large enough to hold such crowds?"

"The stadium of Ephesus, my dear, holds over fifty thousand spectators," answered Philip; "and we have not seen nearly that many persons on our way."

"Fifty thousand!" echoed Prisca. "It is an immense company to be present at one exhibition!"

"It is indeed a goodly number," remarked the Lady Julia. "But some of the public buildings in Rome hold many more than that number. Could you see the vast multitudes of the Capital City flocking in or from the Circus Maximus, you would think this company a Patmos gathering in comparison."

"It all seems wonderful to me!" Prisca

said. "I can hardly conceive of such vast numbers being orderly and comfortably seated in one edifice, and indeed, I begin to fear that we shall not succeed in getting possession of our own seats," she added, as folk pressed forward and pushed their way until the *vomitoria*, one on either side, wide as they were, became choked up by the ingoing throngs.

"We at least need have no uneasiness on that score," said Philip. "Quintus has sent us tablets that show the tier and section where seats have been assigned to us; and they will not be taken from us."

"Show us your tablet, man!" exclaimed the usher at the *vomitorium*, as Philip with his wife and son, backed by his band of sturdy mariners, made his way to the entrance of one of the great galleries (*cavea*) of seats.

"Here it is, sir!"

"Right!" rejoined the gate usher, reading from the tablet: "In the first *mænianum* (gallery), in the tenth *cuneus* (section), twelve feet, of *gradi* (rows) 5 and 6. You will find them excellent seats, far up near the semi-circle, and close by the starting point. Show your tablet as you go along. The place usher will pass you on."

"Thanks!" said Philip. "Look after the Lady Julia yonder, and her companion, please!"

"Valè!" cried the usher. "Ho, Horatius!" he added, calling to an aide who stood at the side of the *oppidum*. "These ladies belong to your party!" and turned hastily to direct a group of priests who were clamoring for his attention.

"This way, madam!" said Horatius politely, as he glanced at Lady Julia's tablet. "Your seat is in one of the official boxes in the *oppidum*." He opened a gate and led the two ladies along a stairway above the stalls (*carceres*) of the charioteers, where a special usher met them, and conducted them to their seats. Thus much of favor the good offices of Quintus' patron, Caius Proculus, the military tribune, had wrought; for the seats were among the best in the stadium, commanding a view of the entire arena, and of the runners throughout the whole course, as well as of both sides of the immense galleries. Lady Julia, knowing the ways of the world, slipped a gratuity into the usher's hand, which perhaps added several degrees to the depth of his bow as he silently glided back to his post.

A most imposing scene was that which opened before them. Tier on tier, from gallery *primum* to gallery *summum* the masses of human beings were ranged. They were dressed in the varied and picturesque garbs of Asia and ancient Greece and Rome, all the brighter on this occasion because of the holiday attire; and although the hour for opening the games had not yet come, they almost filled the immense space. The incessant movements of individuals kept the whole mass in a flutter of agitation. As Prisca gazed upon them from her high seat in the *oppidum*, it seemed like a vast garden of flowers swayed by the wind—living, quivering flowers in human form, with all the colors of a cultivated parterre. From this multitude, the sound of many voices rising and intermingling was like the roll and murmur of sea waves against the beach, and quite drowned at times the music of the harpers (*Anaxenoves*) and the band of flutists (*Xuthi*) set to amuse the spectators until the procession should arrive. These were the successors of the flute players whose skill so won the favor of Mark Antony when he entered Asia (B.C. 41).

Besides these thousands who occupied the

stadium benches, there were many who were kept outside the bounds, chafing under that bitter disappointment which comes with the loss of a long and eagerly expected holiday amusement. They surged back and forth, excited by every trivial incident, and jostled one another, gradually losing their tempers, but still holding to a faint hope that something might occur to give them a place upon those seats toward which they gazed with such intense longing, and which more fortunate or more provident holders had secured.

Others, more philosophical, had accepted their ill fortune, and were sauntering along the beautiful street, amusing themselves with the strolling exhibitors, or venders of knickknacks and jewelry and images of Diana. Some gathered in groups under and around the rich porticos and stately colonnades that lined the way, to secure good positions from which to view the intransigent procession, and thus get somewhat into their day's outing to salve the disappointment of their loss of stadium spectacles.

Now the sound of martial music was heard coming from the direction of the Temple. The stragglers outside the stadium surged

toward the street, and began to arrange themselves along it. The sounds were heard inside, and a flutter of expectation ran along the crowded benches. It gradually quieted as the music drew near, and broke forth afresh into a loud acclaim as the head of the procession entered through the vaulted way in the middle of the *oppidum*, known as the *Porta Pompæ*.

First came the heralds, gayly appareled and mounted, followed closely by the trumpeters and the corps of musicians. Then came the Asiarchs, the chief directors of the games, wearing purple mantles and crowned with garlands, and accompanied by their staff of aides.

The civil authorities of Ephesus, the givers of the games, came next, clad in their robes of office, and followed by the Priests of Diana in their sacerdotal garments, bearing in their midst, on a platform, a large and richly bedecked image of the goddess, the gift of Demetrius and the craft of metal workers.

After these marched a detail of soldiers drafted from the Roman legionaries assigned to Asia Province, with all their bravery of uniforms and standards and banners. This was the military escort of the Proconsul of

Asia, who, clad in the *Toga Picta*, rode in state as the honored guest of the city, and the high and mighty representative of Imperial Rome. Following the Proconsul and his military escort marched the several groups of athletes who were to take part in the various exercises of the Festival—the races in chariots, on horseback, and on foot; the boxers, archers, throwers of the javelin, hurlers of the discus, and a group of sturdy schoolboys who were to amuse the spectators with a game of *Episkyros*, the “football” of the period.

The procession passed through the *Porta Pompæ*, and thence moved around the entire circuit of the arena, amid the enthusiastic cheers and plaudits of the spectators. Then the Proconsul went to his seat of state; the judges and the several officers took their positions; the soldiers and others were shown to their reserved seats; the trumpeters sounded, and the regular courses of the games began. As our chief interest centers in that section of the sports in which Quintus and Lukon were enrolled, we will fix our attention upon that.

Among the several games to be contested in the Ephesus stadium, the foot races justly held a high place. In thrilling interest and

absorbing excitement they could not rival the chariot races, which were apt to attract the largest crowds, and awaken the keenest zest in beholders. But foot races came next in popular interest, though not apt to present any thrilling incidents. In point of real value in contributing to the development of manly character and physical fitness for the public defence, they ranked highest of all athletic games.*

This was a vigorous survival of that conviction which so often breaks forth in the Homeric praises of swiftness of foot as a foremost qualification for soldierly efficiency; and which found utterance in the Davidic lament over the fallen Hebrew heroes, Saul and Jonathan: "They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions." (2 Sam. 1:23.) The last reference is the more significant as the Hebrews were not addicted to the public athletic games in which Greeks and Romans so much delighted.

This being the prevailing sentiment con-

* St. Paul, during his long stay in Ephesus, had abundant opportunity to know the methods of the foot races of the ancients, from which he has drawn such striking images as we find in 2 Tim. 4: 7, 8, and elsewhere. His references to them should be a chief element in the interest with which the accurate descriptions of these pages are read.

cerning foot-racing, a wave of acclamation greeted a group of eight runners who entered and took their place along the starting line. Standing there in the full display of their vigorous manhood, with encumbering clothing removed, with every ounce of superfluous flesh trained down, and their knotted muscles glistening with the lubricating oil, they were eight as fine specimens of athletic youth as one would find in the gleanings of a nation. They were, in fact, the gleanings of the ancient world. Quintus was the tallest and largest man of the group, and in physical beauty perhaps excelled the others. But all showed well in the comparison. And there they stood; their left feet advanced to the starting line, upon which they beat nervously, as innumerable predecessors had done, so that the attrition of like acts, repeated throughout the successive games of centuries, had worn a depressed line in the stone slab that marked the starting point, still visible at this date of the twentieth century.

Presently a herald advanced into the arena and announced the names of the competitors, and the colors by which they might be distinguished, worn in a band on the left arm:

- No. 1. Melès the Athenian, red.
- No. 2. Ladas of Laconia, violet.
- No. 3. Galenus of Sardis, green.
- No. 4. Mauropous (Blackfoot) of Antioch, black.
- No. 5. Idmon of Corinth, orange.
- No. 6. Lukon of Patmos, yellow.
- No. 7. Pothos of Miletus, white.
- No. 8. Quintus of Rome, blue.

With the announcement of every name there followed from various parts of the galleries, where groups of the several contestants' friends and patrons were seated, bursts of applause more or less hearty, with waving of ribbons and small banners of the athlete's chosen color. It was observed that from the boxes in the *oppidum* and the benches where the Roman legionaries were seated, the name of Quintus was received with greatest favor, and for a moment the galleries seemed all aflutter with blue. Evidently the Romans present had adopted the young centurion as their champion, as also had many of the Ephesians, who, lacking a representative from their own city, deemed it good diplomacy, as well as due courtesy, to applaud the favorite athlete of their ruling nation.

The roll of competitors being thus completed the herald added that "Iceus of Pergamum had duly entered the stadium gymnasium, and trained as a runner, but for certain breaches of rules had been disqualified by the Asiarchs, and thus had been 'cast away' from the public trial." This done, the herald fell back from the arena behind the line of runners.

Now the napkin in the Asiarch's hand was seen to drop, and at the same moment a shrill blast of a trumpet rang out. Almost as an echo was heard the beat of eight footfalls upon the arena, and the rush of eight forms across the starting line.

A great cheer went up from the vast assembly. Many rose upon their benches, and dropped again at the calls of "Down! down!" from ushers and others. The runners seemed evenly matched in fleetness, and for half the distance down the course ran so nearly together that it was hard to decide who would take the lead at last.

As they passed along, groups of friends or admirers greeted their favorites with such encouraging cries as "Well done, Quintus!" "On, Melès!" "Speed it, Blackfoot!" "Leap lively, little Lukon!"

But when the first half-course was finished (six laps making a full course of a mile), breaks in the line showed quite distinctly. Mauro-pous was in the lead, his one brown foot, a remarkable birthmark which gave him his distinctive name (Blackfoot) beating with rare rapidity of footfalls upon the white sand of the arena. Close to him ran Quintus, keeping his position easily, and caring less to win out on the first laps than to make sure his place upon the second and conclusive course. Next to him came Lukon, straining every muscle to reach at least second place; for according as the Asiarchs should determine, the first two, or the first four in the first race, would be permitted to enter for the second.

Running almost abreast with Lukon was Melès, now ahead of, now behind him. This alternation of order between the red and the yellow greatly interested the galleries, and for a while called popular attention from the leading pair. The seesawing of position continued, greatly stimulated by the cheers and cries of the spectators, alternating sympathetically with the runners' success, until a burst of applause from the galleries in the semi-circle nearest to the starting and finishing

line, indicated that one of the leaders had reached the final goal, and that the first course was finished. It was a close ending; but Quintus won. Next came Lukon and Melès; and the others straggled in not far behind, and not far apart.

Now the second and determining race must be run. How would the Asiarchs decide?—that it should be between the two leaders, or the four most successful competitors? The decision was soon announced by a herald in favor of the latter mode, on the ground that the four athletes Quintus, Mauro-pous, Lukon and Melès were so equally matched in skill and performance, that justice seemed to require that all should have the privilege of a second trial. Further, the competition between the four would make the race more exciting to spectators, and thus add to its interest.

So, therefore, it was decided; the quaternion of unsuccessful runners retired from the arena, and the four leaders again took their places at the starting line, refreshed by the brief rest, and a vigorous rubbing given them by their trainers, along with sundry hints that might add to their chances in the forthcoming trial of speed.

CHAPTER XII

HOW THE FOOT RACE ENDED

THE short interval that followed brought little relaxing of the strain upon the nerves of Lady Julia and Prisca. For, was not the real test of skill yet to be made by Quintus? However, an incident occurred that gave some diversion to their minds. Sir Honorius Ahala, *magister equitum*, and a member of an old and noble family, had been in attendance upon the Proconsul as a member of his military staff. He was attracted by the name of "Quintus Flavius Decimus" among the competitors in the foot race, and identified him as the son of one of his dear friends, a comrade during campaigns under Agricola in the British wars and in the German campaign. Learning that the young man's mother was within the *oppidum*, he called upon her in her box.

"Will Lady Julia permit an old friend to renew his acquaintance with her?" said the

gallant knight, as he entered the box and saluted the ladies therein.

Lady Julia started at the sound of the voice, and the sight of the knight, whom she at once recognized. Her face flushed, and animated by the excitement of the race lighted up with pleasure, the glow and color adding to its comeliness, which was still notable despite her nearly fifty years.

“Sir Honorius!” she exclaimed rising and extending her hand. “Is it indeed you? I am delighted to meet you once more! How came you here in this far-away part of the Empire? But why need I ask that of a military officer, who must be ever on the wing, and can claim no home, save as the imperial will determines? Whatever has brought you to Asia, it was a most welcome event to me.”

“I have just heard from the military tribune of your presence here,” the knight replied. “And I have called to pay my respects, and to congratulate you on that fine son of yours. For I am told that such he is who wears the blue, and has won out in the first course. What a splendid race he has made, and what a handsome fellow he is! And I am told that he is as good an officer as

he is a runner. You must be proud of such a son. I sincerely hope he wins in the final race!"

"I give you thanks, noble sir," was the lady's reply, while her face grew even rosier and brighter with maternal pride, "for your kind words and good wishes. I have been and still am anxious for his success, as you will readily believe. It has been a trying situation for me."

"I quite understand it, madam!" said the knight, in a voice mellow with sympathy. "A mother's first and chief concern is always for her child. But I think you may dismiss your anxiety in this case. I feel confident that Quintus will win the crown. Your daughter, I presume?" he continued, turning with a smile and bow to Prisca.

"No—not yet, at least," the lady replied. "This is Prisca Agron, a neighbor's daughter in whom I am much interested. My dear, let me present an old friend and a valued comrade of my late husband—Sir Honorius Ahala!"

"Ah!" responded Sir Honorius, with a courtly bow, first to Lady Julia and then to Prisca. "Then I congratulate you on the

prospects of having a daughter whose beauty promises to rival your own. Your servant, fair miss! Have you enjoyed the games, thus far?"

"I can hardly say that I have *enjoyed* them!" was the frank reply. "They have been too intensely exciting to us for real enjoyment. But I have been much interested in them. And the introductory parade, in which I noted you, sir, if I mistake not, riding with the Proconsul's chief officers, I did enjoy. All this is new to me, sir, who am but a simple rustic maid, knowing little of the ways of the great world."

Prisca's cheeks were highly flushed by the previous excitement, which had also thrown much animation into her expressive face and large, brilliant eyes. She spoke in a low, sweet and well-modulated voice, and with such ease and propriety and modesty withal, that the knight was charmed with her simple and graceful manners, as well as impressed by her beauty. The Lady Julia observed this with pleasure, and indeed with surprise; and it added to her growing conviction that, after all, her son was not so far wrong in his view of Prisca's fitness for a higher station in life.

"But I crave your pardon, Sir Honorius!" she exclaimed. "I have not asked about your own family. It is a long time since I heard of them. How is it with Lady—— Ah!"

She checked her speech, for the change that came over the knight's countenance foretokened bad news.

"She is with the shades!" Sir Honorius replied reverently. "She left me in Northern Britannica, four years ago, shortly after the death of my only son, who fell in battle with the savage Britons. I am now alone, as you are, also, though Jove has been more favorable to you, for you still have your son to comfort you. I am quite alone!" he added with a sigh.

"Yes; I still have my son, the gods be praised! and a true comfort he is, in every way. I assure you of my cordial sympathy in your loss."

Her remark was interrupted by the note of a bugle which sounded for the beginning of the second course. The knight accepted Lady Julia's cordial invitation to a seat in the box beside her, evidently with great satisfaction. All eyes were at once turned upon the four stalwart figures who again had shot

across the goal line as though each had been propelled from a catapult.

The general attitude of the runners in the early stages of this course seemed to the popular eye to differ little from that in the first trial of speed. The four men kept well abreast without any marked show of superiority on the part of any. But when the downward track was half covered, differences began to appear.

The Athenian Melès suddenly forged to the front, gradually carrying his red band beyond the other colors to a distance not great, but noticeable. Then he fell behind again, as gradually, to his former place.

Next Lukon made a "spurt," and his yellow band crept forward little by little until he had gained the lead by a foot—by two feet—by a yard, at last, amid cheers in the galleries.

"Oh, see!" exclaimed Lady Julia. "The yellow has distanced my boy! May the gods forbid that he should lose to him, of all others!"

A sympathetic cry from Prisca echoed this wail. But Sir Honorius, being experienced in such matters, sat quite undisturbed, and bade them not to lose heart so readily.

“Quintus will not lose the race, I am sure! Look closely at the field. The Athenian has already made his best effort. He will not lead again. Lukon is now straining every muscle to the utmost. He can do no better; and he cannot keep the ground he has gained. Mauropous, the Blackfoot, is also at his best. Now look at Quintus! He is fresh; is running quietly, with as little nerve-fret as though he were at a morning exercise, pushing on steadily and surely, coolly measuring his own strength and that of his adversaries, and holding his powers in reserve for the final rush. My word for it, he wins the crown!”

“The gods grant it!” exclaimed Lady Julia, piously.

“May Diana be propitious!” echoed Prisca, devoutly, almost passionately.

They both noticed that the knight made no response to these prayers. Had his piety been blunted or erased in the hard usages of war?

Soon Lukon had exhausted his special burst of energy, and dropped back slowly to the third place. By the time the first goal post had been fairly turned the fifth time by all the runners, Blackfoot and Quintus were

so well in the lead that the galleries had settled down to the conviction that the victory lay between these two, with the odds in favor of Blackfoot.

The finishing goal was not far away, and Blackfoot was still in the lead. The Roman backers of Quintus began to be discouraged. His mother and Prisca had watched the contest with spirits alternately rising and falling, oscillating between hope and dread.

"Quintus has lost!" at last cried Lady Julia sadly, almost on the verge of tears.

"No!" said the knight emphatically. "Wait and watch!"

"Fifty sesterces that the black wins!" said a noble citizen of Antioch in the next box, waving his betting tablet at the knight.

"Thank you," replied Sir Honorius, "I am not betting. But you will lose your money on that color. The blue is sure to win."

Prisca and Lady Julia bent over the balcony rail and watched the closing stages of the race with an intensity of interest that they would heretofore have thought impossible to feel in such an event. The excitement around them was contagious. Everywhere men and women were betting on the competi-

tors. And it was gratifying—though there was something galling in the fact that he should be a subject for such sporting—that Quintus had been the favorite in the *oppidum* seats.

Now, however, as his success seemed doubtful, the utterances of regret and disappointment and displeasure that arose on all sides from the crowded boxes caused them pain. And grief was turned into indignation, when here and there were heard voices, proceeding from those who were likely to be heavy losers in the betting:

“What is the matter with the blue?”

“He is not doing his best!”

“Has he sold out the race to the rich Antiochian?”

“Quintus has betrayed his friends and countrymen!”

Meanwhile the knight gazed composedly over the arena, and with a quiet smile again said:

“Wait and watch! They will change their song soon!”

The anger stirred in the two ladies' breasts by the unjust criticisms about Quintus, was in truth greatly modified by the keenness of the

interest with which they followed the two figures straining toward the goal yonder in the far front of the arena.

For a moment or two the forms of Melès and Lukon came between their vision and the leaders, and so far hid them that it was uncertain who had first reached the goal.

Suddenly there burst from the multitude a cry so loud that the stadium seemed to rock beneath it. Everywhere spectators were on their feet cheering. The tumult began at the circular end, nearest the crossing line, and rolled along the galleries until it reached the *oppidum*.

"Who has it? Who wins?" were the queries that flew from box to box.

"Look yonder!" cried Sir Honorius, pointing away to where the solid body of the uniformed legionaries were waving their standards and their blue ribbons, and clapping their hands in triumph.

"Look there! That tells the tale! The Roman soldiers are cheering their centurion as victor."

It was true. As the finishing goal was being neared, he had gathered up all his reserved force, and with mighty leaps rushed

to the front, and crossed the line three good yards before Blackfoot.

And he had won the crown!

Amid the great roar that rolled along the galleries on either side there was one name distinguishable on every tongue. "Quintus! Quintus of Rome!" the people were shouting.

Then the Roman officers and gentry who made up the majority of those in the *oppidum* boxes took up the acclaim:

"Quintus of Rome! Praise to Diana! Our man has it. Hurrah!"

Their faces had suddenly lighted up. Even the late critics and pessimists joined in the cheers, and congratulated one another, as they glanced over their betting tablets. They, too, had won!

Lady Julia was so overcome that she sank back in her seat, and would have fallen to the floor had not Sir Honorius reached out his arm and supported her. Prisca, with face radiant with joyous excitement, was beside her at once to apply restoratives. But the sinking sensation, the result of the revulsion from despondency to sudden joy, passed almost immediately, and Lady Julia was able to receive the congratulations of those who

came to her box, the Proconsul and the military tribune among them.

The echoes of the popular applause had barely died away when a herald rode along the arena proclaiming:

“The victor in the foot races is Quintus of Rome, and the honorable judge has awarded him the crown.”

At this, the cheering broke out anew; and soon after it had died away, another herald appeared with a trumpeter who announced his presence, and called to silence with a flourish of the bugle. Then the herald proclaimed that the next game in order would be the play of *Episkyros* by two bands of youth. This seemed to please the people, for it was followed by vigorous plaudits in the galleries.

Now came out stadium servants, and across one end of the arena stretched a long red cord, and one of green across the other end. Midway between these two base lines and parallel to them, they drew a white line, which was called the *skyros*, and in the middle part thereof laid a ball. Then they retired, and presently there followed a flourish of bugles, at which the doors of the stalls (*carceres*) in the lower story of the *oppidum* were

thrown open simultaneously, and out rushed twoscore young men with a whoop and halloo, like a party of youth just released from school.

One half of these wore red bands on their arms, and they aligned themselves along the red base line. The other twenty wore green, and they took their place on the base line of that color. After a brief pause, the Asiarch's napkin dropped, the trumpeter sounded a sharp note, at which the two teams bounded toward each other, everyone aiming to reach the ball in the middle of the *skyros*.

This good fortune fell to Pyrrhos of Patmos, who quite appropriately (his name signifying "the red") was playing with the party wearing that color. His superior speed had enabled him to do this; and before any of the greens could reach the spot, he had snatched up the ball and hurled it toward the green base line.

Away it flew, down the arena, though the haste with which it had been thrown much shortened the distance of its flight. Then followed a wild rush and scramble to regain the ball. A green player finally got it, and threw it back toward the central line, the *skyros*.

This cast was partly hindered by some

of the red team, so that its flight was not far and another rush and scramble ensued. In this way the ball was kept oscillating between the two base lines with varying success, each party trying to force the opposers back to their own base.

The conflicts for possession of the ball were often lively, and the "scrimmages" greatly amused the spectators in the galleries, who took a great interest in a game which so many of them had often played. They cheered on the respective sides, making loud outcries at especially skillful plays, much like the galleries in a modern game of football, or the "fans" in a baseball match.

But the advantage gained by the first throw of Pyrrhos was not overcome, and after a long, hard and exciting contest in defense of the ball, the greens were forced back nearer and nearer to their base line, and finally were pushed quite over it. Then the bugle sounded. The galleries cheered vociferously. The score of "reds" went off into all sorts of wild antics in the exuberance of their joy. They leaped and turned somersaults, and played leap frog, and chaffed and chased the greens, while the spectators shouted and shook with laughter.

After a few minutes of this horseplay, the bugle called to order; the decision of the judge was announced, that the game had been won by the reds. Then the twenty lads of that team formed in column of fours, and followed by the greens in like formation, marched around the arena. Thus amid bursts of music and acclamations of the people, they passed out of the "Gate of Triumph" in the circular end of the stadium, bearing aloft on a standard, as a trophy, the green wreath of leaves, the reward of their victory.

In the *oppidum* boxes the sport of the boys was enjoyed as heartily as in the galleries. When the game of ball was finished Sir Honorius bade Lady Julia and Prisca adieu; and having learned where they lodged, got permission to call in the evening personally to congratulate Quintus on the victory of the day.

CHAPTER XIII

SIR HONORIUS FULFILLS AN OLD PLEDGE

ON the grounds of the spacious house where Lady Julia lodged, there was a grove; and therein was an artificial fountain, around which were planted flowers and young palm trees. Near by the fountain seats were arranged; and to one of these Sir Honorius led Lady Julia; and Quintus led Prisca to another.

There they sat in the delicious cool of the warm May day, while the tinkle and splash of the falling waters fell pleasantly upon their ears, and the light of the moon streamed through the newly leaved trees as it rose over the eastern mountains beyond the city, and upon the Cayster meadows. Throngs of visitors and holiday-making citizens promenaded the near-by street, and, though they were not seen, the beat of their feet upon the pavement and the murmur of their voices was heard, mingled with bursts of laughter and snatches of song. All this formed the

natural setting for a tale of love and joyous friendship, rather than of sorrow, pain and death such as Sir Honorius had now to tell.

“You will remember to have heard, my dear Lady Julia,” he began, “that I was with your late husband at the time of his death. But there was a dying message which he committed to me, and which I promised to deliver to you in person, at the earliest possible opportunity. That opportunity has never occurred until now. When I returned to Rome, you were gone, and I was not able to find even your address for a long time. Then I learned that you were with your son on an inaccessible island in the Ægean Sea, in a sort of social banishment.

“Sir Flavius and I, as you know, had long been close friends and comrades in many campaigns for the extension and maintenance of the imperial domain. We were therefore well content to be brigaded together in the campaign into Germany to suppress the revolt there. But alas, our happy fellowship was broken up by a wound received by him in one of our engagements.

“He was borne off the field by a faithful sergeant in his legion named Clemens, who

long had been his devoted follower and personal orderly. Clemens was at once assigned duty at his wounded colonel's headquarters, and never left him day or night.

“Now, Clemens was a Christian deacon, a sort of officer or under priest in that sect, and a most devout man. His religion—contrary to the common opinion among us—did not interfere with his duty as a soldier, or his fidelity as a personal follower and friend. On the contrary, he was one of the bravest men in the legion, and one of the most faithful and loyal in every soldierly service. But his religion showed itself in what we all thought a remarkable way, by a great anxiety for what he called his ‘colonel’s spiritual welfare.’

“He was a firm believer in personal immortality (as all Christians are), and he held that a belief in his God and his Saviour Jesus Christ, the Founder of his sect, was needful to obtain redemption, and receive pardon for one’s sins, and a happy immortality in the Christian’s heaven. He therefore prayed without ceasing for what he called his colonel’s ‘conversion.’ Not content with that, he lost no opportunity to commend to

the knight his Christian faith, and to urge him to accept it."

"How could you permit such impertinent importunity?" broke in Lady Julia indignantly. "Could you not have seen to it that the poor knight had leave to die in peace in the enjoyment of his own religion?"

"I did interfere; and tried to stop the sergeant's exhortations," Sir Honorius replied. "But my friend begged me to let Clemens alone. 'It does me no harm,' he said, 'and it seems to do him a lot of good. Besides, I have heard so much from him heretofore, that I half believe what he tells me, and indeed, I wish I could wholly accept his faith. It would be an immense comfort to feel that all the evil acts of my life have been atoned for and forgiven, through a sacrifice of infinite worth once made for all; and to know that after death I should live on, and go away into a heaven of endless bliss, where I might have the hope of meeting once more my beloved wife and children.'

"'These are but vague though pleasant dreams, my old friend!' I said. 'Delusive hopes held out by a religious visionary. I feel you are, in your weakness, yielding to vain

imagnations that will prove but philosophical jack-o'-lanterns, and evade your grasp.'

"'Nay; but Clemens says that his God can do all things!' my friend replied. 'He can raise the dead, and reunite families in the spirit world; and that if I only believe in his Christ, these things may come to pass.' This is what your knight said; so, you see, my lady, I could go no further in the matter than to urge Clemens to be careful and moderate in pressing his religion upon his colonel.

"'Oh, sir!' was the sergeant's reply, 'the eternal happiness of my beloved colonel is at stake! I dare not let him die in unbelief! I would cheerfully die to save his life. I would willingly die to save his soul. And my dear Sir Honorius,' he continued, 'I beg you to take the matter of your own soul's salvation seriously to heart!'

"Well, not to prolong my story, the good sergeant's prayers were answered. At least, he succeeded in his pious efforts to 'convert' his colonel. The 'new birth,' as Clemens called it, came on the night before his death, which occurred several days after his wounding. Sir Flavius fully accepted his sergeant's faith and became a Christian.

“From somewhere in the army—I know not where—Clemens brought one of their ministers or priests, and before myself and the sergeant and several members of his military household, the dying knight was baptized, and confessed his faith in Jesus Christ, and took the sealing rite of their religion, which they call ‘The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.’ ”

“What! my husband died a Christian!” exclaimed the Lady Julia. “You surprise me beyond measure. It seems an incredible story, this that you tell me, Sir Honorius!”

“It is true, on my knightly word, my lady!” was the reply. “And before he died, he secured from me the promise to see you, and tell you all the truth; and to say further, that he left it as his last request that you also accept the Christian faith, and meet him after death, in the Christian heaven, with your son Quintus, and also, as the Christian minister bade him to hope, your deceased daughter. These were his last words, except some warm appeals to me also to become a Christian by committing the salvation of my soul to the Lord Jesus Christ. And now, after all these years, I have kept the promise made to my dying friend. It has relieved my

mind of a great burden, and I am grateful for the happy chance—if it be lawful so to call it—that brought about my meeting with you this day.”

At the close of the story, the Lady Julia was in tears. Prisca was weeping in sympathy. But Quintus seemed to be undisturbed. Indeed, his appearance indicated satisfaction, rather than the reverse. In truth, he was surprised at his own state of mind. Could he have analyzed his feelings, he doubtless would have found that his intercourse with St. John, and his meditations upon the Apostle's words, had gradually been moulding his judgment and emotions so that they were no longer hostile to Christianity.

“Sir Honorius,” at last he said, “would it be proper for me to ask how my father's change of faith and his personal appeals to you affected you? Did you give any weight to them?”

“Your question, centurion,” the knight replied, “is a proper one under the circumstances, and a most natural one. But it is a hard one for me to answer. I do not hesitate to say that I was deeply affected by the incident, and that it made a great change in

my mental attitude towards Christianity. I was not able to think of it as I had done, after I knew that my dearest friend, one whose candor and wisdom I always had highly esteemed, had embraced that religion, and had died in its faith. To be wholly sincere, I was almost persuaded to be a Christian; and that is my present attitude. But I could never quite make up my mind to accept fully, and openly confess the faith. My life has been so intensely busy since then, and my time so strenuously occupied, that I have not been able to give the subject the serious attention which perhaps it requires to reach a decision. But on the whole, I admit I feel favorable—very favorable—toward the religion.”

“What became of the good Sergeant Clemens?” asked Lady Julia. “Though I am not sure that his action in influencing Sir Flavius to be a Christian deserves our approval, I feel that something should be done by us to recognize his personal loyalty and devotion to him.”

“The feeling does you honor, lady,” the knight replied, “but Clemens is beyond the reach either of earthly good or ill.”

“You mean that he is dead!”

“Yes; as he himself would say, he died happily, even gloriously. Our Emperor sent him to the eternal felicities of his Christian heaven through the mouth of lions. He was slain by wild beasts to add zest to one of Domitian’s Roman spectacles, becoming thus a ‘holy martyr.’”

“And that was the public reward reserved for that gallant soldier, and good man, and loyal friend of my noble father!” exclaimed Quintus hotly. “By Jove, it was the act of a ferocious tyrant and brute!”

Sir Honorius sprang to his feet. His face was pallid with excitement. He gazed eagerly around him. He rose, and looked carefully behind a clump of near-by shrubs. When he returned, he said in a low voice, but with great emphasis:

“Young man, that was a speech which easily might have sent you also to the lions. The argus-eyed informers of the Emperor are everywhere. They lie in wait in the most unexpected places to catch the slightest tokens of offense against the person of his majesty. Luckily, no one could have overheard your impetuous and imprudent remark. And it is

safe with me; though, in truth, I risk my own head by withholding it from the imperial police. For the sake of those you love, if not for your own sake, never repeat such an indiscretion under whatever provocation! There are occasions when the most just indignation must be smothered, and its outbreak suppressed. The Roman soldier must learn to await in silence the coming of Divine Justice, which surely will find its lawful victims in due time, though his footsteps may long tarry. There is a time to speak and a time to refrain from speaking; and with us in the imperial service, it is mostly refrain."

Then the knight deftly changed the subject to the foot race and the other incidents of the day. Ere long, Quintus and Prisca rose and went to saunter through the grove in the moonlight, and left the knight and the lady to enjoy—as they did fully—the revival of old friendships, and the reminiscences of old times.

Meanwhile, that mysterious power which the ancients personified as "Cupid," and whose influence no changes of time or creed or condition can alienate from the hearts and

fortunes of human beings, was distilling his subtle potencies upon the grove.

By and by, Quintus and Prisca found a quiet and retired spot where a bench had been opportunely placed and was unoccupied. There they sat down, and soon the centurion claimed and received the reward of his hard-earned victory in the kiss and cordial embrace of his sweetheart. For Prisca, in view of the changed attitude of Lady Julia toward her, felt that at last she might yield, at least for that once, to the importunities of her lover. And when his arm quietly slipped around her waist and drew her to his breast, she did not resist, nor deny the liberty, but gave herself lovingly to his embrace. What maid in the rosy flush of love's first morning, or what matron, remembering her own sweethearting days, will blame her?

Back by the fountain, when the subject of conversation chanced to turn upon the character of Domitian, and the danger of such remarks as the indignant outbreak of her son, the Lady Julia laid her hand gently upon the knight's arm, and in a soft, pleading voice, said:

"Sir Honorius, you will forget his indis-

cretion, will you not? He is a good soldier, loyal to every duty, and for the most part rarely prudent in all things. Promise me, my old friend, that you will protect him by your silence from this one injudicious offense!"

"Lady Julia," the knight responded, lowering his tones to correspond with the lady's, "it was not needed to make this appeal to me. Anything dear to you, and above all your son and the son of my dearest friend, shall be dear and sacred to me. I would die a dozen deaths rather than cause danger to the young man, and bring sorrow to your heart."

Then he drew away the little hand that rested so lightly upon his arm, and covered it with his own strong, sword-broadened palm.

"How small and soft it is!" quoth he. "Too small and weak to carve its way through this hard world without a husband's strength and support!"

And the lady let the little hand nestle in the great one, for a moment or two, ere she withdrew it. "For my dear boy's sake," her thought ran, "I will not grieve him by showing myself offended!"

Ah, a mother's love! Oh, the sly archery

of Cupid! Then the two arose and went through the grove, arm in arm, in search of the young folk; and when they surprised them on the bench in the shady nook, there was no rebuke, nor expression of wonder, but only a smile and quiet word:

“Come, my son, it is time that ladies were indoors; and as we had a strenuous day we should soon retire.”

The two couples moved on through the moonlight into the house, where a gay company greeted them with clamorous talk about the day's sports, ere they went to their rooms for the night.

CHAPTER XIV

A VISIT TO A BIBLIOTHECA

WITH the athletic sports in the Ephesus stadium which followed the foot race and the ball game, this story has no concern. In due time the Gull bore home its passengers and crew. Despite the lack of enthusiasm on the part of Lukon and his friends and their insinuations of detraction, born of the bitterness of defeat, there was a rousing welcome for Quintus at the Patmos landing. The whole village population had come down to the quay. The centurion's company of soldiers was out in force to celebrate their captain's arrival as victor. The citizens, too, felt that in some measure the honor of the victory was shared by them.

Pyrrhos, the son of Philip, divided the public honors with Quintus; for had he not been the hero of the ball game, and thus reflected credit upon Patmos? Indeed, it was then much as it is now, that the victor

in a ball game was, to a considerable part of the community, a hero of the first rank, whose triumphs were not overshadowed by any other. On the whole, it was a great day for little Patmos.

But soon the small community had settled down to its usual humdrum round of simple duties and pleasures. The great Ephesian festival and games had been talked over till the theme became stale and tiresome. Those who had been present had told the stirring events thereof to their less fortunate neighbors until all the island people knew just what had gone on. There had been a brief revival of interest in the Diana worship. Then the tide receded, and once more set toward the little Church of St. John and the Religion of Jesus.

Clearchus continued to grow in spiritual strength and usefulness, and in favor with the Apostle. In his earlier days he had wrought in his father's bibliotheca (or library and bookmaking establishment) as a scribe and assistant librarian; and his knowledge and skill came into good use in the service of St. John. At length he was regularly established with him as amanuensis and private secretary.

He was happy in this service, because he was thus able to be useful to his great benefactor in a work that was highly congenial—the composition of the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel—and which brought him into closer relations with him whom he so greatly loved and venerated, and whose counsels and prayers were so helpful to him.

After his daily round of duty with St. John at the cave, he would go forth for Christian labor among the village folk and the mariners and fishermen; and though the field was small, it was an apt training ground for larger service, and a sphere of present activity for his ardent temperament and restless spirit and intense zeal for his religion.

When, in due time, the work on the Apocalypse was finished, and while that on the Fourth Gospel was still in progress, the Apostle commissioned Clearchus to go to Ephesus and procure eight copies of the book to be made at the Bibliotheca of Pashur, an Alexandrian Jew. With the precious manuscript roll carefully wrapped up, Clearchus left on Philip's vessel, the Gull, which was making one of its occasional voyages to the mainland. Arrived at Ephesus, he took lodg-

ing with the Christian family of Drusiana on Mt. Pion to whom St. John had commended him, and in the morning set out upon his errand.

The house and shop of Pashur was on the main street, not far from the temple; and passing across the columned portico Clearchus came into the atrium, which had been converted into a library room, and served also as a receiving room and office.

Here he was met by the proprietor, a man of sixty, tall and sturdy, but with stooping shoulders which his scholarly habits, no doubt, had induced. His long beard was flecked with gray; and a habit of stroking it with his left hand, and, at times, during excited speech, with both hands, at once arrested attention.

His dark brown eyes and aquiline nose were set upon a face that had once been handsome, and still was attractive amid all the marks of advancing age. An intelligent and benevolent face it was, as of a man of thought and kindly feelings, but withal having the keen aspect of the man of affairs, whose outlook upon the world was not likely to overpass its business conditions and relations.

As Clearchus entered the atrium, with his

manuscript roll under his arm, Pashur at once saw in him a possible customer, and greeted him with a cordial smile and low salaam.

"Peace to thee, my friend!" he said. "Can I be of use to you this morning?"

"The Peace of God be thine also!" was the devout response. "Yes, I have somewhat for you in the way of business, from the Christian Apostle St. John." And therewith he began to unwind the roll which he had brought.

"St. John!" exclaimed Pashur; "I thought he had been exiled some time ago! Indeed I had no idea that he still lived."

"It is true that he was banished to Patmos," said Clearchus. "But, happily for the Church and the world, he still lives, and is able to serve with his pen the Divine Master whom he loves."

"Ahem!" coughed Pashur, as though to clear his throat of some noisome incumbrance, and combed his beard with both hands.

"And I am come from his island prison," Clearchus went on quietly, "where he has been writing this book; and I am commissioned to procure eight fair copies of the same. I am here to see if you can undertake the work, and at what price."

“Doubtless we can do it,” was the book-maker’s response. “And none better, I ween! Let me look at the roll that I may make count of the number of pages.”

He unrolled the scroll to the last page. Then he figured for a few minutes upon a small tablet, with a stylus, and announced what the cost would be.

“It suffices!” Clearchus said. “I will pay the sum which you demand. When can you begin?”

“At once, I believe. But I will go up to the working room and consult with my daughter, who has charge of the publishing department. Amuse yourself here in the library until I return.”

The Jew left, and Clearchus began to look around him. The atrium had been fitted up as a bibliotheca or library; and Pashur, who was a fair type of some modern publishers, and loved books for their contents even more than for the profit of making and selling them, took great pride in his collection. Around the walls were arranged cases (*armaria*) or nests (*nidi*) in which the manuscript rolls that composed ancient books were placed for safe and convenient keeping. These rolls ranged in

breadth from eleven and a half to six and a half inches, and in length from thirty-nine feet to two hundred and sixty-five feet. They were infolded from both ends inward; and one was unrolled by holding it in the two hands and opening it by drawing out and allowing the side already read or consulted to roll up under the left hand, while the right hand drew out the opposite and unread part of the roll.

The continuous roll was divided into pages (*paginae*, Latin; *salides*, Greek) or sections of a convenient width, varying however according to taste, which were written across and downward, much after the fashion of modern printed books. When closed, the rolls were put into bags or coverings, and thrust into their "nests." The edges were smoothed and gilded over or stained red. A label called the *titulus* or index was written on a piece of parchment and attached to the last page of the book, which was pasted upon a wooden plate called the umbilicus (*omphilos*, Greek); hence the expression "ad umbilicum adducere"—to get on to the umbilicus—meant to finish a book. In the center of the room was a rectangular case fitted with nests for rolls after the same style as those along the walls.

Clearchus wandered about the room noting these arrangements, and conning the titles of the various books. He was surprised to recognize in a number of them the titles of books once in his father's library, some of them in his own handwriting. When Pashur appeared, this fact was explained by the statement that these had been bought by him from the person who had purchased his father's library.

"We will be ready to take up your work at once," the bookmaker announced, "beginning to-morrow morning, if convenient to you."

Clearchus retired, taking his precious manuscript with him; and the next day, at an early hour, he returned to the bibliotheca, and was shown at once into a large upper room. A young woman whom Pashur presented to him as his daughter Hannah, sat in an easy-chair placed upon a dais in one corner of the room. She held a crutch in one hand which, as it afterward appeared, she needed for walking, as she was lame. Her face was one of great attractiveness, without being remarkable for beauty. She had large, dark eyes, that now looked out as soft as a wood dove's and again burned with the

kindled intelligence of a keen intellect, or the fire of awakened passion. There were deep dimples in her lower cheeks, which showed when she smiled—not in the affected way of maids who are conscious of such favoring marks of nature, and who force smiles or smirks upon their faces to display them, but in the natural and simple manner of a modest and genuine character, without the least attempt at display. And when she smiled, her parted lips showed teeth of perfect regularity and whiteness.

It was an animated and friendly face that looked up into that of the young man, and responded to his formal greeting. Yet, in repose there was an expression of patient painfulness upon it, that one is apt to note in chronic invalids, and which indicated that her lameness was associated with much suffering, heroically and patiently borne.

“This is the gentleman, my Hannah,” the bookmaker began, “who brings us from the Christian Apostle a volume for copying.”

“How many copies are to be made?” asked Hannah, looking up brightly from her desk, and reaching out a hand for the manuscript that was offered her.

“Eight in all, miss!” Clearchus answered, as he placed the roll in her hand.

“It is in Greek, I see!” Hannah remarked, and read aloud in a clear, sweet voice the opening words. “And it is fairly written, too; as though the amanuensis was not ignorant of his work. I would that we could get the services of so skilled a copyist for my work here!”

Clearchus blushed at the compliment thus unconsciously paid to his own handicraft.

“I thank you, lady!” he said. “For the writing, I must admit, is my own, taken from the holy author’s dictation. I am not seeking employment; but I will be glad to attend the reading, and act as copyist for one volume of the eight, or relieve your reader in dictating from the manuscript.”

“That is a kind offer, good sir,” Hannah remarked, “for in truth, we are short of one writer to-day, one of our best copyists having been kept away by sickness. If you will consent to act in his place for a day or two, it will be a real favor, and we may begin work at once.”

Thereupon the maiden, who heretofore had scarcely more than glanced at Clearchus,

looked upon him steadily. Her face began to redden. Her eyes shone with a strange light, and then dimmed with gathering moisture. She looked long and fixedly into the young man's face, while her hands were clasped nervously upon the desk before her.

"My daughter," at length Pashur said, surprised at this unusual behavior, "the copyists are waiting for your dictation!"

"I crave your pardon for my seeming rudeness!" Hannah said, rallying at once from her abstraction, and taking up the Apostle's roll. "But we have not yet decided upon the quality of paper to use."

"For so sacred a book as this," Clearchus responded, "only the best should be used. Have you the Fauniana?"

"Yes, though not that which is re-made in Rome, but by ourselves, here in Ephesus. But I will warrant that it will be found little if at all inferior to the best Roman-wrought papyrus. As you seem to have some knowledge of papers, here is a sample. Will you look at it?"

Clearchus examined and approved the specimen.

"Then we will to work at once!"

Thereupon Pashur handed to each of the seven scribes who were seated at desks throughout the room, facing Hannah's dais, a blank roll of the chosen style and size. Clearchus also took one, and sat down at the vacant desk.

Then Hannah took up the Apostle's manuscript and began reading slowly and distinctly:

"Apokalypsis Jesou Christou," etc. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass," etc., etc.

As she read, the scraping of eight pens upon the paper arose in the room as the eight writers followed the reading, taking down the Greek text almost as rapidly as dictated. So the work went on with little cessation until noon, when the reader rested, and the scribes put by their pens. Three of them left the place and went out to their own quarters. The remaining four, being slaves, retired to other parts of the house for their luncheon, and for such domestic duties as Pashur, their master, imposed. Clearchus tarried to converse with Hannah.

"Your face has haunted me," he began,

“ever since I saw it this morning. I have met it before, I feel sure; yet I cannot remember where. Is this simply a trick of memory, or is it imagination? Perhaps you can help me out of my mental confusion!”

“I think I can, sir!” was the prompt and cordial reply. “I have changed much since you first saw me, a number of years ago, and I do not wonder that you cannot locate me. I will relate an incident that will aid your memory, I think. One day, on the main street of Ephesus, a runaway quadriga threatened the life of a girl of sixteen. The four horses were running wild. The driver, a servant in charge of his master’s chariot, had lost control of them. They were dashing at full speed down the avenue which the young maid was crossing. She stood paralyzed with fright in the very track of the frantic animals, who would have trampled her underfoot. A cry of horror arose from the throngs on the sidewalk. Among those sauntering carelessly along, was a jovial group of young men. From their midst rushed a tall, sturdy youth, who seized the helpless girl and snatched her almost from beneath the horses’ hoofs. He saved her life; but the chariot wheel struck the

maid's leg as it whirled by, before her rescuer had drawn her wholly from its course, and shattered it. That girl was I; that young man was you, sir! Do you remember it?"

"I do!" exclaimed. Clearchus. "It all comes back to me now!"

Hannah went on with her story: "Moaning with pain, I tried vainly to walk. You took me in your arms, and as tenderly as a father would bear his child, carried me to a near-by physician, where my hurt was treated, and my father was sent for. I was taken home, where I long lay ere my grievous hurts were healed. But I never recovered my health, and have not walked since without my staff. I would indeed be an ingrate were the face of my good, brave deliverer to pass from my memory.

"One thing my father greatly grieved over. In the excitement of the moment the youth who had saved my life disappeared, without leaving his name or residence, or any clue thereto. He hurried away, we afterward learned, apparently wishing to avoid all thanks from us, and all hero-mongering by the crowd who had seen his gallantry, and had gathered around the physician's house.

All our efforts to locate him were in vain, greatly to our grief.

"Once again, sir, I met you. But—I hesitate to remind you of the fact!"

"Go on, miss," said Clearchus encouragingly. "I suspect that I know what you have to tell, and beg you to speak freely."

"I was traveling with my father," Hannah continued, "who was taking a small caravan of books to Antioch. He had provided for me an easy-gaited donkey, which I managed to ride, though not without pain. But I was so eager for the journey that I bore this without complaint. While crossing the mountains, we were stopped by robbers, who brought us before their captain.

"'What is your cargo, sir?' he asked.

"'I carry books, sir!' father answered.

"The captain laughed. 'Books, books!' he exclaimed. 'This is a poor market, man, for such wares. I doubt if there is one in the band save myself who could read one of them. Is that all you carry?'

"'All, but my daughter, sir; a poor, lame maid, who cannot walk. I beg you to be tender with her, for she has been a great sufferer ever since her accident.'

“Then the robber chief looked at me closely. Perhaps he recognized me. ‘How was she hurt?’ he asked. My father told him.

“The captain stood a moment in silent thought. Then he spoke: ‘Come, my merry men! These folk must go toll free. They are friends of mine!’ And he dismissed us with the utmost courtesy; and sent one of his band with us to secure us from further annoyance until we passed beyond his ‘jurisdiction,’ as he called it.

“That robber chief, sir, was yourself, or your counterpart! Coming as you do in the name of the Christian Apostle, I have been confused, and hesitate to decide. But—but—I cannot be mistaken, I fear, though I heartily wish it might be so! I crave your pardon if”——

“Do not distress yourself, lady!” Clearchus interrupted. “You are not mistaken. I grieve to confess that I was that robber. I am glad to have recalled to mind at least one act of kindness to mark those days of criminal folly and outlawry. Thank God, they are forever past! I have been rescued from my wicked course by the good Apostle who wrote this Apocalypse, and I am now trying to lead

a righteous life, and by my Christian virtues and good deeds to help to undo some of the influences of my past wretched career."

"You are a Christian then?" asked Hannah.

"That is my hope, through the grace of my Heavenly Father; and sometime, with your permission, I will tell you the story of my life. Are you a Christian, may I ask?"

"Oh, no! I cleave to the older faith, from which your religion has sprung. But I have some dear friends who hold to that creed, though my father is bitterly opposed to it. I warn you not to enter upon the subject with him, for I fear he may not be so tolerant as I am."

"I thank you for your caution!" said Clearchus, as he rose to retire. "And I will duly heed it!"

CHAPTER XV

A STRENUOUS COURTSHIP

IT was a somewhat notable event for the Patmos people when a strange craft was seen slowly tacking up its long, land-locked harbor, and anchoring at the quay alongside the Gull.

It bore the Roman ensign, and was recognized as an official bark of some sort; and, seeing this, Quintus went down to the shore to inquire into the newcomer's business and quality, and to pay any honors and attention that might be due.

He saw standing on the deck the stately form of Sir Honorius Ahala, and sent back an orderly to the near-by barracks to turn out the whole company to salute so distinguished a military visitor.

"I am military Inspector General of the troops, military posts and works of Proconsular Asia," the knight said, as he landed; "and I have come in due course to your island."

“You are most welcome!” the centurion responded. “Here is my company, and as we did not have the least intimation of your coming, you will find us in our ordinary condition without any attempt to dress up for the occasion.”

“Just what I like!” quoth the knight.

As the men were already drawn up, he proceeded at once to inspect their persons, uniforms and equipments. Then Quintus put them through their military evolutions, in which they proved so agile and accurate that they won the Inspector’s warm commendation. The centurion certainly had the faculty of drilling men into thoroughly disciplined soldiers; and young as he was in the captaincy, he already had won a reputation as a superior drillmaster.

“They move and act like seasoned veterans!” was the knight’s high praise.

“Now to the barracks!” said Sir Honorius; and the knight and the centurion entered the soldiers’ quarters. There is probably no better test of a good officer than the condition in which he keeps the men’s barracks; and herein also Quintus passed inspection without unfavorable comment. On the contrary, when

the men again "fell in," and were passed in review, the Inspector General took occasion to commend them and their officers for the admirable soldierly condition in which he had found their barracks, and which they had shown in all their military bearing and movements.

"Now that business is satisfactorily finished," said the knight, "I will pay my respects to the Lady Julia, your mother!" And so the two walked together to the house.

The midday meal, which was offered and eaten with much gusto, being over, Quintus excused himself on an errand of pressing duty, and left his mother and Sir Honorius to a pleasant tête-à-tête.

"Lady Julia," the knight began, eagerly availing himself of the opportune privacy, "my visit to-day was not wholly to your son, and of a military nature. I have a special errand to yourself. I have thought of you much and earnestly ever since our exciting day together in the stadium, and our quiet evening in the Garden of the Fountain, in Ephesus.

"I have always held you in the highest admiration. Of course, while my friend Sir

Flavius lived, and while my own beloved wife lived, that feeling was kept within the legitimate bounds of a loyal friendship. But conditions have changed with us both. I have come here to say that I now wish and intend to make you my wife!

“Nay, listen to me!” he continued earnestly, as the Lady Julia uttered an exclamation of surprise, and began a remonstrance.

“I am intensely lonely and unhappy. I need some one like yourself to share life and its duties and pleasures, its honors, rewards and cares with me. We have both passed through the romantic period of our lives. We know by experience not only the joys, but the obligations of the married state, and we are better fitted, perhaps, than ever before, to enter upon it with a more intelligent knowledge and purpose to help one another to a happy, honorable and useful career. I offer you my heart, my hand, my home; and I ask you, and hopefully expect you to become my wife!”

The Lady Julia was too wise and too sincere to take on any airs of coyness or coquetry, such as might have been becoming in earlier life. She was a woman of sound

sense, as well as of good taste and warm feelings. She was indeed taken by surprise at the suddenness and blunt directness of this address. But she had mingled much with military men, and knew the frankness of their nature, and was therefore less taken aback by this strenuous mode of wooing. She gave no indication of any special feeling, whether of satisfaction or displeasure, though her face glowed with the pleasure which plainly she felt, and could not well disguise.

“Sir Honorius,” she said, speaking slowly and quietly, but with a voice that quivered with intense emotion, “I am conscious of the honor which you have intended and have done me. I must ask you to consider conditions a little more carefully than you perhaps have done, before it is too late for you to recede from your present wishes. I am no longer a woman of fortune. Sir Flavius left me with a bare living income, and much of my patrimony has been lost. I could add little to the joint sum needed to maintain an establishment such as would become your station and your wife.”

“You may dismiss that objection at once, my lady!” said the knight, rising and taking

a seat upon the divan beside her. "I am not ambitious of display, nor extravagant in my tastes. My ways are plain and soldierly; and by the blessing of Providence and the good will of my parents, I have enough for both of us, to live in a modest but becoming way. It is yourself alone that I am in love with, and whom I seek."

The Lady Julia smiled, and nodded her head as though giving pleased approval. But she quietly withdrew the hand that Sir Honorius had ventured to take, as though the matter were settled.

"Not yet, please!" she said. "There is yet another and greater, if not insurmountable obstacle—my son!"

"Oh, there will be no difficulty there!" exclaimed the knight. "Surely he cannot oppose a union so obviously fitting on both sides! I am confident that he will consent!"

"Possibly, yes!" the lady returned cautiously. "But the difficulty is not alone one of approval of such a match in itself, but one of his own personal comfort and necessities. We live here together. I am necessary to his comfort and happiness. I could not think of leaving him without home or home-keeper in

this secluded island. And surely you, Sir Honorius, would not be willing, even if your duties would permit, to make your home here!"

"I am not sure, my dear lady, what I might be willing to do to secure possession of such a prize as I seek!" the knight answered warmly and with a touch of his stately courtesy.

"But come, now, Lady Julia, dismiss that subject for the nonce, and recall for a moment your own maiden days, when you and Sir Flavius were thinking and planning the natural and divine act of home-building. If I am not much mistaken in my observations of the situation, your Quintus is seriously bent on making a home for himself apart from you, just as were you and Sir Flavius then. And I infer that he has already chosen the lady who will share that home with him.

"We may agree, perhaps, that such an exchange would show bad taste on his part; but it is the manner of young men, and has been since society began, and will be till it shall close in the final chaos. Maids and men have left their parents and their parental homes to begin the work of house-making for themselves; and your son will be no exception.

“He will console himself for his mother’s loss by taking to himself a wife; and indeed that he will do in any event. If your heart inclines to me, as I verily believe it does, I pray you not to sacrifice both your own happiness and mine on grounds so clearly indefensible and impracticable, and so purely sentimental.”

“It may be sentimental, Sir Honorius,” the lady replied, “but it is a sentiment as old as motherhood. It is of the essence of that love which is nearest the divine in human life—the love of a mother for her child.”

“I bow to the sublime truth of your remark,” Sir Honorius rejoined, “and to the force and dignity of your argument, without in the least yielding my purpose before it. I have reserved for my last plea a fact which has come to me in the privacy of official life, and which I give you in strict confidence. A separation from your son is already purposed. At least, I happen to know that his promotion to a higher grade has been planned at army headquarters, with an appointment to a remote field of duty. He will receive orders to leave Patmos, probably for Britain. I was asked to report as to his fitness for the ad-

vance, and the enlarged responsibility. I cannot advise against it. He is in every way worthy of promotion and of service in a larger field. This will make a great change in your life plans. Indeed, the knowledge of this fact first emboldened me to press my plea with you for an early marriage. My dear lady, I will not be denied!"

In the fervor of his emotion, the knight arose, for Lady Julia had already arisen, and put his arms around her, and drew her, unresisting now, to his bosom. She rested her face there for a moment, wet with tears that glistened on her cheeks like drops of April showers upon roses, and then lifted it up with happy consent shining from her eyes. The knight kissed her brow, and then her lips. And so the marriage of Lady Julia Decimus and Sir Honorius Ahala was agreed upon, and the ceremony fixed for the closing week of June.

When Quintus came home, a great surprise awaited him. It was not, however, until the good knight had sailed away that his mother ventured, with much hesitation and heavy-heartedness, to tell him the facts.

Somewhat to her surprise, and possibly

with a touch of disappointment thereat, Quintus took the information without outbreak of grief or vexation, or even marked surprise. He simply took his mother in his arms, as was his wont, and warmly embraced her; and with a slight tremor of voice, the only indication of deep feeling, he said:

“God and the gods bless you, my mother! I congratulate you with all my heart on such a worthy and advantageous alliance, and wish you a renewal of the happiness which you so richly deserve, and are so capable of giving! But”—the tones softened and grew more tender and with an added tremor therein—“but—what—will your Quintus do without you?”

Lady Julia did not try to suppress her emotion. She threw her arms around the centurion’s neck, and wept.

“O my boy! My dear, dear boy!” she sobbed through her tears. “That reflection was the bitterest part of this strange proposal! The thought grievously wrenches my heart. Yet—I do not forget—that you have—Prisca!” The last words came out with a little choking sob.

“Yes, mother dear,” the centurion re-

joined, as he kissed her brow, and smoothed her still brown hair. "Yes, I have Prisca! And I am grateful to the gods and to you for such a love as hers. But I do not forget that though the gods in their great bounty may grant to mateless men more than one wife, none can have more than one mother! Many good mothers there have been and there are in the Roman world, O my mother, but thou excellest them all!"

Again he kissed her brow, and then led her to a seat, where she sat at his side with his arms around her, and wept happy tears, for such indeed there are! It was a sadly sweet hour to her! The sweetness lay in the knowledge of possessing the deep filial love of this stalwart, soldierly son; and that other love, so different, yet not sweeter nor stronger, of a man of such generous nature, and noble character, and sterling worth as the knight to whom she had just pledged a wifely affection. The sadness lay in the thought of the ties that so long had bound her closely to her boy, and which must be loosened so soon—loosened, not lost! No, never that!

Soon she arose, and as the hour for the evening meal had come, she took her son's arm

and walked with him to the supper room. But before they sat down to eat, she sent her maid to bid Prisca come in at once and sup with her and Quintus. And Prisca came, putting aside all formality; and this eventful day closed with an eventful night. For, before Prisca returned home, it was agreed that, her parents consenting, her marriage with Quintus should be celebrated at the same time as that of Lady Julia and Sir Honorius.

Sweet was the sleep and pleasant were the dreams which on that bright May night visited mother and son and the maiden fair, who slept in adjoining houses, separated only by a party wall. And when they awoke in the fresh, bright morning, it seemed to them all that a new, fair world had dawned upon them, and that life had never been rosier, or better worth living.

CHAPTER XVI

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS ON THE CHRISTIAN WAY

WITHIN two weeks of the visit of Sir Honorius to Patmos, Quintus received notice of his promotion to a majority, as the advance might be characterized, with orders to report for assignment of duty to the Proconsular office at Ephesus. The Gull was soon in motion toward the mouth of the Cayster; and without making known the change in his prospects to any save his mother and Prisca, he left the harbor. After arriving at the Panormus, he reported at once to his friend and patron the military tribune, Caius Proculus. As this officer, apart from his personal esteem and friendliness for Quintus, was richer by many sesterces in winnings on his victory in the foot races, he received the centurion most complacently, and at once granted his request to delay his departure for his new station until after his intended marriage. The request was all the more graciously allowed because of the

influence of Sir Honorius Ahala, and his personal relations to the matter, which he already had made known at headquarters.

“But I must insist,” the tribune added, “that you be relieved of your command in Patmos at once. Your successor is named, and is now here; and I wish you to take him back with you, and see that he is favorably received and inducted into command. He has been especially commended by the Emperor.”

So back went Quintus, taking with him the new centurion, Julius Servilius, who had recently come from Rome, and was reputed to be a favorite and confidant of Domitian. He was a man of about the age of Quintus; of medium size, slightly built, but with a remarkable development of muscular power, which had made him somewhat famous as a military athlete.

He was conspicuous on account of his bright red hair, that stood up bristling around his head; his fair, freckled skin and a pair of small, foxy eyes, restless and keen, that swiftly passed from one object to another without lingering long upon any. His bearing was frank enough and soldierly; but it seemed rather an assumed than natural frankness, the

forced product of design, rather than the spontaneous expression of habitual character.

As Quintus addressed him in his cordial way, tempered by a gracious courtesy, his first observation was that Julius glanced at him keenly for a moment, as though to search him through and through, and then quickly turned his eyes away as if he could not long endure a straightforward, manly look. But as Quintus was in the mood to be pleased with everybody and everything that was reasonably prepossessing, he dismissed his first impression, and gave himself to an earnest effort to be agreeable, and to aid the new officer with all the information that might tend to make his position easier.

Centurion Julius was not very responsive; though he soon showed a remarkable fund of curiosity, that sent him in quest of the most trivial details of life and character. In an adroit and insinuating way, without seeming to be inquisitive, he managed to get a knowledge of every person of any consequence upon the island. He was most inquisitive about the Christian colony, especially St. John; and casual remarks dropped, and the general tone

of his queries, raised in Quintus' mind the fear that these good people would not fare so well under the new administration as they had done with him. As he had become warmly attached to the Apostle, to Lady Æmilia and Sylvia, to Clearchus, Rufus and Phoebe and some others, this new development and possibility caused him much concern.. However, he was of a hopeful turn of mind; and so, having done his best to remove what appeared to be an ill-founded prejudice against Christians in Julius' mind, he sought to dismiss the subject.

On the whole, the new officer appeared to improve on acquaintance, and his demeanor was so agreeable that on the morrow, when Quintus formally turned over his command, he was inclined to give his successor something more than mere official commendation to the soldiers, for many of whom he had formed a sincere regard.

No sooner had the authority been fully vested in Julius, than his attitude toward Quintus underwent a marked change. Cordiality gave way to cold propriety, and although the former commander had become the superior in rank, he was made to feel that

his official authority in Patmos as governor had ceased.

It was soon manifest in many quarters that a new régime had begun. The man seemed possessed with a demon of jealous contrariness. That Quintus had favored a person or a policy was sufficient reason in itself to condemn the same.

The good Apostle was among the first to feel the change. The bearing of the new centurion toward him was so supercilious and offensive that he had well nigh involved himself in an open quarrel with Quintus. The gentle old man quieted the hot temper of his young friend.

"Come, my child," he said, "let us remember the spirit and teachings of our Divine Lord and Saviour. It is forever true that 'Blessed are the meek and the poor in spirit, and the peacemakers.' And love is always the chief defense of the Christian. It may be that Heaven sends this man to me as a trial of my own patience and grace, and as an object of my loving endeavor for his salvation."

"It may be so, holy father!" said Quintus. "But as the Christian's obligations to your rules of action have not yet been assumed by

me, I am strongly moved to deal with the man after the manner of the secular and the unbeliever, and ply him with an argument that he will better understand than your methods of meekness, forbearance and love."

"Not so, my friend!" the Apostle rejoined. "It will be found surely that the Master's way in the end is the better: when reviled to revile not again; when smitten on one cheek to turn the other also."

"Well, reverend sir, I might be persuaded to do that," Quintus replied, "but having complied with the letter of the law, I would be disposed to administer discipline after the manner of the man's just deserts. For, if I may be so bold as to suggest it, justice is a Divine attribute as well as mercy and forgiveness; and there are occasions when it must have its due expression in our human life. If it is becoming in the apostle and priest to plead for mercy, it is surely meet that the soldier should stand for justice."

"But you must not become involved in a dispute or embroiled in a quarrel over aught that concerns me!" the Apostle insisted.

So the upshot of the argument was that St. John had his way, and Julius continued

his petty annoyances and persecutions, and soon had the island community in a ferment. All this was in such marked contrast with the tolerant, courteous, genial but firm and manly methods of his predecessor, that among soldiers and citizens alike, an atmosphere of suppressed indignation and scarcely suppressed antagonism lay thick upon the tempers of the Patmos populace.

Happily for St. John's peace of mind, Clearchus was in Ephesus on the business of getting copies of the Apocalypse for the Seven Churches of Asia. Had that high-spirited young man been present with Quintus, there would have been no telling to what length their joint indignation might have gone, or what sort of protests they might have been led into, with possible breaches of Christian peace and quiet.

The one bright feature of this trying period was the opportunity which Quintus had for meetings with Prisca, under the cordial approval of Lady Julia. Over the joy of these sweethearting days there was not a cloud. The happiness of the young couple was so deep and sweet that their cup seemed to be full.

One day, Sylvia suggested to Prisca, "Surely, this is a fitting time to show forth your sense of the Divine Goodness by publicly confessing your Saviour!"

Prisca, who had long pondered the matter, laid this appeal to heart, and after due conference with the Apostle, and with the full consent of her parents, she was baptized in the little Church of St. John, on the following Lord's Day morning. Neither Quintus nor Lady Julia had offered opposition or objection, and both were present at the rite, and joined Sylvia and others in congratulations given to the fair convert at the close of the service.

Quintus and Prisca walked homeward by way of the harbor beach, a favorite path for their sauntering in these spring days; and their communings were both sweet and deep. When the walk ended, Quintus found himself well nigh confirmed in his half-formed purpose to embrace the Christian faith, as his ladylove had done. Indeed, Prisca's act made a marked impression on the island populace, and for a week or more the venerable Apostle was kept busy, in what to him was most delightful service, directing inquirers into the way of Life through Jesus Christ, and instructing

them in the doctrines and duties of the Christian religion.

Into the midst of these scenes of holy Christian peace, there came one of those strange turns of Providence that have so often befallen Christians, and which have led souls in all ages to wonder and fear if the guidance of human affairs may not, for the moment, have been permitted to drop from the hand of God into that of some malign power. There is much in history to encourage an honest belief in the being and occasional dominance of that old-fashioned character known as—the Devil!

A fortnight after the events of the last Lord's Day in Patmos, the Gull, which had sailed on a special errand with Centurion Julius and citizen Lukon on board, returned to port. Therewith came Sir Honorius to celebrate his nuptials with Lady Julia; and an officer from the military tribune at Ephesus on a very different sort of errand. This officer bore to Quintus a letter which ran as follows:

“Major Quintus Flavius Decimus:

“Sir: It becomes my duty, on orders from

an imperial representative, to hereby place you under arrest. You are charged with 'atheism' or hostility to the gods; and with disloyalty to his imperial majesty, by disregarding or qualifying the commands of Cæsar, in dealing with those under his condemnation with undue lenity. In particular you are charged with tolerating the errors and oppositions of one known as the 'Apostle John,' whom you have countenanced and aided in his unlawful teachings and acts. Indeed, you are suspected of and charged with cherishing the treasonable beliefs and practices of the outlawed sect known as Christians; and you are hereby ordered to report at once to this office for deportation thence for trial at Rome. Your orders for the new station and command in Britain are revoked. The bearer hereof is charged with the prompt executions of these orders.

"Caius Proculus,
"Military Tribune."

Had a thunderbolt fallen upon him out of the unclouded ether, Quintus could not have been more astounded than at this cruel cast of fate. All his fond hopes were withered

thereby. Love, honor, ambition, professional pride—all the fair prospects of his bright young life were blighted by this adverse turn of destiny.

“What shall I do?” he cried, turning to Sir Honorius. “I have the written permission of the military tribune to wait here until my marriage!”

“This order being dated after that, takes precedence thereof,” was the reply. “You must go at once, taking only needful time to settle up your affairs. The charge is a grave one, and is likely to have serious results. You must not aggravate your offense by delay in obedience.”

“So, then, it shall be!” returned Quintus, turning to the messenger. “I am ready to go back with you. When do you sail?”

“To-morrow.”

“And until then,” Sir Honorius said, “I will be answerable for the prisoner, and will return him to the vessel.”

“Nay; let him come to our house as a guest with yourself!” Quintus interposed. “The Lady Julia, my mother, will be glad to entertain him.”

So it was arranged; and sad as were most

hearts in that hospitable mansion—and indeed in all the neighboring community, throughout which the news had swiftly run—the evening passed away not unpleasantly; at least without undue outward demonstration of grief.

Quintus promptly paid a visit to the Apostle, and told him of his misadventure. St. John listened with keen interest to the tale. He knew too well the gravity of the situation not to comprehend the serious, even the fatal possibilities of the charges which his young friend would have to meet before Emperor Domitian's tribunals in Rome.

“I deeply regret,” he said, “that your kindness to me should have had anything to do with this disaster. But, my son, it is true that all things work together for good to the true lovers of God and His righteousness. In some way, which we cannot now know, but which the Heavenly Father has foreseen and in due time may reveal to you, He will bring forth a blessing out of this seeming evil.

“Nay, even now it may come to you! I counsel you at once to yield your heart up to your Saviour in obedient love. I have often done so before, without securing your assent. May it not be that this has been permitted

to come upon you, so to hedge about your path that you shall be shut in to the way of faith unto salvation through Jesus Christ?

“You have long been doubting, hesitating, ‘almost persuaded.’ Choose now the better part! Take Jesus with you to the contest and trial before you! You will need Him to support you in the perils which you are to face. Let us kneel together here, and while I pray, do you pray also, and devote yourself in heart to Him who loves you supremely, who died for your salvation, and who wills to redeem you wholly from sin and eternal death.”

So there the two men, the strong youth and the venerable man of many years, the Roman centurion and the Christian Apostle, kneeled upon the floor of the cave, and while St. John prayed aloud, Quintus made the internal act of consecration. When he arose from his knees his face shone, his eyes were moist but radiant with that new light which surely follows the new birth of a soul.

“With God’s good help,” he cried, “I will go forth to confess my new Master freely and boldly! I here devote myself to Him, if you deem me worthy of His acceptance. May He receive me! And if it be His good

pleasure that I should witness with my life to my new religion, may I have grace to be faithful even unto death! Bless me, O my father in the Gospel, ere I go hence!"

He knelt again at the Apostle's feet, and the holy man, spreading his hands above him, broke forth into this monologue and blessing:

"Beloved child, born into the Kingdom and faith of Jesus the Christ, through the word of my Truth, by the Spirit of God, the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. Go forth to thy duty and thine appointed way, firm in the assurance that whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God. And whosoever is begotten of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith!"

Then, laying both hands upon the young man's bowed head, with tearful eyes and trembling voice through which there ran a quavering note of joy, he blessed him:

"God, the Father Almighty, by whom are all things, bless thee and keep thee; the presence and power of Jesus Christ, the only begotten from the Father, full of Grace and

Truth, abide with thee; and the Holy Spirit, who is the Comforter, give thee strength and peace and joy in believing and witnessing for the Truth! Amen.”

Then, as Quintus arose, the holy Apostle stooped and kissed him; and lifted up his voice and wept as the youth he loved went forth from the lamp-lit grotto on the hill-side, which, alas, he greatly feared he might see no more!

CHAPTER XVII

THE POWER OF THE MESSIANIC PLEA

THE incidents which Hannah had brought to the remembrance of Clearchus at once wrought a bond of kindly feeling between the two. This was shared by Pashur, the father, whose strongest passion was his love of his daughter. Her partly helpless condition awakened his tenderest sympathy, and her keen and vigorous mind commanded his admiration and secured his intellectual fellowship. Her relations with him were indeed quite as much those of a friend and companion as of a daughter.

These qualities also operated, along with the romantic adventures that had first brought them together, to awaken in Clearchus an unusual interest in the bibliopole's daughter. On her part, Hannah had long cherished the memory of the handsome face and generous act of the youth who had saved her life at the risk of his own, until they had uncon-

sciously formed within her the germ of an emotion bordering upon a tenderer one than mere gratitude.

It was the one romance of her broken life, which she had cherished as something bright that had once burst upon her path, and then vanished. And now, in this unexpected way it had come back to her! The manly and winning personality of Clearchus, softened by his Christian experience, did much to vitalize this reawakened sentiment.

Clearchus, too, was strongly interested in the fair Jewish maid, whose sprightly intellect and well-informed mind commanded his respect, while her crippled condition aroused his pity and sympathy. It was therefore inevitable that before the work of copying the Apocalypse was finished, and before either was aware of the fact, they were both entangled in the meshes of a growing love.

They walked out together, Hannah aided greatly by Clearchus' strong and helpful arm, first of all to the locality of that accident in which they had first met; then, here and there, in the beautiful parks and streets of Ephesus, where always seats might be found

to rest the maiden's weakened limb and give the incipient lovers a place for private talk. One subject was sure to come up at such times—the claims of the Christian religion; and as this was one in which Clearchus had been instructed by the Apostle John, he was well able to meet the objections and queries of the keen-witted Israelitish maid.

Nevertheless, Clearchus deemed it wise, and at last won Hannah's consent to visit the Christian Bishop Timothy, who had long been established in Ephesus through the influence of St. Paul, who had laid the foundations of the Church in that city; or rather had built the Church upon the foundations rudely laid by the eloquent Alexandrian Apollos. Timothy received them with great cordiality; and after several visits, in which the Biblical arguments for the Messianic character of Jesus Christ were thoroughly gone over, Hannah professed herself convinced, and decided that, with her father's consent, she would profess her faith in Jesus as the true Messiah of Israel and the Spiritual Saviour of all men.

"This is indeed a trial which lies before me!" she said, as she hobbled home with

Clearchus. "I know how sorely my father will be grieved. It will be a hard strain upon his pride to see his only child give up the Church of her fathers, to join the despised sect of the Nazarenes, though his love for me, I am sure, will not be weakened. I much fear, however, that his anger may be visited upon you as the instrument of my change of faith."

"Well, I have borne worse trials than that in my Master's cause," said Clearchus. "And your father has always impressed me as a man of open mind. I therefore hope for the best. But let us unite our prayers that the Holy Spirit of God may so possess his spirit and incline his heart, that he will give candid hearing and heed to the same truths that have convinced you."

"Oh, but we never could persuade him to go to Pastor Timothy to be instructed by him!" Hannah exclaimed.

"Nor need we wish to do so," was the response. "Indeed, the argument will come with greater power and likelihood of conviction from your own lips. Paternal love will be a mighty factor in adding force to the authority of Holy Scripture. Depend upon

it, he will listen to you when he would not to another, even to St. John himself."

So, then, it was agreed to leave the delicate duty of dealing with her father's deeply rooted prejudices and long-established views to Hannah herself. She seized an opportunity when Pashur was in a most favorable mood by reason of some special business success.

"Dearest father," she began, "you know that two of my closest friends, Mary and Martha of Philo, are devout Christians; and how lovely they are in their lives, and how gentle and attractive in their manners."

"It is true!" he responded; "and I often have wondered thereat. But then, you must remember that they were brought up in the synagogue, and have had all the advantage of the mellowing influence of the faith and ways of Israel upon their early life."

"No doubt that has had great weight, and it would be wrong to undervalue it," the maid returned. "But justice and truth require that we should allow due influence to the new doctrines; or, perhaps, I should rather say the new views of the old doctrines, for that is chiefly what Christianity seems to be."

“Well, my child, it can matter little to us what view is taken of the matter!” Pashur said.

“But, father dear, it does matter!” Hannah replied. “Listen to me, and do not give way to vexation or anger! You have taught me that the inner light of the soul, conscience, ought to be our sovereign guide in all matters of doctrine and duty. That I heartily believe; and following your teaching, I have thought it my duty to look carefully and critically into the Christian doctrines; and so doing, have found them other than I had long believed.”

Pashur sprang to his feet, and began combing with his fingers his long beard, as was his wont under great excitement.

“I beg you to be calm, my father, and to be seated, and to listen as becomes the true philosopher you are! I assure you that I have abandoned no essential doctrine that you have taught me. Indeed, I think I am a better daughter of Israel than ever. The great and holy Law given by Moses upon the Mount; the history of the fathers and its lessons; the grand moral truths and predictions of the prophets; the poetic and spiritual beauty

and inspiration of the Psalms—not one of them have I given up or intend to abandon. Nay, I see in them all a force and beauty that I never before suspected. The manner of their fulfillment and embodiment in the great Prophet of Galilee has brought them to me with new light and meaning, as they came lately to my friends, and as they came originally to the Disciples of Jesus the Christ. Will you hear me, my father?”

The old man had been walking the room rapidly, stopping abruptly at intervals, racking his beard, wringing his hands and uttering impatient cries mingled with sighs and groanings. At last he sat down, and with enforced composure exclaimed:

“I will, I will; Jahveh help me! Go on; I will listen! Alas, that it should come to this! O my daughter, the pride of my heart, the hope of my life! Ichabod, Ichabod—the glory has departed! I called thee Hannah—‘Grace’; I should have called thee Marah—‘Bitter.’ But go on! I will listen!”

“Well, my father,” Hannah began, her voice trembling with sympathetic grief and nervous fear, “I am but a babe in the new Wisdom, and I pray Heaven to guide me

aright! I may say at first that the point which had the chief influence on my mind, is the striking manner in which the ancient prophecies concerning the Messiah have been fulfilled in the Prophet of Nazareth. You believe in the coming of the Anointed One, my father, I know, for you have taught me to expect Him, and to pray for His coming to redeem Israel from her long bondage."

"Assuredly I do, my child! And could I be persuaded that the Nazarene Prophet is the Christ—the Messiah, as His disciples claim,—I would be bound to give Him my allegiance.

"That was the claim of their chief heresiarch, Saul of Tarsus, a man learned in the law, a keen intellect and subtle logician, and a plausible reasoner. I withstood him in the synagogue when he taught his Nazarene heresy here years ago. And now—— But—but proceed! I would know what could so move your judgment as to lead a maid of your intelligence and training to embrace Christianity!"

"Well, then, you must know that Christians believe in the promised Messiah as firmly as you do. They accept all the Old Scriptures

that are sacred to us. Only they hold, as Jesus taught them, that the kingdom for which the Messiah was to be Anointed is, and was intended to be a spiritual kingdom; not one of mere earthly power and appointments. They find the first proof of this in what they call the 'Protevangelium'—the promise of Jahveh after the sin of Eden, that the Seed of the woman should bruise the Serpent's head; that is, that the Messiah's mission would be to tread down Satan's kingdom and power, and build up a kingdom of Truth and Righteousness."

"I see nothing particularly objectionable in that view," Pashur remarked, "though it is not what our rabbis have been wont to teach. But I wish not to interrupt or argue—Go on!"

"The first point that really arrested my attention and staggered my confidence," continued Hannah, "was the explanation by the Chief Pastor, Timothy, of the passage in the prophetic blessing of the Patriarch Jacob (Genesis 49:10): 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the obedience of the peoples be!' Shiloh we

have held to be but another name for the Messiah"——

"That is right, Hannah, quite right!" Pashur interjected.

"—— for whose coming we so long have looked. But it seems plain, now, that it must refer—if we hold it for truth at all—to some one in history now past. For it is certain that the ruler's staff has departed from Judah. Every shadow of our national authority has vanished. Our nation, as a nation, is scattered; our national organization has disappeared, utterly swallowed up in that of the Roman Empire. Even our capital city is blotted from the face of the earth. If Shiloh had not already come before these events, the prophecy falls to the ground. Hence, Christians declare its fulfillment necessarily in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. To this view they claim that the meaning of the word Shiloh—'the Man of Peace'—lends itself. The mission of Messiah was not to be one of war—physical violence,—but one of peaceful conquest of heart and life. Such was the teaching of Jesus, though His disciples did not at first so discern it, but took the common Jewish view that their Messiah would be a mighty

King and World-Conqueror of the ordinary type."

"But, my child," said Pashur, who had been silent, but vigorously racking his beard, "the Messiah of our Scriptures is surely to be a Great King, an Anointed Ruler, seated on the Throne of David. And the Nazarene Prophet perished on the cross, condemned thereto alike by the authority of Rome and of His own people. How could you get over this marked discrepancy between the Messianic theory and the facts in the case?"

"That was my greatest difficulty, I confess, until I was pointed to the prophecies, and caused to study them closely. Take for example the remarkable prophecy in Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12, that depicts the Servant of Jahveh, the Messiah of the prophets, as a sufferer 'despised and rejected of men.' Indeed, if you will go over this Isaian record carefully, in detail, as I did, you will be surprised to see how closely it corresponds with the character, sufferings and death of Jesus, and with the Christians' claims that He was a true offering to make atonement for us. 'He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of

our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to His own way; and Jahveh hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all.' Indeed, in the Christian view, all the sacrifices and offerings of the ancient law were fulfilled in the death of that suffering Messiah, our Substitute and Sacrifice of infinite worth, once made for all, and for all time. It is for this reason that in their worship they have no bloody sacrifices. All such demands, once binding under the ancient law, have been forever fulfilled in the Great Sacrificial Death on Calvary. Get down the roll, father, and let us read this wonderful prophecy together."

For a while, the two bent over the sacred roll, while Pashur slowly read in the original Hebrew, the Isaian prophecy.

"It never struck me in this light before!" at length he said. "This does seem to be a close picture of the closing days of Jesus of Nazareth."

"Now unroll the parchment at the Book of Micah (5: 2-5) and see how the prophecy of the Messiah's birth was also fulfilled in Jesus," said Hannah.



The two bent over the sacred roll while Pashur slowly read in the original Hebrew the Isaian prophecy.

Pashur found the place, and read: "*But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall One come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.*"

"We can hardly doubt that this passage refers to the Messiah," said Hannah, "for our Sanhedrin so interpreted it to King Herod, in his time. Now it is well known that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, of the tribe of Judah, of the lineage of King David. Here also our Hebrew Scriptures have their fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth."

Thus the interview ran on, covering the old-time arguments by which Christianity won its way among multitudes of Jewish priests and laymen in the first century, leading them to accept Jesus as the Christ of prophecy, the Mediatorial Prophet "like unto Moses"; the Sacrificial and Atoning Saviour, the Suffering Servant of God, of Isaiah, in whom were fulfilled once and for all, all the sacrificial requirements of the Mosaic Law.

It is needless to make here a fuller record of that eventful night's heart-to-heart spiritual contest between the old and the new. Let it

suffice that at its close, the rock-ribbed prejudices of Pashur were shaken. Subsequent days of earnest and prayerful study of the Scriptures persuaded him that the best type of Judaism was the Christianity of the Apostles and Disciples of the Prophet of Nazareth. By degrees, through conference with the Chief Pastor or Bishop, Timothy, he was strengthened in the Faith, so that at last he stood up with his daughter to profess the new views of the old religion, and be baptized thereinto as a sign of his conversion.

While his daughter Hannah was the chief instrument in bringing about this change, the influence of Clearchus was also active. That Pashur was indebted to this man for the life of his daughter, went for much. How could he refuse to consider with tolerance and respect the views of a person to whom he owed the very existence of her who was dearest to him of all things? Moreover, the spiritual experience of Clearchus was so striking, as deeply to impress the judgment of Pashur. Perhaps also, a growing attachment between the two young people, which soon began to appear to the parent's keen eyes, may have had some weight in the final decision. But

beyond all these secondary influences, and overriding all, was the power of the Spirit, sealing home the truth upon a heart which the Lord had opened.

Pashur's espousal of Christianity produced a profound effect in the Jewish and Christian community of Ephesus, as well as upon many of the literary class among the Greeks and Romans, to whom the bibliopole was favorably known.

It fell to the lot of these three disciples to bear witness to their faith in the arena of the Circus Maximus of Rome, which thus came about: A festival to Diana of the Ephesians was observed with such glaring features of immorality, breaking over even the wonted bounds of impropriety, that Timothy felt it his duty to make public protest, rebuking in the Name of Christ, and of all goodness and purity, such unrighteous proceedings, all the more blameworthy because wrought so publicly, and under the auspices of so-called religion. Their contrast with the austere morals of Christians was sufficiently manifest, to the great credit of the latter.

These truths, so plainly and forcefully exhibited, aroused the fanaticism of the pagan

mob, composed largely, it is probable, of just such a constituency as, under the agitation of Demetrius the silversmith, broke out into riot against the Apostle Paul during his ministry. Unhappily, Timothy had no such order-loving Asiarch as came to St. Paul's aid in the Ephesian theater, and the mob rushed upon the Christian bishop, and beat him to death with clubs.

In the general outbreak and uprising against Christians which followed, a number of the Ephesian Church were arrested. Among these were Pashur, who had been elected a deacon on the recommendation of the bishop, and Hannah his daughter, and Clearchus who then happened to be in the city, on service as a messenger to the churches of Asia from the Apostle John.

These three, as special objects of popular hostility, were hurried off to Rome for trial and exposure in the arena.

Before this time, it may be added, Hannah had become the affianced bride of Clearchus, with the full approval of her father. He could deny her nothing upon which her heart was set, and indeed was glad that he could entrust his lame daughter to the loving care

of such a stalwart and worthy young man. Moreover, as Clearchus was well fitted to take up the thriving business of the bibliotheca, which he must soon lay down by reason of his advanced years, this proposed union with his only daughter seemed to be a happy Providence. The arrest and expulsion to Rome, and the breaking up of all these hopeful plans was a severe trial to the faith of this new convert to the religion of Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER XVIII

CHRISTIANOS AD LEONEM

BY one of those favorable allotments in our career that befall us as Christian women and men, Quintus was placed upon the same transport that carried Pashur, Clearchus and Hannah to Rome. Their converse by the way, their study of Scripture, their gleanings from other Christians, going to Rome from sundry colonies, concerning the progress of Christ's kingdom in their parts, their prayers and psalms and hymns, and their spiritual conferences, all greatly strengthened their faith, and filled them with courage for the trial before them.

The judicial trial in Rome was a brief one, with some parade of fairness and regard for the letter of the law, but with the inevitable foredoomed result that Quintus, Clearchus, Pashur and Hannah were all condemned as "atheists and opposers of Cæsar's will," to be cast to the lions in the arena of the Circus Maximus as a part of a public spectacle.

The venerable appearance and learning of Pashur, the beauty and misfortune of his maimed daughter, the manly and handsome vigor and dignity of Clearchus, the moral purity and exemplary lives of all, availed nothing in their behalf. The fine soldierly record of Quintus, which was testified to by no less a personage than Sir Honorius Ahala, was equally without effect before the tribunal. Even the fact that he was a distant kinsman of the Emperor (lacking the imperial influence to support the fact) only added piquancy to the condemnation, and gave a seeming of judicial impartiality without in the least relaxing the purpose to send him to death, as was done in the case of Domitian's Christian cousin, Flavius Clemens.

A psychic epidemic of social and religious prejudice and passion had pervaded the community, which unconsciously affected even the judges upon the bench. So sentence was pronounced condemning all the party to be publicly destroyed by wild beasts, and the four were sent to the cells of the Circus Maximus to await an early infliction of the sentence.

At last the day of execution arrived. It

was a high holiday in Rome, for a number of Christians were to be exposed in the arena of what was perhaps one of the most magnificent structures in the Roman world. In form it was substantially like that of the Ephesian Circus, which has already been described, but was vastly superior to it in size, and in the beauty and cost of its appointments. There were rich oriental marbles and mosaics, rows of statues on the *spina* in Italian marble and in bronze, costly metal screens, Egyptian obelisks, and sculptured seats for officials of high rank, and the Emperor's gorgeous *pulvinar* or cushioned throne. All these were objects of highest value, and artistic and architectural taste and skill.

Its monstrous size may be judged of by the fact that it seated two hundred and fifty thousand persons. On the day fixed for the execution of the Christians, every seat was occupied. The immense concourse, within its marble setting, was in itself a spectacle of rare interest, embracing, as it did, the rank, authority, courage, power, wealth, learning, culture and beauty of a world-empire, in all their bravery of rich array. The mighty throb of such a mass of excited

humanity was felt like the shock of an electric battery. Only a gladiatorial combat, a chariot race, or the exposure of Christians to the lions, could have brought together such an assemblage, even in spectacle-loving Rome.

At last, the great iron door into the prison quarters was thrown open, and, conducted by armed guards, the little group of our four friends walked out. Apparently undisturbed by the sudden issuance into the glare of the open day, and the presence of such a multitude, they advanced quietly toward the center of the arena, Quintus in the lead, Pashur following with Hannah, limping upon her crutch, and Clearchus in the rear, the guards being on either flank.

A great silence fell upon the spectators, made more impressive by the number present, and in contrast with the hum of many voices, like the roar of the sea surf, which had preceded it. All eyes were strained upon the group of victims who moved toward the arena's center, escorted by the guard of soldiers and their centurion.

Then the roar of voices broke out again, rolling round the amphitheater, along the lofty rows of benches, as the people uttered

to seat-mates and neighbors their opinions of the condemned: the beauty and lameness of the maiden, the venerable appearance of her father, the splendid physique and vigorous manhood of the young men. But not a sign or a syllable of pity! There were indeed a few in the multitude—as afterward appeared—who were tenderly affected toward them. But of all those more than two hundred thousand spectators, there were probably not five individuals who then and there would have turned their thumbs to save the victims from death, and thus deprive themselves of their expected holiday pleasure. Such was pagan Rome!

Now the guards retired from the arena, leaving the group of Christians standing alone in the center. Hark! What is that sound? Is it the opening growl of the unloosed lion? No! It is the Christians at prayer! The deep, strong voice of Quintus is leading them in a petition to their Heavenly Father, in the Name of Jesus their Redeemer, that He may receive their spirits into the Eternal Home of believing souls.

Out from the midst of the seats reserved for the military, there came a single voice

echoing with a sounding "Amen!" the response of the martyr band. It was that of Sir Honorius Ahala, who, though not a professed Christian, was in warm sympathy with Quintus and his friends. Beyond a small circle of surprised soldiers, it was almost unheard in that crowd, but the speaker was near enough to the martyrs to be heard by them; and that single utterance fell upon their ears like an angel's word out of Heaven, in answer to their prayer. It strengthened their faith and courage; and, lifting up her voice, Hannah began in a clear, sweet treble, a hymn of Christian praise. It was a version of the Ninety-first Psalm of the Hebrew psalter, a favorite source of comfort and spiritual strength amid those days of persecution, and to multitudes ever since. Quintus and Clearchus joined in the psalm with their strong tenor voices, and Pashur with his deep but quavering bass.

Every ear in the tiers of seats was bent down to listen as the strange, sweet notes rose up, softened by the distance, but rising bold and clear, rather like a song of victory than a death song. Thus the song ran:

BENEATH GOD'S WINGS.

My Father-God, I trust in Thee;
My Refuge, Thou, to Thee I flee!
Within Thy secret place I bide,
Secure, when trusting by Thy side.

Safe 'neath His pinions thou shalt be;
His brooding wings shall shelter thee,
Safe from the terror of the night
And from the arrow's deadly flight!

A thousand at thy side may die,
Ten thousand dead around thee lie,
But still unscathed thy life shall be
For God's own shield shall compass thee!

A loud clang broke upon the melody. It was the iron door of the wild beasts' cage thrown back by the attendant slaves. Every eye was fixed upon the cavernous opening, out of which rushed a huge lion.

"Leones, leones! the lions, the lions!"

The cry of the populace ran round the amphitheater. Many arose upon their seats and leaned forward for a better look. The gaze of the Christians, too, was turned toward the open cage. They saw the fierce beast spring forth, but their song went on. Not a note was dropped. Not a tone trembled.

His angels shall beset thy days,
To keep thee safe in all thy ways.
Their hands shall safely bear thee on,
And lift thee o'er each stumbling stone.

The lion gazed round the circle of encompassing human beings, and shook his bushy mane, and lashed his tail, and stretched himself as if in defiance. Then he started to pace the round of the arena, close up to the high wall which divided it from the seats and which supported them. Once or twice he leaped up, uttering snarling cries, against this barrier, as though to reach those who, at their safe distance, were hooting at him and pelting him with sundry objects, shouting the while:

"Ad Christianos! Go to the Christians!"

Straight on went the melodious chant of the Christians. They had reached their last verse:

The adder's tooth thou shalt not dread;
Upon the lion thou shalt tread;
The fierce young lion's shaggy crown,
And dragon, thou shalt trample down!

And now the lion's attention was directed to the little group. He turned his hungry, bloodshot eyes upon them. He crouched low, and with belly to the earth, began to creep slowly toward his prey. Quintus and Clearchus, with the instinctive impulse of chivalrous men, stepped before the old man and

the maid, as if to shield these weaker ones from the approaching peril.

The deep silence that overhung the Circus was suddenly broken by the sharp ring of metal striking against the arena floor, while two objects darkened for a moment the air as they were hurled from a group of soldiers in the seats reserved for the military. They were two swords.

Their metallic clang as they fell, wrought magically upon Quintus. Heretofore, no thought except that of submission to the inevitable, and a swift and placid martyrdom had entered his mind; but the familiar sound, and the sight of the weapons lying there almost within his reach, stirred up old associations and sentiments. Unconsciously the soldierly impulse possessed him. It was a resistless seizure.

He ran to where the swords had fallen, picked them up and was back again, putting one into the outthrust hand of Clearchus. He was a soldier now—a transformed man! He would fight for his life, and for the lives of his companions, and die as a soldier should, arms in hand, fighting a brave and righteous fight. The like spirit had seized upon Clearchus, and

the two men with swords poised, stood facing the approaching beast, nerved for a mighty conflict.

An angry protest, starting from Domitian's throne seat ran through the official quarters.

"Disarm them! It is violation of the judicial decree, and an open offense to Cæsar!"

But the populace took a different view of the incident. Soldiers and people vigorously applauded. They were pleased!

"See! There will be a fight. Good!" they cried. "It will add to the excitement of the spectacle! It is a new and interesting feature!"

Before this outburst of popular opinion the frowns of the Emperor and the protests of the officials went for little. Besides, the event had passed beyond the bounds of interference, and was hastening to its own issue.

The lion, irritated by the clamor of the multitude, and eager with long fasting, had neared Quintus and Clearchus, and with a frantic rush leaped upon them. Clearchus knelt upon one knee, and held his sword firmly before him as the lion charged, so that the blade was buried in the beast's breast. That of Quintus, by a stroke of



Christianos ad Leones.

The adder's tooth thou shalt not dread;
Upon the lion thou shalt tread;
The fierce young lion's shaggy crown,
And dragon, thou shalt trample down!

equal skill and force, almost severed a fore paw. Uttering a howl of rage and pain, the frantic creature hurled himself upon Clearchus, who was borne down to the earth.

Hannah, in the intense excitement of the moment forgetting herself in her lover's peril, hobbled to the scene and began belaboring the beast with her crutch. Sir lion soon disposed of this novel sort of weapon, which at first he hardly deigned to notice, for with one swoop of his sound paw, he struck the crutch from the maiden's hand. This gallant but futile defense of her lover awakened the mingled laughter and applause of the multitude, while Hannah stood wringing her hands and weeping in hopeless misery, all thought of her own danger having apparently disappeared, until her father ran up and drew her to one side.

Her act, absurd and ineffectual as it seemed, was not without its advantage; it may indeed have saved the life of Clearchus; for it diverted the beast's attention from him long enough to permit the second attack of Quintus. Raising his shaggy head and bloody mane from the prostrate body, he struggled to a partly erect posture, and with wide-open

jaws turned upon his assailant. After sundry thrusts and strokes, Quintus forced his sword—a good Damascus blade—deeply into the creature's open mouth. Clearchus was now upon his feet, and hastily recovering his weapon, aided in dispatching the gigantic brute.

“*Secundum leonem!* Turn out another lion!” was the order, inspired by Emperor Domitian, which was shouted to the keepers. But by this time the vast concourse was in a tumult. From the highest to the lowest tier of seats soldiers and civilians alike were cheering and applauding with the utmost enthusiasm. Their fancy and sympathy (one hesitates to say their pity) had been aroused in behalf of the Christians.

“No, no! *Sufficit, sufficit!* It is enough! *Gratia, gratia!* Pardon!”

These and like cries resounded from every side, while from all parts of the immense amphitheater there suddenly burst forth a mass of white handkerchiefs, the sign of mercy in gladiatorial combats, which covered the place like the bloom of a cherry grove at springtime.

In the face of such an outbreak of popular

feeling, Domitian dared not urge the full execution of the sentence. He therefore made the sign of mercy, and an official hastened away to secure the prisoners' release from the arena.

It was too late! Already an overzealous keeper, anticipating the Emperor's real wish, and the people's ordinary course of action, had released another lion—a young male. As he sprang forth from the cage he sniffed up the air, tore up the earth with backward strokes of his hind claws, glared round him, made a few great leaps along the barrier, and then, catching the scent of blood, made straight for the central group.

"Turn in the gladiators!" shouted a strong-voiced man, from the midst of the military circle, whom Quintus recognized as Sir Honorius.

This met the popular approval, as was shown by a storm of plaudits that greeted it, and with scarce a moment's delay—for these public servants were quick to read the will of the people—three gladiators in waiting, a spearman, a swordman and a netman (*retitelarius*) ran into the arena.

Quintus and Clearchus, at the lion's approach, had taken a posture of defense, but

had little expectation of escaping this fresh danger. Clearchus was shocked and hurt by the lion's charge. Quintus' vigor was abated by his great exertions. The new phase of the situation brought a glint of hope.

"Perhaps we can hold off the beast till the gladiators reach us!" said Quintus to his comrade. "Courage, brother! And stand by as best you can."

It was not courage that Clearchus lacked, but physical strength. He was really on the point of fainting from pain and shock, and was bracing himself up to hold out against the infirmities of nature, with no vigor left to oppose the coming brute.

"Let me take your sword!" exclaimed Pashur, stepping to his side. "You can wield it no longer. I am old and scant of strength. But I was a soldier once; and was counted of goodly courage and skill in my people's wars against the Romans. I cannot wholly have lost my power; and Jahveh's hand is mighty! With His help I shall do valiantly. He can bless even my weak, old arm!"

Clearchus shook his head. He would hold to his sword to the last. But already he was growing faint. His limbs trembled. He tot-

tered and sank to the ground. Hannah ran to him, and tearing off a piece of her garment, began to bind up his bleeding hurts.

Meanwhile, Pashur had seized the sword from the young man's relaxing grasp, and flinging off his outer tunic, stood at Quintus' side, shaking in his withered but still vigorous arm the blood-stained weapon.

The spectators cheered lustily the gray-beard's plucky act; but by this time the lion had charged upon Quintus, who was engaged in a hopeless struggle when Pashur came to his aid. It would have gone hard with both of them, though Pashur fought valiantly, had not the three gladiators at that moment arrived, and joined in the affray. For a while the play of swords and spear kept the formidable beast at bay, until, seizing a favorable moment, the *retitelarius* cast his net. The lion's struggles only entangled it more and more in the fatal meshes, and after vain struggles and wrathful howls and rollings upon the ground, he succumbed to his foes' attack.

There, then, the two great beasts lay dead, while the Christians lived, but little hurt, save the wounds inflicted upon Clearchus. With characteristic courtesy, Quintus thanked the

gladiators who had saved their lives; then kneeled with Pashur and Hannah by the prostrate animals, and gave thanks to God for their deliverance.

Now came in the centurion of the guards with his soldiers, and with slaves who seized the carcasses of the lions, and with a stretcher on which to carry Clearchus, whom they supposed to be dead. The whole party moved through the open gateway out of the arena, amid the tumultuous greetings and cheers of the populace.

Domitian, ill satisfied with this ending of the spectacle, left his *pulvinar*, giving secret orders that the four Christians should not be set free, but should be kept in their cells for private disposition.

“Moreover,” he added, “since the contumacious multitude have been pleased to thwart my will with these first victims, I will be pleased to mar their holiday, by making the spectacle end right here. Let all the other Christians be set free at once! And let the lions be fed!”

Then he left the Circus, and presently the people retired amid mingled cheers and hoots, plaudits and curses. They had lost their

expected long day of enjoyment; but one incident, at least, of rare interest and intense excitement they had experienced—and, they had had their way!

Sir Honorius, who was well known among the Circus officials, waited in hope of taking Quintus and his party to his house; but when he found what orders had been given concerning them, he went home to the Lady Julia with a heavy heart; for he knew the cruel nature of Domitian too well to doubt what the secret orders meant.

CHAPTER XIX

AN AFTERMATH OF THE PERSECUTION

DOMITIAN left the Circus Maximus in high dudgeon. His petty spirit, that could find a chief amusement of his solitary hours in catching flies and impaling them on pins, was deeply offended not only by the failure to glut his cruel passions on the death pains of his victims in the arena, but by the manner in which the people had snatched them from his power.

“But I will not be wholly thwarted!” he muttered. He went home brooding upon the safest way in which he could gratify his small and bloodthirsty mind, by the death of Quintus and his party. That Quintus was a remote kinsman, only added fuel to the fires of jealousy and fear that burned within him.

“Who knows?” he said to Parthenius, his palace chamberlain. “He is a brave and comely fellow, with all the soldierly attributes that take the popular fancy! They might get a notion to exalt him to my place! Stran-

ger things have happened. He is the very stuff for a popular hero! He must die—and his friends with him! And at once!”

He gave his orders to that effect to Parthenius for the chief jailer. “To-morrow, without fail!” he added.

“Yes, your majesty; *he shall die!*” the chamberlain replied.

That order and its echo sealed the death doom of so many of the world’s noblest spirits, that the Emperor never doubted that the four Christians upon whom the events of the day had centered, were already as good as dead.

Early the next morning Sir Honorius Ahala was at the prison. The chief jailer had been once an officer in his command in the British campaigns, and was well known to him.

“I have called to see what can be done about my stepson and his friends,” he said. “Their sentence of death was publicly revoked by the Emperor at the people’s demand. But when I learned of the secret orders for their retention, I knew too well the methods of the administration, to suppose that the popular will can be carried out against Domitian’s

secret orders. I wish to know what sum will adjust the matter?"

"Stop, Sir Honorius!" the chief jailer began. "You may save your money, and"——

"Aye, sir, and lose my friends!" the knight interrupted sharply. "I speak plainly; for I know that these affairs are often a matter of bargain; and though I despise the policy as iniquitous, and destructive of honor and manliness, I am willing to submit in this case, as the only method that can"——

"You do not get my meaning!" the jailer cried, breaking in upon the torrent of the knight's utterance. "There have been wild rumors afloat in the palace and its environs that will change many a destiny. I have just heard that the Emperor has been assassinated! The mad tyrant Domitian is dead—the cruellest ruler and the worst man that has sat upon the imperial throne since Nero!"

"Assassinated! Can it be? You appal me! But is it true? Caution, my old comrade! Sets your head so securely on your shoulders, that you can venture upon such words within earshot of Domitian's palace and his army of spies and informers?"

"It is true! I have carefully inquired.

He is really dead—slain in his own rooms by his own official family. The Senate is already being summoned to elect his successor.”

“It is a foul, black deed!” the knight exclaimed. “And I regret the manner, though I cannot mourn the fact of his taking off. He has ended a blood-stained career, by a bloody death. And I have anticipated, ever since he began his policy of terror and assassination, that some one of the many victims of his cruelty would strike back at his oppressor. What a pity that he ever departed from the just and temperate method of his early reign! Have you learned the particulars of his assassination?”

“Yes, I have them all!” the jailer replied. “Domitian had just given directions to his chamberlain Parthenius for the private killing of Quintus and his party.

“‘Yes, your majesty, *the man shall die!*’ was the reply. That sentence was a signal, or key word agreed upon among the palace conspirators, Parthenius, Domitia the Empress, and Petrus Secundus, the prefect of the *Praetorium*.

“Thereupon Stephanus, a freedman, a person of unusual strength, was introduced

into the room with a fresh list of victims charged with '*crimen majestatis*' and 'unlawful religions.' While the Emperor was considering these, Stephanus ran upon him, and stabbed him in the groin with a dagger.

"The stroke was a clumsy one; or the Emperor, always suspicious and on the lookout for assassins, might have diverted it. He closed with his assailant, and a ferocious conflict followed. The combatants rolled and struggled on the polished marble floor, Domitian seeking to clutch in his bloody fingers the assassin's knife, or to gouge out his eyes. At this juncture Parthenius, who was on guard, admitted two hired gladiators who stabbed the Emperor to death."

"It was a horrible deed," quoth Sir Honorius, "even though the world is well rid of such a monster. But it seems doubly dark because perpetrated by members of his own household."

"Perhaps you will make more allowance for them when you learn all the facts!" the chief jailer retorted. "One of his wife's maids in dusting up Domitian's private rooms found a bit of paper which she took to her mistress.

It was a cast-off fragment of the Emperor's death tablets on which were roughly jotted the names of some new victims. Among them were his wife Domitia, Parthenius the chamberlain, and Petrus Secundus, the prefect of the *Praetorium*. Thereupon, to save their own lives, the parties named hatched the conspiracy of assassination, and successfully carried it out."

"Well, whatever be our judgment," said the knight, "he has reaped as he sowed, as, in the long run, most men will. And the world, especially Roman citizens, will draw a long breath of relief when the end is made known. But to go back to our own particular interest. What effect will this have upon the fate of my stepson and his friends?"

"I will release them without hesitation!" the jailer replied. "No official record was made of the Emperor's change of judgment, reversing that of the Circus; and in view of the present situation, I will venture to disregard the private orders, and adhere to the publicly announced and the popular verdict. Indeed, I can hardly take any other course. Come with me! I will lead you to them, and willingly release them, to go with you, or whither-

soever they will. No, no! there will be no fee! It is a pleasure to do my duty now, simply for duty's sake."

It was a joyful meeting. "*Laus Deo!*—Praise to God!" was the glad cry that arose from the liberated Christians, who had momentarily been awaiting the executioner. They fell upon the floor of the cell where they had all been imprisoned together, and thanked their Heavenly Father for their second deliverance "out of the paw of the lion, and . . . the bear!"

"Aye, and from a worse and more ferocious beast, by far!" the knight responded as they rose from their knees. He had silently been offering thanks to Jove whom he still revered, though half-heartedly.

Quintus was soon in his mother's arms, and a happy morning meal was that of the company gathered round the hospitable board of Sir Honorius and Lady Julia.

The hurts of Clearchus were not serious, and were not long in healing; the shock of the lion's charge being the chief injury. He was therefore soon able to join his companions in going about the city to view its wonders. They found Rome stirred to its depths

with excitement over the news of Domitian's death. But it was not the excitement of a mourning people. The promise of the Emperor's early years, which had raised up high hopes of an administration of the type of his father, Vespasian, and his brother Titus (*amor et deliciæ generis humani*), had been dissipated by the closing years of his life. On the whole, this last of the Flavians left a record which places his name beside those of Nero and Caligula as among the worst rulers of Rome, or of the world.

The public anxiety was relieved as to the succession, by the Senate, which met at once and elected M. Cocceus Nerva, Emperor. This met hearty popular approval. The Senate also decreed that Domitian's name should be stricken out of the Roman annals, and obliterated from every public monument. But records of a life written in such black characters upon human history, were not so easily blotted out. To-day the name of Domitian is as infamous as ever, not only in the annals of the Christian Church, but in the secular history of the world. The most charitable theory of him, is, that in the last few years of his reign he was the victim of a

species of moral insanity, which, perhaps, phenomenal wickedness often is.

Until the breaking out of the Domitian persecutions the Christians had had a long period of comparative rest. Even in Rome there were at no time such awful scenes as marked the days of Nero, when the imperial gardens were lighted with living torches of Christian men and women, and crosses laden with their agonized human fruit stood as thick as olive trees on the hillsides.

But the last years of Domitian had brought such a revival of the Neronian terror, that Christians had again fled for refuge to the Catacombs. In those gloomy retreats, among the sealed tombs of the dead, arranged in carved niches, one above another, which to-day are objects of reverent curiosity to visitors in Rome, the disciples of Jesus found homes and temples. On the Lord's Day following their deliverance our little band of followers and confessors of the Christ, sought and found a place of worship in one of these temples, now known as the Catacombs of St. Calixtus.

The Roman bishop Clemens, who had shared with his flock the sufferings of the time,

was there to lead the simple services. It was touching to hear the primitive psalms and hymns of those faithful witnesses, sounding through those underground retreats, their smothered echoes dying away, and rolling back again until lost in the far distance and darkness.

The newcomers, whose escape from the wild beasts of the Circus Maximus had been the talk of the town, and was held to be little less than miraculous, were cordially welcomed by the brethren as real martyrs in the purpose of their minds (though not unto death), to that Saviour whom they loved, and had so devoutly and steadfastly confessed. In the freedom and simplicity of the brotherly relations of those primitive days, warm prayers of thanksgiving were offered up in their behalf.

“We hope soon to be delivered from these gloomy abodes,” said Bishop Clemens, after the formal services, as he gave them his personal greeting, “and live and worship freely in the open air. For Nerva’s reign promises to be just and kindly to those of our faith. But we shall hold to these quarters at least for a short time, till we see how events

are likely to move; for the beginning of Domitian's reign was also most promising to us. Yet we trust that our season of bitter trial is now over, and that our God will grant us many days of rest and refreshment. *Pax vobiscum*—Peace be with you!"

On the next day Clearchus returned to St. Calixtus with Hannah, accompanied by Pashur, Quintus, Sir Honorius and Lady Julia, and the twain were united in marriage by the Chief Pastor, who gave them his hearty pastoral benediction, as they were on the eve of returning to Ephesus.

CHAPTER XX

BACK TO PATMOS

PRISCILLA'S grief after the departure of Quintus was great, and particularly hard to endure under the circumstances. It was not the sorrow of "hope deferred." There was no hope! Who had known anyone going from the Province of Asia Minor charged with the crime of Christianity, to pass into the whirl of that awful maelstrom of human life and destiny called Rome, and return therefrom alive?

Her sorrow was the harder to bear because of its peculiar conditions. It had all the bitterness of widowhood. Yet she was denied even the poor satisfaction of that public recognition of her status and her right to mourn, which was a widow's portion. For she was an unmarried maid, though an affianced wife. This affliction, coming in the dawning of her Christian experience, was a sore trial of her faith. Sometimes the tempting thought would intrude:

“Is this the way in which the new Lord whom I have confessed cares for His disciples? What have we gained by our exchange of religions? Quintus goes to Rome to die at the hands of Domitian. His bright and promising young life is sacrificed to his new belief. And I stay here on this lonely isle, with every hope and joy of life blighted. The bloom of youth has become for us but a bundle of withered leaves. Alas, would that I too could have gone to Rome to die with him! That were better than this daily living death in Patmos! My beautiful dreams of bliss which had been woven around my devoted lover, are all vanished—gone, forever gone!”

In her loneliness and wretchedness she turned to St. John for advice and comfort.

“My child,” he said, “my heart is sad and heavy for you. You are tasting early the bitter fruit of the world’s tribulation. I can only repeat to you the Saviour’s words: ‘Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.’ God will find a way of peace for you in the midst of these troubles. These afflictions shall work out for you a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory. Keep your faith fixed steadfastly on Jesus! Your union

with Him assures your spiritual union with your beloved one, even here on earth. And, what is better, it assures your eternal union with him. At the longest, this life is but a brief day; and with most of us a troubled day. But all Eternity is yours! And you may share it with Quintus! His death will not wholly divide you. It will bring him nearer to you.

“Let me repeat to you one of the supplications which I heard the Son of God utter on the night before His sacrifice for us. ‘Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am!’ That prayer was for you also, my child. That is your sure ground of greatest consolation. The Lord’s intercession shall not fall to the ground. You and Quintus, as Christ’s own redeemed souls, the gift of the Heavenly Father’s Love, shall surely be with Jesus in the Eternal Home of all His Saints! Fix your mind on that truth, and let it blunt the keenness of your grief. Heaven with Christ!—that is the reward of all our persecutions and sufferings for Christ’s sake, the solace of all our sorrows here.”

But the good Apostle, wise in knowledge

of the human heart, knew that there is no remedy for heart trouble like that of active occupation in some duty, some unselfish service for others. The germs of grief have rapid and sturdy growth in the unoccupied mind; but dwindle and die in the busy and love-filled spirit. He therefore assigned Prisca, for a little while, to the work which Clearchus had undertaken—taking down from St. John's dictation the words of the Fourth Gospel, which he had begun.

It was new work for her, yet she was not wholly unqualified for it; for having a bright intellect and well-trained faculties, and being familiar with the Greek language, and writing a bold, plain hand, she made good speed. As the Apostle was aiming rather at the good he could do her, than the advantage he could get from her, she gave satisfaction, and found pleasure, with relief, in occupying even if not quite filling the vacant place.

One great source of discomfort to her that soon developed was the annoyance which the new centurion gave her. From the first he had been smitten with her charms, and persisted in spending much of his time at her father's house, and in her company. To this

she submitted at first, out of regard to her father; for she knew what power the centurion had to harass those upon whom his ill will might be turned.

But at length the man's attentions became so pointed and intolerable, that she let him know how disagreeable they were to her. This not having the desired effect, Philip felt compelled to remonstrate.

"My daughter, sir," he said, "is the affianced bride of Quintus, your predecessor. It is not becoming, and it is not agreeable to her or to me, that she should receive the marked attentions of another man. It adds to her grief, which already is so great as to cause us anxiety."

"But, my good man," Servilius rejoined, with a trace of triumph in his tone, and with a covert sneer upon his lips, "there is little wisdom and no gain in nursing a lost love. And Quintus is already lost to your daughter, beyond hope of recovery. Domitian's lions are not apt to give up their prey; and that Priscilla's lover has gone to the lion is as certain as that he has gone to Rome."

There was something so heartless and unmanly in this remark, that the stout-

hearted mariner's wrath was stirred up. He rose to his feet.

"Sir centurion," he cried, in a voice trembling with indignation, "I know the respect due to your rank and office, and will endeavor to yield the same in due measure. But for yourself personally I have only the utmost contempt. Leave my house! And if you ever come back, except on official business, and to myself alone, by the trident of Neptune, sir, I will throw you out of doors!"

Servilius left hastily (for he was not a valiant man), vomiting forth his anger in scurrilous but harmless malevolence; and from that day he began a series of petty persecutions and annoyances that kept the captain of the Gull and all his family in hot water. The loss of government patronage, which the centurion controlled, was an item of some consequence to Philip, though fortunately he was in a position to be measurably independent thereof, as there was no other boat upon the island that could compete with his in quality of service; and his private fortune, though not large, was sufficient to secure him against serious embarrassment in its loss.

One day a strange vessel appeared in the offing, beating up the long, land-locked harbor by which Patmos was approached from the East. She bore the imperial ensign betokening a government ship. As she slowly approached, tacking with difficulty and making little use of the oars, she signalled for a pilot.

Philip and Prisca, who chanced to be at the wharf, answered the signal. "She is a stranger in our waters," the shipmaster remarked, "or she might have known that she could approach our shore without such a precaution, in weather like this. But cast loose the skiff; I must be off at once."

"May I pull you on board, father?" Prisca asked.

Philip hesitated. Then he remembered his Priscilla's loneliness of grief, and bethought him how she had long moped from her usual outdoor activities, and replied:

"Jump in, my girl, and take the oars! A spell of rowing, mayhap, will do you good."

Soon the skiff was skimming over the placid water, the oarswoman greatly enjoying the exercise, and the father at the rudder greatly pleased to see the color mounting to

his child's cheeks, and her face catching somewhat of its old-time brightness.

"Father, father! Look there!" the maiden cried excitedly as they drew nearer. "See yon tall man standing on the deck! He looks to me like Clearchus! Can it possibly be he?"

"It surely is he, Priscilla! Or his double. Did he not go to Rome with Quintus?"

"He did, he did!" Priscilla exclaimed. "And O father, could it be possible that Quintus is also on yon vessel? My heart is sinking within me. I am trembling between hope and dread."

"Keep to the oars, my daughter!" Philip cried. "It will not do to fail now and here! I cannot understand how the ship would signal for a pilot with such an old Patmos citizen as Quintus on board! Unless—the skipper may have been unwilling to trust to the word and aid of a soldier, whom he would naturally hold to be a mere landsman; which perhaps is not unlikely. I fear there is scant ground for your hope. But keep a good heart and a steady hand, and we will soon be there, and know all!"

Just then a Roman officer came from below deck, and advanced to the ship's railing where

Clearchus stood. It was Quintus! Yes, beyond doubt, it was he! Prisca's heart was beating wildly. Tears of joy filled her eyes. Yet, in the shock of the great surprise her nerves gave way and her arms momentarily lost their power. Then, in the pure ecstasy of intense reaction of feeling, she unconsciously flung all her energy into her stroke.

"Back oars!" her father cried.

It was too late! The bow of the skiff bumped against the ship's side so sharply, that Prisca would have been dislodged from her thwart had not Philip put out his hand and stayed her.

Another hand also came to the rescue. Quintus had leaned over the ship beneath the rail, and clasped the skiff's curved bow, saving the small boat from the rebound of its hard contact. At once, all three of this strangely met party recalled the scene—how short a time seemed to have passed since then!—when almost on that spot, the young Roman centurion bent down as he was doing then, and held the same skiff steady, until Prisca had climbed aboard the Gull!

It seemed a bold and unmaidenly thing to do, and her native modesty shrank from it,

but when Quintus, giving way to the rapture of unexpected meeting, and unthinking of what observers might say, caught her in his arms and kissed her, she suffered the embrace. Aye, lovingly and gladly, too, though thereafter her cheeks burned at the recollection thereof! How could she, under such circumstances, with her lover there, restored to her as from the very jaws of death, repel him from her arms?

Nor could it ever be learned that Quintus had any regrets to express for his action. When he was gently reproached for it, he simply and emphatically said:

“She is my affianced wife. I do not care who knows it! I expect to marry her just as soon as the ceremony can be arranged for; and I am ready to acknowledge her as my plighted wife before all the world.”

And that indeed he did ere long, with the Apostle John to add his benediction to the simple rite that bound these two of his spiritual children in the holy bonds of Christian wedlock.

CHAPTER XXI

AN EMIGRATION FROM PATMOS

ON the quay, the centurion Servilius awaited the landing of the strange vessel. He cast a glance of mingled vexation and admiration upon Prisca as she stepped ashore. At Quintus he glared with such marks of surprise as those with which one might greet a man risen from the dead. He could not control himself, indeed, but moved toward him, and gave vent to his wonder in a loud exclamation.

“Sir, I know not what to make of this!” he said. “You left here as a criminal, charged with grave offenses, and with the almost certainty of a capital punishment. You come back apparently free! How or why this is, I do not know. Nor do I know what to do in your case, though I am disposed to arrest you as one escaped from the hands of justice, and return you to the authorities at Ephesus or Rome.”

“That bit of presumption would be quite

characteristic conduct on your part," Quintus coolly replied. "But before you attempt it, perhaps you will do me the favor to look at this document."

Thereupon he handed him a paper signed by the Military Tribune for the Proconsul of Asia, relieving him of his command, and ordering him to turn it over to Quintus, and to report under arrest, at headquarters in Ephesus, to answer to sundry serious charges.

Servilius turned pale to the very roots of his carrotty hair. He shot at Quintus a look that, had eyeglances been arrows, would have transfixed him. Then he choked back his rising wrath, and assuming a fawning manner that came quite natural to him, said:

"I recognize this signature as genuine, and will make no opposition to the orders herein. I will just go to my quarters for such personal belongings as I wish to take with me, and will then report to you here."

"You will do no such thing, sir!" retorted Quintus sternly. "You will report on board this ship immediately, in arrest; and will not leave it without permission from me. Captain," he added, saluting the commander of the vessel, "be good enough to take charge of

this officer as a prisoner; and see that he is kept securely on board, though without needless severity."

Then addressing a petty officer who had come to the dock in attendance upon Servilius, and who was a well-known and trusted veteran:

"Sergeant Brutus, see that all the papers of Centurion Servilius are seized, carefully secured and sealed. All private papers, memoranda and notes of whatever sort you will bring to me as the property of the State. His personal effects you will have delivered to him here."

The smile that illumined the face of honest Brutus was so broad and sunny, that one who ran might read, even beneath the habitual self-control of a Roman veteran, the satisfaction with which he had heard of the restoration to command of his beloved Quintus, and the humiliation of Servilius, whom with all his heart he despised.

He hastened away to the barracks, and soon a rousing cheer, which even Rome's discipline was not sufficient to suppress, announced the reception which the company had given the news brought by Sergeant

Brutus. That Servilius heard and rightly interpreted the demonstration, was evident by the cast of his countenance, as he impatiently walked the vessel's limited deck, under the eye of an armed mariner.

This arrest of Servilius was a token of the new policy which had come in with the Emperor Nerva. The papers found in the centurion's office showed that he was one of Domitian's spies and informers. It was seen that he it was who had procured the arrest, and so, well nigh the death of Quintus and Clearchus, Pashur and Hannah. It was through him that the good Proconsul of Asia, Civius Cerialis, had been arraigned and executed. It was that kindly man, a probable Christian, who had suffered and encouraged Quintus to ease the exile of St. John by gentle and generous treatment; which, however, had evoked the hatred of Servilius, and the terrible judgment of that cruel Emperor of whom he was the eager and congenial tool.

The captured papers also showed that Servilius had tried to procure the death of St. John, and to have the banishment of Lady Æmilia and Sylvia changed to capital punishment, the motive therefor being the manner

in which his infamous proposals to Sylvia had been repulsed. Rufus and Deaconess Phoebe, and others in the Christian colony in Patmos, were also on his death tablets.

Indeed, his pernicious activity had a far wider sweep. Patmos was only the center of his operations, from which he pushed his malevolent system of espionage and false accusations into Ephesus and the cities of Asia. He seemed to have had the entire confidence of Domitian and his bureau of secret information, and used his influence chiefly against Christians, but without scruple also for his own private revenge and advantage.

The deaths of many Christians and of other worthy citizens, whose only offense was their worthiness and some available wealth that warranted their imperial "plucking," were shown by the captured papers to have been brought about by this obnoxious character.

In his plots and prying he was aided by Lukon, whom he had seduced by flattery and bribes to become one of his most active spies, and for whom, as a memorandum indicated, already a secret death was prepared; a convenient mode of getting rid of one who possessed much inconvenient knowledge of his

affairs. This wretch Servilius was a worthy disciple of his imperial master, and an apt product of Domitian's secret methods of judicial assassination.

That Nerva had eschewed all these creatures of his predecessor's schemes of official murder and robbery, who burrowed beneath society like moles in a lawn, and pursued their victims in dark and crooked ways, was a reversal of an infamous policy that met the applause of every manly spirit, and gave a guarantee of a new era of justice and safety and imperial honor.

No class of the people felt the change more keenly and kindly than the Christians. Their absolute freedom was not as yet secured, but as contrasted with the dark days of Domitian, they had comparative rest during Nerva's brief reign of sixteen months.

It was one of the pleasant features of the return of Quintus to Patmos, that he brought with him official permission for the Apostle John to return from exile to his old home in Ephesus. This grace Lady Æmilia and Sylvia, Rufus and Phoebe and others also shared.

The Apostle parted from his Patmos

parishioners with many regrets. He had become warmly attached to them during his stay. The simple manners and rugged characters of the islanders, born of their seafaring habits, had won his affectionate interest. In some respects they reminded him of the friends of his youth and early manhood, on the shores of the little, inland water known as the "Sea of Galilee." With the fond return of an old man's thoughts and fancy to the days and scenes of earlier life, he saw in them much that touched his heart and won his regard.

Many of them, too, were his children in the Faith. For these he held that peculiar affection which ministers of Christ are apt to feel for those in whose spiritual birth they have been the instruments. But the wider field and its larger duties called him to a fuller service of his Divine Master. He therefore turned away from the quiet scenes of the lonely island, whose rugged, heather-clad hills and rocky shores he had learned to love; and from the little cave, "The Repose" of Quintus, where he had spent so many peaceful hours of private meditation and study, and of holy communion with his Master, with

feelings of real regret. Such tender associations, once formed, are not easily surrendered.

It was not without hesitation and some degree of shrinking, that he thought of entering again upon the stirring and strenuous life of luxurious and idolatrous Ephesus. But the same Voice of the Divine Word that called him into the Apostolate, now summoned him to that great hive of human souls, to close his sacred ministry where it could best tell for God's glory and men's welfare.

Quintus felt it both a duty and pleasure to accompany the venerable Apostle and his Christian friends on the voyage from Patmos, and to see them safely landed in the Ephesian harbor. The choice had been given him, under the influence of Sir Honorius Ahala, of returning to Patmos or taking service with the legions in Britain or Germany. He chose to return to Patmos, and to remain there at least for some time after his marriage to Prisca. And thus it came about that he was once more upon the field of his earlier military service, and was permitted to take some part in the closing scenes of St. John's Patmos life.

It was a congenial and happy company that occupied the deck of the Gull as the good

little ship bore away down the harbor under the vigorous strokes of the oarsmen. As they approached the harbor's mouth, and felt the heavier swells of the Ægean Sea, the mariners mounted the single mast, and shook out the great sail. Among these sailors was Lukon, greatly humbled by the revelation of his relations to Servilius, and to whom Quintus, in the face of many remonstrances from his fellow-islanders, had given a chance for a new and better life. Soon the sail was bellying beneath a brisk wind, and the bark drove merrily towards the Asian shore whose mountain ranges rose blue and hazy in the distance.

A good voyage brought them to the Cays-ter river, and ere long they dropped anchor in the marble-columned Panormus, among the barks of many nations to whom Ephesus was still an important mart. Among these lay many ships of Rome, bearing the eagle and the purple banner, the "*Signum*" of the empire.

There was no crowd of welcoming friends thronging the quay, for there had been no means of communicating knowledge of their coming. Soon the little company of Christians had exchanged farewells, and the Apostle had given them his parting benediction.

Then Quintus, who had busied himself in getting St. John's belongings together, and assigning them to porters, refused to leave him, and started with him up the broad street toward Mt. Pion, the Christian quarter, and the house of Drusiana, wherein the Apostle had made his home. As they passed along, they met a funeral procession which, by outward tokens, they knew to be that of a Christian. As Clearchus was one of the bearers, the Apostle ventured to ask him who was dead.

"Drusiana!" was the unexpected and startling reply.

"What! the good dame of whose house I was so long an inmate?"

"Even so, reverend father. She is dead; and we are bearing her to her grave."

Now Drusiana had excelled in hospitality, and in all good works; and in nothing had she wrought a better service than in the care of the aged Apostle's health and home comfort, by which, many thought, his life had been prolonged and his vigor maintained so remarkably.

He was much saddened by this news, and stood a moment or two in deep thought. Then he bade the bearers, who had paused with

their burden out of respect for the Apostle, to put down the bier. When they had done this, he addressed himself to prayer. Most earnestly he besought the Heavenly Father, for the Son's sake, to interpose in His servants' behalf, and restore to life and health the woman whose good works had endeared her to all, and especially to himself. He pleaded that he might thus be permitted to give to the Church and to the city, now on his return from exile, a token of the Divine Character and the Power of His Son Jesus Christ.

At the close of the prayer, the woman stirred upon her bier, and gave signs of returned life! Friends quickly removed the wrappings from her face and limbs, and she arose and went back with them to her house. The Apostle also returned thereto, and was received with marked reverence and joy, and again became an inmate of Drusiana's* home, and an object of her reverent care.

Clearchus laid this act up in his heart, and when he went home to his wife Hannah, at the house of Pashur, he told her of it.

"Surely," he added, "the great Apostle

* This is the name which tradition has given to this woman, of whom this miracle is related by a persistent tradition, as occurring on St. John's return from Patmos.

who could restore life to Drusiana, could bring back power to your injured limb. I will entreat him to do it!"

"Oh, my husband!" Hannah cried, "can there be such a blessing in store for us? Do you think the Apostle would do this for us? I believe truly that he could, if he would. But I have heard him say that he does not think it wise to encourage the people to depend on him for miraculous works of healing. He wishes them to go directly to God the Father through the Christ, who is the Life of Man, and to Whom we are to give all honor, and to depend wholly upon our own exertions wrought in Christ."

When Quintus, who was a guest of Clearchus in the house, came in, the matter was laid before him. He agreed to go with them the next day to the house of St. John and entreat his grace in Hannah's behalf. And so they did.

When the Apostle heard their plea, he said:

"My children, how can I deny you this request? Have you faith to believe that God can do this thing for you?"

"We have!" was the joint response.

"And you, my daughter," turning to

Hannah. "Is your trust in Christ so strong that you believe He can and will do this healing act through me; and yet, is your will so submissive, that you will not repine at or doubt Him, should His Wisdom and Goodness refuse you?"

"Yes, my father in God!" she replied.

"Then, let us pray!"

After a fervent prayer, the Apostle said to Hannah: "In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"

For a moment the young wife waited. Then she sprang to her feet and with a glad cry of thanks to God, began walking about the room. In the force of old habit she held to her crutch, but she did not use it. She did not need it. She could walk freely without it! She ran to the Apostle, and kissed his hand, and poured out her heart in gratitude to him. Then she fell upon her knees, and gave thanks to the Divine Power who, by Jesus Christ her Saviour, through His Apostle's word, had wrought this great blessing.

Then she arose and threw her arms around Clearchus.

"O my husband, my beloved," she exclaimed, "this is a new life to me! I did

not fully know before what it is to live. I feel new vigor pulsing through the once dead and useless limb. See! I can walk freely! Come, let us hasten home to father, that he may share without delay my joy and gratitude."

Away, then, the happy trio went, with St. John's blessing following them. Hannah walked all the way, and often, as though to test the reality of her new gift, would run for a little space, and even leap as she ran. She seemed to be a child again, frisking joyously, as before her accident, in the open squares and emparked places, and around the marble fountains and columns.

Of all the many homes in Ephesus that night—and some of them were truly happy homes—there was probably none happier than that of Pashur the bibliopole. Hannah seemed never weary of showing her new gift of walking—to the servants; to her two close friends, Mary and Martha, of Philo, to whom she at once sent the glad tidings; to the workmen and scribes in the bibliotheca; to the neighbors who had heard the news and run in to make certain of its truth. To all these, and to all others she sounded forth the praises of Jesus Christ, through whose Name, by faith in His

Name, she had been made every whit whole.

“What a lesson is here for us!” said Quintus to Clearchus, as he noticed Hannah’s ecstasy and gratitude. “See how grateful she is for this, one of the most common blessings of life! It has never even occurred to me to thank God for the use of my limbs; for the power to walk and run, and exercise my arms and legs in the daily ordinary affairs and acts of life. Yet, what would life be, were this lost to me! I have learned a lesson this day which I will not forget. I think I understand now, as I did not before, a phrase in the Apostle’s family prayers, who was wont to thank God for ‘blessings seen and unseen.’”

Quintus returned to Patmos, and established his Prisca as mistress of the house next door to that of her parents, in which his mother, Lady Julia, had presided in his earlier days on the island. The belief which he then had declared in his Priscilla’s ability to take and keep the head of any house of his with dignity, grace and efficiency, was not disappointed; neither then nor ever afterward, in his years of highest success.

He was a good and faithful, considerate and loving husband, as becomes every Chris-

tian man to be. And he ever found Prisca a devoted, helpful, loyal and sympathetic wife, who labored and prayed to make their home for herself and family the holiest and happiest place on earth, a type of and nursery for the Christian's Home in Heaven.

Clearchus took up the work of the bibliotheca which Pashur's advanced age compelled him to give up. Many of his most precious manuscripts had been seized by the government on his arrest, and sold or scattered. Some of them were recovered through the generosity of friends, and the justice of others, enough to form the nucleus of a new library.

It was counted by both Clearchus and Hannah a happy circumstance that the first new book manufactured under the new arrangement, was from the manuscript of John's Gospel in the original Greek, begun in Patmos and completed in Ephesus. Into this they put their best faculties and most loving care.

They especially enjoyed the visits of the venerable author when he called, as he often did, to look after the progress of the work, and secure the correctness of the text. The book when finished was in great demand among Christian readers and the editions issued by

the bibliotheca of Clearchus became a "standard," and were so numerously multiplied that Hannah's department, over which she still presided with far greater comfort and satisfaction to herself, was kept continually occupied.

Before St. John's death he ordained Clearchus first to the eldership, to which the people had elected him, along with his father-in-law Pashur, and then called and ordained him to the Christian ministry. He became a laborious and successful evangelist, not only in the teeming city of Ephesus, but in the populous regions round about, where the "Seven Churches of Asia" were located, to which as St. John's "messenger" he had carried copies of the Apocalypse. The profits of the book-making craft, though not large, were enough to maintain him in this work, which he dearly loved, and in which he continued to be greatly honored.

The Apostle John continued his life work in and around Ephesus, until his years overpassed one hundred. Then he quietly fell asleep, and was buried where he died, and his tomb was long shown to pilgrims at Ephesus. Tradition has been busy weaving about his

memory and his closing days many stories, most of them highly imaginary.

One that persistently survives, and bears the face of probability, sets forth that when he grew too feeble to address the people, he would be carried into the sanctuary on the Lord's Day, and lifting his hands before the congregation, as if invoking a benediction, would repeat the words "Little children, love one another!"

When some of his hearers, wearied with so much repetition, asked him why he spoke these words so often, he replied:

"Little children, love one another! They are the Divine Master's own words; and the sum of the Christian life lies therein. For Love is the fulfilling of the Law!"

THE END

