

then with you and Graja, and good old departed Euphrosyne, have learnt to be good myself, and have embraced Christianity!"

"What, have you really been thinking of this, Jubala?"

"For a long time, lady, in my sorrows and remorse. For I have seen how happy Christians are, even those who have been as wicked as myself. And because I hinted this to my husband this morning he has beaten me and threatened to take my life. But, thank God, I have been making myself acquainted with Christian doctrines through the teaching of a friend."

"How long has this bad treatment gone on Jubala?" asked Orontius, who had heard of it from his uncle.

"Ever," she replied, "since soon after marriage, I told him of an offer made to me previously by a dark foreigner named Eurotas. Oh! he was indeed a wicked man, a man of black passions and remorseless villainy. Connected with him is my most racking recollection."

"How was that?" asked Orontius, with eager curiosity.

"Why, when he was leaving Rome he asked me to prepare for him two narcotic potions; one for any enemy, he said, should he be taken prisoner. This was to be certainly fatal; another had to suspend consciousness for a few hours only, should he require it for himself. When he came for them I was just going to explain to him that, contrary to appearances, the small phial contained a fatally concentrated poison and the large one a more diluted and weaker dose. But my husband came in at the moment, and in a fit of jealousy thrust me from the room. I fear some mistake may have been committed, and that unintentionally death may have ensued."

Fabiola and Orontius looked at one another in silence, wondering at the just dispensations of Providence, when they were aroused by a shriek from the woman. They were horrified at seeing an arrow quivering in her bosom. As Fabiola supported her, Orontius, looking behind him, caught a glimpse of a black face grinning hideously through the fence. In the next moment a Numidian was seen flying away on his horse, with his bow bent Parthian-wise over his shoulder, ready for any pursuer. The arrow had passed, unobserved between Orontius and the lady.

"Jubala," asked Fabiola, "dost thou wish to die a Christian?"

"Most earnestly," she replied.

"Dost thou believe in One God in Three Persons?"

"I firmly believe in all the Christian Church teaches."

"And in Jesus Christ, who was born and died for our sins?"

"Yes, in all that you believe." The reply was more faint.

"Make haste, make haste, Orontius," cried Fabiola, pointing to the fountain.

He was already at its basin, filling two hands, and coming instantly, poured their contents on the head of the poor African, pronouncing the words of baptism; and as she expired the water of regeneration mingled with her blood of expiation.

After this distressing, yet consoling, scene, they entered the house, and instructed Torquatus about the burial to be given to this doubly baptised convert.

Orontius was struck with the simple neatness of the house, so strongly contrasting with the luxurious splendor of Fabiola's former dwelling. But suddenly his attention was arrested, in a small inner room, by a splendid shrine or casket, set with jewels, but with an embroidered curtain before it, so as to allow only the frame of it to be seen. Approaching nearer, he read inscribed on it, "THE BLOOD OF THE BLESSED MIRIAM, SHED BY CRUEL HANDS!"

Orontius turned deadly pale, then changed to a deep crimson, and almost staggered.

Fabiola saw this, and going up to him kindly and frankly, placed her hand upon his arm, and mildly said to him, "Orontius, there is that within which may

well make us both blush deeply, but not therefore despond."

So saying she drew aside the curtain, and Orontius saw within a crystal plate, the embroidered scarf so much connected with his own and his sister's history. Upon it were lying two sharp weapons, the points of both which were rusted with blood. In one he recognised his own dagger; the other appeared to him like one of those instruments of female vengeance with which he knew heathen ladies punished their attendant slaves.

"We have both," said Fabiola, "unintentionally inflicted a wound and shed the blood of her whom we now honor as a sister in heaven. But for my part, from the day when I did so, and gave her occasion to display her virtue, I date the dawn of grace upon my soul. What say you, Orontius?"

"That I, likewise, from the instant that I so misused her, and led to her exhibition of such Christian heroism, began to feel the hand of God upon me, that has led me to repentance and forgiveness."

"It is thus ever," concluded Fabiola. "The example of our Lord has made the martyrs; and the example of the martyrs leads us upwards to Him. Their blood softens our hearts: His alone cleanses our souls. Theirs pleads for mercy: His bestows it. May the Church, in her days of peace and of victories, never forget what she owes to the age of her martyrs. As for us two, we are indebted to it for our spiritual lives. May many who will only read of it draw from it the same mercy and grace!"

They knelt down, and prayed long together silently before the shrine.

They then parted, to meet no more.

After a few years, spent by Orontius in penitential fervor, a green mound by the palms, in the little dell near Gaza, marked the spot where he slept the sleep of the just.

And after many years of charity and holiness Fabiola withdrew to rest in peace in company with Agnes and Miriam.

[THE END.]

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REV. D. O'NEILL,
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