

ADRIEN D'ALBRET



badly forced

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Mrs. Methuall

General Proficiency

In 4th Class

Geo. W. Pearce

Teacher

Dec 23. 1885



"Behold your Gods!"

ADRIEN D'ALBRET

BY

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Christmas Day, or First Sunday after
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ADRIEN D'ALBRET.

St. John i. 11.

N the broad terrace walk which ran in front of an ancient château in the heart of Guienne, two men were walking, one summer evening in the year 1573. The elder was dressed in a suit of rich, though sober-coloured, silk; the hilt of his rapier was of the most costly workmanship; and his hat was looped with a jewel of great value. But there was no need of these outward tokens to declare that he belonged to the highest ranks of the noblesse. Pride of birth, so habitually indulged that all consciousness of it had been lost, was stamped on every look and gesture. His companion wore a handsome hunting suit, a good deal stained with dust, as though its wearer had but recently returned from a long day's sport. The likeness which he bore to the older man showed plainly enough the relationship between them.

“Pardon, M. le Marquis,” said the youth, “I regret

that you have delayed your journey on my account. I did not know you required my presence."

"Yet what I said to you yesterday, Adrien, might have assured you that I should require it," returned the Marquis. "In which direction has your path lain? Messengers have been sent out on all sides in search of you."

"I have been following game in the neighbourhood of Les Marais Salants," replied the young man, with some embarrassment, which he tried in vain to conceal.

"Les Marais Salants," repeated his father in some surprise. "What game could you expect to find there? But no matter. The delay has been unfortunate, but cannot now be helped. M. Thibaut de Marsan arrived here very soon after you left the château. He came with proposals which merit our gratitude, and should be received with the utmost cordiality. My remarks to you on previous occasions, will suggest what his proposals were.

"He offers us an alliance with his house," resumed the Marquis, finding that his son made no answer, "one of the noblest in France. You know that the Count de Marsan has now no son, and but one daughter, who will be the heiress of his estates. Should she form such an alliance as the King approves, her husband will be permitted, after the Count's death, to assume his name and title."

He paused again, but the young man did not speak, and his father went on in a sterner tone.

"Our ancient renown and the favour of Queen Catherine will secure the King's approval of the marriage. It is a

great stroke of fortune for a younger son, such as you are. Your brother himself will scarcely be your superior in rank and consequence. Methinks such an offer calls for some expression of thankfulness."

"Pardon, my father," stammered Adrien. "If I might have a few days for reflection——"

"Reflection, Adrien! M. de Marsan has been already kept too long without an answer, as it is. I have indeed taken on myself to assure him, in your name, of your deep sense of his consideration, and grateful acceptance of his alliance. But courtesy requires that you should express the same yourself without delay."

"I cannot, at this moment, sir," exclaimed the youth; "there are reasons,—which I will explain shortly——"

"What reason can there be for delaying your answer? Surely you cannot mean," he continued, bending his forehead into a frown of the darkest anger, "you cannot mean to decline the Count's overtures! It cannot be possible that what Father André hinted to me last winter, and which I dismissed as wholly incredible, is true! Adrien, if I could believe that you were infected with the heresy of these wretched Huguenots, rebels alike to their Sovereign and their Church—if I could believe that you would ally yourself with them, I should forget that you were my son, and be careful for nothing, except that the name of D'Albret should not be disgraced. With my own hand would I strike your name from our family records; the Bastile, lifelong imprisonment, death itself

should be your portion, rather than that such a blot should fall on our ancient scutcheon. But no more of this. Retire now to your chamber. M. de Marsan fortunately does not know of your return to the château. I shall accompany him to Paris; where in a week from this time I shall expect to arrive for the ceremony of betrothal."

Adrien obeyed without a word. He repaired straight to his own apartment, and locking the door behind him, threw himself on a seat. The information just received had greatly disturbed him, though his father had altogether mistaken the cause of his embarrassment. He had no leaning to the Reformed opinions. It was true that he had more than once expressed his horror at the massacre of the previous August, known as that of St. Bartholomew; but his horror had been excited by its cruelty and treachery, not by any sympathy with the creed of the sufferers. His embarrassment was occasioned by a different cause. Hunting in the forest one day early in the spring, he had pursued the game with so much ardour, as not to notice the approach of night. He presently found himself entangled in the forest glades; which in another half-hour became so dark, that it was impossible for him to find his way. He knew it would be of no use to shout for assistance. The spot generally known as Les Marais Salants was a singularly wild and desolate one, and was generally avoided by the peasantry from an idea that it was haunted by evil spirits. He cut down some bushes with his *couteau de chasse*, so as to

form some shelter against the wind, and gathered a bed of dried moss. He was just composing himself to sleep, when suddenly he caught sight of a light, glimmering through the brushwood at a short distance. Discarding the superstitious fancies which for the moment took hold of him, he started up, and hurried towards it. It repeatedly disappeared, and again came in sight, until at length he approached sufficiently near to perceive a woman holding a lantern in her hand, which she occasionally raised, and then covered with her cloak. The moment she became aware of his approach, she extinguished the light, and ran off in the darkness. Adrien tried in vain to follow her. In a few minutes he caught his foot in a bush, and fell headlong over a precipice of some depth.

When he recovered his senses, he found himself lying on a coarse bed, in a hut built of logs, and thatched with reed. The furniture of the room was of the rudest description; yet there was not wanting a certain elegance, which argued that the owner, though poor, possessed taste. He tried to rise from the bed, but his whole frame was so bruised and shaken, that he abandoned the attempt. Presently a voice was heard, singing some simple melody. It sounded like a Spanish air, and came apparently from the lower part of the cottage. He lay still and listened in a trance of delight. He was passionately fond of music, and had never heard a voice of such exquisite and thrilling sweetness. The song came to an end, a light step was heard ascending the rough stair, and a girl stood by his bedside,

exclaiming, "Ah, monsieur has recovered his senses at last, praise be to Heaven for it!"

Adrien looked at her with mingled interest and wonder. Her dress was of the coarsest possible material, according in all respects with the appearance of the cottage. But such was her extraordinary grace and beauty, that it sat upon her as though it had been the robe of a princess. Her complexion was pale, with a slight tinge of colour; her eyes of the deepest and richest blue; her hair auburn, parted simply across the forehead, and falling in natural ringlets. Adrien's first idea was that he was dreaming. His next, that he had been made the subject of some masquerading trick; and the damsel before him was a lady of the highest rank, who had chosen so to disguise herself for the sake of some playful frolic. He would have spoken, but she placed her finger on her lips, forbidding all conversation. "You are not to talk," she said. "My father, who understands something of medicine, says you must remain quiet for the present, or it will increase your fever. When he returns home in the evening, he will examine your hurts again."

The young nobleman obeyed; in truth, it seemed impossible to refuse obedience. All that day he lay helpless on his couch, watching every movement of his beautiful nurse, or listening to the snatches of song which she poured forth from time to time, as unconscious of any admiration which she might awaken, as any of the birds around her. Who could she be? Her complexion, her

hair, the colour of her eyes, were quite different from those of the natives of the country? Why should she be living in this rustic hut, built evidently in the most sequestered part of the wood, for purposes of concealment? The idea occurred to Adrien that her father must be a refugee from some foreign country—Saxony or Sweden, perhaps; a political exile, to whom the strictest concealment was necessary. The appearance of the father, Pierre Bertot, as he seemed to be called, did not however corroborate this view. His complexion and features somewhat resembled those of his daughter, but there was nothing of the disguised nobleman in his bearing or conversation. He spoke with evident restraint and reserve. Adrien could not fail to see that, but for the injury he had sustained, he would have been anything but a welcome guest at the stranger's *châlet*. Pierre declared, however, that *monsieur's* injuries were too severe to allow of his returning home for several days; and, as it was impossible for Bertot himself or his daughter to go up to the *château* for help, Adrien must needs remain in his present quarters for some time longer. A week passed thus. Adrien's interest in the fair girl grew stronger every day. Her perfect simplicity, her natural grace and extraordinary beauty, her total unconsciousness of the embarrassment of their mutual position, enhanced his admiration. Adrien had never hitherto known the passion of love. His life had been passed almost entirely at the *Château d'Albret*, under the tutelage of Father André. His father, a

favourite, as the reader has heard, at the court of Catherine de Medicis, had bestowed but little attention upon him. His mother had died when he was an infant. Except on the occasion of a visit to the capital, he had seen nothing of women's society: and what he had beheld on that occasion, repelled and disgusted him. Under these circumstances it was no wonder that the rare loveliness of Paulette Bertot, to which the strange mystery by which she was surrounded lent additional piquancy, should have had a strong fascination for him. His, too, was a nature which, when it has once received a deep impression, rarely loses it again. Before he was sufficiently recovered to accomplish his journey home, an overpowering passion had taken possession of him. Had he perceived the slightest encouragement on Paulette's side, he would forthwith have declared himself her lover. But her parting words were calculated to repress any such feeling.

"Farewell, monsieur," she said; "I rejoice that we have been the means of restoring you to health. Farewell; we shall scarcely meet again."

"Paulette, I can never forget you!"

"Monsieur had better do so: at all events, he had better refrain from re-visiting this spot. It is the only kindness he can do us."

Adrien said no more. He saw that she was in earnest, and was moreover aware of the wisdom of her counsel. The sight of her father had dispelled the fancy that she could be his equal in rank, and a *mésalliance* would

irrevocably offend his father. He must blot the last fortnight altogether out of his memory. Prudence and common sense alike required it of him.

But at one-and-twenty, prudence and common sense have but small chance of victory in a struggle with a first passion. Adrien found that Paulette's lovely face was for ever intruding itself between him and the book he was studying : her sweet voice would not permit him to work by day or to rest by night. In his excursions he took the path which led to the Marais Salants, only pausing when within a short distance of the well-remembered path through the brushwood, which led to the châlet, in the half-acknowledged hope that some chance would bring her that way. At last, he could control himself no longer. He must see her again, if only once. He must know who and what she was. He must make sure that a union with her was impossible, before he surrendered all hope.

She was alone, as usual, when he reached the cottage, engaged in her customary occupation of knitting. A bright flush overspread her face and neck as she became aware of his presence : but it was instantly followed by a deadly paleness.

"Monsieur," she said in a tone of reproach, "why are you here? Have you forgotten my last words?"

"I have forgotten none of your words, Paulette. It is impossible that I can ever forget them. I have tried, but I cannot. I have come hither to tell you so. Ah! do not be so cruel."

“Cruel! It is you who are cruel, to return to a spot whither you can bring nothing but suffering and ruin.”

“I would die sooner than cause you either!” exclaimed the young man. “Can you think so meanly of Adrien d’Albret, as to believe it possible?”

“Adrien d’Albret, the son of the Marquis d’Albret!” cried Paulette. “Is it possible? This is worse than I had dreamed!”

“Yes, I am Adrien d’Albret, Paulette. If you knew me, you would not believe me capable of harming you. Trust me, my wife——”

“Wife!” almost shrieked the maiden. “Monsieur cannot know what he is saying. He cannot cherish so wild a dream!”

“Why a dream? You are strangers and fugitives, poor, of humble rank. But what does love care for these things?”

“Ah! and you have never guessed what we really are? You do not know that we belong to a race not merely enslaved and despised, but proscribed and accursed—with whom the lowest peasant will hold no intercourse—who are not permitted so much as to enter the dwellings of their fellows—who may not eat of the same food, or drink from the same fountain, as other men, for fear their touch should poison it—not suffered in life to pray with the congregation in Christ’s Church, or partake of the sacraments ordained for all—not suffered in death to sleep within consecrated ground! In a word, my lord does not dream that he is seeking a Cagot maiden for his bride?”

Adrien started back. It was strange that this had never occurred to him. There were, indeed, no Cagots on his father's estate. Common throughout the southern and western coasts of France, there were none in that part of Guienne in which the Château d'Albret lay. Pierre Bertot had fled from the borders of the Pyrenees, more than a twelvemonth previously to Guienne, and had chosen the neighbourhood of Les Marais Salants as the most suitable place of concealment. His history was a somewhat singular one. He had been born on the estate of a proprietor unusually humane and tolerant of the unhappy race, whom all men shunned and hated. He had permitted Pierre to be educated at the village school, and had even condescended to instruct him himself, until in respect of knowledge and refinement he was greatly the superior of the peasants on the domain. During his master's lifetime, he had been allowed to reside in one of the woodmen's cottages on the estate. There Paulette had been born and educated, till she had reached her seventeenth year. The death of his feudal master, and the succession of a distant relative, a wild and dissipated youth, had entirely changed Pierre Bertot's position. The new proprietor had encountered Paulette, whose beauty attracted him. Dreading the extremity of outrage and wrong, Pierre had at once taken to flight, concealing his departure so skilfully that no one could conjecture whither he had gone. Some seven or eight

months after his settlement in Les Marais Salants, the accident had occurred to Adrien.

The latter, as he caught Paulette's last hurried sentence, stood for a moment the picture of despair. He was too enlightened, as well as too humane, to share fully the general prejudice felt against that unhappy race; whose origin and history alike are wrapped in impenetrable obscurity. But whatever might be his own feeling, he knew that there was indeed an insurmountable barrier between Paulette and himself. A marriage could not be contracted with her, without an entire surrender of rank and fortune, home and country. A foreigner might be naturalized, a peasant might be ennobled, but a Cagot—no, it was not to be thought of. He glanced at Paulette, who was leaning white and trembling against a tree, and then rushed frantically from the spot.

He returned home, and shut himself up in his own apartment, pleading illness as a reason for seeing no one. He struggled fiercely with the passion that was consuming him—told himself, again and again, that it was nothing less than madness to cherish it further—that he must tear it out of his bosom, cost him what it might. Three days did he pass thus, but on the fourth his resolution gave way. He returned to the Cagot's hut, and entreated Paulette to take him for her husband. "I have considered the whole matter," he said—"I have done nothing but consider it since we parted. I have weighed the forfeiture of the privileges of my rank and my inheritance, of the

esteem of my friends, the affection of my relatives, against the loss of you. I can bear the surrender of the first, but never of the other."

"What, you would take a Cagot girl as your wife, knowing her to be a Cagot!" exclaimed Paulette in irrepressible amazement.

"I would," returned Adrien. "I know but too well, that my father, that my kinsmen, would not receive you, but I shall not ask their consent."

"Ah, I perceive," she rejoined bitterly, "monsieur would place me in some secluded spot, where he would only visit me by stealth—where none would guess that he had a wife, of whom he was ashamed!"

"You wrong me, Paulette. In France I could not produce you to the world as my wife, without danger to yourself. But there are other lands—England or free Switzerland, where you would be free from danger."

"Free from danger perhaps," said Paulette. "But you would still be the noble, and I the daughter of a despised race; whom you could not present to your equals, of whom neither you nor they would love to speak. Monsieur, it cannot be. Go your way, I pray you, and leave the Cagot girl to her lot, which she can bear with patience. Approach not our hut again. My father has received a hurt from a wild boar, from which he may be long in recovering. Your presence would but increase his suffering."

Adrien departed without further remonstrance, reaching home, as the reader has heard at the outset of this tale, just

in time to have an interview with his father, and hear the proposed arrangements for his marriage with Le Comte de Marsan's daughter. He spent that day and the next in the solitude of his chamber, and on the following morning set out for Paris.

About a week had passed between the last interview between Paulette and her lover, when the latter once more made his appearance at the *châlet*. The girl, who came forth at his summons in an agony of distress, did not at the first moment recognize him. He no longer wore the dress of a noble: he was now attired in the coarse homespun jerkin, the round broad-brimmed hat, and the untanned shoes, ordinarily worn by the peasantry. There was a leathern belt round his waist, but there was no sword hanging from it.

"Oh, wherefore have you come again," she exclaimed, "and in this disguise, which only mocks me? My father is dead—he died two hours ago. I am left alone in the world. I must myself commit his body to the ground; no prayers but mine will be uttered over him. Then I must return to my own kindred, who perhaps will take me in. Surely, *monsieur*, you will leave me now."

"Paulette," said Adrien, "hear me for a few moments; and if you then bid me leave you, I will go for ever. I am a proscribed and dishonoured man. I have renounced my rank and my country. My name has been struck off from our family rolls; my father and my brother will never pronounce it again. Were I again to show myself

in France, imprisonment for life in the Bastile would be my lot, unless indeed a shorter mode should be resorted to of wiping out the stain on the family honour."

"And wherefore this?" exclaimed Paulette, startled and amazed at her lover's words.

"Because my father insisted on my allying myself with a lady of noble rank and princely fortune, and I would not. Why I refused, none know so well as you."

"You do not mean that you have done this for my sake, for *mine!*" she repeated breathlessly.

"Yes, for your sake. I told my father that my affections were fixed on one as far beneath me in rank, as she was above me in every nobler quality—that I would never marry any one else, let the consequences be what they might. He threatened me with the loss of rank and wealth, declared that he would banish me from his presence, blot my name from our ancient pedigree, shut me up in a prison, whence I could not escape—all this, and more he poured forth in the bitterness of his disappointment. Finding that I still remained unmoved, he desired that a strict watch should be kept over me, and then went out—I doubt not, to procure the Queen's order for my committal to the Bastile. I contrived with difficulty to escape from the palace, laid aside the dress I had been wont to wear, and took in its place the peasant's garb you behold. I shall never lay it aside again."

"And whither go you now?" faltered Paulette.

"To the Swiss frontier. There I shall dwell—a peasant

among peasants, supporting myself by the labour of my own hands. Paulette, Paulette, must I go alone?"

She stepped forward, and threw herself into his arms. "Adrien!" she exclaimed through her tears, "I will go with you to the end of the world. I am yours for ever!"

What woman could have given any other answer to the man, who had renounced station and dignity, a splendid home, and a lofty destiny, to share her poverty, and her shame? Yet, what was the sacrifice thus made by Adrien, when compared with that, which the great Bridegroom made for the Church, His Bride; when, as on this day, He laid aside the glory which He had with His Father in Heaven, to wear the garment of humanity, and experience all its shame, its weaknesses and its sufferings, that He might truly become One with man? But, what has been the answer of Humanity to its Divine Wooer? Alas that it responds so little to that mighty act of love, that the sad record of His visit to earth should be, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

No. VI.

Sunday after Christmas.

THE TEMPLE AT GODMUNDHAM.

Isaiah xlv. 6.



THE city of Eurewic—which name in more recent times has been contracted into York—was for many generations, not only the residence of the kings of Northumbria, but the metropolis of the North. The Romans had surrounded it with strong walls and flanking towers ; some of which remain till the present day. Many of the Northumbrian monarchs were crowned and consecrated within its walls ; many lie buried in its graveyards ; not a few who had voluntarily abdicated their thrones, or had been deposed from them in the civil strife of those troublous times, ended their lives in the monasteries, which themselves or their predecessors had built there. It was in truth a suitable capital for the kingdom to which it belonged. Roads, exceptionally good for the times, connected it with all places of consequence in the neighbourhood ; and its public buildings—the legacy for the most part of Roman magnificence—were well adapted for the

display of barbaric splendour, which distinguished the reign of the early Saxon kings.

One morning, in the year 626, there was an unusual stir in the main street of the city, as though a public meeting of some importance was about to be held. Men of rank, ealdormen and thanes, were continually arriving on horse-back, attended by their followers. None of them wore armour. The helmet, the round shield, and suit of chain mail had been laid aside; and though the theowes carried their spears, and the nobles their swords girded to their sides, it was only as a precaution against the possible attacks of wild animals. Edwin's rule had reduced the kingdom to so perfect a condition of order, that the high-ways were accounted as safe as a man's own private dwelling. By the road-side, wherever a clear spring or a sheltered nook suggested a pleasant halting-place, cups and dishes of metal were chained to posts for the convenience of travellers. Men of rank were distinguished by their woollen tunics, sometimes richly embroidered, and by their flowing cloaks fastened over their shoulders with clasps of gold. Their attendants wore dresses of sober brown, and cloaks greatly shorter than those of their masters. Now and then a variety was occasioned by the arrival of a priest belonging to the shrine of Thor or Freya, known by his flowing dress of peculiar shape and colour, and attended by his inferior ministers. As troop after troop passed up the principal street to their places of destination—some to gist houses or hostelries, a few of which were to

be found in the great towns only ; some to residences of private friends ; some to the palace of the king himself—they formed the subject of continued observation to the lookers-on. These, for the most part, clustered together at the corners of the streets, or round the doors of the principal mansions. Just inside the courtyard of the royal palace, three persons were thus employed. Two of them would have been at once recognized, by their dress, as officers of the king's household ; the third, occupying a stone seat, in a recess adjoining one of the doorways, was the favourite bower woman of Queen Ethelberga. She was gaily, indeed gorgeously attired, wearing a rich scarlet mantle, with wide sleeves, over a tunic of fine linen, the latter having a deep fringe of embroidery. She had shoes of the same colour as her mantle, on which was worked a pattern in golden thread. A girdle of the same device sustained the keys of the royal bower, together with scissors, and the other articles required for her mistress's toilet.

“It is thy hope then, Beowulph,” said one, “that the result which we have been so long looking for, will this day be accomplished, and the King openly profess himself a believer in Christ? May it be so ! I scarce dare hope it.”

“And why not, Ulla?” returned Beowulph. “Hath he not convened the Witan for the express purpose of determining whether the ancient belief shall be wholly abandoned or not ; and thinkest thou he would have taken a step like that, if his own mind were not fully made up on the subject? Did we not hear him solemnly assure the

most reverend Bishop, that he would thenceforth render no more homage to those, who, he was well persuaded, were no gods at all?"

"We did," replied Ulla, "but it is one thing for our lord to renounce the service of those, whose hollowness hath been fully proved, and another to profess obedience to Him, of whom he knoweth little or naught. Nor is this the first time that he has publicly declared his intention of debating the question, whether he will embrace the Faith of the Crucified or not. Thou knowest that he was accepted as our royal mistress's suitor, not only on the understanding that she was to be free to follow her own Faith, but that he would himself give that Faith his most careful consideration. When again he narrowly escaped the assassin's dagger—thou rememberest that, Beowulph?"

"That do I," said Beowulph, "I was but a few yards distant from the King, when the attempt was made. It was the morning of the blessed Easter Festival. The assassin had been introduced as an ambassador from the foul pagan, who rules in Wessex. Suddenly in the midst of his speech, he drew a poisoned dagger and rushed on the King. I saw his intent, but could not stop him. In truth, nothing could have saved our King, except the devotion of the noble Lilla, who threw himself in the way at the moment the blow was dealt. Even then, so furious was the stab, that it passed entirely through Lilla's body, and slightly wounded the King. No escape could have shown more visibly the protecting hand of God. So did

the holy Paulinus assure him, nor did the King himself doubt the truth of his words."

"True," said Ulla, "yet he did not offer himself as a candidate for Baptism. When Paulinus enlarged on the guilty deeds which the Gospel abhorred, but which pagans practised, he professed that he would thenceforth have no more to do with a creed, which could allow such wickedness; but he added no more. Again, when he was about to set forth with his army to exact vengeance on his intended murderer, he gave a half-promise, that if he should return victorious, he would comply with Paulinus's wishes. Yet though the victory he desired was obtained, he took no decisive step, such as we all had hoped for. There seems to me little ground for anticipating that more will come of this present movement, than further debates and questionings. King Edwin is now forty-three years of age, and it is eleven since he ascended the throne. I fear he is too like the Roman governor, to whom holy Paul preached of old; who waited so long for a 'convenient season,' that it never came at all!"

"There is truth in thy words," observed Berwine, "I myself have often feared the same. Yet now there hath something occurred, of which thou knowest not, which may afford a better ground of hope. Thou mayest have heard something of the dream, or vision, which the King saw, when he found refuge with Redwald—as thou hast truly said, more than eleven years ago."

"I have heard naught of such a vision," answered Ulla,

“nor do I think have others, or they would not have been silent respecting it.”

“I know it with certainty,” said Berwine, “having heard it from my royal mistress’s own lips. It chanced one day that our noble master was sorely grieved in mind, deeming it likely that King Redwald, his host, would surrender him into the hands of his enemies; in which case there would be scant hope of his escaping instant and cruel death. It was the dusk of the evening, and he was sitting on a stone in front of the royal palace, meditating sadly on these things, when suddenly a stranger of venerable aspect presented himself. He wore a dress, the like of which the King had never seen before, and asked wherefore he kept watch thus sad and alone. Fearing some snare, the King would not satisfy him; but the stranger told him there was no need for explanation, for that he already knew all. He bade him take comfort, since Redwald would not betray him as he feared. On the contrary, Edwin would mount his father’s throne, and attain to greater power and honour, than the latter had ever possessed. Whensoever this should have been accomplished, the King was to bear in mind the present interview, and hearken to the instructions respecting a new faith, which would then be offered him. The stranger then laid his hand on the King’s forehead, as a token whereby he was to remember their meeting, and then disappeared.”

“Strange, indeed,” said Ulla. “It is no wonder that the King should attach importance to such an occurrence.

Yet again I must say, that if all these years have passed without its having induced him to take the step we so earnestly desire, I know no reason why it should do so now."

"I will tell thee a reason," said Berwine. "But two days since the holy Paulinus, doubtless divinely warned of the vision which the King had beheld, entered his chamber, where he was sitting in just such a reverie as had occupied him while at Redwald's court, and laying his hands on his forehead, required him by that token to submit himself to the yoke of Christ. The King was moved as he had never been before. Straightway he sent out messengers to summon the meeting of the Witan."

"Indeed!" said Ulla. "Doubtless that gives a better ground for hope than I had supposed there to be. And see there our royal mistress cometh, accompanied by her father the Bishop. She is doubtless on her way to the chapel she hath newly builded, there to pray that the Lord will be pleased to open the eyes of her husband to discern the truth. Go thou with her, Berwine, and join thy supplications to hers, while we take our part in the deliberations of the council."

Half an hour afterwards, the Witena-gemot had assembled in the great hall of the royal palace. It was a striking and impressive scene. The roof was lofty and inlaid with gold; the panelled walls similarly decorated, the upper bays being hung with tapestry, representing the coronation of Solomon. At the further end of the hall

on a high daïs, the King's throne was placed. Beneath him, on benches covered with rich cushions, the great nobles, or earls, the heretocks, or leaders of the army, and the chief among the heathen priests, had their places : below them again the thanes, deputies of a lower rank, corresponding to the country gentlemen, and gentlemen farmers of the present day. The assembly bore a nearer resemblance, than is generally realized, to the Parliaments of modern times ; and was a wonderful display of political wisdom, considering the rudeness of the age.

When all had taken their places, the King rose to address the assembly. His dress did not differ much from that of the great earls, except that his tunic was of a purple colour, and his brow was encircled with a diadem. He spoke briefly, but to the point, as was ever his wont. He told them that for many years past, doubts had arisen in the minds of the people respecting the ancient belief of their fathers. Many were inclining to the new Faith, which of late years had been preached in Britain. For himself his mind was still somewhat clouded with doubt, and he was anxious to take counsel with the Witan. He prayed therefore that all would speak freely, on a matter in which all were deeply concerned.

He resumed his seat, and Coifi, the chief of the heathen priests, rose in his place. He was eagerly listened to, for it was known that the present subject had deeply engaged his thoughts. But his words nevertheless occasioned considerable surprise. He began by stating that none had

ever studied more deeply the religion of their fathers than himself ; none had ever rendered their gods a more faithful obedience. Yet this devotion had not procured for him the prosperity, which ought to have been his portion in life, if they had been what they professed to be. He was therefore convinced of the hollowness of the present belief of the nation, and accounted it but reasonable, that due attention should be paid to the new doctrines now preached among them ; which might contain the truth, in which their own creed was wanting.

When he ceased, there was a pause, perhaps of surprise, perhaps of doubt, and then one of the thanes, whose known character for wisdom procured him an instant and respectful hearing, rose to speak. He concurred in what Coifi had said, but for far deeper and more solid reasons. Their present creed, he pointed out, taught them nothing as to the true origin, or the future condition, of the soul. “What do we know of the present life of man on earth?” he asked. “Is it not like the flight of a bird through the hall, wherein the King may be sitting at supper with his nobles in the season of winter—when the fire blazes warm in the midst, and the rain and the snow rage without? Thou hast seen, O King, how on such an occasion a sparrow will fly in at the open door at one end of the hall, and find shelter and warmth for a while ; yet soon fly out again, through the opposite entrance into the dark night and vanish from sight. So is it with man in this life. We behold him while he is here, but of what happened

before, or of what will happen afterwards, we know nothing. If then this new Creed can teach us aught on these subjects, surely it merits our attention."

A deep murmur of approval ran through the crowded benches; and at the suggestion of Coifi, Paulinus was introduced. He came forward, preceded by his deacon carrying a silver cross. As he advanced up the hall, his figure and dress presented a remarkable contrast to those round him. The dark ring of hair surrounding his tonsure, the swarthy complexion, the thoughtful expression which sat on his classic features, suggested a wholly different type of countenance to the rounded faces and fair skins, the bright blue eyes, and long flowing flaxen locks of the Saxons. His spare, nervous figure, too, was as unlike as possible to the strong and massive frames of the King and his ealdormen. He stood in his dark monk's dress in the midst of the richly apparelled assembly—the very contrast producing its solemn effect on all present.

At a sign from the King he commenced his address using the Anglo-Saxon tongue, which he had done his best to acquire since his arrival, but of which his knowledge was as yet imperfect. Yet here again the foreign accent and the unfamiliar mode of expression riveted perhaps the attention of his hearers, more than the most fluent address of one of their own countrymen might have done.

"Men and brethren," he began, "I am sent unto you from the holy Father of the Church, that I should preach

unto you the truth, as God has been pleased to reveal it to mankind, for the enlightening of the understanding and the saving of the soul. Hitherto have ye worshipped them that are no gods—images of wood and stone, the work of men's hands ; that have eyes, but cannot see, and ears, but cannot hear. How should man's own handiwork help and protect him ? Rather lift up your eyes unto Him who made heaven and earth ; who sways the winds and the seas ; who orders the seed-time and the harvest ; whose servants, the sun and the moon, are—the mere creatures of His pleasure. He is not to be worshipped under any figure or image, but only in spirit and in truth, even as He Himself is a Spirit. How indeed could any image of Him be made ? 'To whom will ye liken God,' said one of His inspired prophets, 'or what likeness will ye compare unto Him ?' Lift up your eyes on high, and behold Him, who hath created these things. Yea, brethren, turn unto Him, quitting for ever your dumb idols, and ye shall receive wisdom and strength and peace for ever."

He ceased. Once more there was a general cry of approbation from every part of the assembly. Coifi again started to his feet, proposing that the temples hitherto dedicated to false gods should be destroyed, that their worship should be renounced ; that the whole nation should prepare to receive the rite of Christian Baptism.

The King rose to reply, but still with an air of indecision.

"Think not," he said, "that I have heard unmoved the words of this holy man. Long have I been persuaded

that there cometh neither help nor blessing from those, whom we call our gods. Yet it may be that they exist, and are powerful to avenge and injure, though not to bless. Who is there that will take upon himself the peril of provoking their wrath, by destroying or profaning their shrines?"

"I will," exclaimed Coifi, springing up. "Thou knowest, O King, that it is forbidden to the priests of Odin to wield weapon or mount warhorse. But I here renounce once and for ever the service of Odin: in token of which I will put on the forbidden armour, and mount thine own charger, if thou, O King, wilt permit it. My hand shall be the first to desecrate the altars, at which I have served—to overthrow the idols, before which I have bowed down. On me be the peril of the deed!"

A shout louder than any that had preceded it burst from the whole assembly; and the King, borne away by the enthusiasm of the moment, gave orders that Coifi's wish should be complied with. A fiery charger was led forth, helmet and breastplate, shield and spear, were brought from the royal armoury. Throwing off his priestly vestments, Coifi arrayed himself like a warrior for battle, and springing on the back of the warhorse, rode out through the palace gate.

Meanwhile the tidings of what had passed at the Witan spread through the town, and everywhere excited the keenest interest. A vast crowd had already assembled before Coifi could pass the city gates. It was impossible for the horse to proceed at any speed along the narrow

road leading to Godmundham, where the great temple of Odin was situated. He was compelled to moderate his speed, and keep pace with the crowd which poured along at his side.

Meanwhile the numbers were swelled by many of the earls and thanes, who with their followers had taken to horse. By the time that Godmundham was reached, a vast multitude had assembled. Hitherto they had but imperfectly comprehended Coifi's purpose. But when the sacred ash grove surrounding the temple was reached, within which stood the sacred enclosure itself, and they beheld him press forward with uplifted spear through the consecrated precincts, a murmur of mingled doubt and alarm ran through the crowd.

"Hath madness seized this priest?" exclaimed a peasant, whose close-cropped hair, coarse tunic, and metal collar, showed that he was a theowe—a serf, that is, attached to the soil. "Doth he not know, that to wear arms—much more to wield them within the sacred precincts, will bring the wrath of the Holy Ones of Asgard upon him?"

"Odin will transfix him with his lance," cried another.

"Or Thor smite him with his thunder," added a third.

"It should not be suffered," clamoured a fourth. "Hein-dal will withhold his showers, and Freya refuse our women her aid in childbirth."

"Seize him, bind him, slay him on the stone of Odin, or the wrath of the gods will fall upon us all."

The tumult rose higher and higher, as Coifi approached the wooden fence immediately environing the shrine itself; the evident purpose of the throng being to prevent the violence he intended, or at least to avenge it. But he suddenly drew rein, and shouted in a voice which all could hear, bidding them stand aside.

“What, cannot your gods defend themselves? If they be almighty, as ye believe, do they need your help against a mortal? Lo, I defy them thus!”

Rising in his stirrups as he spoke, he hurled his lance against the ashen fence with such force, that it penetrated deep, and remained quivering in the wood. The crowd stood still for a moment, awed at this extremity of daring. But when they beheld Coifi, alike unhurt and undaunted, spring to the ground, and force his way into the sanctuary itself, through the priests, who would fain have stayed him—their mood suddenly changed. Half awed, half expectant, they pressed after him into the innermost shrine, trodden in ordinary by none but consecrated feet. Here, on pedestals of marble, carved in wood and rudely coloured, stood the statues of the seven great gods of Asgard. To the right were the idols of the Sun and Moon, and the mysterious Tiw, of whom nothing but the name is known; to the left, Thor, Freya, and Saturn, the last an old man wearing a white tunic, and leaning his arm upon a wheel. In the centre appeared the figure of Odin, to whom the temple was dedicated, gigantic in size, armed from head to foot, grasping a spear in one hand,

and with the other sustaining a shield. The sight of these awful images, so long the objects of fear and veneration, caused the multitude once more to recoil in terror ; until Coifi, striding forward with his uplifted axe, struck so fierce a blow on the head of the central idol, that it fell shattered to the ground.

“ Behold your gods !” he exclaimed ; “ what are they but dumb idols, which can neither see, nor hear, nor avenge themselves on any ? Bring fire, and let us utterly destroy them, and the shrine in which they have so long been worshipped. Then will we lift up hands in homage to the true Lord of heaven and earth, even Him whom Paulinus preacheth.”

His commands were obeyed, as those of one inspired. Rushing to their cottages, which lay near at hand, the peasants caught up blazing firebrands from their hearths, and in a few minutes the whole enclosure was in flames. It was constructed of ashen posts, driven into the ground close to one another, and rudely squared by the axe. The wood was dry by exposure to many a summer ; it soon caught fire, and burnt fiercely. The dusk of the evening had been gathering, when Coifi approached Godmundham, and ere nightfall such a blaze had been kindled, as warned the King and such of his nobles as had remained behind, that the purpose of the priest had been accomplished. Presently the horsemen who had ridden forth, returned to the city and reported what had passed. The narrative deeply stirred the heart or

the King. The sacred flame was at last kindled. He commanded that a chapel should straightway be built, of the same materials as that just destroyed, but different in construction, and adapted for Christian worship. Here he was himself baptized, on the ensuing Easter-day. A church of stone, larger in size and more splendid in appearance, was commenced, and consecrated by Paulinus, who was appointed the first Bishop of Eurewic.

Soon afterwards the whole people of Northumbria, following the example of their King, sought entrance by baptism to the Church of Christ. Such multitudes resorted to Paulinus for this purpose, that he is said to have been employed for six-and-thirty days, from morning to night, in administering the rite. The banks of the Glen, and those of the Swale, near Richmond, were the places chosen for the solemn ceremony. Heathenism, for the time, became almost extinct. The people had learned that the deities, whom they had hitherto worshipped, were but the work of human hands, unable to hear prayer, and powerless to answer it. They had attained at last to the knowledge of "the King of Israel, and their Redeemer the Lord of Hosts, who saith, I am the First and I am the Last; and beside Me there is no God."

No. VII.

First Sunday after Epiphany.

SECESSION TO MONS SACER.

Romans xii. 4, 5.



THE condition of Rome, immediately after the expulsion of the Tarquins, was very different from what the ordinary student would be likely to gather from the native historians of those times. He would be apt to suppose that the nation, when freed from its tyrants, received a sudden accession of strength—that the young republic sprang at once into lusty life, like a young Phœnix, from the ruins of the monarchy. But the immediate consequence was not an increase, but a very considerable loss, of power. The city itself indeed remained uninjured. Porsenna, though he obtained a complete victory over the Romans, gained the city not by storm, but by surrender; and like a generous enemy, retired without either destroying or weakening its fortifications.

These were, considering the scanty extent of territory possessed by the people, very extensive. The walls of Servius Tullius are said to have been six miles in circum-

ference ; but the space thus enclosed was not occupied entirely by buildings. As in the instance of the great cities of the East, it contained large tracts of arable and pasture land, or districts covered with forest or under-wood—thus affording ample space for the surrounding inhabitants to find refuge in event of an invasion, as well as supplying food to the garrison during a lengthened siege.

The city at this period also contained many great, and even splendid, buildings. The cloaca maxima which conveyed the sewage of the city into the Tiber, was a work of vast extent. The great circus again must have been a grand national structure. The temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill, and the Mamertine prison, were worthy of the later days of Roman magnificence. The streets were, no doubt, narrow, irregular, and crooked ; the houses very simple and insignificant ; but in this respect we have no reason for supposing that Rome was inferior to the other Italian cities of the period.

Thus far the city had not suffered by its change of government ; but in other respects, the loss they had sustained was very serious—one from which they were many years in recovering. We find that their tribes were diminished from thirty to twenty ; their territory, in every direction, was reduced in extent, and that on the right hand of the Tiber, for the time, was wholly lost. So complete was their subjection to Porsenna, that they were even compelled to renounce the use of iron, except for

purposes of agriculture; as was the case with the Israelites during the supremacy of the Philistines. It is quite evident, that if the Etruscan conqueror had chosen to exert the power which his victory had given him, he might have wholly crushed the eagle's egg, out of which the conqueror of the world was yet to come forth.

But the evil was far from being confined to the mere loss of territory. The condition of the people—the lower orders that is—became sensibly worse in each successive year after the expulsion of the kings. By the loss of their lands, many of the farmers were reduced almost to beggary. They endeavoured to redeem their fortunes by borrowing money from the traders; whose property had, by comparison, suffered little injury. Large and ever-increasing rates of usury were demanded by the lenders, which the borrowers soon found themselves wholly unable to pay. Laws, which had hitherto been almost a dead letter, were now put in force; the harshness of which almost exceeds belief. The debtor was required to surrender himself, his wife, and children, as the absolute slaves of his creditor, unless he could discharge his liabilities in full within a limited time. If he refused to do this, his creditor was permitted by the law to keep him in confinement for a certain specified period, bound with a chain of fifteen pounds in weight, and fed upon only one pound of corn during the day. After an imprisonment of two months, if he still continued obstinate he might be put to death at the pleasure of his creditor, or sold into

foreign captivity. Nay it is even related that where there were several creditors, the law allowed them to mutilate the body of the unhappy debtor, each taking a portion of it, corresponding to the amount of his debt.

These evils continued to grow worse with each successive year, until at last they became unendurable. One morning, in the year 254 after the building of the city—500 years, that is to say, before the birth of our Lord—the spark of discontent, which had been so long smouldering, broke out into a flame. News was received at Rome, which caused the Senate to be convoked without an hour's delay. Information had been despatched by the Consuls, who had led the army forth to meet an alleged incursion of the Æqui and Sabines, that the whole of the soldiers under their command had mutinied. They had indeed spared the Consuls' lives, but less apparently through any regard entertained for them, than from a sense of the uselessness of putting them to death. But they had snatched up their standards, to which they ever rendered religious reverence, and marched off in the direction of the river Anio.

It had since been ascertained that they had encamped on a mountain, situated on the further bank of that river; where they were at present lying. It did not appear what was their immediate purpose. It might be that they intended to maintain themselves in the place where they were entrenched, by plundering the surrounding neighbourhood, until the Senate should be compelled to submit to their will. It might be that they contemplated march-

ing on the city, and reducing it by the sword. In either case the state of things was too alarming to be overlooked. A message was despatched without loss of time to the rebels, requiring them instantly to return to their allegiance; promising a free pardon in event of compliance, and threatening them with punishment if they refused. An answer was returned with equal promptitude, which was not calculated to allay the anxiety of the Patricians. The offer of a general amnesty was contemptuously rejected, and the Senate informed, that if they thought fit to employ force against them, they would speedily discover with what manner of men they had to deal.

On the receipt of this reply, the two Consuls, who had now returned to the city, summoned an assembly; at which as a first step new Consuls were to be chosen. Their own term of office had expired, and they had neither the inclination, nor the necessary qualifications, for a further tenure of it. It was not easy to find any one willing to undertake so grave a responsibility; but after a long debate Cominius and Cassius, both of them men of consular rank, were persuaded, by the general entreaty, to accept it. They were in truth a wise choice. They were popular with both parties; and while they would not desert the interests of their own order, could command to a great extent the confidence of the commons.

Their first step was again to convene the Senate; which met in large numbers, and obviously in a very excited state. The crisis was viewed in a very different

manner by the two different parties, of which it might be said to be composed. The younger men, who constituted a very large proportion of the body—for at that period there was no limit as to the age at which the Patricians were admitted to it—the younger men, and many of the more haughty among the elders, were inclined to treat the revolted commons with a high hand. The number of males capable of bearing arms at the last census, had been fully a hundred and thirty thousand ; that of the malcontents was not more than a seventh part of that number. It would not be difficult for the Patricians to raise a force, which would be twice as great as theirs. Then again they were without officers ; and soldiers without officers are, in general, little better than a military rabble. Besides they had neither provisions, nor houses to shelter them, nor money, by which either could be procured. Granting that they could maintain their present position during the remainder of the summer, what could become of them when winter approached? Encamped under canvas, on the bare hillside, the roads rendered perhaps impassable by snow or flood—they would perish miserably without stroke of sword. As for their assaulting the city, strongly fortified as it was—that seemed too crazy an undertaking to be even thought of. They had no military engines, no implements for conducting a siege, none of the scientific knowledge necessary for such an attempt. The young Patricians were disposed rather to regard the present situation of affairs, as a favourable opportunity for completely crushing

the rebellious spirit, which had long been displaying itself among the commons; whom they regarded as of no value whatever to the state, but rather a drawback to its prosperity.

When, therefore, at the outset of the proceedings, Menenius Agrippa, a man of consular rank, and held in high esteem by all parties, rose to propose that a deputation of ten persons should be appointed to confer with the seceders, and endeavour so to adjust the matters under dispute that a reconciliation might be effected—he was not well received. His high character indeed secured him from any demonstrations of disfavour; but he was listened to in silence, and little applause followed when he resumed his seat. Still more unwelcome was the speech of Valerius, who concurred in Menenius's view, but did not imitate his moderation. He inveighed vehemently against the barbarous oppression which (as he averred) had been practised by many, even of those present, against their poorer fellow-citizens. To his mind these had been the sole causes of the outbreak, and could not be defended. The right course for the Senate was to repair, as speedily as possible, the gross injustice which had been perpetrated. He proposed that Menenius and his colleagues should be empowered to offer terms to the malcontents. The Senate must expect that these would not be of a very pleasing character; but they must agree to them nevertheless. A year ago, had they consented to pass a measure for the abolition of debts, the people might

have been satisfied with it. Now they would doubtless require that some security would be given against the recurrence of such injustice.

This speech was received with signs of general disapprobation; and Valerius had no sooner ceased, than Appius, the leader of the Patrician party, sprang up to answer him. He denied, with much vehemence, that there was any truth in the charges brought by Valerius against his fellow-senators. The creditors had but acted in accordance with the law—had but insisted on those rights, which the government had solemnly secured to them. The Senate had repeatedly refused to rescind enactments, which maintained the just rights of private citizens. The matter had been debated calmly and dispassionately, and that had been their conclusion. Were they prepared now to grant, at the dictation of a seditious mob, what they had refused to peaceable citizens? If they did this, they would in effect abdicate their power altogether, and become the servants, not the masters, of the rabble. Rather than this, let them arm their slaves, let them admit the Latins to the privileges of citizenship, let them get allies from whatever quarter they might be obtained, and fall sword in hand upon the rebels. If they submitted unconditionally, mercy might be shown them; if they continued obstinate, they should suffer the penalty of their treason.

These proposals were welcomed with loud shouts of approval. It was evident to the Consuls that if Menenius's motion should be put to the vote, it would be rejected by

a large majority. The younger senators went further, and openly accused the Consuls of unfaithfulness to their order, and disloyalty to their country. It seemed for the moment as if that most terrible of all evils which can befall a state—a civil war—was imminent. But, happily for Rome, the Consuls and their advisers were wise and sagacious men. Without openly opposing the evident determination of the Senate, they declared that, as the matter was one affecting the welfare of the people, it was proper that the whole people should be invited to determine it—a course which, according to the ancient constitution of the country, it was unquestionably competent for them to adopt.

The announcement of this resolution had its immediate effect. The Patrician party foresaw that the people, if appealed to, would inevitably take part with the seceders; with whom they were closely connected by the ties of blood and companionship. They had felt themselves strong enough to crush the disaffected citizens encamped beyond the Anio, but not to contend with the whole Roman people as well. Moreover a report had arrived, and was now being circulated from man to man, that a fresh band of malcontents had fortified themselves on Mount Aventine, resolved to support the demands of those already in arms. With the single exception of Appius Claudius, the Patricians withdrew their opposition to Menenius's proposal. Ten commissioners accordingly were chosen, of whom the chief were Menenius, Valerius, and Lartius. This had no sooner been arranged, than the deputies set out for the camp of the seceders.

Meanwhile the latter were full of confidence, which was increased by the rumours continually reaching them from Rome. It was known that there were dissensions among the senators; that they had a difficulty in finding persons to fill the office of Consul; and that those who had been appointed to fill that office were favourably inclined to them. Tales were industriously circulated by the leaders of the sedition, Sicinnius and Brutus, calculated to inflame their feelings still further against the Patricians. Here and there might be seen one of their emissaries, mounted on some of the camp baggage, and surrounded by an audience, into whose ears he was pouring a long catalogue of offences; which, according to his account, the nobles had perpetrated.

“What, citizens,” exclaimed one, “do they expect us to return—to put ourselves again under the intolerable yoke, from which we have now broken free? Sooner expect the wild bird, which has burst through the bars of its aviary, and mounted into the free air of heaven, to return again to the narrow cage where it has pined! Would you expect our neighbour Ancus yonder, who for no other offence than because he was unable to meet the grinding usury which Quintus Claudius, a man of consular rank, sought to exact of him, has led a life for years past, to which that of a beast of burden would be preferable—would you expect him to go back at his master’s call, and resume his hopeless drudgery? A worthy citizen was Ancus, as ye all know, a man of industry and probity, a thriving man,

too, until the enemies of Rome stripped him of the lands which he and his fathers had possessed, I know not how long. Was it so heavy an offence, to be unable to meet demands against him under such circumstances? Was it so terrible a crime, to be compelled to borrow money in order to satisfy them; that he should forfeit his own liberty, and the liberty of his wife and children?

“What think you again of Titus Naso, that gallant veteran, who had fought in eight and twenty battles, and whose breast was scarred with honourable wounds? His house and lands had been plundered and burnt by the enemy. Starvation had compelled him to sell the poor remains of his property. He too was obliged to borrow; and for that crime, he and his sons were chained down in a loathsome prison, and would have perished with hunger, if he had not broken free! You all remember his venerable figure, bowed and broken as it was by suffering, his hoary hair begrimed with filth, his features pinched with want and sickness! What think you, once more, of Nevius, who was sold as a slave into a foreign land, to work in mines, where he never beheld the light of the sun? What think you of Titus Draco, who, refusing to be sold to slavery, was mercilessly slain by his creditor Quintus Claudius? The Senate have sent to summon us back that we may endure again a yoke like this. Say, Romans, will you obey their summons?”

“Never, never,” shouted the excited multitude. “Down with the Patricians, the oppressors of the commons! We

will league with our brethren at Rome against them. If all unite, our numbers exceed theirs, five to one. We will slay them—root them out—Rome shall be a free city! Or, if we fail in that, at least we will found a new city here, where the tyranny of the Patricians shall be unknown.”

The excitement was at its height, when a trumpet gave notice of the approach of a deputation from Rome. Their arrival caused the greatest interest and excitement in the camp. Bitter as their feelings against the nobles were, the soldiers were yet anxious to know what terms they were disposed to offer, and how they would comport themselves under circumstances so humiliating to their pride.

Sufficient respect was entertained for the three principal commissioners to secure them from outrage or indignity. Nor was it the policy of Sicinnius and Brutus that any affront should be offered them. A spot was chosen on the side of the hill, where the various speakers might be distinctly heard by the whole assembly. The first who spoke was Valerius. He told them briefly that the Senate had not only decreed an amnesty for past offences, but had empowered them to treat with the commons, respecting the questions now at issue between them. The people therefore had only to return to Rome, and confer amicably with the Fathers, and all would be well.

He ceased, but no sound of approval followed. Sicinnius and Brutus remarked, on behalf of their followers, that “no intimation had been given, as to the terms, on which the people were invited to return. Was the law of

debtor and creditor to be repealed? Were the liberties of the people to be secured? Were they to have their share in the government of the State? Was their condition to be raised, or were they asked to go back to the old state of bondage and degradation?"

Lartius rose to reply. He said that "no Government could undertake to abolish the private debts, which one citizen might have contracted to another; but the Senate were prepared to look into the case; and if it could be proved that the laws were oppressive, they were willing to modify them. But these concessions ought to be asked in a loyal and dutiful spirit, not demanded by force of arms; nor could so rash an enterprise, as that which they had undertaken, end in anything but disaster and defeat."

The speech was not well-timed. He had no sooner concluded, than Sicinnius again rose and exclaimed that Lartius's haughty words were a clear intimation of what they might expect, if they should again put themselves into the power of the Senate. "Propose at once," he exclaimed, turning to the deputies, "the conditions you are here to offer, or quit the camp without further parley."

A burst of applause, louder than any that had preceded it, greeted this speech. For the second time it seemed as if a civil conflict could not be avoided. But Menenius now came forward. His venerable appearance, the high honour in which all ranks held him, obtained for him here, as formerly in the Senate, a hearing; which perhaps would have been accorded to no other man present. He told

them simply, and without preface, that the Senate had resolved on cancelling all debts due from insolvents ; on setting free all debtors now in confinement ; and on abolishing the existing laws on the subject. As regarded the future contraction of debts, new laws should be made by the Senate and people, in concert ; and these should not be ratified without the full consent of both parties. He added that all the commissioners were prepared to bind themselves, by the most solemn oaths, to observe these conditions, and devote themselves and their children to the infernal Gods, if they failed in their promise.

His language and deportment, so different from that of both his colleagues, produced a great effect on the multitude. Instantly taking advantage of this, he proceeded to address an earnest remonstrance to them, couched under the guise of an allegory—than which no form of speech has greater influence with the multitude. He pointed out to them that, at Rome as in every other community, all classes were a mutual help and support to one another ; that it was a most grievous mistake to suppose that the sufferings of any one order in the state could be the advantage of another. The Senate could not dispense with the services of the plebeians ; the plebeians could not prosper without the services of the Senate. A commonwealth, he told them, resembled that most skilful of all pieces of mechanism, the human body ; about which he could relate an interesting tale. Once upon a time the members were discontented, and mutinied against the

belly, accusing it of lying idle and useless, while the rest of the body worked. The brain, they said, exerted itself to contrive the means of subsistence: the arms, the legs, and the hands performed the labour necessary for carrying out its designs. All the food so procured was conveyed into the belly, which did nothing but enjoy itself at their expense. They resolved that this abuse should be reformed. Unless the belly should agree to labour like the others, the hand would not lift the food to the mouth, nor the mouth receive it, nor the teeth chew it. They persisted in this for a while, until they discovered that all the members of the body suffered in consequence, and were gradually being reduced to the last stage of maceration. Thereupon the belly pointed out that, far from remaining idle, it did the most valuable work of all. It digested properly the nourishment which had been thrown into it in a crude and imperfect state, thus diffusing through every portion of the frame, the health and strength which it had now lost.

The close of his speech was interrupted by shouts of general acclamation. One further concession, and one only—that of the appointment of Tribunes, and the sanctity of their persons—was asked and agreed to, and the sedition was at an end. An altar was erected on the top of the hill where the camp of the seceders had stood; sacrifices were offered upon it to Jupiter, and the mountain declared “sacred” for evermore, in memory of the auspicious reconciliation which had there taken place. Then

the whole multitude, led by their new Tribunes, and escorting the commissioners of the Senate, returned to Rome with shouts of rejoicing, and were there welcomed by their fellow-citizens with equal exultation.


Nothing further is known of Menenius Agrippa, than that he died in the following year, so poor that his property would not pay the cost of his funeral ; which was solemnized at the public expense, and with many demonstrations of respect and sorrow. He seems to have been a good man, certainly a wise one—few characters in history have shown greater wisdom. But he, after all, only imperfectly comprehended the great truth, which he so eloquently laid before his countrymen. Not until the Church of Christ was set up, was the doctrine put forth in all its fulness and beauty, that men are indeed members one of another—that the life of the Body is the life of each separate Member, that the weakness of one part is the weakness of the whole. The perfect Wisdom that is in Christ, alone can teach us that “as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office ; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”

No. VIII.

Second Sunday after Epiphany.

THE DEPOSED LEADER.

Rom. xii. 16.

HE city of Thebes, the capital of Bœotia, was one which ought to have risen to great eminence in Grecian history. It was situated in the midst of a country exceptionally rich and fertile; on an insulated eminence, at the foot of which flowed the river Ismenus; and the citadel of Cadmæa was a place of extraordinary strength. And in very early times it does appear to have been a place of much celebrity. But throughout the period of Grecian glory, from the times of Solon to those of Alexander the Great, it held in general an inferior, and sometimes a most unenviable, position. This was mainly caused by the jealousy it entertained towards the other leading states. This induced it to side with the Persians in their invasion of Greece; this again, to take part with the Lacedæmonians in the Peloponnesian war, when the power of Athens had grown to great dimen-

sions ; this once more, to side with the Athenians against Sparta, when Sparta in its turn assumed prominently the lead in Greece. The same feeling afterwards prompted it to offer the most determined opposition in its power to the growth of the Macedonian supremacy. This narrow-minded and fickle policy prevented the Thebans from ever exercising any great influence in Grecian affairs, and at length entailed upon them complete destruction.

There was one exception to this rule. For the space of about ten years, from B.C. 371 to B.C. 362, they were the leading power of Greece. This was due, not to any change in their policy, but to the extraordinary talents of two of their citizens, Pelopidas and Epaminondas, and more particularly to those of the latter. When these two men grew up to manhood, they found their country little better than a dependency of Lacedemon. The Theban government was not only wholly under the influence of the Spartans, but the Cadmæa, the Acropolis of Thebes, had been seized by the most shameless violence, and was actually occupied by a Spartan garrison.

A conspiracy was set on foot by Pelopidas, to expel the intruders ; which he carried into effect with equal address and courage. In this movement Epaminondas declined to take any part. He concurred indeed heartily in the object in view ; but there was a certain amount of deception involved in it, from which his honourable nature

revolted. As soon, however, as it had taken effect, and Thebes was delivered from her tyrants, he at once lent his powerful aid to assist his friend in upholding his country against her enemies. From this time she maintained her independence; and on two occasions, B.C. 375 and 371, won the only two great battles, in which the Lacedæmonians ever suffered defeat. At Leuctra, in particular, where the whole of Greece was arrayed against Thebes—and the latter could only muster 6000 soldiers, and those but lukewarm in her cause, against 10,000 of the best soldiers of Greece—his transcendent military skill obtained for his countrymen a decisive triumph. He followed this up by an invasion of Laconia itself. For the first time since the foundation of Sparta, its citizens beheld the smoke of an enemy's camp; and but for the address and prudence of Agesilaus, the city would have fallen into his hands.

On his return from this glorious expedition, he might well have expected to be received by his countrymen with enthusiastic gratitude. But the jealous temper, which was ever characteristic of Thebes, showed itself even in the instance of her greatest benefactor. There was a law, that no Bœotarch, as their generals were called, could hold his power for more than a month without renewal. If Epaminondas and Pelopidas had literally complied with this regulation, they would have been unable to follow up the military advantages they had gained, and Sparta would have escaped the deep humiliation it had

sustained. They felt that under these circumstances duty to their country justified, nay imperatively required, that they should dispense with ordinary rule. But the popular leaders at Thebes refused to grant them an indemnity. The two leaders were impeached on a capital charge, and judgment might have been given against them, if Epaminondas's intrepid calmness and burning eloquence had not carried all before it. He recapitulated to his fellow-countrymen what he and his friend had done for them in the late campaign, and professed his willingness to accept the sentence of death, if they would inscribe on his tomb what the deeds were, for which he had incurred it.

Not very long afterwards, a war broke out between the Thebans and Alexander the Tyrant of Pheræ, and Pelopidas was sent with an army against him. Imprudently adventuring his person within the power of the Tyrant, he was seized by the latter, and thrown into prison. An army was at once sent to Pelopidas's rescue ; but the jealousy of the Theban leaders, which had before imperilled Epaminondas's life, was again strong enough to prevent his appointment to the command of the expedition. Considering the warm friendship which existed between him and Pelopidas, he would naturally have been the person chosen to lead it—even if he had not, by his conduct in the field, proved himself the first soldier of Greece. But what is there too mean, or too rash, for the jealousy of little minds? Two officers of very inferior

ability, Cleomenes and Hypatas, were appointed leaders : Epaminondas had not even the command of a troop entrusted to him. Doubtless the Thebans knew, that if he were to accompany the march, with even the pettiest authority committed to him, he would be virtually the commander of all. They therefore resolved to exclude him from any participation in it. But Epaminondas was not deterred by their malignity from serving the cause alike of his friend and his country. He joined the army as a private soldier—a step which they were unable to prevent—cheerfully marching in the ranks, and obeying the orders of those, who in previous campaigns had esteemed it an honour to obey his.

The consequences, which might have been looked for from the incapacity of the generals, soon showed themselves. The army had threaded the narrow pass of Thermopylæ, and moved westwards towards Pheræ, when they found themselves entangled in a difficult country, with which they were but imperfectly acquainted. Alexander, who had a numerous force of cavalry, and had been reinforced by some squadrons, which the Athenians had sent to his assistance, harassed their march, and cut them off from provisions. His light troops were continually assailing their outposts and foraging parties, in such numbers, that they dared not advance farther into the enemy's country. But to retreat was almost equally dangerous, nor did the generals know what measures to adopt. The men grew disheartened, and

had almost given themselves up for lost. They encamped one evening, after a day of continued alarms and reverses, in the strongest position they could find : but the depression among the soldiers almost amounted to a panic. They conversed together round their camp fires, each repeating some sinister rumour which had reached his ears. The sentinels, as they moved up and down at their posts, glanced anxiously round them, expecting to see an enemy start up from every hollow, or advance stealthily upon them from under the shelter of each wooded covert. One sentry alone, a tall, fine-looking warrior, in the prime of life, continued his march to and fro ; apparently in no way moved by the dismal forebodings of his companions : which, however, he could hear plainly enough, whenever he halted to take rest.

At the farthest end of his beat two men were engaged in anxious conversation. The sentinel gathered from their speech that they were Thessalians, citizens of Pheræ, whom the tyranny of Alexander had driven to take up arms against him ; but they appeared to have considerable knowledge of Theban affairs—indeed, to have been occasional visitors to Thebes itself.

“Have you heard, Nicanor,” said one of them, “that Thorax, one of the chief officers of the army, was this morning captured by the enemy ? A rumour to that effect reached the camp this afternoon, but I know not if it be true.”

“Thorax ! no, I had not heard it. I hope it is a mis-

take; for Thorax is one of our best officers, and we need all the ability that they can command, if we are to escape from our present strait. Perhaps yonder sentinel who has just been relieved, can certify us on the subject. Know you how he is called, Evagoras?"

"I think I heard some one speak of him as the son of Polymnis," returned Evagoras. "Art thou called Polymnides, sentinel?" he continued as the latter approached.

"I am the son of Polymnis," replied the person addressed, "what would you with me?"

"We would fain inquire whether the rumour respecting the capture of Thorax, one of the Chiliarchs, be true," said Nicanor. "Evagoras here has heard it, but it may not be correct."

"It is true," said the sentinel. "The troop under his command was surprised by some Athenian horse an hour ago."

"And he has been carried off a prisoner to Pheræ, I suppose?" said Evagoras. "Then Thebes has lost his services for ever?"

"That need not be so," remarked the man addressed as Polymnides. "Our generals have already sent an offer to Alexander, to exchange him against some prisoners whom we have taken."

"They will lose their labour, good Polymnides," observed Evagoras, "and do not know the Tyrant of Pheræ as well as we do, or they would have spared themselves the trouble of making any such offer. He is little likely

to spare a Theban of rank, and still less likely, when he hears his countrymen are anxious to ransom him."

"Yet he hath spared the noble Pelopidas," remarked Polymnides.

"Ay," said Nicanor, "but only because he hopes to wring some important concessions from your government, by retaining him in his hands. Else had he long ago suffered a cruel death."

"Is he so utterly merciless?" asked the sentinel.

"Merciless beyond the power of imagination to conceive," said Nicanor. "They who incur his fear or hatred, are straightway put to death without trial, and in such a manner as may most gratify his barbarous temper. Some he buries alive, others he dresses up in the skins of stags or wild boars, and turns out to be shot by his archers, or perhaps torn to death by his hounds. No man's life is safe, if Alexander have any power over him. It is not long since, that he convened an assembly of the chief men of the neighbouring cities, and when they had met together for deliberation, commanded his guards to surround, and cut the throats of, the whole party."

"It is a wonder," said Evagoras, "that his tyranny has been so long endured, when one honest downright blow would have rid the world of him for ever."

"Ay," answered Nicanor, "but you forget the precautions he takes against a surprise; which would make it a hard matter for an attempt on his life to succeed. His whole palace is full of guards, who keep watch day and

night. His sleeping chamber is surrounded by an outer wall, within which a fierce mastiff is kept, which will suffer none but himself or his wife to approach it. The chamber can only be entered by a ladder and trapdoor ; and the ladder is always drawn up, and the door closed, after he has gone to rest for the night."

"Methinks his tyranny brings with it its own punishment," said Polymnides. "Who would not rather die a hundred times, than drag out a living death, such as you describe?"

"True," said Nicanor, "yet the Athenians, who have ever professed to be the zealous champions of liberty, uphold this monster, and have even sent their troops to aid him."

"They have not forgiven Leuctra," said Polymnides.

"True," said Evagoras, "and yet thou dost forget, sir sentinel, that it is not the Athenians only, who cannot forgive that victory—no, nor yet the Lacedemonians only, either."

"Whom meanest thou?" asked Nicanor.

"I mean the Thebans themselves," returned Evagoras. "Do I not speak truth, Polymnides? Have they not pursued with bitter jealousy their own great captain, Epaminondas, the hero of Leuctra? Did they not depose him from his command, and even endeavour to procure a sentence of death against him? Hath not their injustice sought to do him greater injury, than the Lacedemonians themselves would have desired in requital of their defeat?"

“ I know not that Epaminondas hath aught to charge against his countrymen,” returned the Theban. “ They appoint whomsoever they will to lead their armies, and whomsoever they will, they depose from that office. Who is Epaminondas, that he should account it his right to be chosen general, more than another ?”

“ Who is he ?” repeated Evagoras. “ If thou, friend, hadst been present, as I chanced to be, on the plains of Leuctra, when the Theban hoplites broke, for the first time in the memory of man, the Spartan phalanx ; or hadst thou beheld them ford the waters of the Eurotas, where no enemy’s foot had ever trodden before, thou wouldst not ask that question.”

“ Ay,” said Nicanor, “ those two days were surely reasons enow for entrusting the general’s staff to his hand. Yet it was not their ingratitude on that occasion, that I condemn so much ; nor even their attempt (unworthy though it was) to punish him with death for having broken the law, which required him to lay down his office at the end of a month. I do not blame them so much for those acts, as for the shameful insult they put upon him, in requiring him to debase himself to the most menial service to which a citizen could be put—the superintendence of the public sewers ! Mine host Hippias, on the occasion of my last visit to Thebes, told me of the indignation, which all the better among the citizens felt at the gross insult thus put upon the noblest of her citizens. What sayest thou to that, friend Polymnides.”

“I think you are in error,” was the reply. “There is a proverb in Greece, that ‘the office shows the man,’ but to my mind it may more truly be said, that ‘the man shows the office.’ Whatsoever duty is imposed on a citizen, he may discharge it with fidelity and zeal; and in so doing alone, is there any true honour. I think Epaminondas had reason to feel honoured, not insulted, by the service entrusted to him.”

“Say you so?” exclaimed Evagoras. “Then must I account you as one of those who have joined in the persecution of this brave and worthy man; and I rejoice that you have heard what I and my comrade think of the usage which he has received at the hands of his countrymen.”

“There is a rumour,” said Nicanor, “that he is present in the camp, but only in the guise of a private soldier—so at least I was told this morning. If so, it would rejoice me much to behold him face to face. Thou, Evagoras, hast seen him from a distance, and on the field of battle, but I have never been in his presence at all.”

Polymnides would have spoken, but at this moment there was a sudden stir in the camp. A lochagus, accompanied by about a dozen privates, approached them and inquired, whether they could tell him in what part of the camp Epaminondas, the son of Polymnis, was to be found. Evagoras was about to answer, when suddenly the sentinel stepped forward, and announced himself to be the person of whom they were in search.

“You are well met, noble Epaminondas,” said the

lochagus. "We have explored every part of the camp in quest of you. Know that our generals, Cleomenes and Hypatas, desire your immediate presence at the council, that means may be devised of delivering the army from its present strait. I trust you will obey the summons."

"Surely," returned Epaminondas calmly. "Whatsoever help I can render, shall not be wanting. Farewell, my friends," he continued, turning to Evagoras and Nicanor. "I thank you for the kind favour with which ye have spoken of Epaminondas. Let me pray you to be just to his countrymen also."

He turned away, leaving the two Thessalians, in a state of mingled surprise and satisfaction at the interview which had just taken place between them and the great Theban conqueror. The latter walked quietly away in company with the lochagus; and before morning, the news had spread through the camp, that the generals had resigned their command to Epaminondas, who had notified his willingness to accept it.

The effect seemed almost magical. The soldiers, who had grown so dispirited, that they could hardly be induced to put on their armour, or form in line, instantly recovered hope and courage. Forming them in close order, Epaminondas addressed a few words to them, assuring them that if they would take heart and obey orders, he would lead them back to Thebes in safety and honour. He was greeted with a general shout. In another hour they had marched forth in orderly array, as different a body of men

from the disorganized rabble, which had reached their present quarters on the previous evening, as it is possible to conceive. Alexander and his troops at once recommenced their attacks; but these were now repelled with an alacrity and vigour, which at first surprised, and then alarmed them. The truth soon became known, through the information of one or two stragglers who fell into Alexander's hands—that the hero of Leuctra was in command. The news spread rapidly through the Thessalian host; and the effect was even greater than had been the case with the Thebans themselves. It seemed as if the terror of his name was in itself a rampart, through which no enemy could hope to break. Day after day Alexander hung upon the rear of the retiring Bœotians, but he rarely ventured to assail them: when he did so, he uniformly encountered disastrous loss. Before many days the Pass of Thermopylæ was again reached; and the troops, passing through it, reached their homes in safety.

The story was soon told at Thebes. Pelopidas was still a prisoner: the army had barely escaped total destruction, and could not be induced again to take the field, unless under the generalship of the man, who had now once more proved his inborn title to command. Under these circumstances, no one ventured to offer any opposition to his election. Armed with the necessary authority, Epaminondas again led the troops against the King of Pheræ. In the course of a few weeks he had completely reduced him to submission, and might, if he had chosen it, have crushed the power of

the Tyrant for ever. But he remembered that Pelopidas was still a captive in his hands, and would in all likelihood be sacrificed to his fury, should the latter be driven to extremity. He therefore agreed to make a truce with Alexander, and withdrew his forces, on condition that Pelopidas should be delivered in safety to him—foregoing his own glory, foregoing even the satisfaction of doing justice upon one of the vilest of miscreants, for the sake of his friend's deliverance. In joy and triumph the two noble Thebans returned home together.

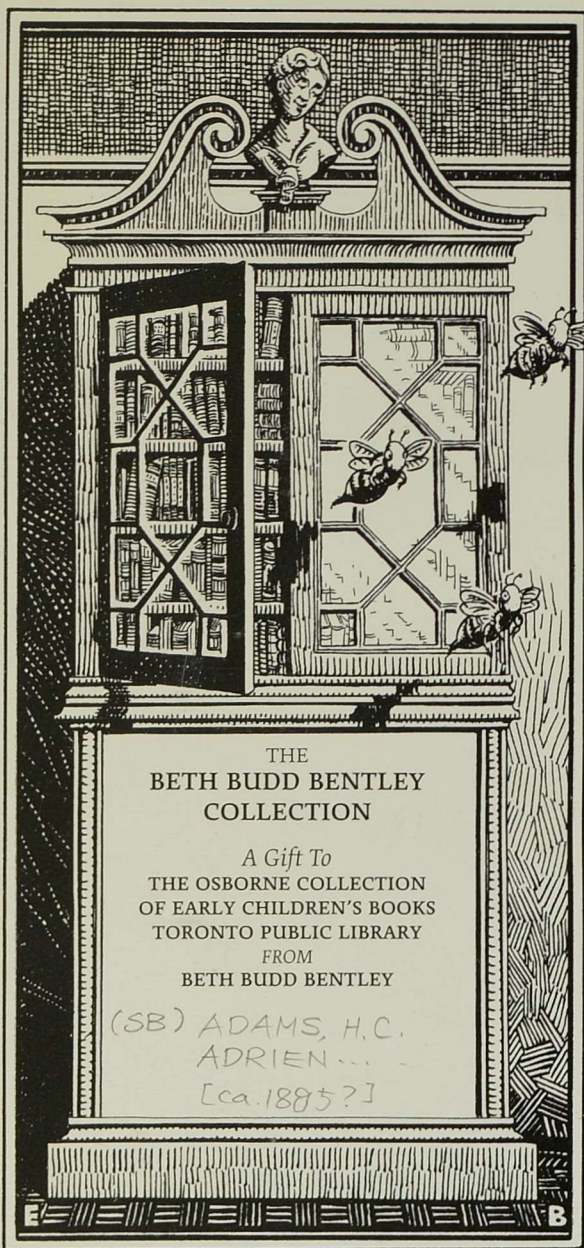
This was almost the last exploit of Pelopidas's life. Two years afterwards he again led a body of troops into Thessaly, to punish Alexander for some fresh acts of frightful barbarity. He gained a decisive victory over the Tyrant ; but exposing himself too rashly, was himself unhappily slain. Epaminondas's career lasted nearly two years longer, and was marked by several brilliant actions, worthy of his former renown. While absent in command of the Bœotian fleet, his opponents seized the opportunity barbarously to destroy the city of Orchomenus ; which they had endeavoured to do eight years before, after the victory of Leuctra, but had been prevented by Epaminondas from carrying out their purpose. It was a striking testimony, alike to his virtue and his ascendancy, that they were compelled to seize the opportunity of his absence, to execute the inhuman purpose ; from which, when present, he had restrained them. Grieved and shocked as he was on his return, he did not desist from loyal service to his

country. In the following year he once more led a Theban army to the gates of Sparta; penetrating to the very heart of the city; which was only rescued by the desperate exertions of Agesilaus from complete destruction. Finally, at Mantinea he a second time encountered the armies of united Greece, and a second time gained a decisive victory. But it was a dearly-purchased triumph for the Thebans. Just as the rout of the enemy was complete, Epaminondas received a thrust from a javelin through his breastplate, inflicting a mortal wound. He lingered long enough to express his satisfaction that the freedom of his native land had been secured, by the great victory which had been won; and then, with his own hand drawing forth the iron head of the javelin, he expired.

There is no grander name than his in all heathen history. It is hard to say whether he was greater as a warrior, a citizen, or a man. Modern strategists have pronounced him the ablest general of antiquity: Cicero declares him to have been the greatest man, whom Greece, that nursery of heroes, ever produced. His memory stands forth in the annals of his country, like a solitary lamp seen from a distance in a dark night—illuminating with its brilliancy the objects immediately surrounding it, but leaving the rest of the landscape in unbroken obscurity.

But to estimate him rightly, we must try him by the lofty standard of Christian duty, which St. Paul brings before us in the Epistle to-day, and see in how many particulars, heathen as he was, he acted

up to it. With what simplicity did he give to others, despising riches, except for the good they conferred on the weak and suffering—with what diligence did he rule in whatsoever office of trust he was placed—in a bloody and ruthless age, with what cheerfulness did he show mercy. No man's love was ever freer from dissimulation. No one abhorred evil, for its own sake, or clave to good because it was good, more honestly. Though he formed no family ties, and left behind him neither wife nor child, he was yet kindly affectioned towards others, with brotherly love. Though he led the way in all honourable pursuits, he preferred the honour of others to his own. Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit: serving virtue, the only "Lord," which the heathen knew; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; distributing to the necessity of his fellow-citizens; given to hospitality—he blessed those that persecuted him, he blessed and cursed them not. He rejoiced in the success of his fellow-men, he wept with them in their sorrow. In all things he strove to be of one mind with them, requiring only that their mind should be just and upright. Above all he had that rare merit—which, but for him, might have been pronounced impossible in a heathen—"he minded not high things, but condescended to men of low estate."



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