

Chapter 33. A Good Confession

1 {357} THE cry came from the keeper's wife, whom we have described as kindly
2 disposed to her. She was a Lybo-Phoenician, and spoke a broken Latin; but the
3 language of sympathy is universal, in spite of Babel, "Callista," she exclaimed; "girl, they
4 have sent for you; you are to die. O frightful! worse than a runaway slave,—the torture!
5 Give in. What's the harm? you are so young: those terrible men with the pincers and hot
6 bars!"

7 Callista sat up, and passed from her vision to her prison. She smiled and said, "I am
8 ready; I am going home." The woman looked almost frightened, and with some shade of
9 disgust and disappointment. She, as others, might have thought it impossible, as it was
10 unaccountable, that when it came to the point Callista would hold out. "She's crazed,"
11 she said. "I am ready, mother," Callista said, and she got up. "You have been very good
12 to me," she continued; "I have been saying many prayers for you, while my prayers
13 were of no good, for then He was not mine. But now I have espoused Him, and am
14 going to be married today, and He will hear me." The woman {358} stared at her
15 stupidly, as much as to make it evident that if afterwards a change took place in her, as
16 in Callista, that change too, though in so different a soul, must come of something
17 beyond nature. She had something in her hand, and said, "It's useless to give a mad
18 woman like her the packet, which my man has brought me."

19 Callista took the packet, which was directed to her, and broke the seal. It was from her
20 brother. The little roll of worn parchment opened; a dagger fell out. Some lines were
21 written on the parchment; they were dated Carthage, and ran as follows:—

22 "Aristo to his dearest Callista. I write through Cornelius. You have not had it in your
23 power to kill me, but you have taken away half my life. For me, I will cherish the other
24 half, for I love life better than death. But you love annihilation; yet, if so, die not like a
25 slave. Die nobly, mindful of your country; I send you the means."

26 Callista was beyond reflecting on anything around her, except as in a sort of dream. As
27 common men think and speak of heaven, so she now thought and spoke of earth. "I
28 wish *Him* to kill me, not myself," she said. "I am His victim. My brother! I have no
29 brother, except One, who is calling me."

30 She was carried to court, and the examination followed. We have already given a
31 specimen of such a process; here it will be sufficient to make use of two documents,
32 different in kind, as far as they go, which have come down to us. The first is an alto-
33 relief, {359} which once was coloured, not first-rate in art or execution, and of the date of
34 the Emperor Constantius, about a century later. It was lately discovered in the course of
35 excavations made at El Kaf, the modern Sicca, on the ruins of a church or Roman
36 basilica, for the building in question seems to have served each purpose successively.
37 In this sculpture the prætorium is represented, and the tribunal of the president in it. The
38 tribunal is a high throne, with wings curving round on each side, making the whole
39 construction extend to almost a semicircle, and it is ascended by steps between the

wings. The curule chair is at the top of the steps; and in the middle and above it are purple curtains, reaching down to the platform, drawn back on each side, and when drawn close together running behind the chair, and constituting what was called the *secretarium*. On one side of the tribunal is a table covered with carpeting, and looking something like a modern ottoman, only higher, and not level at top; and it has upon it the Book of Mandates, the sign of jurisdiction. The sword too is represented in the sculpture, to show a criminal case is proceeding. The procurator is seated on the chair; he is in purple, and has a gold chain of triple thread. We can also distinguish his lawyers, whether assessors or *consilarii*; also his lictors and soldiers. There, too, are the notaries in a line below him; they are writing down the judge's questions and the prisoner's answers: and one of them is turning round to her, as if to make her speak more loudly. She herself is mounted {360} upon a sort of platform, called *catasta*, like that on which slaves were put up for sale. Two soldiers are by her, who appear to have been dragging her forwards. The executioners are also delineated, naked to the waist, with instruments of torture in their hands.

The second document is a fragment of the *Acta Proconsularia* of her Passion. If, indeed, it could be trusted to the letter, as containing Callista's answers word for word, it would have a distinctly sacred character, in consequence of our Lord's words, "It shall be given you in that hour what to speak." However, we attach no such special value to this document, since it comes to us through heathen notaries, who may not have been accurate reporters; not to say that before we did so we ought to look very carefully into its genuineness. As it is, we believe it to be as true as any part of our narrative, and not truer. It runs as follows:—

"Cneius Messius Decius Augustus II., and Gratus, Consuls, on the seventh before the Calends of August, in Sicca Veneria, a colony, in the Secretary at the Tribunal, Martianus, procurator, sitting; Callista, a maker of images, was brought up by the Commentariensis on a charge of Christianity, and when she was placed,

"MARTIANUS, the procurator, said: This folly has been too long; you have made images, and now you will not worship them. {361}

"CALLISTA answered: For I have found my true Love, whom before I knew not.

"MARTIANUS, the procurator, said: Your true love is, I ween, your last love; for all were true in their time.

"CALLISTA said: I worship my true Love, who is the Only True; and He is the Son of God, and I know none but Him.

"MARTIANUS, the procurator, said: You will not worship the gods, but you are willing to love their sons.

"CALLISTA said: He is the true Son of the True God; and I am His, and He is mine.

77 "MARTIANUS, the procurator, said: Let alone your loves, and swear by the genius of
78 the emperor.

79 "CALLISTA said: I have but one Lord, the King of kings, the Ruler of all.

80 "MARTIANUS, the procurator, turned to the lictor and said: This folly is madness; take
81 her hand, put incense in it, and hold it over the flame.

82 "CALLISTA said: You may compel me by your great strength, but my own true Lord and
83 Love is stronger.

84 "MARTIANUS, the procurator, said: You are bewitched; but we must undo the spell.
85 Take her to the Lignum (the prison for criminals).

86 "CALLISTA said: He has been there before me, and He will come to me there.

87 "MARTIANUS, the procurator, said: The jailer will see to that. Let her be brought up
88 tomorrow. {362}

89 "On the day following, Martianus, the procurator, sitting at the tribunal, called up
90 Callista. He said: Honour our lord, and sacrifice to the gods.

91 "CALLISTA said: Let me alone; I am content with my One and only Lord.

92 "MARTIANUS, the procurator, said: What? did he come to you in prison, as you hoped?

93 "CALLISTA said: He came to me amid much pain; and the pain was pleasant, for He
94 came in it.

95 "MARTIANUS, the procurator, said: You have got worn and yellow, and he will leave
96 you.

97 "CALLISTA said: He loves me the more, for I am beautiful when I am black.

98 "MARTIANUS, the procurator, said: Throw her into the Tullianum; perhaps she will find
99 her god there also.

100 "Then the procurator entered into the Secretary, and drew the veil; and dictated the
101 sentence for the tabella. Then he came out, and the præco read it:—Callista, a
102 senseless and reprobate woman, is hereby sentenced to be thrown into the Tullianum;
103 then to be stretched on the equuleus; then to be placed on a slow fire; lastly, to be
104 beheaded, and left to the dogs and birds.

105 "CALLISTA said: Thanks to my Lord and King."

106 Here the Acta end: and though they seem to want their conclusion, yet they supply
107 nearly every thing which is necessary for our purpose. The one subject on which a
108 comment is needed, is the state prison, {363} which, though so little is said of it in the
109 above Report, is in fact the real *medium*, as we may call it, for appreciating its
110 information; a few words will suffice for our purpose.

111 The state prison, then, was arranged on pretty much one and the same plan through the
112 Roman empire, nay, we may say, throughout the ancient world. It was commonly
113 attached to the government buildings, and consisted of two parts. The first was the
114 vestibule, or outward prison, which was a hall, approached from the *prætorium*, and
115 surrounded by cells, opening into it. The prisoners, who were confined in these cells,
116 had the benefit of the air and light, which the hall admitted. Such was the place of
117 confinement allotted to St. Paul at Cæsarea, which is said to be the "*prætorium* of
118 Herod." And hence, perhaps, it is that, in the touching Passion of St. Perpetua and St.
119 Felicitas, St. Perpetua tells us that, when permitted to have her child, though she was in
120 the inner portion, which will next be described, "suddenly the prison seemed to her like
121 the *prætorium*."

122 From this vestibule there was a passage into the interior prison, called *Robur* or *Lignum*,
123 from the beams of wood, which were the instruments of confinement, or from the
124 character of its floor. It had no window or outlet, except this door, which, when closed,
125 absolutely shut out light and air. Air, indeed, and coolness might be obtained for it by
126 the *barathrum*, presently to be spoken of, but of what nature we shall then see. The
127 apartment, called *Lignum*, was the {364} place into which St. Paul and St. Silas were
128 cast at Philippi, before it was known that they were Romans. After scourging them
129 severely, the magistrates, who nevertheless were but the local authorities, and had no
130 proper jurisdiction in criminal cases, "put them in prison, bidding the jailer to keep them
131 carefully; who, on receiving such a command, put them in the inner prison, and fastened
132 them in the *lignum*." And in the Acts of the Scillitane Martyrs we read of the Proconsul
133 giving sentence, "Let them be thrown into prison, let them be put into the *Lignum*, till
134 tomorrow."

135 The utter darkness, the heat, and the stench of this miserable place, in which the
136 inmates were confined day and night, is often dwelt upon by the martyrs and their
137 biographers. "After a few days," says St. Perpetua, "we were taken to the prison, and I
138 was frightened, for I never had known such darkness. O bitter day! the heat was
139 excessive by reason of the crowd there." In the Acts of St. Pionius, and others of
140 Smyrna, we read that the jailers "shut them up in the inner part of the prison, so that,
141 bereaved of all comfort and light, they were forced to sustain extreme torment, from the
142 darkness and stench of the prison." And, in like manner, other martyrs of Africa, about
143 the time of St. Cyprian's martyrdom, that is, eight or ten years later than the date of this
144 story, say, "We were not frightened at the foul darkness of that place; for soon that
145 murky prison was radiant with the brightness of the Spirit. What days, what nights we
146 passed there {365} no words can describe. The torments of that prison no statement
147 can equal."

148 Yet there was a place of confinement even worse than this. In the floor of this inner
149 prison was a sort of trap-door, or hole, opening into the *barathrum*, or pit, and called,
150 from the original prison at Rome, the Tullianum. Sometimes prisoners were confined
151 here, sometimes despatched by being cast headlong into it through the opening. It was
152 into this pit at Rome that St. Chrysanthus was cast; and there, and probably in other
153 cities, it was nothing short of the public cesspool.

154 It may be noticed that the Prophet Jeremiah seems to have had personal acquaintance
155 with Vestibule, Robur, and Barathrum. We read in one place of his being shut up in the
156 "atrium," that is, the vestibule, "of the prison, which was in the house of the king." At
157 another time he is in the "ergastulum," which would seem to be the inner prison. Lastly
158 his enemies let him down by ropes into the lacus or pit, in which "there was no water,
159 but mud."

160 As to Callista, then, after the first day's examination, she was thrown for nearly twenty-
161 four hours into the stifling Robur, or inner prison. After the sentence, on the second day,
162 she was let down, as the commencement of her punishment, that is, of her martyrdom,
163 into the loathsome Barathrum, lacus, or pit, called Tullianum, there to lie for another
164 twenty hours before she was brought out to the equulous or rack.

Chapter 34. The Martyrdom

165 {366} CALLISTA had sighed for the bright and clear atmosphere of Greece, and she
166 was thrown into the Robur and plunged into the Barathrum of Sicca. But in reality,
167 though she called it Greece, she was panting after a better country and a more lasting
168 home, and this country and home she had found. She was now setting out for it.

169 It was, indeed, no slight marvel that she was not already there. She had been lowered
170 into that pit of death before noon on the day of her second examination, and, excepting
171 some unwholesome bread and water, according to the custom of the prison, had had no
172 food since she came into the custody of the *commentariensis* the day before. The order
173 came from the magistrates to bring her out earlier in the morning than was intended, or
174 the prison might have really effected that death which Calphurnius had purposed to
175 pretend. When the apparitors attempted to raise her, she neither spoke or moved, nor
176 could well be seen. "Black as Orcus," said one of the fellows, "another torch there! I
177 can't see where she nestles." "There she is, like a bundle of clothes," said another.
178 "Madam gets up late this morning," said a third. {367} "She's used to softer couches,"
179 said a fourth. "Ha! ha! 'tis a spoiler of beauty, this hole," said a fifth. "She is the demon
180 of stubbornness, and must be crushed," said the jailer; "she likes it, or she would not
181 choose it." "The plague take the witch," said another; "we shall have better seasons
182 when a few like her are ferreted out."

183 They got her out like a corpse, and put her on the ground outside the prison. When she
184 still did not move, two of them took her between them on their shoulders and arms, and
185 began to move forward, the instrument of torture preceding her. The fresh air of the
186 morning revived her; she soon sat up. She seemed to drink in life again, and became

conscious. "O beautiful Light!" she whispered, "O lovely Light, my light and my life! O my Light and my Life, receive me!" Gradually she became fully alive to all that was going on. She was going to death, and that rather than deny Him who had bought her by His own death. He had suffered for her, and she was to suffer for Him. He had been racked on the Cross, she too was to have her limbs dislocated after His pattern. She scarcely rested on the men's shoulders; and they vowed afterwards that they thought she was going to fly away, vile witch as she was.

"The witch, the witch," the mob screamed out, for she had now come to the place of her conflict. "We'll pay you off for blight and pestilence! Where's our bread, where's the maize and barley, where are the grapes?" And they uttered fierce {368} yells of execration, and seemed disposed to break through the line of apparitors, and to tear her to pieces. Yet, after all, it was not a very hearty uproar, but got up for the occasion. The populace had spent their force, not to say their lives, in the riot in which she was apprehended. The priests and priestesses of the temples had sent the poor wretches and paid them.

The place of execution was on the northeast of the city, outside the walls, and towards the mountain. It was where slaves were buried, and it was as hideous as such spots usually were. The neighbourhood was wild, open to the beasts of prey, who at night used to descend and feast upon the corpses. As Callista approached to the scene of her suffering, the expression of her countenance had so altered that a friend would scarce have known it. There was a tenderness in it and a modesty which never had been there in that old time. Her cheek had upon it a blush, as when the rising sun suddenly touches some grey rock or tower, yet it was white and glistening too, so much so that others might have said it was like silver. Her eyes were larger than they had been, and gazed steadfastly, as if at what the multitude did not see. Her lips spoke of sweet peace and deep composure. When at length she came close upon the rabble, who had been screaming and yelling so fiercely, men, women, and boys suddenly held their peace. It was first from curiosity, then from amazement, then from awe. At length a fear smote through them, and a strange pity {369} and reverence. They almost seemed inclined to worship what stirred them so much, they knew not how; a new idea had visited those poor ignorant souls.

A few minutes sufficed to put the rack into working order. She was laid down upon its board in her poor bedimmed tunic, which once flashed so bright in the sun,—she who had been ever so delicate in her apparel. Her wrists and ankles were seized, extended, fastened to the moveable blocks at the extremities of the plank. She spoke her last word, "For Thee, my Lord and Love, for Thee! ... Accept me. O my Love, upon this bed of pain! And come to me, O my Love, make haste and come!" The men turned round the wheels rapidly to and fro; the joints were drawn out of their sockets and then snapped in again. She had fainted. They waited for her coming-to; they still waited; they got impatient.

"Dash some water on her," said one. "Spit in her face, and it will do," said a second. "Prick her with your spike," said a third. "Hold your wild talk, said a fourth; "she's gone to

229 the shades." They gathered round, and looked at her attentively. The could not bring her
230 back. So it was: she had gone to her Lord and her Love.

231 "Lay her out for the wolves and vultures," said the *cornicularius*, and he was going to
232 appoint guards till nightfall, when up came the *stationarii* and Calphurnius in high wrath.
233 {370}

234 "You dogs!" he cried, "what trick have you been practising against the soldiers of
235 Rome?" However, expostulation and reproach were bootless; nor would it answer here
236 to go into the quarrel which ensued over the dead body. The magistrates, having got
237 scent of Calphurnius's scheme, had outwitted the tribune by assigning an earlier hour
238 than was usual for the execution. Life could not be recalled; nor did the soldiers of
239 course dare publicly to disobey the Proconsul's order for the exposure of the corpse. All
240 that could be done, they did. They took her down with rude reverence from the rack,
241 and placed her on the sand; and then they set guards to keep off the rabble, and to
242 avail themselves of any opportunity which might occur to show consideration towards
243 her.

Chapter 35. The Corpo Santo

244 {371} THE sun of Africa has passed over the heavens, but has not dared with one of his
245 fierce rays to profane the sacred relics which lie out before him. The mists of evening
246 rise up, and the heavy dews fall, but they neither bring the poison of decay to that
247 gracious body, nor receive it thence. The beasts of the wild are roaming and roaring at a
248 distance, or nigh at hand: not any one of them presumes to touch her. No vultures may
249 promise themselves a morning meal from such a victim, as they watch through the night
250 upon the high crags which overlook her. The stars have come out on high, and, they too
251 look down upon Callista, as if they were funeral lights in her honour. Next the moon
252 rises up to see what has been going on, and edges the black hangings of the night with
253 silver. Yet mourning and dirge are but of formal observance, when a brave champion
254 has died for her God. The world of ghosts has as little power over such an one as the
255 world of nature. No evil spirit has aught to say to her, who has gone in her baptismal
256 white before the Throne. No penal {372} fire shall be her robe, who has been carried in
257 her bright *flammeum* to the Bridal Chamber of the Lamb. A divine odour fills the air,
258 issuing from that senseless, motionless, broken frame. A circle of light gleams round her
259 brow, and, even when the daylight comes again, it there is faintly seen. Her features
260 have reassumed their former majesty, but with an expression of childlike innocence and
261 heavenly peace. The thongs have drawn blood at the wrists and ankles, which has run
262 and soaked into the sand; but angels received the body from the soldiers when they
263 took it off the rack, and it lies, sweetly and modestly composed, upon the ground.

264 Passers-by stand still and gaze; idlers gather round. The report spreads in Sicca that
265 neither sun by day, nor moon by night, nor moist atmosphere, nor beast of prey, has
266 power over the wonderful corpse. Nay, that they cannot come near it without falling
267 under some strange influence, which makes them calm and grave, expels bad
268 passions, and allays commotion of mind. Many come again and again, for the

269 mysterious and soothing effect she exerts upon them. They cannot talk freely about it to
270 each other, and are seized with a sacred fear when they attempt to do so. Those who
271 have merely heard their report without seeing her, say that these men have been in a
272 grove of the Eumenides, or have suddenly encountered the wolf. The popular sensation
273 continues and extends; some say it is magical, others that it is from the great gods. Day
274 sinks again into evening, evening {373} becomes night; the night wears out, and
275 morning is coming again.

276 It begins to dawn: a glimmer is faintly spread abroad, and, mixing with the dark, makes
277 twilight, which gradually brightens, and the outlines of nature rise dimly out of the night.
278 Gradually the sacred body comes to sight; and, as the light grows stronger around it,
279 gradually too the forms of five men emerge, who had not been there the night before.
280 One is in front; the rest behind with a sort of bier or litter. They stand on the mountain
281 side of her, and must have come from the country. It has been a bold enterprise theirs,
282 to expose themselves to the nightly beasts, and now again to the rabble and the
283 soldiers. The soldiers are at some little distance, silent and watchful; such of the rabble
284 as have passed the night there have had some superstitious object in their stay. They
285 have thought to get portions of the flesh for magical purposes; a finger, or a tooth, or
286 some hair, or a portion of her tunic, or the blood-stained rope which was twisted round
287 her wrist and ankle.

288 As the light makes her at length quite visible to the youth on the other side, who stands
289 by himself with clasped hands and tearful eyes, he shrinks from the sight. He turns
290 round to his companions who are provided with a large winding-sheet or pall, and with
291 the help of one of them, to the surprise of the populace, he spreads it all over the body.
292 And having done this, he stands again trembling, just for a few seconds, absorbed in his
293 meditations, praying and {374} weeping, and nerving himself for what is to follow. Ah,
294 poor Agellius! you have not risen yet to the pitch of triumph; and other thoughts must be
295 let to range through your breast, other emotions must spend themselves, before you are
296 prepared simply to rejoice, exult, and glory in the lifeless form which lies before you.
297 You are upon a brave work, but your heart is torn while you set hand to it, and you
298 linger before you begin.

299 It was in the pride of her earthly beauty, and the full vigour and elevation of her mind,
300 that he last had seen her. It seemed an age since that morning, as if a chasm ran
301 between the now and the then, when she so fascinated him with her presence, and so
302 majestically rebuked him for bowing to that fascination. Yet on his memory every
303 incident of that interview was fixed, and was indelible. O why should the great Creator
304 shatter one of His most admirable works! If the order of the sun and stars is adorable, if
305 the laws by which earth and sea are kept together mark the Hand of supreme Wisdom
306 and Power, how much nobler perfection of beauty is manifested in man! And of human
307 nature itself here was the supereminent crown, a soul full of gifts, full of greatness, full
308 of intellect, placed in an outward form, equally surpassing in its kind, and still more
309 surpassingly excellent from its intimate union and subordination to the soul, so as
310 almost to be its simple expression; yet this choicest, rarest specimen of Almighty skill,
311 the Almighty had pitilessly shattered, in order that it {375} might inherit a higher, an

312 eternal perfection. O mystery of mysteries, that heaven should not be possibly obtained
313 without such grinding down and breaking up of our original nature! O mysterious, that
314 principle in us, whatever it is, and however it came there, which is so antagonistic to
315 God, which has so spoilt what seems so good, that all must be undone, and must begin
316 anew! "An enemy hath done this;" and, knowing as much as this, and no more, we must
317 leave the awful mystery to that day when all things shall be made light.

318 Agellius has not been idle while these thoughts pass through his mind. He has stooped
319 down and scooped up such portions of the sand as are moistened with her blood, and
320 has committed them to a small bag which he has taken out of his bosom. Then without
321 delay, looking round to his attendants, and signing to them, with two of the party he
322 resolutely crossed over to the other side of the corpse, covering it from attack, while his
323 two assistants who were left proceeded quickly to lay hold of it. They had raised it, laid it
324 on the bier, and were setting off by an unusual track across the waste, while Agellius,
325 Aspar, and the third were grappling with some ruffians who had rushed upon them.
326 Few, however, were there as yet to take part against them, but their cries of alarm were
327 bringing others up, and the Christians were in growing danger of being worsted and
328 carried off, when suddenly the soldiers interfered. Under pretence of keeping the peace,
329 they laid about { 376 } them with their heavy maces; and so it was, the blows took effect
330 on the heads and shoulders of the rabble, with but slight injury to Agellius and his
331 companions. The latter took instant advantage of the diversion, and vanished out of
332 view by the same misleading track which their comrades had already chosen. If they, or
333 the party who had preceded them, came within the range of sight of any goatherds upon
334 the mountains, we must suppose that angels held those heathen eyes that they should
335 not recognise them.

Chapter 36. Lux Perpetua Sanctis Tuis, Domine

336 {377} THE bier and its bearers, and its protectors, have reached the cave in safety, and
337 pace down the gallery, preceded by its Christian hosts, with lighted tapers, singing
338 psalms. They place the sacred body before the altar, and the mass begins. St. Cyprian
339 celebrates, and after the Gospel, he adds a few words of his own.

340 He said that they were engaged in praising, blessing, and exalting the adorable Grace
341 of God, which had snatched so marvellously a brand out of the furnace. Benedicamus
342 Patrem et Filium cum Sancto Spiritu. Benedictus, et laudabilis, et gloriosus, et
343 superexaltatus in sæcula. Every day doing marvels and exceeding all that seemed
344 possible in power and love, by new and still newer manifestations. A Greek had come to
345 Africa to embellish the shrines of heathenism, to minister to the usurpation of the evil
346 one, and to strengthen the old ties which connected genius with sin; and she had
347 suddenly found salvation. But yesterday a poor child of earth, and today an inhabitant of
348 the heavens. But yesterday without God and without hope; and today a martyr {378}
349 with a green palm and golden vestment, worshipping before the Throne. But yesterday
350 the slave of Satan, and spending herself on the vanities of time; and today drinking of
351 the never-cloying torrents of bliss everlasting. But yesterday one of a number, a grain of
352 a vast heap, destined indiscriminately for the flame; today one of the elect souls, written

353 from eternity in the book of life, and predestined to glory. But yesterday, hungry and
354 thirsty, and restless for some object worthy an immortal spirit; today enjoying the
355 ineffable ecstasy of the Marriage Feast and the espousals of Emmanuel. But yesterday
356 tossed about on a sea of opinion; and today entranced in the vision of infallible truth and
357 immutable sanctity. And yet what was she but only one instance out of ten thousand, of
358 the Almighty and All-manifold Grace of the Redeemer? And who was there of all of
359 them, there assembled, from the most heroic down to the humblest beginner, from the
360 authoritative preacher down to the slave or peasant, but was equally, though in his own
361 way, a miracle of mercy, and a vessel, once of wrath, if now of glory? Only might he and
362 all who heard him persevere as they had begun, so that if (as was so probable) their
363 trial was to be like hers, its issue might be like hers also.

364 St. Cyprian ceased; and, while the deacon opened the *sindon* for the offertory, the
365 faithful took up alternately the verses of a hymn, which we here insert in a most
366 unworthy translation:— {379}

367 "The number of Thine own complete,
368 Sum up and make an end;
369 Sift clean the chaff, and house the wheat,—
370 And then, O Lord, descend.

371 "Descend, and solve by that descent,
372 This mystery of life;
373 Where good and ill, together blent,
374 Wage an undying strife.

375 "For rivers twain are gushing still,
376 And pour a mingled flood;
377 Good in the very depths of ill—
378 Ill in the heart of good.

379 "The last are first, the first are last,
380 As angel eyes behold;
381 These from the sheepcote sternly cast,
382 Those welcomed to the fold.

383 "No Christian home, no pastor's eye,
384 No preacher's vocal zeal,
385 Moved Thy dear martyr to defy
386 The prison and the wheel.

387 "Forth from the heathen ranks she stepped
388 The forfeit throne to claim
389 Of Christian souls who had not kept
390 Their birthright and their name.

391 "Grace formed her out of sinful dust;
392 She knelt a soul defiled;
393 She rose in all the faith and trust
394 And sweetness of a child.

395 "And in the freshness of that love
396 She preached by word and deed,
397 The mysteries of the world above—
398 Her new-found glorious creed.

399 "And running, in a little hour,
400 Of life the course complete,
401 She reached the throne of endless power,
402 And sits at Jesu's feet. {380}

403 "Her spirit there, her body here,
404 Make one the earth and sky;
405 We use her name, we touch her bier,
406 We know her God is nigh."

407 The last sentiment of the yet unfinished hymn was receiving an answer while they sang
408 it. Juba had been brought into the chapel in the hands of his brother and the exorcists.
409 Since he had been under their care, he had been, on the whole, calm and manageable,
410 with intervals of wild tempest and mad terror. He spoke, at times, of an awful incubus
411 weighing on his chest, which he could not throw off, and said he hoped that they would
412 not think all the blasphemies he uttered were his own. On this occasion, he struggled
413 most violently, and shook with distress; and, as they brought him towards the sacred
414 relics, a thick, cold dew stood upon his brow, and his features shrank and collapsed. He
415 held back, and exerted himself with all his might to escape, foaming at the mouth, and
416 from time to time uttering loud shrieks and horrible words, which disturbed, though they
417 could not interrupt, the hymn. His bearers persevered; they brought him close to
418 Callista, and made him touch her feet with his hands. Immediately he screamed
419 fearfully, and was sent up into the air with such force that he seemed discharged from
420 some engine of war: then he fell back upon the earth apparently lifeless.

421 The long prayer was ended; the *Sursum corda* was uttered. Juba raised himself from
422 the ground. When the words of consecration had been said, he adored with the faithful.
423 After the mass, his attendants {381} came to him; he was quite changed; he was quiet,
424 harmless, and silent; the evil spirit had gone out; but he was an idiot.

425 This wonderful deliverance was but the beginning of the miracles which followed the
426 martyrdom of St. Callista. It may be said to have been the resurrection of the Church at
427 Sicca. In not many months Decius was killed, and the persecution ceased there. Castus
428 was appointed bishop, and numbers began to pour into the fold. The lapsed asked for
429 peace, or at least such blessings as they could have. Heathens sought to be received.
430 When asked for their reason, they could only say that Callista's history and death had

431 affected them with constraining force, and that they could not help following her steps.
432 Increasing in boldness, as well as numbers, the Christians cowed both magistrates and
433 mob. The spirit of the populace had been already broken; and the continual change of
434 masters, and measures with them, in the imperial government, inflicted a chronic
435 timidity on the magistracy. A handsome church was soon built, to which Callista's body
436 was brought, and which remained till the time of the Diocletian persecution.

437 Juba attached himself to this church; and, though he could not be taught even to sweep
438 the sacred pavement, still he never was troublesome or mischievous. He continued in
439 this state for about ten years. At the end of that time, one morning, after mass, which he
440 always attended in the church porch, he suddenly went to the bishop, and asked for
441 {382} baptism. He said that Callista had appeared to him, and had restored to him his
442 mind. On conversing with him, the holy Castus found that his recovery was beyond all
443 doubt: and not knowing how long his lucid state would last, he had no hesitation, with
444 such instruction as the time admitted, in administering the sacred rite, as Juba wished.
445 After receiving it, he proceeded to the tomb, within which lay St. Callista, and remained
446 on his knees before his benefactress till nightfall. Not even then was he disposed to
447 rise; and so he was left there for the night. Next morning he was found still in the
448 attitude of prayer, but lifeless. He had been taken away in his baptismal robe.

449 As to Agellius, if he be the bishop of that name who suffered at Sicca in his old age, in
450 the persecution of Diocletian, we are possessed in this circumstance of a most
451 interesting fact to terminate his history withal. What makes this more likely is, that this
452 bishop is recorded to have removed the body of St. Callista from its original position,
453 and placed it under the high altar, at which he said mass daily. After his own martyrdom,
454 St. Agellius was placed under the high altar also.

THE END.

Postscripts to Later Editions

455 *February 8, 1856.*—Since the volume has been in print, the Author finds that his name
456 has got abroad. This gives him reason to add, that he wrote great part of Chapters I.,
457 IV., and V., and sketched the character {viii} and fortunes of Juba, in the early spring of
458 1848. He did no more till the end of last July, when he suddenly resumed the thread of
459 his tale, and has been successful so far as this, that he has brought it to an end.

460 Without being able to lay his finger upon instances in point, he has some misgiving lest,
461 from a confusion between ancient histories and modern travels, there should be
462 inaccuracies, antiquarian or geographical, in certain of his minor statements, which
463 carry with them authority when they cease to be anonymous.

464 *February 2, 1881.—October, 1888.*—In a tale such as this, which professes in the very
465 first sentence of its Advertisement to be simple fiction from beginning to end, details
466 may be allowably filled up by the writer's imagination and coloured by his personal
467 opinions and beliefs, the only rule binding on him being this—that he has no right to
468 contravene acknowledged historical facts. Thus it is that Walter Scott exercises a poet's
469 licence in drawing his Queen Elizabeth and his Claverhouse, and the author of
470 "Romola" has no misgivings in even imputing hypothetical motives and intentions to
471 Savonarola. Who, again, would quarrel with Mr. Lockhart, writing in Scotland, for
472 excluding Pope, or Bishops, or sacrificial rites from his interesting Tale of Valerius?

473 Such was the understanding, as to what I might do and what I might not, with which I
474 wrote this {ix} story; and to make it clearer, I added in the later editions of this
475 Advertisement, that it was written "from a Catholic point of view;" while in the earlier,
476 bearing in mind the interests of historical truth, and the anachronism which I had
477 ventured on at page 82 in the date of Arnobius and Lactantius, I said that I had not
478 "admitted any actual interference with known facts without notice," questions of religious
479 controversy, when I said it, not even coming into my thoughts. I did not consider my
480 Tale to be in any sense controversial, but to be specially addressed to Catholic readers,
481 and for their edification.

482 This being so, it was with no little surprise I found myself lately accused of want of truth,
483 because I have followed great authorities in attributing to Christians of the middle of the
484 third century what is certainly to be found in the fourth,—devotions, representations, and
485 doctrines, declaratory of the high dignity of the Blessed Virgin. If I had left out all
486 mention of these, I should have been simply untrue to my idea and apprehension of
487 Primitive Christianity. To what positive and certain facts do I run counter in so doing,
488 even granting that I am indulging my imagination? But I have allowed myself no such
489 indulgence; I gave good reasons long ago, in my "Letter to Dr. Pusey" (pp. 53-76), for
490 what I believe on this matter and for what I have in "Callista" described.

170. A Martyr Convert
{307} (A Hymn.)

THE number of Thine own complete,
Sum up and make an end;
Sift clean the chaff, and house the wheat;
And then, O Lord, descend.

Descend, and solve by that descent
This mystery of life;
Where good and ill, together blent,
Wage an undying strife.

For rivers twain are gushing still,
And pour a mingled flood;
Good in the very depths of ill,
Ill in the heart of good.

The last are first, the first are last,
As angel eyes behold;
These from the sheep-cote sternly cast,
Those welcomed to the fold. {308}

No Christian home, no pastor's eye,
No preacher's vocal zeal,
Moved Thy dear Martyr to defy
The prison and the wheel.

Forth from the heathen ranks she stept,
The forfeit crown to claim
Of Christian souls who had not kept
Their birthright and their name.

Grace form'd her out of sinful dust;
She knelt a soul defiled,
She rose in all the faith, and trust,
And sweetness of a child.

And in the freshness of that love
She preach'd, by word and deed,
The mysteries of the world above,
Her new-found, glorious creed.

And running, in a little hour,
Of life the course complete,
She reach'd the Throne of endless power;
And sits at Jesu's feet. {309}

Her spirit there, her body here,
Make one the earth and sky;
We use her name, we touch her bier,
We know her God is nigh.

Praise to the Father, as is meet,

Praise to the Only Son,
Praise to the Holy Paraclete
While endless ages run.

The Oratory.
1856.