

The Passion of Christ.

“ Let His Blood be upon us and upon our children.”

COULD we have stood, two thousand years ago, before the Praetorium in Jerusalem, we would have heard the above words rush from the throats of an angry Jewish mob,—a mob infuriated beyond all description by their ungodly hatred, a hatred which took from them all semblance of reason, all feelings of humanity. But who is the object of this unparalleled rage? What did he do? He must have committed some horrible crime.

Thirty-three years before the assembling of this mob, a child was brought into this world. Its parents were poor people, living in seclusion. They were barely able to obtain the necessaries of life. The child grew up apparently as other children have grown up. Nothing seemed to indicate that he was not as other children; he performed his every-day tasks as others did; he was known as “ The Carpenter’s Son.” Time went on and the child became a man.

Now a change takes place. The obscure “ Carpenter’s Son ” becomes famed throughout the length and breadth of the land. He has commenced to preach a strange doctrine; people flock from far and near to hear him; his followers increase daily. But strange to say his own people turn against him. They seek to catch him by word or by act; they lay snares; but all to no avail. They must have recourse to intrigue and to bribery. They seize him; he is dragged from tribunal to tribunal, and at last condemned to death.

Who of us is not moved by the sight of human blood when it is spilt unjustly? Every feeling of the heart of man cries out against it. The springs of human pity gush forth and over-flow. Indignation rises up; justice demands redress. Hard indeed are the feelings of those who are not moved beyond themselves. This is especially so if the victim be a father, a brother, a sister, or a son. Then the very seat of human affections is touched. All the love of which man is capable rises up and will not be put down. Grief becomes so great

as to stifle, yea, even to kill. If this is so for a human victim what must it be for a Divine Victim, for a God?

The nobler the being the keener the suffering. But what tongue can adequately describe the sufferings of the crucified Saviour? The Garden of Eden introduced sin into the world; the Garden of Olives ushered in the Redemption. The former was surrounded with the love of God, the latter with Jewish hatred. The former was a garden of peace, the latter a garden of turmoil. Nevertheless it was in these surroundings that the Saviour of mankind began the Redemption. It was here, abandoned by friends, that all the iniquities, all the insults, all the crimes of man were viewed. The cold hearts, the deluded minds, all stood before Him mocking, jeering, and insulting. His future sufferings passed before His eyes; the ingratitude of His people, the blasphemies, the brutal crimes, nothing failed to appear. We were all there each one brought his load of sins, each one unabashed in the presence of Him who loved us more than we loved ourselves. There was no one to offer sympathy; no one to lighten the load. The Disciples, representatives of you and me, fell asleep. The Saviour's agony increased; a bloody sweat covered His body; His face is brought low to the ground; the blood mingles with the sand; the first blood in the cause of Redemption is spilt.

Under the guidance of the traitorous Judas, the persecutors arrive at the garden. Some have torches, others have ropes, but the greater number are armed with swords, scourges and other weapons, coming as it were to seize some notorious criminal and not a Saviour. Judas gives the kiss, the sign for the others to act; Jesus is seized, bound and led to the tribunal of justice.

The second bloody scene of the Passion now takes place. Pilate, unable to pacify his fellow-country men and fearing the loss of favour, orders Jesus to be scourged. Oh what an act of human cowardice! The God of heaven and earth is to be scourged, and that by the order of a man! Jesus is stripped, tied to a post and then the work of scourging commences. Human fiends lacerate His sacred flesh until "from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head there was no soundness

therein, wounds and bruises and swelling sores." The flesh is torn from his body ; the veins are opened and the nerves exposed. Every blow adds untold agony. No pity, no love, no mercy enters the heart of these scourgers. Blow after blow falls on that mangled body until, unable to bear up, Jesus falls to the ground. Then, and then only does the scourging end, but not through any thought of pity or mercy, but in order that their Victim may live. Yes, live to endure more terrible sufferings.

Just as a storm, on a summer's evening, gathers fury as it advances, so the storm of Jewish passion redoubled in energy as it advanced from stage to stage. The last part of the passion far surpassed the first in fury, hatred and suffering. The Jews urged on by blind rage now sought the destruction of their Victim. Not even the sight of that mangled body, nor the bleeding brow encircled by the crown of thorns, had any effect on their hardened hearts. Satan had so far blinded them that they would be satisfied with nothing less than Deicide. To Pilate's "Behold the Man" the High-Priests answer "Crucify Him, Crucify Him." The angry mob take up the cry and it re-echoes from far and near, until the very rocks seem to cry out "Crucify Him, Crucify Him." A rude cross is quickly furnished and laid on the bleeding shoulders of Christ. Then begins that long tramp up Calvary's hill. A throng of jeering, mocking fanatics line the way. Insult is added to insult; injury to injury, as the weary, lacerated Saviour passes along.

They arrive at Calvary's height. The cross is thrown on the ground. The Victim is seized ; His blood-soaked clothes are torn from His body, taking with them pieces of mangled flesh. All the wounds are reopened and bleed afresh. The persecutors heed not this, they only see the fulfillment of their desires. They do not notice how willingly the Saviour stretches Himself on the cross. There is no hesitating, no entreaties for mercy, there is only meek submission. The Divine hand is stretched out ; the persecutors pierce it with a nail. O agony of agonies ! Who can comprehend the intense pain ? Who can describe it ?

The other hand—that hand which had been raised in so many blessings ; that had conferred so many favors—is held out. The intense pain has already caused the muscles to contract, so much so that the hand cannot reach far enough. Ah, but the persecutors are prepared ; they use force ; they stretch ; they pull. At last the joints give away ; the arm lengthens ; they have succeeded. Now they pierce it as they did the other. Thus is half of their bloody work completed.

Turning to the feet, they again pull the joints apart ; the tendons snap and the feet are pierced. But yet satisfaction is not obtained. They needs must raise the cross. They do so and let it fall into place with a thud. All the tongues of men, all the tongues of Angels cannot tell how terrible was that shock. Pain pierced every fibre of the Saviour's body. Every nerve gave back its heart-rendering reply. Every muscle contracted until the very nails groaned. But no sign of pity, no sigh of compassion escaped from the mocking multitude. They answered with insults and blasphemies, with stones and curses. The Sacred Blood as it trickled down the face and painted red the trees of the cross or as it fell drop by drop from the Sacred Hands, cried in vain for the love of human hearts. The Sacred Brow, crowned with thorns, held no meaning for the proud. The lacerated body meant nothing to the sensual throng. The lover of freedom saw nothing in that Victim as it hung nailed to the cross. The drunkard and the glutton were unaffected by that intense, burning Thirst. All these pleadings fell unheeded on that frenzied mob. On the one hand all was hatred, on the other all was love ; on the one revenge on the other forgiveness ; on the one the creature, on the other a God.

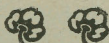
The Jews have finished their work, but even now they are not satisfied. They remain at the foot of the Cross. Is it to pray ? Is it to beg forgiveness ? No, none of these thoughts find a place in their hearts, They remain to mock, to insult, to curse. They remain to enjoy and to exult in their bloody work. For three long hours, suffering untold agony, Christ hung on the cross. Suspended between heaven and earth He pours out the very last drops of His blood for man's redemption.

With His last breath, as with His first, He interceeds for friend and foe, for Jew and Gentile. He prays that the Father may "forgive them for they knew not what they did." At last, yielding to the hand of death, He bows His head and dies.

Well may the Jews and the persecutors tremble. Well may they exclaim "This was indeed God." For all nature proclaims it. The sun refuses its light ; the veil of the temple is rent in twain ; the dead appear to the living ; the very earth shakes and trembles, striking fear to the hearts of all.

Christ is dead. The redemption is completed. "Consumatum Est." But what about the Jews ? How have they profited by their deed ? Sorrowfull indeed is their plight. Doomed to wander over the face of the globe, despised, contemned, ignored. Their own words must return to them with a fearful vengeance. "Let His blood be upon us and upon our children." But who are the Jews ? Do they not represent mankind ? Yea, surely, we were all found in that mob ; we were there as truly as the Jews. This is the thought we should remember. The Jews were us, and we were the Jews.

H. M. '18.



Though I prefer learning joined with virtue to all the treasures of kings, yet renown for learning, when it is not united with a good life, is nothing else than splendid and notorious infamy.

In the Hall of Fame every man is his own sculptor.

When we have contracted the habit of venial sin, we are like a worm-eaten beam which looks sound outside, but breaks as soon as weight is laid on it.