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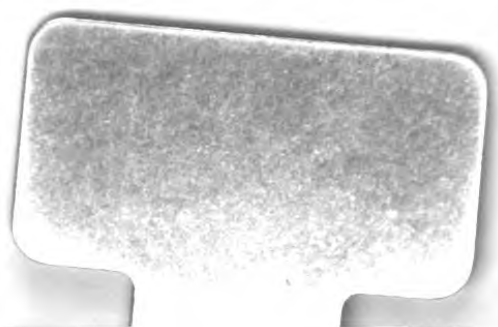


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ÆMILIA :

A DRAMA OF THE FOURTH CENTURY.

BY J. W.



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# ÆMILIA:

*A DRAMA OF THE FOURTH CENTURY.*

By J. W.



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THE aim of the author in this slight dramatic sketch, the work of leisure hours, is to illustrate the conflict between the old faith and the new just before the adoption of Christianity under Constantine. The character of Theophilus is intended to exhibit that colouring of mingled Puritanism and Platonism by which the Christianity of the early part of the fourth century was strongly tinged.

In words like Galerius, Maximian, the (probably) original syllabic pronunciation has been retained, although in English poetry it is usual to regard such words as trisyllables. The penultimate of Nicomedia has been shortened for rhythmical reasons.

A short explanation of historical allusions will be found in the Notes at the end of the book.

J. W.

*April, 1879.*



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.



DIOCLETIAN, Emperor of Rome.

GALERIUS, one of the Cæsars.

RUFINUS, Prefect of the Prætorian Guards.

ÆMILIUS, a Senator.

THEOPHILUS, the Greek Secretary of Diocletian.

ÆMILIA, Daughter of Æmilius.

IANTHE, a Greek Freedwoman, Companion of Æmilia.

SOLDIERS.

The Events of the first four Acts take place at Nicomedia ;  
those of the fifth, at Salona.

ACT I.—A.D. 302.

APISTIA.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the Emperor's Palace at  
Nicomedia.*

ÆMILIA, IANTHE.

*Æm.* This splendour wearies me: I pray thee charm  
Fatigue away with some sweet song of Greece.

*Ian.* *Hither, O hither, Odysseus!*

*Here let thy haven be,*

*Glory and might of Achæa,*

*List to our melody.*

*None have yet pass'd by our island,*

*None have urged on their ships,*

*Ere they have heard what blithe music*

*Flows from our honey lips.*

*Oh, what a joy is the list'ner's,  
 Greater than human joy !  
 Infinite knowledge we grant him,  
 Knowledge without alloy.  
 Well do we know of the battles  
 Waged around Troia's towers,  
 Bitter the strife of the nations,  
 Urged by the heavenly powers.  
 Well do we know all the story,  
 All that can hap know we,  
 All that now is or is destined,  
 List to our melody.*

*Hither, O hither, Odysseus :*

*Æm.* I love that song, I love it better far  
 Than those grim Christian hymns on which thy mind  
 Seems chiefly bent ; thou hast not deign'd of late  
 To carol frivolous and empty strains  
 Like this poor Siren song.

*Ian.* In sterner moods  
 The stern Theophilus hath tutor'd me,

Verses like this he almost thinks a sin  
Too great for pardon.

*Æm.* This Theophilus,  
For all his soul is sad with superstition,  
And darkly clouded by a vain belief  
That a dead thief is God, hath still some spark  
Of brave old Spartan fire abiding in him.

*Ian.* Lady, hadst thou a deeper knowledge of it,  
Thou could'st not call such faith a superstition.

*Æm.* What shall I name it, then? The Roman Gods,  
The Gods our fathers worshipp'd, growing old  
And out of date, have ceased to satisfy  
Theophilus and thee and all the crew  
Of Nazarenes and Christians. Hast thou read  
The scathing words of our great Tacitus?  
Hast thou well ponder'd o'er the great imposture  
Which he lays open to the very heart  
In all its foulness?

*Ian.* Nay, the Roman speech  
Is strange and harsh to me, I cannot read

The rough and cumbrous tongue ; but this I know,  
That foulness and imposture cannot dwell  
Among the Christians.

*Æm.* See, Theophilus

Comes from the presence of the Emperor :  
I fain would ask him more about this matter.

*Enter* THEOPHILUS.

Early art thou relieved, Theophilus,  
From thy attendance on the Cæsar. Tell me,  
Is our Lord well ?

*Theo.* He is, but sore fatigued,

He seeks for the repose that follows labour ;  
The humblest drudge in all Bithynia  
Hath easier days than Diocletian.

*Æm.* We have been speaking of the Nazarenes,  
Ianthe and myself, how Tacitus  
Scoffs at their customs and unlovely worship.

*Theo.* Lady, thy grievous words are ill-bestow'd :  
We are not Hebrews,—they reject the truth  
As fully as do ye ; in truth, the world



*Æm.* Hast thou no better hope for me than this?

*Theo.* Nay, lady, none, if thou wilt choose the  
darkness.

*Æm.* Then is thy faith indeed a dismal one.

*Theo.* Dismal to those who worship evil Gods,  
They and their Gods shall fall in common ruin.

*Æm.* Destruction, ruin, and a hopeless woe!  
These are thy keywords; if thou canst not gain  
Thy converts by persuasion, they will come  
For very fright.

*Ian.* Nay, but, Theophilus,  
Thou hast not told Æmilia the truth;  
Thou hast not told her that the Christian's God  
Is not a God of wrath and punishment;  
Thou hast not told her how the blessed Son  
Left as His precious gift the Feast of Love.  
The fragrance of that earliest Feast of Love,  
Doth it not linger still around the spot  
Where meet the faithful few in trustfulness?  
Theophilus knows well the hymn we chant:  
'Twill sound but weird to thee, Æmilia.

*O holiest myst'ry of a holy faith,  
 Bless'd remembrance of a dying Lord :  
 I eat a Saviour's flesh, the Christian saith ;  
 I drink the blood that for my life was pour'd.  
 While through the aisles the solemn music swells,  
 While high the note of praise harmonious soars,  
 My soul her Saviour's very presence tells,  
 And bathed in grateful reverence adores.  
 Happy the soul that feels her Lord is near,  
 Happy who eats His flesh and drinks His blood ;  
 The blessedness of Heav'n itself is here,  
 For sure 'tis Heav'n to share in heav'nly food.  
 O wondrous Eucharist, so solemn-sweet,  
 Last gift of Him who, though He died, yet lives ;  
 To Thee in love I turn my wand'ring feet,  
 Nought but the feast of God such calmness gives.*

*Theo.* Thou hast well said, Ianthe, God is Love ;  
 But He is Justice too : no excellence  
 May save the bondmen of a base Pantheion.  
 Loath am I to conceive that such as thou,



Gentle Æmilia, must be condemn'd  
 For hater of the true. Am I too stern  
 When I say this, Ianthe?

*Ian.* Ay, thou art,  
 Theophilus ; our God is not a Moloch  
 Delighting in the blood of innocent maids.

*Theo.* 'Tis time I waited on the Emperor.  
 I would thou wert of us, Æmilia.  
 It grieveth me that one so fair as thou,  
 So good and virtuous, should'st be so blind.  
 But I have hopes ; the proudest hour of all  
 Will be when I enrol thee in the ranks  
 Of those who battle for the cross. Farewell. [*Exit.*]

*Æm.* Such was the manner of the old Republic ;  
 He is not like the mob of sycophants.

*Ian.* Yet is he no unletter'd Cincinnatus.  
 Shall I recite for thee some lyric lines  
 He hath but just writ for the cithara ?

*Why, Fate, dost thou delight  
 To nurture hopes within us that must die*

*When Love's dream fades from sight,—  
 A dream so swift to rise, so swift to fly ?  
 Why, Fate, is it thy will  
 To scorn degree when hearts are one, and cast  
 No shadow on the hill  
 That frowns ahead and may not be o'erpast ?  
 Why, Fate, in cruel mood  
 Dost thou forecast a happy end to care,  
 A joy too soon imbued  
 With doubt, whose issue is a full despair ?*

*Æm.* The lines are good. He hath not yet forgot,  
 Though he be Christian, how Necessity,  
 If Grecian poets lie not, governs all.  
 There is some meaning here. Know'st thou at whom  
 All this artillery of verse is aim'd ?

*Ian.* I can divine, but may not tell, the aim.  
 Where Greeks saw Fate, the Christian sees a God.

*Æm.* A truce to this, 'tis time we went abroad.  
 The rheda stands before the portico. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.— *The Antechamber of the Emperor.*

RUFINUS, ÆMILIUS.

(THEOPHILUS *passes over the stage.*)

*Æm.* While such as he become the chosen friends  
Of Cæsar, can we hope for victory?

*Ruf.* In spite of all, this age will see again  
The captive led along the Sacred Way.

*Æm.* For the last time, Rufinus; bid the Roman  
Mark well the triumph he will see anon.  
He will not see another; bid him learn  
The streets through which the long procession winds,  
The temple where Augustus lays the gift  
Vow'd to the God amid the battle-rout,  
That when, in years to come, his children's children,  
Reading of triumphs, shall inquire of him  
What triumphs are, he may remember this,

And tell them, " Here I saw the Emperor,  
Drawn by the four white horses, pass me by " ;  
Or, " Here I saw the Persian General  
Laden with chains of silver ; but, my sons,  
That was long, long ago, when I was young.  
Rome doth not conquer now, and that is why  
We have no triumphs now."

*Ruf.* This pleasantry  
Of thine is somewhat harsh ; I like it not.

*Æm.* Believe me, 'tis no pleasantry, Rufinus ;  
I would it were : my mind misgives me sore  
We shall not have another Roman triumph.  
Augustus is a new Deïoces,  
He is well practised in the evil ways  
Of servile Media ; he doth not rest  
Contented with the grandly simple state  
Of Trajan or the mighty Antonines.  
Shame on us Romans ; shame on thee, Rufinus ;  
And shame on me ! he wears the diadem  
Which none hath worn in Rome since Tarquin's time.

An Imperator with a diadem,  
And we two senators of Rome to see it !  
He hath ingrafted on a Roman province  
The slavish manners of the crouching East ;  
He is not Rex, but he is Basileus,  
And we must do obeisance in the presence.  
Curse on such folly ! Well, it is for Rome,  
She is not goodly dwelling-place enough  
For our fastidious princes. O ye shades  
Of simple Romans of the good old time,  
Suffer not this pollution in your midst !  
It racks my heart in Nicomedia ;  
'Twould kill me if I saw a Basileus  
Bediadem'd within the Capitol.  
My tongue hath freely utter'd all my thoughts,  
Too freely, it may be, but I will trust thee.

*Ruf.* To me most sacred is such confidence.

*Æm.* Then more, the sure result of this base system,  
Spring up these miserable Græculi ;  
They swarm about the palace, fitting mates

For our slave-born Augustus ; theirs the art  
Of pleasing tyrants. This Theophilus,  
Who hath just pass'd us by, he is a Greek,  
Therefore I hate him,—not without just cause,  
For all that in this despicable Court  
There are a hundred ten times worse than he.

*Ruf.* To me it seems that neither diadem  
Nor yet the Græculi are terrible.  
I fear the Nazarenes, if they are left  
Unheeded and uncheck'd ; they force their way  
Unto our very hearths,—yes, e'en to thine,  
Æmilius ; the handmaid of thy daughter  
Is of the cursed sect, and strives to steep  
The mind of mistress and of maid alike  
In arrogant contempt of all we hold  
Most holy.

*Æm.* This I know, but cannot deem  
My daughter's cultured faith to be so weak  
That it must fall before the soft persuasion  
Of a Greek waiting-woman.

*Ruf.* More than this,  
Theophilus stands high in the esteem  
Of thy fair daughter ; I may scarce deny  
He hath a surface of ability  
In speech and song and music, fit to dazzle  
The eyes of those who look not deep within.

*Æm.* Thou dost him less than justice ; for a Greek  
He is morose and somewhat rough of speech.

*Ruf.* A word is ample warning to the prudent ;  
I well remember, when I was a boy,  
We learn'd a silly song with this refrain,—  
“The nest was there, the fairest nestling gone.”

*Æm.* Rufinus, I do thank thee for thy friendship,  
But know that if thou hadst not been my comrade  
For forty years, I would have struck thee down  
Ere yet another word could find its path  
Forth from thy lying throat ; great Jupiter,  
This of my daughter, my Æmilia !  
Away, Rufinus ! I would be alone.

[*Exit* RUFINUS.]

Ah, 'tis an anxious thing to have a daughter !  
They are so closely twined round our hearts.  
The mother's love is boundless for her son ;  
Did mother ever lavish on her first-born  
A love so deep and true and infinite  
As mine is for Æmilia? Rufinus  
Hath gather'd up suspicion from slight trifles,  
The daughter of the oldest noble house  
In all the Roman realm can scarcely stoop  
To look with favour on a Græculus,  
One of the Prince's train, for all his boast  
That in his veins there runs the valiant blood  
Of Archidamus and Leonidas.  
He is a Christian ; Lacedæmon's kings  
May well be proud of him ; had Christians kept  
The pass at Pylæ, Xerxes might have gain'd  
The gates of Greece without a traitor's aid.  
Rufinus, thou art right in this,—the sect  
Is a foul sore within the Commonwealth ;  
But oh, thou art not right in this,—my heart,



A father's heart,—forbids it for a daughter :—  
That my Æmilia can deign to bless  
Theophilus the Christian with that love  
Which must all other quench,—it cannot be !

[*Exit.*



## ACT II.—A.D. 303.

## SKIA.

SCENE I.—*The Council Chamber of the Emperor.*

DIOCLETIAN, GALERIUS.

*Gal.* The boldest in attack must win the day,  
Thou and the Christians are in hostile camps,  
One must destroy the other ; 'tis for thee  
To see thou art destroyer, not destroy'd.

*Dio.* Softly, Galerius, thou art too hot,  
Thou dost not love the Christians, nor do I,  
But must we then forbid them to exist ?

*Gal.* They do but clog the wheels of government ;  
They are fanatics, dangerous to us,  
And harmless to the public enemy.  
Dost not remember how some ten years back

A Christian tribune in Pannonia,  
 Order'd to lead his cohort into battle,  
 Unsheathed his sword and cast it to the ground ;  
 For war, i' faith, was wrong, whene'er the God  
 Of these vile cowards had not sanction'd it ?  
 Sudden and sharp his fate ; but such examples  
 Are perilous to discipline in arms.  
 Men of small wit hold such a one a hero,  
 Envy his death, and call it martyrdom.

*Dio.* Milan hath sour'd thy temper ; thou hast  
 learn'd

Thy lesson well from grim Maximian.

*Gal.* No lesson needful in so clear an art.  
 The danger grows ; it rears its evil head  
 Within these sacred precincts ; even more,  
 The second Cæsar, colleague in that office  
 Of my unworthy self, is thought to look  
 With none so great disfavour on the sect.

*Dio.* And for that very reason I am loath  
 To put thy thoughts in action ; come, bethink thee,

I have no braver than Constantius  
(Except it be his son, young Constantine,)  
Among the legions ; true, I love them not,  
They are cold friends, but e'en the coldest friendship  
Is safer than an active enmity.

The cautious nature of Constantius  
Seeks not to find offence in a religion  
Which may have deeper roots and wider branches  
Than Emperors conceive ; I am not sure  
He is not wise herein, Galerius.

Why can we not live peaceably together,  
Orthodox, Nazarenes, and Platonists,  
The world is wide enough for all of us ?

*Gal.* Great Emperor, thou wilt not be forewarn'd ;  
A Christian's life is a continual crime,  
The honour due to Cæsars deified  
He hesitates not to ascribe to Christ.  
Is not this treason ? Is not this rank treason ?  
Too soon thou may'st discover for thyself  
That all I say is true.



No hazardous enforcement of the faith  
In the old Gods upon these Nazarenes.  
If they obey not salutary rules,  
Made only to secure the public order,  
Why then they are mask'd traitors, and the doom  
Meet for such traitors rightly lights upon them ;  
If they obey,—and that they will obey  
I make no doubt,—thou hast reduced the sect  
Under the regulation of the State,  
And canst restrain them with a tighter rein.  
[*Aside.*] This takes : I was too violent at first,  
I see that craft does more than violence.  
I will betake myself to my affairs,  
And let the poison work. I go, Augustus,  
For many duties call for me this day.  
My words are truly spoken ; weigh them well.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*The Same.*

DIOCLETIAN, THEOPHILUS.

*Dio.* Theophilus, I have a task for thee  
I fear will pain thee, but the State commands.  
Inscribe upon thy tablets all my words,  
And let them speedily appear in form  
Of edict from myself in legal phrase.  
It is my pleasure that each Christian Church  
Shall instantly be levell'd with the ground,  
Till not a stone remain ; that none shall hold  
A secret meeting for the Christian worship,  
Or shall attend such meeting : if he do,  
He dies ; that all the bishops of the sect  
And all the presbyters shall give account  
Of books of worship, and shall render them  
To be destroy'd. If any property  
Have flow'd into the coffers of a church,  
'Tis forfeit to the State. Then, last of all,—  
'Twill test thy loyalty, Theophilus,—

The Christian freeman shall not serve the Empire  
In war or peace ; the Christian slave shall toil  
Till death, uncheer'd by hope of liberty.

*Theo.* It shall be done, my Prince, as thou com-  
mandest.

[*Aside.*] The blow hath fallen ; I have need of  
strength

More than mine own to bear it ; there is death  
Writ dark between the lines ; a sterner will  
Than Diocletian's hath order'd this.

*Dio.* No harm shall light on thee, thou'rt amply  
shielded ;

Be what thou wilt at heart, an empty form  
Of reverence to Mars or Jupiter  
Is all the State enforces from the Christian.  
I look not to thy inner thoughts, or wish  
To lose my trusty servant for a scruple.  
Were there but one Augustus ruling Rome,  
E'en this condition should not trouble thee.

*Theo.* The favour of the Emperor conferr'd



On his unworthy servant I confess.  
Thou hast advanced me to a dignity  
Beyond my poor deserts, and I have striven  
To serve thee honourably from my heart ;  
Among my faults I cannot truly say  
I find ingratitude ; to me thou art  
Master and friend at once, and as a friend—  
If thou wilt bear with me for my long service—  
I would unbosom all my mind to thee.  
Oh, think not, gracious Prince, I look with scorn  
On thy rich bounty ; I were less than man  
Could I forget that great Augustus deign'd  
To grant to me the highest gift of all,  
The treasure of his friendship. Then deceit  
I will not practise now ; 'tis bitter pain  
To me, Augustus, to requite thee thus,  
But it must be : I were no honest Christian  
Did I show reverence to Jupiter,  
Even in form.

*Dio.*           What madness do I hear?

These doughty words thou wilt repent anon  
In calmer moments.

*Theo.* Even now regret  
Steals over me, but it is the regret  
For being exiled from thy confidence ;  
There can be no regret for choosing truth,  
With its sad severing of ancient ties,  
Before a life which is a patent lie.

*Dio.* Thou art disturb'd by this, Theophilus,  
And not thyself, I will not hear thee further ;  
When thou hast mused alone upon this thing  
Thou wilt forget this folly ; reason well,  
Summon thy wisdom ere it be too late. [*Exit.*

*Theo.* Thus ever is the sacred cause of Christ  
But folly in the eyes of Roman princes.  
I go to carry out this fell behest ;  
The very words are burn'd into my brain.  
'Tis the last edict I shall ever write.  
Galerius hath conquer'd for the nonce,  
Some friend of his will be the Prince's scribe. [*Exit.*

## ACT III.—A.D. 303.

EROS.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the Palace.*

ÆMILIUS, ÆMILIA.

*Æmilius.* Hither, my daughter, I would speak with  
thee.

*Æmilia.* Father, thy will is law and pleasure too.

*Æmilius.* I may by chance offend thee with my  
speech.

*Æmilia.* A father's words are sacred to a daughter.

*Æmilius.* I am no facile Greek, I cannot wrap  
My meaning up in nicely-balanced phrase,  
I ask thee plainly and at once ;—but no,  
I will not doubt my daughter by the question.

*Æmilia.* Thou troublest me, my father, by thy words.  
What is this mystery?

*Æmilius.* Seek not to learn ;  
If it be false, and in the air of Courts  
False tales soon ripen for the harvesting,  
Better thou shouldst not know ; if it be true,  
Thou hast dishonour'd a patrician house.

*Æmilia.* Now I demand the question instantly.  
I am thy child, my father ; then believe  
Thou wrongest me in joining, e'en in words,  
Dishonour and myself.

*Æmilius.* I do believe,  
And I will tell thee all. Thou knowest well  
Theophilus, the Prince's secretary ?

*Æmilia.* I do, and much esteem him for his truth  
And nobleness of life.

*Æmilius.* He is a Christian.

*Æmilia.* Other good men are Christians : by their  
lives  
And not their doctrine ought they to be judged.

*Æmelius.* Sore grieved am I at this, Æmilia ;  
It but confirms what I have lately heard.  
This Christian Greek, Augustus' body-servant,  
He hath presumed to raise his eyes to thee ;  
He hath presumed to utter words to thee  
As to a maid he woos ; he hath aspired  
To wed a daughter of Æmilius.  
Can this be true ?

*Æmilia.* It is not true, my father.

*Æmilius.* If it were true, then were it sore dis  
honour.

*Æmilia.* It is most false ; I would that he were here  
Who forged the cunning lie, thou wouldst avenge  
My wrong on him.

*Æmilius.* [*Aside.*] Rufinus doth not wag  
His tongue in tattle like a waiting-maid ;  
He is too wise to scatter groundless charges.  
I will take vengeance when I know how far  
The lie hath wrought its way. Theophilus,  
As I well know, hath visited thee oft,  
Is this not so ?

*Æmilia.* It is, but never yet

Hath word of passion been once breathed by him ;

He is my friend, a tried and trusted friend,

But not my lover. Well Ianthe knows

To me Theophilus hath told no tale

That might not well be told me in thy presence.

*Æmilius.* 'Tis well, Æmilia, my heart is calmer ;

I will not doubt thee further, or assume

This all unwonted sternness to my daughter

Further than this, 'tis well that thou shouldst keep

More stately distance when Greeks visit thee.

*Æmilia.* I ne'er forget the race from which I  
sprang.

*Æmilius.* Thou doest well ; its annals are writ large

In golden letters on the page of time.

There was an age when the Æmilii

Had little need to brood o'er memories

Of their past greatness, with as great a present

And a still greater future ever sure.

'Tis not so now ; there is no reverence

In these new men who hold the reins of State,

Whether as princes or as counsellors,  
What cares the Caledonian gladiator  
Or the untutor'd herdsman from the Ister  
For our grand line, with all its brilliant story  
Of senator and consul and dictator,  
Noble in race, in this more noble still,  
Untainted honour and a people's love?  
We have no hopes, the death of the Republic  
Quench'd such for ever; only this is left,  
To look we do not shame our memories.

*Æmia.* I am the last of the Æmilii,  
And therefore to be trusted when I promise:  
I will do nought to soil our dignity.

*Æmilius.* If that thou dost, I will disown thee  
straight;  
A Roman father, e'en in these base days,  
Hath still some shadow of authority.  
If that thou dost, thou art no longer mine;  
At once I tear thy image from my heart,  
And die myself in agony of shame. [*Exit.*

*Æmilia.* The world hath busy tongues abroad in it,  
Outbraving truth until it seems a lie.  
I do not love Theophilus, and yet  
I would have justice done him. Such reports  
Thrive in the telling ; a malicious word  
Sown skilfully may bear a heavy crop  
Of mischief. Were he but in race a Roman,—  
A Roman sure he is in soul—be still,  
My heart, be still,—a Christian and a Greek ?  
The Gods have fix'd no law immutable  
By which a Christian is a sorry coward,  
By which a Greek must be contemptible ;  
The law is thine alone, Æmilius,  
And I thy daughter say it is unjust. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.— *The Same.*

THEOPHILUS, ÆMILIA, IANTHE.

*Theo.* 'Tis heavy news I bring thee ; even thou,  
For all thou hatest those who have misliked



The ancient Gods, wilt scarce rejoice at this ;  
 The sword is drawn against us, to renounce  
 The Christian's God, or die : so runs our doom.

*Æm.* Alas for Rome ! her sword is turn'd once  
 more

Against her citizens.

*Ian.* The spoiler's hand  
 Will once again be red with blood of saints.

*Theo.* So far they strike us in our loyalty,  
 Not in our life ; no longer may we guard  
 The Empire with our arms, or serve the State  
 With peaceful arts ; our life is left unharm'd,  
 But not for long. Think'st thou Galerius  
 Will check his lust for blood by remedies  
 As mild as this ? Think'st thou Maximian  
 Will rest content before he sacrifice  
 A thousand Christians to the nether Gods ?  
 The end is not yet come ; whene'er it comes  
 God's help attend us.

*Æm.* I could almost be

Myself a Christian when I see the woes  
That Christians suffer.

*Theo.*                      Almost ! Far apart  
Art thou in inmost soul from followers  
Of hundreds of degrading deities.  
Ere many days have pass'd thou wilt cast off  
The ancient superstition : woe to thee  
If, when the door is open'd wide, thou pause,  
And wilt not pass the threshold !

*Æm.*                      My resolve  
Is not yet fix'd. I cannot spurn the worship  
That made Rome queen of nations, or contemn  
The venerable deities, whence branch'd  
Full many a house renown'd ; nor can I hold  
That faith in them is necessary faith,  
And ev'ry misbeliever is accurst.  
My heart is sad when I forecast what troubles  
Come flooding in upon distracted Rome.  
My doubt is born of no new credence given  
To thy new sect ; it rather springs from this,

The trembling thought that greediness for blood  
Is token of the false and not the true.

*Theo.* Thy doubt shall one day vanish like the  
mist

Before the sun ; when rolls the cloud afar,  
Thine eye shall see the beauty of the King.

*Æm.* I understand thee not ; but this know well,  
Pity for Christians is not faith in Christ.

*Theo.* I am in peril here ; Galerius  
Will not be deeply troubled at my fall,  
Nor yet thy father, lady, nor Rufinus.  
Soon as the edict on the palace gate  
Metes out the law to men, as one proscribed  
Forth go I to my doom ; the Emperor  
Must not protect me then, for I shall be  
A traitor stain'd with crime : not even Cæsar  
May harbour treason.

*Æm.*           What is this thou sayest ?  
Thou hast just told us that thy life remains  
Unharm'd, no penalty as yet denounced

But loss of office : why these boding words ?  
Wherefore not bow thy head before the storm ?  
If thou foreseest death, then get thee hence  
Before it be too late, before thou stain  
The dust of the arena with thy blood.  
For my sake and Ianthe's, for the sake  
Of all who love and honour thee, away !

*Ian.* If thou hast any thought for me, away !

*Theo.* Æmilia, I hear a voice that calls,  
And bids me not to shrink from yielding up  
My life before my duty. Lentulus  
And others of the household have I warn'd,  
And they will fly to-night beyond the province.  
The work of the destroyer hath begun ;  
Elate with rumours of the new-made law  
Our enemies have girt them to the task.  
E'en as I speak, the fury of the flames  
Is loosed upon our doom'd basilica.  
Women may tarry still ; they will not war  
With women yet awhile. Two causes press me



Of thine avails to vanquish doom. Ianthe,  
Is this not truth ?

*Ian.* So says our Grecian bard :—

*If but there were another gate  
Than death by which to fly from fate,  
Men would escape thereby ;  
Life's bitterness is myriadfold,  
A task it is of toil untold  
To bear it or to fly.  
The beauty kindly Nature gives,  
Companion of our sordid lives,  
It is man's only boon ;  
The fruitful earth, the deep pure sea,  
The sun, the stars' sweet harmony,  
The circle of the moon.  
All else in life is shrinking fear  
Or pain, and if we cherish here  
Some rare and passing bliss,  
Too soon a train of woes succeeds ;  
Such transient pleasure only breeds  
A sterner Nemesis.*

*Æm.* Thy words are in close concord with the time,  
Urged by his fate, Augustus hath put off  
His wonted gentleness.

*Ian.* I see a mind  
Higher than his in these new purposes.  
By tribulation and sharp chastisement  
God's people must be purified, the chaff  
Must drive before the blast of cruelty,  
Till nought but wheat be left.

*Æm.* Thy God, methinks,  
Forgets his mercy when he purifies.

*Ian.* So doth the husbandman in rooting out  
The noxious weed, in this more merciful  
To what remains of wholesome fruit, thus purged  
Of all deceitful rivals.

*Æm.* This may be,  
But persecution is not husbandry.  
The persecutor slays the brave and true,  
The while deceit is safe. Theophilus  
Is mark'd for death ; the craven lies and lives

*Ian.* It is God's will, and I may not presume  
To question His decree.

*Æm.* I am inclined  
To look with greater favour on thy faith  
Than erst I did, for all Æmilius  
Hath taught me to despise it as too mean  
For Roman maiden ; there may come a time,—  
I say too much, but thou mayst read again  
The proem of thy Evangelium  
Written by one Joannes.

*Ian.* Gladly, lady,  
Will I obey thy pleasure in a place  
More secret and retired ; 'twere fraught with danger  
To con it here ; the temper of the times  
Gives great occasion to the eye of malice.  
Safe in the inner chamber let us read.

[*Exeunt.*



SCENE IV.—*The Same.**ÆMILIA alone.*

*Æm.* Can this be true? Did Cyprian display  
Resolve so dauntless for a barren tale  
Devised from nought. Did Stephen in his youth  
Die for a fable? Is it destiny  
To foster what I once despised?

[*Enter THEOPHILUS.*]

How now,

Theophilus, still wilt thou court the peril  
Encircling thee around?

*Theo.*

*Æmilia,*

I could not part from thee before I spoke  
Words that perchance may be my last to thee.  
Thou art the daughter of a senator,  
And I a scribe, a hireling of the Court ;  
Nay, worse than all, *Æmilia* may think,  
A Greek ; what though a son of Heracles

I claim to rank, yet still a slavish Greek.  
I will not say I love Æmilia,  
'Tis an offence too grave ; but hear me now,  
And pardon one whose feet have well nigh pass'd  
Within the world unseen. Had I been born  
Of ancient Roman stock, long time ere this  
Had I to thee thus open'd out my thought,  
And said, " Within the temple of my heart,  
Æmilia, thou sittest high enshrined,  
Higher than all beside." I weary thee :  
I go, but not to purchase life by flight ;  
I go not from the palace till the lions  
Roar for their prey : 'tis sweeter far to die,  
Knowing that thou art near, than live afar.  
If but my fate can draw one tear from thee,  
I am rewarded richly. Life and honours,  
I have had surfeit of them ; such as I,—  
Ay, lower far than I, the sons of slaves,  
Or barbarous provincials,—have oft ruled  
The Roman State ; there was a time, indeed,

When I had lordly daydreams of dominion.  
 I am more humble now, and I would choose  
 Thy love, at least thy pity for my death,  
 Before the purple of an Emperor.  
 Thou art my gladsome day, Æmilia ;  
 When thy farewell is spoken, coldly sinks  
 The splendour of the sun before the night.

*Æm.* Hath not this morn brought bitterness enow,  
 Theophilus, but thou must add to it ?  
 Is this a time for softly-utter'd vows ?

*Theo.* Thou hast not turn'd in anger from my  
 words,  
 Nor has contempt——, one question would I ask,  
 'Twill give thee little pain to answer it,—  
 I have thy pity, have I gain'd thy love ?

*Æm.* Theophilus, thou hast. [*Aside.*] The fix'd  
 resolve,  
 The sturdiness of heart I carried bravely  
 Before my father, can I show it now ?  
 These burning words have put it all to flight.

*Theo.* What reck I now of death? The lion's  
tooth,

The headman's sword, are empty names of terror.

Æmilia doth love me. O my God,  
Grant that I shrink not from my duty now!  
And thou hast trusted on the Crucified?

*Æm.* I have.

*Theo.* My heart can scarce contain its joy:  
Thou lovest me, and thou hast faith in Christ.  
God help me! or I shall be coward still;  
Life is a gracious thing—I must be gone  
Ere resolution fail.

*Æm.* Nay, tarry not  
Until the wolves are round thee; in thy journey  
Give to Æmilia a passing thought.

*Theo.* I go not from the city: can I fly  
And leave thee thus? So strong my purpose grows  
It may not be opposed; it is God's will.  
I shall forget all if I linger here.  
The blessing of thy Saviour rest on thee. [Exit.

*Æm.* Severe the task my God to me allots,  
'Tis my first cross, I must not murmur yet.  
To reach my highest joy, and in that moment  
To see it dash'd for ever, could the gods  
I venerated once have giv'n me strength  
To bear my misery? Theophilus,  
My brave Theophilus, thou shalt not die !  
The Emperor will hear me when I ask  
The little gift of life ; I will assail  
Galerius with words so eloquent  
That even he must soften. Hope remains,  
And bloodier monsters than Galerius  
Have tamed their rage before a woman's tears.

[*Exit.*

## ACT IV.—A.D. 303.

## THANATOS.

SCENE I.—*The Street before the Palace Gates at Nicomedia. On the Gates the Edict against the Christians. Two Soldiers guarding the Gates. To them enter THEOPHILUS.*

THEOPHILUS, SOLDIERS.

*Theo.* Our church deflower'd, our holy books condemn'd,

And I stand by and see it all unmoved.

Perdition light upon my craven soul!

I will be so no more; base edict, thus

[*He tears down the edict.*

I cast thee useless to the ground; there lie.

Would that with thee there lay the enemies  
Of Christ and of the Cross !

*1st Sold.*                   He hath pluck'd down  
The sacred edict ; scarce can I believe it,  
Though mine eyes saw it.

*2nd Sold.* To the Prefect with him,  
And we shall have reward for ready zeal.

[*They seize* THEO.]

Thou must with us ; thou art a proper man,  
And fit to do good service in the wars :  
'Tis pity thou should'st lose thy head when Rome  
Is perishing for lack of men, 'tis pity.

*1st Sold.* Strange that a scrap of parchment can  
destroy  
A life ! nay, many lives ; there will be work  
Again for us from this same bit of parchment.

[*Exeunt* SOLD. *with* THEO.]

SCENE 2.—*The Court of the Prefect.*

RUFINUS, THEOPHILUS, SOLDIERS, &amp;c.

*Ruf.* Thou dost acknowledge, then, this impious  
deed?

*Theo.* I do confess the deed, I do deny  
The deed was impious.

*Ruf.* Then for thy contempt  
Of sacred Cæsar, whom the Gods preserve,  
For thy most manifest and open treason,  
The law of Rome hath set the penalty,  
And thou must die. By special grace it is,  
Rather than justice, that I send thee not  
To combat lions in the people's sight.  
Before the setting of the morrow's sun  
The sword shall shed thy blood, if thou obtain  
No pardon from Augustus for thy crime.

*Theo.* Rufinus, no ill-will I bear to thee,  
Though well I know thou art mine enemy;



I cannot curse where my Redeemer bless'd.  
The shadow of my death draws on apace ;  
I fear it not, I see in radiant sheen  
The pinnacles of the Celestial City.  
Death is a moment's pang, and gives release  
From all the sorrows of an evil world,  
Its sins, its abject lusts, its paltry cares.  
I covet not my life, or wish to live,  
For living's sake ; to die I am right willing.  
But yesterday I dream'd how blest it were  
To love and be beloved with earthly love.  
That were indeed a happy fate, and mine  
It might have been if I had set my duty  
Below my plighted troth. The thought of her  
Whose soul was knit with mine for one short hour  
Made death seem fearsome ; now I am resign'd  
To suffer out my doom : 'tis better thus.  
More precious offering to God is he  
Who perishes in pride of strength and youth,  
Rich in a maiden's love, than he who meets

The stroke with calmness as a welcome gift,  
When life and pleasure have long dwelt apart.  
I ask no mercy, all too well I know  
'Twere vain to plead for mercy in a Court  
Where Roman Justice sits enthroned and arm'd.  
I ask no mercy now, the day is nigh  
When none need ask for mercy in like case.  
I see the vision of a Christian prince  
Guiding the power of Rome, a Christian host  
Led out to war by Christian captain, sped  
Forth on its way by prayer of Christian priests.  
The triumph of the Lord is near at hand,  
I would that I might see the wondrous hour.  
It may not be ; He calls me to Himself.  
To-morrow I shall see my Lord,—to-morrow !  
Would that it were to-day ! O Christ, I come !  
My Lord awaits me at the golden gates ;  
Stephen is there, and James, and Polycarp,  
And all the martyrs of the blessed faith.  
O gentle death, thou art too slow of foot !

*Ruf.* Augustus' ear is open to the prayer  
Of humble penitence.

*Theo.* 'Tis not for me  
To supplicate for pardon ; my offence  
Is far too black. I rest here well content  
With thy decree.

*Ruf.* Thy blood be on thy head !  
Thou art stark mad, I will not hear thee more.  
Ho ! guard him to the prison-house again.

[*Exeunt SOLD. with THEO.*]

SCENE III.—*The Council Chamber of the Emperor.*

DIOCLETIAN *discovered busied with documents, &c.*  
*To him enter ÆMILIA.*

DIOCLETIAN, ÆMILIA.

*Æm.* 'Tis but an instant's hearing that I crave,  
Augustus, well I know thou givest ear  
To prayers of e'en the meanest of thy subjects.

*Dio.* What is thy will with me, Æmilia ?

The daughter of Æmilius commands  
Indulgence, if it be within the law.

*Æm.* The bounty that I now implore, dread Prince,  
I ask not for myself; oh, pardon me  
If I do seem to shadow forth reproach  
In my request. Thou hadst a secretary,  
Theophilus.

*Dio.* Speak not of him; time was  
That I had said, if one had question'd me,  
In all the realm I had no trustier friend.  
Speak not of him. O Gods, have I deserved  
To be repaid by such ingratitude?

*Æm.* His service was a long and faithful service.

*Dio.* The dearest friend becomes the deadliest foe.

*Æm.* May not his life of goodness plead for him?  
His truth, the trust that thou hast aye reposed  
Upon his wisdom,—these do all confirm  
The prayer I make to thee; 'tis but for life,  
His honour fell from him when first his hand  
Was stretch'd against thy sacred proclamation.

Mercy becomes Augustus,—mercy sits  
 Upon his diadem, its brightest jewel.  
 Stripp'd of his dignity, Theophilus  
 Will walk the earth attainted and disgraced,  
 But never ceasing to repeat to men  
 That Diocletian is merciful.

*Dio.* Thou art a most persistent deputy.  
 Hath he despatch'd thee as his messenger  
 To deprecate my wrath ?

*Æm.* 'Tis of myself,  
 Urged by my heart, that I have ventured this.  
 I am his bride affianced ; if the good  
 That he hath wrought for thee may not prevail,  
 Then, Cæsar, at thy feet Æmilia  
 Implores thy favour.

*Dio.* Thou hast moved me strangely.  
 [*Aside.*] Shall I make shipwreck of young hopes,  
 and leave

For this bright maid the emptiest thing in life,  
 Remembrance of a happier day now past ?



*Gal.* A miserable Christian ! Let him die,  
The world will be endurable without him.

*Æm.* Most gracious Cæsar, hearken to my words,  
And mock not at my prayer ; the Emperor  
Hath heard me mercifully.

*Gal.* Get thee gone,  
Thou foolish maid ; retire unto thy bower,  
And meddle not with the affairs of state.

*Dio.* Nay, nay, too harsh thou art, Galerius ;  
Say to the Cæsar what thou wilt, my daughter.

*Æm.* Cæsar, what pleasure hast thou in the death  
Of one poor scribe ?

*Gal.* Such vagabonds defile  
The city with their presence.

*Æm.* Oh, be gentle,  
The Emperor thirsts not for blood as thou dost.

*Gal.* Thou dost forget thyself, Æmilia.  
Augustus, thou hast lent a facile ear  
To perilous requests : this scribe of thine  
Was grown too lofty in his own esteem.

He is right proud, the fellow will not stoop  
To beg the boon himself ; then comes this girl  
With tearful tale. Thou art too womanish,  
Not such the temper that once show'd in thee  
When all unpitied fell Numerian,  
Thy dagger at his heart ; take thought again,  
The State will suffer by thee. Let him die,  
If such a gift he thinks not worth the asking.

*Dio.* 'Tis true ; I heard the matter from Rufinus :  
He utterly disdain'd to make appeal  
To my authority. I mourn his fate,  
But if he is content, and troubleth not  
To ask his life himself, why, let him die.  
Twice hath he set at nought Augustus' power :  
Edict, he will have none of it ; and pardon,  
He will have none of that ; he hath transgress'd  
Beyond all bounds ; forgiveness is a wrong  
With such stout malefactors : he must die.  
Æmilia, our mercy is refused.  
Thus much we grant thee ('tis a grace beyond



What traitors or what traitors' brides deserve),—  
It is permitted thee to visit him  
Before his doom.

*Gal.*                   And then forget him straightway :  
In sooth, the youths of Nicomedia  
Will not permit thee long to mourn for him.  
There are as good as he still left alive ;  
Thou wilt not want for lovers.

*Æm.*                                   God forgive,  
Galerius, thy jests.

*Dio.*                   They are unseemly,  
Cæsar ; I pray thee do not trouble her.

*Æm.* Augustus, for thy courtesy I thank thee.  
Oh, that thou hadst but granted my desire !  
My heart is buried with Theophilus.  
One day remorse may seize upon thy soul  
With grasp as rough as is the cruel speech  
Of thee, Galerius, this day.

*Gal.*                                   Begone !

And thank Augustus that thou hast escaped  
The vengeance rightly due for thy bold words.

[*Exit* ÆM.]

SCENE IV.—*The Prison at Nicomedia.* THEOPHILUS  
*discovered in fetters. To him enter ÆMILIA, led  
by a Soldier.*

THEOPHILUS, ÆMILIA.

*Theo.* The sun hath shone once more, the clouds  
depart ;  
I have been feeding on my gloomy thoughts ;  
There is some brightness left, Æmilia,  
And thou hast brought it.

*Æm.* 'Tis the last poor service  
That I can render thee, Theophilus.

*Theo.* Musing alone I almost have forsworn  
The stoutness of a Christian ; it was thou,  
Thou wert the cause. I spoke big words indeed  
Before Rufinus when the pagan crowd

Press'd eagerly to see the Christian flinch  
 In prospect of his doom ; then came this darkness,  
 Horrible darkness, and I felt my spirit  
 Grow cold as night, when shot the groaning bolt  
 Back to its socket in the massy door.  
 I doubted all, I doubted of my God,  
 I doubted of my duty ; terribly  
 Desire of life unmann'd my fearful soul.  
 How could I bear the picture that I drew ?  
 I saw thee left unshielded to the onset  
 Of all thy foes ; and then I wish'd to live.

*Æm.* If any word of mine hath laid restraint  
 Upon thy duty, gladly had I died  
 Ere such a word was utter'd.

*Theo.* It is past,  
 This yearning for earth's pleasure ; now I see  
 Such visions of the City of the King  
 I am impatient of the little while  
 That still is left ; I see the purple rays  
 Gleam glorious on the plains of asphodel



As his who stands upon the sacred mount  
And views afar beyond the western sea  
The Islands of the Blest.

*Æm.* Thine hour is near,  
And I must leave thee : be thy latest prayer  
Breathed on behalf of thy Æmilia.  
Just souls are in the hands of God. Farewell !

*Theo.* Farewell ! The sun hath risen to the zenith ;  
The remnant of existencē I would pass  
In contemplation of that Perfectness,  
That Infinite Beneficence and Truth,  
Which I shall share anon. O mighty joy !  
Soon shalt thou share it too, Æmilia.

[*Exit* ÆM.]

## ACT V.—A.D. 305.

POTHOS.

SCENE I.—*The Audience Chamber in Diocletian's  
Palace at Salona.*

DIOCLETIAN, ÆMILIUS.

*Dio.* This is indeed true freedom ; what to me  
Are all the tumults of the wounded Empire ?

*Æm.* Unending war and discord have possess'd  
Distracted Rome ; there passes not a day  
That brings not in its tale of siege and battle.  
Alas, the day that ever thou wast moved  
To leave the State without a guiding hand !  
Galerius may wreak his savage will  
Uncheck'd ; 'twere almost happier that a Christian  
Should wield the strength of empire.



It well nigh maddens me ; again I see  
 The sad, pale presence of some friend I slew :  
 Theophilus, my scribe, his pleading eyes  
 Gazing on mine in pity ; Lentulus,  
 Legions of those who died since that foul day  
 When in Bithynia the law denounced  
 Death to the Christian.

*Æm.* Nobly have they met  
 Their doom, these Christians ; dost thou not recall  
 With what stanch spirit this Theophilus  
 Fell as a Spartan should ? I much disliked him,  
 He was the promised bridegroom of my daughter ;  
 For all my hate, he was a steadfast youth :  
 A man may be a hero and a Christian.  
 I did not think so once. My daughter's heart  
 Was well nigh rent asunder by the stroke  
 That slew Theophilus.

*Dio.* Ah me, the anguish  
 Young hearts have suffer'd from such deeds as mine !

*Æm.* My daughter seeks an audience ; wilt thou see



Æmilia once more, ere Dîs hath claim'd  
 Another sacrifice? The sentence pass'd  
 Upon Theophilus was pass'd on her.

*Dio.* Before the even she shall speak with me.

*Æm.* I will inform her of thy gracious will. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.—*A Room in the Palace.*

ÆMILIA, IANTHE.

*Æm.* This day I meet the Emperor again  
 After my years of sorrow : hath remorse  
 Yet fasten'd on his soul with iron fangs?  
 I have not seen his face, Ianthe, since  
 I pray'd a lover's life, and pray'd in vain.

*Ian.* He hath weird trances and unquiet nights,  
 So say they in Salona.

*Æm.* God is just :  
 A bloody crime brings bloody Nemesis.

*Ian.* It was his weakness rather than his crime  
 That urged him to such evil work.



*Ian.* I swear.

*Æm.* Thou wilt be lonely, my Ianthe, here,  
When I am gone ; 'tis better thou shouldst quit  
This scene of parted ties, and see again  
The brilliant Athens of thy birth ; my wealth,  
It is all thine,—Æmilius hath promised  
Thus much to me.

*Ian.* Thou canst not banish me  
While yet thou livest. Nay, Æmilia,  
I care not for thy wealth ; away with it  
To whom thou wilt : the richest gift of all  
Will be to die with thee.

*Æm.* Thou painest me,  
Ianthe, faithful friend ; these dismal years  
Thou must forget : a brighter life remains  
For thee in sunny Hellas.

*Ian.* O sweet lady,  
The future is all dark ; without thy love  
What is there left ? E'en Athens hath no charm  
If we are parted.

*Æm.*                    Never till to-day  
Knew I the deep affection of thy heart.  
I am unworthy of this strong devotion ;  
May God reward thee for thy love, Ianthe.  
There is some goodness left upon the earth  
As in the golden age ; such faith as thine  
Is like the fragrance of sweet flowers that blow  
Upon a battle-field, it is so rare  
In this poor hollow age.

*Ian.*                    Nay, praise me not ;  
Could any living thing have been thy comrade  
Through all these years, and then refuse to love thee ?

*Æm.* I am so weak, I cannot speak the words  
That throng upon my tongue ; it is the hour  
Appointed by Augustus for the audience.  
Lend me thine aid, my limbs are grown so feeble  
They scarce support my weary, wasted frame.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The Audience Chamber.*

DIOCLETIAN, ÆMILIA, IANTHE.

*Dio.* Ah me, Æmilia, to me thou seem'st  
A Heaven-sent Erinny's to chastise  
My tortured breast! Oh, spare me, spare me, Heaven!  
Oh, let the past be buried with its wrongs!  
There was of late a Roman Emperor,  
Fell and implacable; he rules not now,  
Then let him be forgot. Thou hatest him,  
Thou hast good reason. Diocletian  
Hates him no less; then let us pity him,  
And pass him by: he is no more Augustus.

*Æm.* I come not to reproach thee, my allegiance  
Forbids reproach; I cannot nurse offence  
Within my bosom when my footsteps press  
The threshold of the tomb: may God forgive  
The sin of blood as fully as do I.

*Dio.* I am thy murderer, Æmilia;

Theophilus, the firstfruits of my rage  
Against thy sect, hath drawn thee to himself  
Beyond the grave.

*Æm.*           A little while shall pass,  
And I shall be at peace.

*Dio.*           He died undaunted,  
As Christians die.

*Æm.*           The Christian hath no fear,  
For death to him is but a moment's sleep,  
And then a waking to immortal joy.

*Dio.* There is a wondrous beauty in thy faith,  
Ofttimes upon the face of some poor wretch  
Sent to the headsman or the lions glow'd  
A strange unearthly lustre.

*Æm.*           'Tis the lustre  
Sprung from the perfect confidence within.

*Dio.* The sect is waxing strong : such men attract  
The wonder of the multitude ; they die  
With such a courage that in emulation  
Others must follow them.   Galerius

Hath not the strength, despite his watchfulness,  
 To combat fervour such as this ; the Gods  
 Stand silent and aghast ; the Pythoness  
 At Delphi answereth, “ Apollo sleeps,  
 I cannot speak ; the slaughter of the just  
 Sits heavy on my tongue.” The Gods take wing  
 In days of civil strife, and careless dwell  
 In Epicurus’ heav’n ; ambrosial meats  
 Become them better than the clash of arms.

*Æm.* The Gods of Rome have ta’en a deadly wound ;  
 The Cross hath conquer’d. Would Theophilus  
 Had lived to see this day ! Great Emperor  
 (I needs must call thee so, Galerius  
 Doth but disgrace the robes of majesty),  
 The noblest maxim of the Christian faith  
 Impels us to forgive our enemies.  
 Wert thou mine enemy, I could forgive ;  
 Thou art no foe of mine ; the Christian’s breast  
 Holds nought but charity, and gives no room  
 For wrath to dwell there. When my spirit flies





## NOTES.



DURING the time comprised in the first four Acts, Diocletian and Maximian were joint Emperors or Augusti, the former residing almost entirely at Nicomedia, in Bithynia, the latter at Milan. The two Cæsars, or presumptive successors to the higher dignity of Augustus, according to the political scheme devised by Diocletian, were Galerius and Constantius Chlorus. In the year 305, Diocletian and Maximian resigned the position of Augustus, and Galerius and Constantius Chlorus became Augusti. In spite of the political change in the meaning of Augustus and Cæsar, the old name Cæsar was continually used (as it is in this work) in a general way to denote the highest officer of the State. Prince (Princeps) was another generally used title.

*Page 5.*—These lines are a free rendering of Homer (Odyssey xii. 184—191), the famous Sirens' song.

*Page 8.*—*We are not Hebrews.* There was for a long time a confusion between the Christians and

the Jews at Rome. The name "Nazarenes," which was frequently applied to the Christians, perhaps tended to perpetuate the error. See Merivale's "History of the Romans under the Empire," vol. vi., p. 273. Tacitus probably shared the general confusion. He describes the Christians and the Jews in terms almost identical. *Annals*, xv. 44; *Histories*, v. 5.

*Page 9.—Iamblichus.* A Neoplatonist philosopher who flourished at this time.

*Page 11.—*Adapted from an old Greek hymn. Music seems to have been used in the Christian churches at this time.

*Page 13.—If Grecian poets lie not.*—See especially the Prometheus Vincit of Æschylus.

*Page 14.—For the last time.* The triumph of Diocletian was celebrated at Rome in 303. It was the last triumph which Rome ever saw. In the Eastern Empire there was one as late as the reign of Justinian, when Belisarius triumphed.

*Page 15.—Deioces.* The first king of Media, who established a system of magnificence and seclusion, in order that his subjects might the more easily forget the lowliness of his origin. Diocletian adopted the same course, and was the first Emperor who ventured to wear the Persian diadem, a band of silk set with pearls. He also assumed the title of "Basileus." "Rex" was still too hateful a word for even

Diocletian to venture to arrogate. He introduced the custom of prostration in the Imperial presence.

*Page 16.—She is not goodly dwelling-place enough.* Diocletian was only in Rome for two months during the whole of his reign, viz., at the time of his triumph.

*Page 17.—Slave born Augustus.* Diocletian was the son of a slave in the house of a Roman senator.

*Page 22.—A Christian tribune.*—More than one instance of such conduct is to be found in history.

*Page 22.—The second Cæsar.* Constantius' wife, the Empress Helena, was a Christian, and he had many Christians in his service.

*Page 26.—Inscribe upon thy tablets.* This speech gives pretty correctly the terms of the first Edict. It was promulgated on 23rd February, 303. The second and third Edicts of Diocletian were still more severe, and amounted to persecution, which the first in itself did not. But Diocletian was enraged by the treatment which the first Edict received. For the tearing down of the Edict see "Gibbon," c. xvi.

*Page 27.—Reverence to Mars or Jupiter.* Christians who were tempted to sacrifice to the gods so as to retain their lives or employment were called in contempt by their more faithful companions, "*libellatici*," from the magistrate's certificate given to each person who submitted to the test.

*Page 37.—Full many a house renown'd.* It was

a theory of both the Greeks and Romans that the original ancestor of a *gens* was (in most cases) a god or hero.

*Page 39.—The fury of the flames.* The basilica of the Christians at Nicomedia was destroyed by fire the day before the appearance of the first Edict.

*Page 41.—From the Greek Anthology.*

*Page 44.—A son of Heracles.* A descendant of the Heraclid kings of Lacedæmon.

*Page 50.—To the Prefect with him.* It is probable that at this time the Prefect of the Prætorian Guards had criminal jurisdiction in cases arising more than 100 miles from Rome. An appeal lay from him to the Emperor in many cases, certainly in cases of treason like that of Theophilus.

*Page 51.—The sword shall shed thy blood.* Punishment both by beheading and by exposure to wild beasts in the circus was usual at this period.

*Page 59.—Numerian.* One of the predecessors of Diocletian. He was found dead in his tent in camp in A.D. 284, and Diocletian was, with some reason, suspected of his murder, although Aper the prefect suffered for the murder.

*Page 64.—The sacred mount.* An allusion to the old Celtic legend to the effect that the Islands of the Blest are to be seen far off in the Atlantic from certain spots and at certain times.

*Page 64.—Which I shall share anon.* The theory

of the Neoplatonist school was that the soul of man is originally an emanation from the soul of God, and after the death of the body returns to its archetype.

*Page 65.—This is indeed true freedom.* The abdication of Diocletian occurred on the 1st May, 305. He resided for the remainder of his life in the magnificent palace of Salona in Dalmatia, ruins of which still survive.

*Page 65.—Siege and battle.* The years between the abdication of Diocletian and the accession of Constantine were marked by continual civil strife.

*Page 74.—The Pythoness.* The Pythoness, or Pythia, was the priestess of Apollo at Delphi, who delivered the oracles. Shortly after this time oracles were suppressed by the Christian emperors.

*Page 74.—In Epicurus' heaven.* Where the gods lived "*securum ævum*," according to the view of Epicurus, Lucretius, and Horace, caring not for what took place upon earth among miserable mortals.



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