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THE THEBAN LEGION.

BY PROF. W. M. BLACKBURN.

CHAPTER VIII.

REFUGE.

THE desert was fearful to the people of the East, on account of its deathly influences. A shelter, a retreat, a place of refreshment was rarely to be found; but if one were found it was appreciated by the traveler, exposed to the burning heat or drifting sands. Hence the reference of the prophet to a time when "a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest: as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Such should a king be at a future day. But no such king, prince, or emperor appeared in the East during those years of which we are writing. The imperial breath was as the deadly wind, making a desert on which were dying thousands of heavenward pilgrims.

The man, who was as a shadowing tent in the daytime from the heat, "and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from the storm," was usually to be found in humbler life. Here and there was a shield for the saints of God.

No house was better known as a refuge, than that of Otho, the innkeeper of Ancyra. It was called a Noah's ark. It was a *rendezvous* for the persecuted of all that region. It was a home in which plundered Christians were supported; a hospital for beaten and tortured confessors, or for the eyeless and the hamstrung heroes, who groped and limped along their way of escape; a church wherein bread and wine were furnished gratuitously to those who refreshed their souls in the supper of the Lord, and forgot their sufferings when they remembered Calvary (at this time everything sold in shops and markets was first offered to the gods).

Otho and his wife were worthy of the portrait drawn by the orator Tertullian, when he had in his eye a Christian home. Of such a wedded pair he says: "How shall we find words to express the happiness of that marriage which the Church effects, and the oblation confirms, and the blessing seals, and angels report, and the Father ratifies? What a union of two believers, with one hope, one discipline, one service, one spirit, and one flesh! Together they bow, together they pray, together they keep their

OLYMPIA FULVIO MORATA.

BY PROF. L. J. HALSEY, D. D.

BEFORE leaving the period of the Great Reformation, we must bring into view one more distinguished name. It was fit that woman, who was thenceforth to share so largely in the blessings of civil and religious liberty, should act a prominent part in the grand movement of Protestant reform. Nor can it be denied, that, in point of genius and learning, many of the most gifted minds of the period belonged to the female sex. Besides the two illustrious characters already described in these pages, it is enough to mention Jeanne d'Albret and Renée of France; Annie Askew, Lady Jane Grey, and Elizabeth of England, to show what the woman of the Sixteenth Century was.

Vittoria Colonna stands as the representative of a noble family; and Marguerite of Navarre wore a queenly crown. In Olympia Fulvia Morata, we have the example of one, who was neither queen nor noble, but an unpretending daughter of the people. She had neither rank nor fortune; and though for a time she was an inmate of the Court of Ferrara, where she was associated with the great and the noble, still her highest earthly distinction was, that which she won on the simple ground of genius, learning and piety. It is not without a purpose then, that in sketching the characters of some of the noted women of Christianity, we turn from the splendors of nobility and royalty, and take an illustration from the humbler spheres of life.

She is spoken of by Dr. McRie, in his work on the "Reformation in Italy," as the "most enlightened woman of her age;" and contemporary historians describe her as "*electissima et eruditissima Morata.*" She is not, however, so distinguished for what she did, as for what she was. Her life was cut short at the early age of twenty-nine.

Exiled, moreover, from her native land for her religion, she had no opportunity to achieve a great destiny, other than that of steadfast allegiance to truth, and heroic fortitude under suffering. The same remark, indeed, may be made of many other Italian reformers. As it regards great and lasting results, the whole Reformation in Italy was a failure. But true greatness is not always to be measured by success.

This child of genius and song, was born at Ferrara, in 1526, the year after the battle of Pavia. She was the eldest daughter of Fulvio and Lucretia Morata, parents eminently qualified by their own excellent virtues to give her the highest Christian culture of the age. Her father, who was an early and bold defender of the Lutheran doctrines, held the position of tutor to the young princes of the Ducal house of Ferrara, and Professor of Latin and Greek in the University of that place. Himself one of the most learned men of the country, he soon discovered the extraordinary talents of the little Olympia, and spared no pains in her education. Under his own guiding hand, her fine intellectual and moral powers were rapidly and successfully developed. In that age of genius, under the enthusiasm awakened by the revival of literature and philosophy, and by the presence of many living teachers from Greece, it was the fashion for ladies and even young girls, to vie with each other in the study of the ancient classics. Olympia, before she was twelve years old, had attained a proficiency in the higher liberal learning, which made her the wonder of all Ferrara. She could speak Latin and Greek as fluently as Italian. By the time she was sixteen, she had added mathematics, philosophy, and theology, and was so accomplished in rhetoric and poetry, that she was qualified

to teach, lecture and improvise in song, or conduct a public disputation before the learned.

A brief passage from one of her early friends and preceptors, Curio, as given in her biography, will serve to convey an idea of the attainments she had made at this period. "She wrote observations on Homer, the prince of poets, whom she translated with great strength and sweetness. She composed many and various poems, with great elegance, especially on divine subjects, and dialogues in Greek and Latin, in imitation of Plato and Cicero, in such perfection, that Zoilus, himself could have found nothing to criticise. And she wrote those three essays on the paradoxes of Marcus Tullius Cicero, which in Greek are called prefaces, when she was scarcely sixteen years old; and declaimed from memory, and with excellent pronunciation, her explanation of the paradoxes, in the private academy of the Duchess of Ferrara."

To a learned correspondent at a distance, who had addressed him in reference to his accomplished pupil, Curio replies in the following explicit terms: "You write to me that you desire to be informed of our Olympia, because many deem the name and character fictitious. I will do what you ask willingly and shortly, although I might refer you to George Hermann, who knows her well. Her father was Fulvio Morata, a native of Mantua, a man famous for learning and probity, with whom I was very intimate. I have heard her at court declaiming in Latin, speaking Greek, and answering questions as well as any of the females among the ancients could have done. Do not feel a doubt respecting the Sapphic ode written in Greek, in which she celebrates the praises of the Most High. It is indeed the work of a real Olympia, whom we have known from her infancy, and whose other productions we possess. Nor does it at all astonish us. For she is skilled in Greek and Roman literature beyond what any one can credit, and she is also renowned for her knowledge of religion."

This precocity of genius was beautifully blended, in Olympia Morata, with great sweetness of disposition, the most engaging modesty, and all those sterling qualities of good sense and piety, which afterward so adorned her character. In her thirteenth year, she was removed from the bosom of her father's family, to become an inmate of the Ducal palace, and the companion in study of Anna d'Este, the daughter of the Duchess. The good Duchess Renée, of France, now the wife of the Duke of Ferrara, attracted by the wonderful talents of Olympia, had sought her as a suitable companion for Anna, whose tastes and studies were of similar character. In this new and elevated sphere, her youth was spent in the eager pursuit of learning. But though caressed and honored by the great, surrounded by men of science and literature, who applauded her talents and sought her society, she never lost her simplicity and purity of character. She continued the same devoted and dutiful daughter, the same consistent and earnest friend amid all the brilliant fascinations of the court.

We have no relic or picture, from which to form any true conception of the personal appearance of this remarkable woman. The author of the "Schonberg Cotta Family," however, may come to our assistance, in the following description of the Duchess and her young friend, at the time now under review, as given in a recent work: "The Duchess had nothing royal in her appearance. You would not have singled her out from her ladies, as the one born to command. Her features were plain, her figure homely, her dress as plain as the manners of the time allowed. A velvet train, open in front, displayed the ample folds of a brocaded petticoat; her straight bodice was unadorned, a jeweled necklace rose and fell beneath her transparent stomacher, and her hair was concealed in a tight velvet hood. By the table at which she sat, stood a lady of far queenlier bearing. She was young, and simply attired; a black velvet dress fell around her graceful form, confined by a silver girdle; a plain white collar stood up

around her throat, the sleeves of her dress fell from her elbow, and at the wrists the snowy lawn was clasped by silver bracelets; these, with the miniature of an old man with gray locks and beard, which rested on her bosom, were her only ornaments. The miniature was a sketch of her father, by the young Raphael. Her head was slightly bent, and in her hands she held some of the Duchess' broidery threads, which she was arranging; the long lashes shaded her rounded cheeks, and her dark hair,

‘Not over wide dispread,
Parted Madonna-wise, on either side the head,’

was confined in golden net work. But as from time to time, she raised her head suddenly, when something in the conversation aroused her—in the expressive half parted lips, the broad forehead, the sunny eyes, you could see the light of a clear intellect, and the glow of a warm and generous heart. She was Olympia Morata, one of the most gifted of the women, who, in the time of that great awakening, gave themselves to the cause of Christ and of freedom.”

Thus glided by, peacefully and joyously, the young years of Olympia, amid her congenial studies, and the refined society of the court. The court of Ferrara was, at that time, one of the most brilliant, not only of Italy, but of all Europe. Under the protecting auspices of Renée, it had become the very seat and center of the Italian Reformation. Here were gathered, from all quarters, the *elite* of the times—poets, orators, scholars, and divines—and it seemed for a season, as if the sun of gospel truth were about to burst forth in full-orbed splendor upon Italy. In this favored and elegant retreat, Olympia was brought into association, from time to time, with the leaders of the reformed faith, and other distinguished characters—the eloquent Ochino, the heroic Aonio Paleario, the learned Sinapius and Calcagnini, the noble Fannio, the faithful Secundo Curio, the accomplished Vittoria Colonna, and Marguerite of Navarre, with her poet Secretary Clement Marot, and

John Calvin, the prince of them all; some of them residing, and others visiting, at Ferrara. The walls of the Ducal palace rang with religious discussion, and the air grew fervid with the eloquence of prayer and preaching.

But this bright morning of promise was suddenly changed to a day of darkness and gloom. The Papal authorities, taking alarm, determined to crush the rising cause. The fires of the Inquisition were soon kindled for some of the leaders, and the rest were driven into exile. The Duke and the Pope became fast friends, and even the safety of the Duchess was endangered. Her friends were silenced or dispersed. The court no longer afforded shelter or protection, and the hope of Protestant Italy perished.

Owing to these changes and the machinations of the Papal party, who regarded her as a heretic, Olympia lost her position at court; and, at the age of twenty-one, returned to the bosom of her own family, where she soon became deeply engaged in the education of her sisters and brother, and in ministering at the bedside of her father, who died the next year. And from this time, a new and nobler chapter opens in her history. The sudden eclipse of her earthly prospects, the relentless persecution of all her earliest and best friends, along with the sickness and death of her father, became the means of driving her, for consolation, to the Rock of Ages, and of disciplining her powers to a higher life. Her clear intellect had long since detected the sophistries and superstitions of the dominant religion. But now her heart was brought to feel the unsubstantial character of all earthly things, and the sweet attractions of the cross. While in the Ducal palace, she had deeply studied the Scriptures, and she had heard all the great doctrines of the Lutheran faith expounded and defended by the most eloquent men of the times. But now, her religious convictions took a deeper hold; her Christian character was developed in the school of adversity and bereavement; her faith became settled and fixed up-

on the rock of truth, never more to be shaken by the allurements of the world, the storms of persecution, and the sufferings, which, in poverty and exile, awaited her.

Once she had found her highest joy in the works of Cicero and Plato, or in the charm of the court, the splendor of its fetes, and the attractions of society. "Had I remained longer at the Court," she remarks, "I must have been lost." But now, with the love of Christ in her heart, and with the unsealed word of God in her hands, revealing celestial realities, she turns away from all the vanities which had so charmed her. Pouring forth her new feelings and hopes to her old friend Curio, she writes: "No longer do these fleeting and failing joys affect me with strange regret; but God has lighted up in me the desire to inhabit that heavenly home, in which it is sweeter to dwell for one short day, than to linger a thousand years in the halls of princes." From this time forth, by conversation, by correspondence, and by all the productions of her pen, it became her ceaseless endeavor to extend the reformed doctrines, to fortify her Christian friends in their holy profession, and to minister the consolations of the gospel both to the lowly and the great. In letters, breathing the very pathos of tenderness, sparkling with eloquence, and fraught with gospel truth, she pours out the fullness of her loving heart, now to her own kindred, now to God's ministers, and now to queens and princes. And thus, one poor unfriended girl—no longer now speaking from a Duke's palace—found a door of utterance through all Europe, and a willing audience among the generations to come! What good may not a true hearted and accomplished woman do when her soul is in earnest, and her theme the love of Christ!

In the year 1550, Olympia was married at the age of twenty-four, to Andrew Grunthler, a young Bavarian of good birth, finely educated, fond of letters, and devoted to medical science. He had been attracted to Ferrara by the fame of its University, and was al-

ready a convert to the reformed doctrines. The reverses which had befallen Olympia only deepened the interest which she had awakened in his mind while the favorite of the Court, and the idol of men of letters, and brought him into closer association and sympathy with her. Their acquaintance, fostered by similar tastes, studies, and religious convictions, ripened into love. After completing his studies with distinction, and taking his Doctor's degree, he sought and obtained her hand in marriage. But finding no suitable position at Ferrara, he concluded to return and seek a Professor's chair in his own country.

'Twas a sore trial to Olympia, to leave the green hills, the sparkling waters, the sunny skies of Italy, to part with the friends she had loved from childhood, the sisters who had been led by her guiding hand, the mother of whom she had been the stay. 'Twas with a sad heart, a resolute will, and a true woman's instinct, that the noble young wife penned the following lines: "God has united me to a husband dearer than life. I would follow him with a confiding step as readily into the houseless solitude of the Caucasus, or into the cold regions of the West, as I would across the valleys of the Alps. Wherever he shall be pleased to go, I will follow him with rejoicing heart. There is no region however distant, which does not seem to us an object of desire, if we can serve God there in freedom of conscience." In the spring of 1551, they accordingly left Italy, and entered Germany, taking with them the little brother of Olympia, eight years old.

It were long and painful to relate all that befell them during the next four years. A sadder chapter is not often met with in the biography of the good. Germany was distracted by war, and, after residing a while at Augsburg, it fell to their lot to be shut up, in a protracted siege, at Schweinfurt, during which they were exposed to all the horrors of pestilence, famine and carnage. The place was at last sacked and burned, and they escaped from the ruins barely with their lives, having endured un-

paralleled sufferings, and lost their house, their books, and all earthly goods. They found a shelter and a cordial welcome, in the castle of the good Count of Erbach, where Olympia was prostrated by a long illness.

She slowly recovered under the genial hospitality and sympathizing attentions of the Countess. But her constitution was broken, her health was gone forever. During all these disasters and sufferings, her heart was comforted by the hope of Christ. Her faith grew stronger and brighter, and multiplied letters to her friends in Italy and France bore witness that she was rapidly ripening for heaven. In the summer of 1554, they removed to the famous city of Heidelberg, in whose University her husband had been elected to the Professorship of Medical Science.

Here, for a brief space, Olympia found a safe and quiet resting place, a pleasant home, and the most congenial literary and religious society. She devoted herself to the care of her house, the education of her young brother, and an extended correspondence; while a portion of her time was given to the men of letters, who visited her humble abode. The professors of the University, the statesmen of the Palatinate, the theologians of Basle and Geneva, and strangers from foreign countries, attracted by her fame, felt an interest in the young woman who had devoted her life to the study of the classics; and they lost no opportunity in paying their respects to one whose reputation had spread over Europe.

But the sufferings through which she had passed had fatally undermined the citadel of life, and she felt that her end was near. Her soul rested with childlike confidence on the bosom of Jesus. In the near prospect of death she gave expression to her feelings in sentences like the following: "I desire to die, because I know the secret of death. I desire to die, in order to be with Jesus Christ, and to recover in Him eternal life. He who puts his confidence in Jesus Christ, the Prince of Life, shall live forever. The price of life is not knowledge, but conflict

and trial. In the Olympian games, it was not the handsomest or most diligent wrestler that received the prize, but he who fought and came off victor from the arena. Consider the lot of those who, for Christ's sake, endure shame, exile, the fire, or the sword. Lighter shall be thy sufferings. God lays them upon thee because he would treat thee as his child. He chastens him whom he loves. Is there in the world a more glorious privilege than to be a child of God, a sister of Jesus Christ, and companion of his glory in eternity? Let the Word of God, then, be the rule of thine actions, and the lamp which lights thy path. Ask, seek, knock, and it shall be opened to you; draw near to the heavenly Bridegroom; behold Him in the bright and true mirror of the Bible, which shines with all the knowledge which you need."

Early in the summer of 1555, while upon her sick bed, the plague, that terror of Europe, broke out in great violence, and hurried its victims to the grave. Her husband was constantly engaged visiting the sick, though he was reluctant to leave her bedside. But she urged him to follow the calls of duty. It was under these distressing circumstances, that she wrote to her loved friend Curio such passages as the following: "Here the plague spreads terror. Almost all the inhabitants have fled the city. Still, up to this day, the victims are few. We shall remain, to live or die. Our lot is in the hands of Him, to whom we commit all things with entire trust. Salute from me your dear wife and children. Take care of your health. I have wept with joy in learning that you have been snatched from the tomb. May God preserve you long for the happiness of his Church. As for me, I must tell you, that there is no longer hope of my life. Medicine can do nothing for me; each day and hour my friends see me wasting away. Probably this letter is the last you will receive from me. My strength is exhausted; I have no more appetite; day and night I am stifled by my cough; the fever consumes me, and pain takes

from me my sleep. There remains to me nothing now, but to render up my spirit; but in my latest breath I shall think of those whom I have loved. Let not the intelligence of my death afflict you. I know that the crown is reserved for me, and I desire to quit this life, to be forever with Jesus Christ."

Her peaceful, triumphant end is best narrated in the words of him who knew and loved her best. "I have never known," writes her husband, "a truer and more transparent spirit; never have such candor, grace, and purity flourished on earth. Death to her brought no struggle, but only the radiance of joy. Death, she felt, was about to transport her from the dark anguish of life, into the bosom of eternal happiness. A few hours before her death, she woke from a short sleep, and smiled, as at some ineffable vision. I approached her, and asked her the cause. 'I saw,' she said, 'in a dream, a place lighted up with the purest and most brilliant light.' 'Courage, my beloved,' was her husband's answer. 'You shall soon live in that pure light!' She smiled, and too weak to speak, gave with her head a sign of assent. A little afterward, she whispered, 'I am happy, entirely happy.' Soon after, on her sight beginning to fail, she said, 'I scarcely see you, my loved ones, but the places which surround me seem to me to be filled with the most beautiful flowers.' These were her last words." "An instant afterward," adds her biographer, "she fell into the peaceful sleep in which she passed away. Her conversation during these last days manifested the depth and power of her faith. Continually, in the intervals of pain, she dwelt on the mercies of her Redeemer. She praised him for having turned her heart away from a delusive world. The wishes for her recovery, expressed by friends around her dying bed, served only to distress her. 'God,' she said, 'has traced for me a short course, filled with afflictions and trials. Now that I am near the close, could I wish to return on my steps?' When asked by a devout man, if her conscience did

not reproach her, 'the demon has not ceased,' she said, 'a single day these last seven years to labor to turn me from the faith, but it seems now that he has lost all his power. I find in my heart nothing but the peace of Christ Jesus.'"

Thus died Olympia Fulvia Morata, on the 24th of October, 1555, in the twenty-ninth year of her age. In twenty-two days her noble husband followed her to the tomb, stricken down by the plague, while bravely ministering to the sick, and seeking thus to drown, in duty, the sorrows of his own heart. Before the month was out, the little brother, Emilio, over whose opening years she had watched, both with a sister's and a mother's fondness, was also numbered with the dead; and "the mourning city of Heidelberg," remarks the biographer, "beheld this home of love, genius, and piety desolate. An inscription graven on a tablet, in the porch of the ancient church, tells in touching language the simple story of the worth and trials of those who repose beneath."

It remains only to speak of the general sorrow produced by her death. This may be stated in the words of the author, to whose recent interesting work, "Life in Italy and France, in the Olden Time," we have been chiefly indebted for the materials of the present sketch.

"The news of her death spread the deepest distress through the Reformed Churches of Germany, Italy and France. The aged Sinapius poured forth his sorrow in a letter to Calvin, in which he contrasts his own desolate age with the glory, youth, and beauty which had sunk, like a vision, into the tomb. Curio expressed in a letter, and in an epitaph, his sorrows; and Beza added the tribute of his admiration. Poets and divines vied with each other in celebrating her praises. More than twenty elegies in verse were written in her honor. The famous warrior and statesman of Holland, Philip Von Marnex, the learned Beza, the upright De Thou, the accomplished friend of Montaigne, and the Rector of the University of Heidelberg, joined

with historians and writers of Italy, France, and Germany in embalming her memory. The city Schweinfurt gave a strong mark of their esteem, by decreeing that the house in which she lived among them, should be rebuilt at the public charge; and they affixed to it an inscription, which, if not remarkable for its poetry, was an evidence of their regard."

In 1558, her old and faithful friend, Cælius Secundus Curio, reared a still nobler monument to her memory, by collecting her writings, chiefly letters and poems, in a volume, which he published in Basle, dedicated to Isabella Mauricha, and in the next edition, 1562, to Queen Elizabeth of England, whom he addresses as "the most chaste and learned virgin, bravest of women, and wisest of queens." To her fostering care and guardianship, he commits

"these writings of a woman distinguished for piety and learning, which on her death-bed, as relics of her genius, she had bequeathed and commended to him." The work passed rapidly through successive editions, and became a text book of elegant Latin literature. One edition of 1570 was revised by Curio in his dying hours. The last and fullest was published ten years later, and all were eagerly bought up. But much had been destroyed in the fire of Schweinfurt. What remained were only fragments of more numerous letters and longer poems; and the scholars of the day, when they read the beautiful little volume, lamented still more the loss of the rest—her Latin Essays on Cicero, her Greek Odes, Criticisms on Homer, and versions of the Psalms.

THE WOMAN QUESTION.

Familiar Letters on J. Stuart Mill's "Subjection of Women."

NOVEMBER 27, 1869.

My dear Elsie.—As I have the prospect of a leisure day, I will not wait for your answer to my last, before going on with "Our Author."

Although the whole scope of the third chapter is to prove woman's fitness to vote and to rule, and I have said all I have time to say on these points, there remain some topics incidentally introduced, which I can not altogether pass by.

Among other grounds on which Mr. Mill defends women from the imputation of being unable to compete with men in works requiring intellectual ability, is the fact, that "few women have time for them." They are engrossed by family cares. The claims of society are imperative. Women must be charming. They must dress well. They must be always ready to make and receive visits. The whole fabric of social life rests on them. Of course this absorbs time. How can a

woman be expected to achieve much, in the few dribblets of leisure she can manage to save from such continual and distracting occupations? Well, what is to be done about it? I will not insult Mr. Mill, by supposing for a moment, that he would sweep away family cares by the board, let the dinners and the children take their chances together, and allow all the amenities of our happy homes to disappear forever.

But who are to attend to all these matters if women are to be set free from them? Shall we call men from their grosser and severer pursuits, to employ their clumsy fingers in these delicate affairs? We should not gain much. The loss of time and opportunity would, to say the least, be equal in this direction, and it is not easy to see that the world would be the gainer by the transfer. It is the best economy of labor, to have every worker employed in those departments for which he is best fitted.