

Ecce Homo

The cruel executioners then reconducted our Lord to Pilate's palace, with the scarlet cloak still thrown over his shoulders, the crown of thorns on his head, and the reed in his fettered hands. He was perfectly unrecognisable, his eyes, mouth, and beard being covered with blood, his body but one wound, and his back bowed down as that of an aged man,

while every limb trembled as he walked.

When Pilate saw him standing at the entrance of his tribunal, even he (hard-hearted as he usually was) started, and shuddered with horror and compassion, whilst the barbarous priests and the

populace, far from being moved to pity,

continued their insults and mockery. When Jesus had ascended the stairs, Pilate came forward, the trumpet was sounded to announce that the governor was about to speak, and he addressed the Chief Priests and the bystanders in the following words: 'Behold, I bring him forth to you, that you may know that I find no cause in him.'

The archers then led Jesus up to Pilate, that the people might again feast their cruel eyes on him, in the state of degradation to which he was reduced. Terrible and heartrending, indeed, was the

spectacle he presented, and an exclamation of horror burst from the multitude, followed by a dead silence, when he with difficulty

raised his wounded head, These meditations on the sufferings of Jesus filled Sister Emmerich with such feelings of compassion that she begged of God to allow her to suffer as he had done. She

instantly became feverish and parched with thirst,

and, by morning, was speechless from the contraction of her

tongue and of her lips. She was in this state when her friend came to her in the morning, and she looked like a victim which had just

been sacrificed. Those around succeeded, with some difficulty, in moistening her mouth with a little water, but it was long before



she could give any further details concerning her meditations on the Passion. crowned as it was with thorns, and cast his exhausted glance on the excited throng. Pilate exclaimed, as he pointed him out to the people; 'Ecce homo! Behold the man!' The hatred of the High Priests and their followers was, if possible, increased at the sight of Jesus, and they cried out, 'Put him to death; crucify him.' 'Are you not content?' said Pilate. 'The punishment he has received is, beyond question, sufficient to deprive him of all desire of making himself king.' But they cried out the more and the multitude joined in the cry, 'Crucify him, crucify him!' Pilate then sounded the trumpet to demand silence, and said: 'Take you him and crucify him, for I find no cause in him.' 'We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die,' replied the priests, 'because he made himself the Son of God.'

These words, 'he made himself the Son of God,' revived the fears of Pilate; he took Jesus into another room, and asked him; 'Whence art thou?' But Jesus made no answer. 'Speakest thou not to me?' said Pilate; 'knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and power to release thee?' 'Thou shouldst not have any power against me,' replied Jesus, 'unless it were given thee from above; therefore he that hath delivered me to thee hath the greater sin.' The undecided, weak conduct of Pilate filled Claudia Procles with anxiety; she again sent him the pledge, to remind him of his promise, but he only returned a vague, superstitious answer, importing that he should leave the decision of the case to the gods. The enemies of Jesus, the High Priests and the Pharisees, having heard of the efforts which were being made by Claudia to save him, caused a report to be spread among the people, that the partisans of our Lord had seduced her, that he would be released, and then join the Romans and bring about the destruction of Jerusalem, and the extermination of the Jews.

Pilate was in such a state of indecision and uncertainty as to be perfectly beside himself; he did not know what step to take next, and again addressed himself to the enemies of Jesus, declaring that 'he found no crime in him,' but they demanded his death still more clamorously. He then remembered the contradictory accusations which had been brought against Jesus, the mysterious dreams of his wife, and the unaccountable impression which

the words of Jesus had made on himself, and therefore determined to question him again in order thus to obtain some information which might enlighten him as to the course he ought to pursue; he therefore returned to the Praetorium, went alone into a room, and sent for our Saviour. He glanced at the mangled and bleeding Form before him, and exclaimed inwardly: 'Is it possible that he can be God?' Then he turned to Jesus, and adjured him to tell him if he was God, if he was that king who had been promised to the Jews, where his kingdom was, and to what class of gods he belonged. I can only give the sense of the words of Jesus, but they were solemn and severe. He told him 'that his kingdom was not of this world,' and likewise spoke strongly of the many hidden crimes with which the conscience of Pilate was defiled; warned him of the dreadful fate which would be his if he did not repent; and finally declared that he himself, the Son of Man, would come at the last day, to pronounce a just judgment upon him.

Pilate was half frightened and half angry at the words of Jesus; he returned to the balcony, and again declared that he would release Jesus; but they cried out: 'If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend. For whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.' Others said that they would accuse him to the Emperor of having disturbed their festival; that he must make up his mind at once, because they were obliged to be in the Temple by ten o'clock at night. The cry, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' resounded on all sides; it re-echoed even from the flat roofs of the houses near the forum, where many persons were assembled. Pilate saw that all his efforts were vain, that he could make no impression on the infuriated mob; their yells and imprecations were deafening, and he began to fear an insurrection. Therefore he took water, and washed his hands before the people, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just man; look you to it.' A frightful and unanimous cry then came from the dense multitude, who were assembled from all parts of Palestine, 'His blood be upon us, and upon our children.'