

“ Thus, our three generous champions are condemned to die for the faith, after an interval of captivity and suffering, the limit of which is unknown. Before the law, such a condemnation is lighter than capital punishment; but in the eyes of our confessors it is incomparably more cruel. Let us hear them complain of it, in a letter to Father Retord: ‘ We hoped much to be condemned to die speedily; and behold, now the king wishes us still to live, we know not for what length of time: we are greatly afflicted on account of such a delay; it is certainly our sins which have rendered us unworthy of the grace of martyrdom. God wishes to make us expiate them by leaving us longer in the miseries of this world.’ ” The great mandarin continues to tempt us from time to time. wrote one of the Catechists; ‘ he said to me one day—Just make one little step on the letter X; pass a little on one side, if you are too much afraid to step on it, so that I may be able to write to the king to demand your pardon. Nearly all the kingdom follows the religion of Phat; nevertheless, if the king proscribed it, as he has done yours, we would all abandon it without hesitation.—I answered him, that it was not by disobeying God, that one proved their fidelity to the prince. Scarcely had I pronounced these words, when the mandarin’s bailiff commanded me to be silent. But his master said to me—You have never stolen anything, not even the

most trifling article, and yet you are so wretched! If I wish you the least evil, may it fall upon myself. From that time, he did not call me before him any more.’ ”

“ How long will this respite, which is but a series of tribulations for our brethren, last? Probable until the autumn of next year. In the mean time, they suffer patiently the horrors of a dungeon, loaded day and night with their cangues chains. May their holy angels visit them, often console them in their distress, and obtain from God, for them, the gift of perseverance!

“ Such is the simple account of the events which have afflicted our Churches. There are besides a great many local persecutions which we have passed over in silence, either because we only know them imperfectly, or because we reckon on other brethren, to render an account of them to you. It is on the vineyard which we cultivate that the storm has burst with the greatest violence; the Mission of the Rev. Fathers of St. Dominic has more particularly suffered. A furious torrent, which rushes down in an inundating tide over the country is not more fatal to the harvest, than the mandarins have been to the churches of eastern Tong-King; but however terrific the tempest may have been, our courage has not been crushed by it; our Christians have frequently shown themselves worthy of the primitive martyrs: like them ‘ they have suffered stripes and insults, chains and imprisonment: immovable in the confession which is their hope, they have preferred being afflicted with the people of God, to tasting the sweetness of a transitory pleasure.’—(H. B.) And what is still more wonderful is, that