## A VICTIM TO THE SEAL OF CONFESSION.

A TRUE STORY BY THE REV. JOSEPH SPILLMAN, S. J.

PREFACE.

Although the minor details of the marrative given on the following pages are fictitious, it may yet be said to be a true story, since not only is it founded on fact, but the principal incidents have actually occurred, and that in our own day. Many of our readers will doubtless remember, that an account of the event which we have taken for our thome, was, a few years are, published theme, was, a few years ago, published to the Catholic world more or less at length, in all the newspapers, as a striking example of the extent to which a priest is bound to guard the seal of confession even when his own life is at stake. The fact that the occurrence is of recent date, and that, to our know-ledge, the priest whose story we are about to tell is still living, renders it advisable to suppress his real name, as well as the names of other actors in the drama. Several of the subordinate characters whom it was mecessary to introduce upon the stage for the sake of weaving the narrative into a connected whole, are fictitious, and the scene in which it is laid is also to a certain measure altered. More over in regard to accessory circum-stances the writer felt himself at lib erty to draw upon his imagination, in order to bring into stronger relief the sacrifice which, in certain cases, the secrecy of the confessional imposes on the Catholic priest.

## CHAPTER I.

AN EXCURSION TO STE. VICTOIRE Winter had given place to spring the soft breezes from the Mediter-ranean had already melted the light covering of snow which for a few weeks ted on the hills and plains of sunny Provence, and the smiling landscape wore a garb of vernal green, to be changed, alas! only too soon to a brown and dusty hue under the scorch-

ing rays of the summer sun.
It was the first Sunday of Lent in the year 1888 The genial weather had tempted many of the inhabitants of Aix les-Bains to forsake the streets of the old town, founded by the Romans some hundred years before the Chris-tian era, on account of its salubrious springs, and repair to the open Bands of pedestrians, merrily country. ig together, were to be seen in direction; of these by far the greater number were wending their way to one or other of the little gardens way to one or other of the little gardens and vineyards scattered about the hill sides, to spend the Surday afternoon in the garden houses erected there.
Almost every house-holder in Aix owns one of these gardens, which, with their summer houses or chalets, called by the Provencals bastides or bastidons, of imaginable style and shape, bu mostly painted white and overgrown with creepers, give variety to scenery that would otherwise be somewhat uniform and monotonous. Other excursionists, either alone or in groups, were follow ing the paths which led to the Alpine heights, by the side of the rivulets and little streams that, swellen by the spring rains, came rushing noisily down from the mountains. The roads too, leading to Lambase and Peyrolles were alive with passengers on foot or on horseback and light vehicles of every description.

One of the principal points of attraction was the heights of Ste. Victoire, a rocky eminence some seven or eight miles distant from Aix, whence a splendid view could be obtained over the wide plains and the lower ridges of hills far away to the deep blue sea be On the other side, next to Aix, yond. On the other side, next to Alx the wall of rock, of a yellowish white tinge, rises almost perpendicularly the summit is crowned by a cross of the summit is crowned by a cross of gigantic proportions, called the "Cross of Provence," which stands out against the azure sky, displaying to all the country round the sign whereby the Christian hopes to achieve victory. Those who wish to reach that spot must go round towards the north, cause on that side the slope from the mountain top in the valley below is gentler; and on the opposite side, though the rocks do not rise quite abruptly, yet the ascent is steep and rugged. On this, the south side, a village nestles in the valley at the foot of the hill. The stone houses and the gardens are built in terraces, and above them, almost like an old feudal castle, rise the church and the ancient monastery of Ste. Victoire, close to the face of the rock.

On their return from High Mass, as soon as the midday meal was finished, an elderly woman and two children set out from Aix on their way to this village. The woman was well past sixty; her hair, seen beneath the white lace cap she wore, seemed scarcely less white than the cap itself. After she had gone some distance the look of fatigue discernible on her kindly features somewhat afushed by the exertion of walking, showed that she had over-rated her strength, and undertaken more than she could well perform. It was, in fact, rather too long an excursion for one of her years; but what will not a fond grandmother do to please her grandchildren!

Charles, Julia !" she called out to "Charles, Julia!" she eather out to the children, "how can you run and jump about as you are doing! Remem-ber we have still an hour's walk before we reach the farm of St. Ferreol, and then the ascent begins. But I did just the same when I was your age, and

just the same when I was your age, and I fancy my poor old bones will ache long before yours do. Come, we will rest a little under those clive trees."

"Are you tired already, Grand mother?" asked the boy, tossing his curly brown hair off his temples. "I could go a long long way further with the property of the prope out wanting to rest; I could go to Brignolles, and Ste. Brume, and on to Marseilles, to the sea. Oh how I would like to go to the sea, and get on board a big ship, and sail right away; away to the islands afar off, where the cocoanuts grow and the savages live, the wicked heathen whom the missionaries into good Christians, as Uncle turn into good Curistians, a Child Francis was telling us last time we saw taking orders was a bad speculation bim. Do you know, Grandmother, I now a days. But the good pastors have

mean to be a missioner when I grow

up."
Then you will have to be much more industrious at your lessons, and

more industrious at your lessons, and bring home a better report for your Latin than you did last week," the girl interposed rather pertly.

"Now, now, you are quarrelling again. You promised you would be such good children, if I took you with me to see your Uncle Francis."

"Forgive me, Grandmother, I did not mean to be naughty," said Julia.
"And do not look so crossly at me, Charles. Come and help me gather a nosegay for Uncle Francis, while nosegay for Uncle Francis, while Grandmother rests a little longer. Look what beautiful cowslips there are

growing under the hedge !"
Quickly pacified, the boy ran with
his sister, who was a little older than his sister, who was a little older than himself, to the place where the flowers were growing, and they soon came back to their grandmother with their hands full, asking her to help them arrange

them.
"The poor flowers will be faded before we get to Ste. Victoire," she said with a smile.

"Oh, Uncle Francis will put them in the pretty gilt vases you gave him when he said his first Mass, and they will soon revive in water. They will look beautiful on each side of our Lady's statue. One day last week Annie Le comte, you know, the daughter of the gardener just outside the town, brought some flowers to school which were much more faded, and yet they revived when Sister Angelica put them in water. But look there! Is not that our baker, Mr. Lenoir coming along, driving all

alone in his grand new cart?"
"Yes, it is!" exclaimed the boy, quite delighted to see the man, with whom he had struck up a friendship, on whom he had struck up a friendship, on the strength of the cakes, one or two of which were generally given him when he went to the shop to pay the monthly bill. "Hullo, Mr. Lenoir," he shouted, waving his cap over his head, as the worthy tradesman approached at a leisurely trot: "good day to you, and a pleasant drive."

"Why, that must be my young friend Charles, if my ears do not deceive me,"

Charles, if my ears do not deceive me," answered the baker, bringing his stoat brown cob to a standstill, and putting up the eye glass which was attached to a cord round his neck. "My eyes are not as good as my ears now, but yes, it is he sure enough. Will you come for not as good as my ears now, out yes, it is he sure enough. Will you come for a drive, my boy? What, can that be you, Mrs. Montmoulin? You do not mean to say you have walked all the way from Aix? Well, you are wonder fully strong for your years. I could not have walked half so far, though l

am a good many years your junior."
"No doubt of that, my good man," who doubt of that, my good man, said the old lady. "My feet have not to carry your weight. But for the matter of that, I am really much more fatigued than I thought I should be."

The good-natured baker burst out laughing. "True," he said, "my legs have twice as much above them as yours have. That comes from all the flour have. That comes from all the and other stuff that gets down my throat every day. But where are you bound for, this lovely spring-day?"
"We are going to Ste. Victoire. I

wanted to see my son again after vinter, so I thought I would take ad vantage of the fine weather to visit him with my grandchildren."

"How fortunate! I can take you

all three as far as the inn, and it is no distance from there up to Ste Victoire. Come, let me help you up at once; and you Charles, help your sister to get up

Mrs. Montmoulin demurred a little at first at accepting this offer, but it was no use; with a shout of delight Charles clambered up into the light, two wheeled cart and dragged his sister after him, while the grandmother, with the assistance of her friendly acquaintance, got up in front and seated herself beside him, overwhelming herself in

apologies. "Don't say a word about trouble, his horse with the whip. pleasure to drive a lady like you. I have more respect for hands that bear the marks of honest work, than those whose fingers are covered with diamond rings. I have had myself to work hard from my youth up, and if God has prospered my south up, and if God has pros-pered my exertions more than those of some men, I have no reason to boast of it. So you are on your way to Ste. Victoire, to see your son? Well, I am sure he ought to be proud of having so excellent a mother. But do tell me-not that I want to meddle in your priv ate affairs—the worthy priest has a very good income, has he not? Could t do something more for you now, as you are getting into years? It must have been a hard struggle for you to defray his expenses at the Semin-

Mr. Lenoir was a very worthy but he did not possess much tact. Mrs. Montmoulin knew that he meant well, so she su pressed the feeling of resent so she su pressed the teering of resemb ment his inquisitiveness excited, and answered quietly: "I managed it with the help of God, and some kind friends. The sum I was obliged to borrow is almost entirely paid off now, and my son has recompensed me amply for any little sacrifice it cost me by his

affection, if in no other way."
"What! my good madam, is it possible that you are still encumbered with debt on account of your son's education! Why, he must have been a priest for eight or ten years, and surely in that time he could have laid surely in that time he could have laid by sufficient to pay off what was still owing. Excuse my plain speaking, but it strikes me that he cannot have been very thrifty in his housekeeping."
"In one respect my son is not thrifty," Mrs. Montmoulin replied with a taint smile; "he lives as plainly and simply an arrestible, it cannot be denied; his

smile; "he lives as plainly and simply as possible, it cannot be denied; his great extravagance is in regard to the poor. Every mouthful he can deny himself he gives to them, and when in visiting the sick he meets with any case of real destitution, he is as lavish with temporal as with spiritual assistance. This soon runs away with the scanty salary he receives from the gov-

"Yes, I know the Revolution did away with the fat livings of former times, and I have often thought that taking orders was a bad speculation

a comfortable berth for the most part a comfortable perth for the most part, and might easily put by a hundred francs or so a year. Of course if a man gives every penny away to the poor he has only himself to blame. He should leave it to the municipality or to the charity organization to look after them."

officials dole out to the needy are often made bitter to them by unkind words, and more harm is done than good. How different what is given in a kindly spirit, sparing their feelings as much as possible: it is like balm to the sorrow. possible: It is filled beam to the fight there; the Parish Priest is the father of the poor, as he has very often told me. In the good old times the property of the church was the property of the poor; the rich benefices were doubtless for the maintenance of the clergy in the first place, but all that was over was to first place, but all that was over was to be spent on the church or distributed to the poor. And my son makes it a rule to do this, to a much greater ex-

tent, in fact, than he is bound to."

The well-to do baker glanced at his ompanion, whose dress, though scrupcompanion, whose dress, betokened a alously neat and clean, betokened a very slender purse. "Well, well," he rejoined, "you must not be offended, but I cannot help thinking it is his first duty to help you a little more in your

old age."

"Oh, as long as God keeps me in health," replied the old lady with a heightened color," I can continue to make both ends meet. My little business answers very well, my fingers are never idle, and even in the dark I can go on with my knitting. Then there is the new machine, which can go on with my knitting. Then
there is the new machine, which
daughter bought out of the few pounds
her poor husband left her, that makes
beautiful vests and all kind of woolen garments. So we two manage to keep ourselves and the two children, thank God. And in order that you may not think hardly of my son, I must tell you that he has repeatedly offered to pay my rent, and he constantly urges me to go and live with him, so that I need have no anxiety about my last days. I almost think I shall accept his proposal, for now he has plenty of room in his

" Of course he has room enough and to spare, if he inhabits the old monas-tery. There must be a splendid view from the upstairs rooms, and capital air too, very different to the narrow streets of our old town. I, for one, should congratulate you on the charge of resi-lence. Why, you would take a fresh lease of your life up there! Look, you can see Ste. Victoire now, what a pretty

place it is !' A turn in the road had, in fact, brought our travellers in sight of the old monastery of Ste. Victoire which had till then been hidden by a spur of the mountains. The white walls of the long, regular building, standing on the the hill, looked out from the midst of a perfect forest of plum and other fruit trees. Below were grouped the cottages and a few larger houses which formed the village, amid wellkept gardens and clumps of trees, while the church, a venerable structure, form ing one wing of the monastery, with hig one wing of the monastery, with a high steeple, dominated the whole scene. Behind it rose the hill, almost bare of trees, but decked with verdure, up to the blue vault of heaven. The whole formed a pleasing landscape illumined as it was by the soft warm

light of a southern sun.

"Hurrah, Ste. Victoire, Ste. Victoire," shouted Charles, who had been amusing himself with his sister's help, by tying up in bundles the violets, cow slips, and narcissus which they had gathered. "I think I see Uncle Francis. Look, the window of his room is open, it is the last, just where the old olive tree stands." Thereupon the boy waved his cap vigorously, and Julia fluttered her handkerchief in the hope

of attracting their uncle's notice.
"Come now, I don't believe even your young eyes could see your Uncle all this way off," said Lenoir, turning ound and addressing "But from the monastery you could easily descry my cart coming along the road from Brignolles. Do you look out for it a little before 6 o'clock, and when you see it, come down leisurely with your grandmother and Julia to the inn; shall stop half-an-hour there. Then I

I shall stop half-an-hour there. Then I will take you back to Aix with me."

"How kind of you, Mr. Lenoir! That will be first-rate! We shall be able to stay ever so much longer with Uncle, and Grandmother will not be a bit tired," exclaimed Charles; and Mrs. Montmoulin was soon paramaded. Mrs. Montmoulin was soon persuaded to accept the friendly offer.

"I have got quite unused to driving," she said. "This is almost the first time I have been out in any conveyance of the kind since my husband's death. In his lifetime we were accustomed to go out in the gig every Sunday after go out in the gig every Sunday after noon, he would drive me and the chil-dren to Molsheim or Illkirch or some other place in the vicinity."

"Those places have foreign names, they are not in France if I

they are not in France, if I mistake not," the baker observed.

"They are in the environs of Stras-burg," the old lady replied. "We re-sided there until the commencement of the ill-fated war put an end to all our happiness. My husband carried on a trade in fruit; on one occasion when he came into Provence to purchase a quantity of the dried plums of these parts, I made his acquaintance. My parents consented to our union, so I followed him to the Rhineland as his wife. We got on well until the out-burst of the war; and almost before we were aware of it, the Germans surwere aware of it, the German sattrounded Strasburg. Those were terrible times, Mr. Lenoir; one did not dare to venture into the streets because the enemy's shells flow about on all sides. After the defeat at Metz all hope of an accommodation was at an end. The quarter of the town where end. The quarter of the town where we lived was most hotly attacked. Before the bombardment began in earnest, through the intervention of some Swiss gentlemen of position, permission was obtained for the old men, women and obtained for the old men, women and children to leave the town. This was proclaimed with beat of drum in the streets, and immediately George said the children and I must go. Our parting was a truly sorrowful one. For the children's sake I complied with my hateth his brown husband's wish. Francis was then a John iv-20.)

lad of sixteen and still attending the Gymnasium; Charlotte was a few years younger. We bade each other an affectionate farewell, then I joined the affectionate larewell, then I plant of exiles—some two thousand in all—which were to pass through the enemy's lines under the escort of our Swiss friends, and proceed to Bale. Before we had crossed the frontier the cannonade in our rear announced that the attack on the city had begun, and the attack on the city had begun, and soon a red glare lit up the sky in the direction we had left. Ere long we heard that the authorities had surrendered; and I learnt from the newspapers a portion of the misfortune that had befallen us, it was said that every house in the querter where our home. had befallen us, it was said that every house in the quarter where our home was situated was reduced to ashes. I waited from day to day, looking for tidings of my husband; I felt daily more convinced that had he been alive he would have come, or at least would have written to us. The worthy people who had offered a refuge to the children and myself tried to console me by dren and myself tried to console me by saying that no dependance could be placed on the post in time of war; they ought to deter me from returning Strasburg, but at the end of a week, I could bear the separation no longer. Leaving my children under the care of our kind entertainers, I took the train our kind entertainers, I took to Strasburg. God grant that you may never witness such a sight as met my eyes! Just as, after clambering over leaps of debris and still smoldering ruins, I reached the spot where our house had stood, I saw the police ex-

tricating the body of my dear husband from beneath the rubbish. I identified him by his clothes and his wedding ring. See, this is the ring."

So saying, Mrs. Montmoulin brought out a bent and blackened ring, and showed it to the man, who had listened to her narrative with the deepst in terest. "One can see that it was in the fire as well as its master," he said as he examined it closely. "It has as he examined it closely. "It has been indented too by the falling walls. And did the Prussians let you go with out molestation? People say they were very devils."

"No, they were quite civil and even allowed me to have the small su u con-tained in the cash box, which they also dug out of the ruins. One of the officers, too, who was superintending the men, gave me half a sovereign, when he heard that I was the widow of the man whose remains had just been found, and that I was left utterly with out means of subsistence. God gave me strength to bear up at that time, or my troubles wou'd have deprived me of my reason or brought me to the grave.
As soon as I had seen my poor husband As soon as I had seem by book hashing made up my mind to go back to my old home in Provence with the two children. The good people who shown us hospitality would take shown us nospitately work and the mothing from me, not a penny! God reward them! They even made me a little present, and bade me God speed on my journey, when we started on our way through Geneva to my dear old way through Geneva to my dear old native town, Aix, where my mother was still living. I took the little house, our present abode, and opened a small business in woollen manufactures with the few hundred franc which George gave me when we left Strasburg, all the ready money he had at the time. This has prowith a scanty subsistence, just enough with a scanty subsistence, just enough to live on ever since. But I am wearying you with my long story, Mr. Lenoir. You must forgive me; when an old woman begins to speak of bygone days, she finds it difficult to stop."

"Forgive you!" her companion rejoined. "I owe you many thanks for telling me this, and I feel for you with all my heart. If ever you want a friend

all my heart. If ever you want a friend in need, do you come to me. Upon my word you have shown great courage.
only hope the remainder of your will be more tranquil and happy than the past has been, for you have had severe trials. When you go to live with your son at St. Victoire you will have a good time before you."
"If it is the will of God, Mr. Lenoir.

I have been looking forward to it for a long time," the old lady replied, and as she spoke she sighed deeply, for and as she spoke she signed deeps, a a dark presentiment seemed to rise up before her, like the shadow of a heavy cloud, as if another trial was yet in store for her. "If it is the will of God," she repeated gently. "I trust your hopes may soon be fulfilled. Here we are at the inn al-

ready! Your conversation has made the time appear so short. Now the time appear so short. Now Charles, my boy, look sharp, and mind you are down here again by 6 o'clock."
And the stout baker swung himself to
the ground more nimbly than one would have thought possible for a man of his weight, and politely helped Mrs. Mon moulin to alight. The two children moulin to alight. The two children soon jumped down, and after heartily thanking their kind friend, they followed their grandmother on the way up the hill to the convent.

TO BE CONTINUED.

## PROGRESS.

We have come to understand that education in the true and large sense of the word is our one means of improving men; and that it is a delusion to imagine that a reform which is not based on education can be either deep or last-ing. The church which is not also a school exerts no vital influence. What is eternal is perishable. The source of life is within, and the stronger, the purer, the more conscious of itself it becomes the more is the souls filled with immortal

hopes and loves.

This is the root idea of progress, of This is the root idea of progress, of the progress which enters as an essential element into our conception of life, of the progress which is the soul's effort to realize itself. It begins, indeed, with the environment; for they who have no thought of improving their material surroundings, rarely have a desire for intellectual and moral ad-vancement. Material progress enables vancement. Material progress enables us first to provide for our physical existence for health and comfort and length of days, but its proper human value consists in its power to mini to spiritual uses.—Bishop Spalding.

If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. (1

## PRIEST AND PROPLE.

Leo Gregory in the New World

When we behold so ne masterplece of painting like the "Transfiguration" of Raphael, the "Last Judgment" of Michael Angelo, or the "Immaculate Conception" of Murillo; when we behold some masterplece of sculpture, like the "David," the "Moses," the "Apolio Belvidere," or the "Laccoon Group" in the Vatican; when we stand before some masterplece of architecture. Group" in the Vatican; when we stand before some masterpiece of architecture, like the "Colonge Cathedral," or "St. Peter's" in Rome; when we read the literary masterpieces left us by Homer, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare and Milton; or when we listen to the enrapturing music of Mozart, Beethoven or Gounod, we instinctively pay homage to the men whose genius conceived and executed them. We look upon those men as almost more than human. and executed them. We hold them those men as almost more than human. They seem to have shared in a marvelous degree the creative power of God. And so they did. And we do right to pay them honor.

And yet, my dear brethren, the work of the humblest priest is higher and holier, far more God-like than those works of merely human genius which the world is so ready to applaud.

You call the priest your spiritual father. And such he is in fact. For under Gcd he is the author of your spiritual life. Through his ministra tions you receive grace, the principle of supernatural life; and through his ministrations that supernatural life is nourished and perfected. Through the nourished and perfected. Infough the sacraments and the sacrifice of the Mass he infuses grace into your souls. Now grace is the gift of God the Holy Ghost acts, there He is present. He unites Himself to your souls in such a way that you become like unto God.
The union between your souls and God
the Holy Ghost is the closest possible short of personal, hypostatic. You do not cease to be creatures, distinct from God, but you become partakers in the very nature and life of God. You are as it were recreated, born again to a new and higher life. Your souls are beautiful with the beauty of God, new and higher life. Your souls are beautiful with the beauty of God, knowing with His wisdom, strong with His strength—Cardinal Manning. "Internal Mission of the Holy Ghost."

Humanly speaking, when the priest dies, his name dies with him. His image survives in no visible form. Yes! But if you could only look upon the souls of them to whom he has minis tered you would there behold his image reproduced. In the kingdom of soul his name never dies, and his children are ten thousand. He works not on canvas, nor in marble, but on human souls. Having before his eyes Jesus Christ, the Model of human perfection, Christ, the Model of human perfection, he strives to form your character after that great original. Day by day, year after year, laboriously and patiently, tenderly and lovingly, sometimes with joy of heart, sometimes in tears, he labors to form in you a copy of the God man. And while he works, God works with him, inspiring his thoughts, inflaming his heart, guiding his hand. laming his heart, guiding his hand.

And what a work he produces! Not painting that must fade and moulder; not a marble form or granite structure must crumble into dust; but a living image of God, destined to live forever. As long as God lives, that work shall live—a monument to the faith and hope and love of the priest. The priest is not content to make

The priest is not content to make you worthy members of civil society. He does that. He inculcates the natural virtues of industry, honesty, sobriety, patience, love of country, reversity, patience, love of country, reversity. briety, patience, love of country, reverence for infancy and old age, respect for and chedience to lawful authority His special work, however, is to mak you worthy citizens of heaven. He knows that this life is only the threshold of eternity. He knows that you are children of God, brethren of Christ and that you are destined to occupy thrones in heaven. And so he labors to prepare you for your glorious des-tiny. What a noble work is this! And tiny. how insignificant and transitory appear all the works of merely human genius! The work of the priest, like the souls of men on which he works, is mmortal-enduring for all time and all eternity.

Such is the work accomplised by the humblest priest-the work done by your priests, for you and for your children. The priest is indeed your spiritual father. Yes; and you are his spiritual children. His children? Then be His children! Cherish for Him all those sentiments which good children cherish for their earthly father.

The priest is of necessity a public man. In every community he is a conspiruous character, whether he will or no. He stands always in the glare of public opinion. All eyes are directed upon him. And those eyes are not all charitable eyes.

charitable eyes.

The young, who have never yet attempted any difficult work; the negatively good, who have never tried and therefore never failed, may sometimes think him lacking in zeal because he does not accomplish impossible things. The old are not apt to judge a priest harshly. I do not recollect ever hearing an old person criticise a priest severely. The old know from experience the weakness of their own nature, and the weakness of their own nature, and the weakness of their own nature, and the weakness of human nature, in general, too well, to be uncharitable in judging any priest. On the other hand they are liable to think him too ambitious, too zealous, and instead of amotious, too zeasous, and inseed of encouraging him, they almost discourage him by counseling what they call prudence, but what in reality is only timidity.

The wilfully wicked, they who do not

even try to lead virtuous lives, watch him with the eyes of a serpent, color his every word and act with the malice of their own hearts, and take a fiendish delight in detecting the least sin or mistake. If his conduct is above re proach, they impugn his motives. He is vain, lacks character, or he is too positive and conceited. If perchance he really does fall into sin, they raise a hue and cry over him as vultures circle screeching over the hero who wounded on the battlefield. L Let the priest fall once, his whole life, they conclude, has been a sham, and he only a hypocrite! One priest falls,

then all priests are hypocrites, all

then all priests are hypocrites, all religion a mockery!
They will not or cannot practice virtue themselves; hence they rejoice in the fall of the innocent. The occasional lapse of the virtuous is to them a justification of their own habitual and wilful wickedness.

My dear brettren, can you inaging a program of the proper rejoicing agreement of the properties of the pr

an occasion of more rejoicing among the devils in hell than the fall of a priest? No! Then what shall you do? What should you do in regar it to your priests, your spiritual fathers? Support them, encourage them, sympathize with them, shield them!

Suppose they do err! Is that an excuse for descriing them, for betraying them? No! That is the plea of them? No! That is the plea of every traitor who ever betrayed his country or his fellow-man. Benedict Arnold tried to excuse his treason by alleging the faults and mistakes of his superiors, by saying that men of less deserts than he—which is true—had been promoted over his head. Has the world accepted his excuse? No! Neither will it accept yours for be-traying your God given leaders, your spiritual fathers.

Suppose the priest does err! Is that an excuse for your publishing his sin?
Do not imitate Cham, the wicked son of Noah, who, when he saw his father in-toxicated and lying naked in his tent, laughed in derision and published his shame to his brethren. Beware of fol-lowing his example, lest the curse that fell on him and his posterity may fall on you and yours! Rather imitate the example of Sem and Japhet. When they heard of their father's sin and shame, they took up a cloak, and, walking backwards lest they might see, covered him. Do you in like manner, and I am sure that God Who re-

warded them and theirs, will bless you and yours. (Gen. 9: 21 27.) What kind of a Catholic do you most admire? What kind of a Catholic do Protestants most admire? Is it the Catholic who is always criticising church and sisters and priests? No! The Catholic whom you admire, the Catholic whom all men ad nire, is the man who, when he hears his church, the sisters or the priests reviled, throws off his coat and is ready to fight.

Pray for your priests, all of them. Do not be like the little academy girl heard about the other day. She finished her evening prayers and was about to climb into bed when her

"Mary, you forgot to say a prayer for Father L---," or Father L——,"
"Father L——? Why, he dossn't need my prayers."
"Why not?" asked the mother.

"Because he is so good."

"How about Father Mc--?" The little girl looked at her mother with her innocent eyes and in all charity said: "I don't know, mamma. Maybe I'd better say a prayer for him." The mother suggested that she had better pray for both. And so do I. Father Mc—and Father L—both aced your prayers. Father L—has a long road to travel before he reaches long road to travel before he reaches
the point where I now stand.
He will doubtless find ahead of
him many a piece of rough
road, many a quagmire, many a
steep hill. Many a time his feet will
bleed as he bears his cross up his hill of Calvary. He will see the bloodstained print of the Saviour's feet who walked

that path before him. Still he needs our prayers. In your charity you may sometimes fancy that the priest does not need your prayers. He does need them, and he counts on them. You cannot know how much he leans on you for support. In almost every man's life there come now and then periods of depression. Overwork and worry, especially if there be added some great misfortune or sorrow, drag his soul down to the verge of despair. Strange as it may seem, buoyant, happy. sanguine natures are most prone to these seasons of melancholy. And they are truly awful. The past seems an utter failure. The present is overcast with the blackest clouds of gloom. The future is terrifying in its forebodings of disas-

If you saw your father walking on the edge of a precipice, where a single false step could hurl him to destruc-tion, how you would tremble for his safety! How you would pray God to

keep him from harm!

For aught you know, my dear children, your spiritual father may at times be, figuratively speaking, in just that position, where a sadden gust of temp tation would cause him to fa'l, when a feeling of loneliness and discourage ment makes him almost ready to hurl himself from his height.

himself from his height.

And it may be, that at such a time, you think of him and without ever dreaming that he needs your prayers, you pray for him, and your prayer is his salvation.

Second the efforts of your pastor. He is working for you. Encourage him. Speak kindly of him. Do not keep all your eulogies for his funeral day. Do not be like the friends of a certain poet. During life he could certain poet. During life he could hardly get enough to eat. When he died they erected a costly monument

over his grave which caused some wit of the day to say of him: "He asked for bread; they gave him

on a certain occasion when the On a certain occasion when the Israelites were engaged in battle with their enemies Moses knelt on the mountain top and prayed for them. As long as he kept his hands upraised the people were successful. When his hands fell from weariness, the people were pressed back in defaat. Then were pressed back in defeat. Then two of his attendants ran to his side and held up his hands. The people in the plain rallied again and swept the enemy from the field. (Gen, 17:9 13.)
So will it be with you. When the So will it be with you. When the hands of the priest at the altar fall

from discouragement or lack of support you will be defeated by your spiritual enemies. If you hold up his hands by your sympathy, your encouragement, your co-operation, you will be victor-Before all things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves; for charity covereth a multitude of sins.
(1 Peter iv 8.)