

mon in the Book of *Proverbs*. Several Fathers, it is true, have variously interpreted it. St-Augustine sees in that same passage a picture of the Church ; St-Bernard recognizes therein the Virgin Mary, who, by her privileges, her virtues and her merits, has surpassed both angels and men ; according to others, the portrait belongs at the same time to the most illustrious woman of the old Testament, to Mary and to the Church. All such interpretations are founded on the text that we quote ; but on a more attentive examination, it will be seen that the passage applies also very specially to St-Anne, and that this admirable page of Scripture contains, as it were, the abridgment of her life. Besides which, the Church, in proposing the sacred page to our meditation, in the office of the 26th of July, herself authorizes us to make such an application.

“ Who shall find a valiant woman ? far, and from the uttermost coasts is the price of her.”

Before the memorable definition of Pius IX, the great majority of the faithful believed in the Immaculate Conception, on reasons of simple propriety and under the impulse of an irresistible instinct, leaving to Theology the discussion of the more weighty motives on which the dogma rested. The same reasons of simple fitness, even neglecting the precise teachings of tradition, make us believe in the very great holiness of St-Anne, in her virtues of an uncommon order, in her incomparable merits surpassing by far the rarest. As for the mystery of the Incarnation, a creature no less perfect than Mary was required, to become the mother of the Word ; likewise Mary, the most accomplished of all creatures, supposes in her mother a woman who must be among saints of her sex what diamonds and precious stone are among the more common objects that every day meet our view.

“ The heart of her husband trusteth in her, and he shall have no need of spoils.”

Who can recount to us the unspeakable joys of that union, the perfect esteem of St-Joachim for St-Anne,