

from her. Accepting her new situation as appointed for her in God's providence, she set herself to writing her autobiography—a task enjoined upon her by La Combe, as her spiritual director, before his own arrest, to correspondence with friends, and to conversation with the few visitors who were admitted to see her. She was carefully examined as to her views by two judges, who were specially anxious to ascertain her attitude to the Church in her teachings and in her actions. She claimed to be a good Catholic, and it is certain that in many points, such as the adoration of the mass, the worship of Mary, belief in purgatory, and a superstitious regard for relics, she was far removed from Protestantism. Nevertheless, the instinct of the authorities was not at fault, for her characteristic doctrine of the inwardness of religion, of salvation by faith, if accepted and experienced, is certain to affect the attitude of men to outward ceremonies and church authority.*

With failing health, under very close surveillance, with no prospect of release, she became depressed, though still kept in peace. She has exquisitely expressed her prison experience in the familiar little poem:

"A little bird I am
Shut from the fields of air;
And in my cage I sit and sing
To Him who placed me there;
Well-pleased a prisoner to be,
Because, my God, it pleases Thee.

"Nought have I else to do;
I sing the whole day long;
And He, whom most I love to please,
Doth listen to my song;
He caught and bound my wandering wing.
But still He bends to hear me sing.

* She said to her judges: "I am a Catholic in the substance and spirit, and not merely in the form and letter." The Catholic Church never intended that her children should remain dead in her forms; but that her forms should be the expression of the life within them, received through faith in Christ."

"Thou hast an ear to hear,
A heart to love and bless;
And, though my notes were e'er so rude,
Thou wouldst not hear the less;
Because Thou knowest, as they fall,
That love, sweet love, inspires them all.

"My cage confines me round;
Abroad I cannot fly;
But though my wing is closely bound,
My heart's at liberty;
My prison walls cannot control
The flight, the freedom of the soul.

"Oh! it is good to soar
These bolts and bars above,
To Him whose purpose I adore,
Whose Providence I love;
And in Thy mighty will to find
The joy, the freedom of the mind."

Through the intervention of a pious lady, Madame de Miramion, with Madame de Maintenon, and of the latter with the king, Madame Guyon was released from imprisonment in October, 1688. She made her home with the good Madame de Miramion, and resumed her work of promoting holiness by conversation and correspondence, a great interest having been awakened in her views and experience of the inner life. In 1690 her daughter (in her fifteenth year) was happily married to the excellent Count de Vaux, and for two years the mother lived with her daughter.

At this point begins the momentous intercourse of the subject of our sketch with the illustrious and supremely eloquent Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, and the yet more illustrious Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray. The former was, perhaps, the prince of modern preachers; the latter, perhaps, the prince of modern Christians. The former most eloquently defended and expounded the Christian faith; the latter most eloquently lived it. Fenelon was of the highest social rank, his position at court as tutor to the heir-apparent was exalted and influential; but none of the cares or pleasures of his position made him other than a pure and humble Christian. His eager de-