

sublime virtue seemed to be hereditary, little children recalled to mind the conduct of the young Origen, exhorting his father to martyrdom.

"Michael M's daughter, eleven years of age, escaped one day from home, to visit the holy confessor in prison. She had to go a distance of half a day's journey, and penetrated without fear through soldiers and guards to her father's dungeon. One of his sons also, only nine years old, sent him word, not to renounce his religion, but to suffer martyrdom, that he might go direct to heaven, and not to be in trouble about his children, as the same God who had given them existence, would take care of them.

"The persecutors, tired at last of struggling with a constancy, which continued trials tended only to confirm, pronounced sentence of death against the holy confessors, which in a few days after was confirmed by a royal decree; and the following day they were led to execution. On this occasion the mandarins redoubled their precaution to keep at a distance the crowds, which pressed forward to gather up the blood of the martyrs; for their pride was wounded to see, that they who were punished by them as criminals, were respected by others as saints. The efforts, however, the mandarins made to keep off the crowds, only made them press more eagerly around the martyrs, and animate them to the last combat.—The praises which were loudly given to their courage, the tears of compassion which filled the eyes of all, amply compensated them for contempt with which they were treated by the government officers. Our generous champions, loaded with the cangoe and their chains, moved forward to the place of punishment with serene and joyful countenances. They conversed together on their happiness, made signs of adieu to the Christians, who saluted them with profound respect, as they passed, and earnestly recommended themselves to their prayers. Michael M distinguished himself particularly by the intrepidity he displayed. The executioner had said to him, 'Give me five blows, and I

will sever your head at a single blow, so that you may not suffer much.' 'Cut it into a hundred pieces if you wish,' replied he; 'provided you cut it off, that is enough for me. As to the hands, though I have plenty at home, I will not give you any; I would rather give them to the poor.'

"Having reached the place of execution, the mandarins caused the martyrs to be surrounded with a double line of soldiers, in order to prevent the people from taking away any relics of the martyrs. But no sooner had their blood begun to flow, than Christians and pagans rushed forward in a mass to gather it up. As rain did the soldiers (whose ranks were broken strike the crowds with the flat of their swords no one paid the least attention to them. On that day, a traffic was established, of which the history of the martyrs alone offers an example. The executioners, turning the remains of their victims to account, were seen pulling a price on the blood which adhered to their swords, selling by retail the beard of the persons executed, trading with their cangoes, their cages, and with everything else that had been an instrument of their torture. The people even fought among themselves to obtain some portion at any price. In this way the purchasers (even among the idolaters) were so numerous, that the sale was soon over. Then the crowd began to pull up the grass, and collect with care the earth of the place on which the martyrs' blood had flowed. The pagans gave their sick children some of this blood to drink; and we are assured that they were cured: the executioners say, that at the moment of striking the martyrs, an odour, as if it were perfume, was diffused around them.—It is usual to implore the pardon of those they put to death, and beg their permission to do so. The mandarins themselves have sometimes yielded to the influence of Christian virtue. At the martyrdom of Father Vien, they were seen rendering public homage to the innocence of that holy Priest. When he arrived at the place of execution, they made him sit in state, on five beautiful red carpets; the Christians were permitted to place before him a table, covered with meats, and to bid him their last farewell. The