

were inflicted. Her tastes, her aversions, her peculiar disposition, were closely watched that the knowledge thus gained might be turned to account for more effectually rendering her unhappy and her remaining in the convent impossible. She had a constitutional aversion to mutton. Mutton, therefore, was given to her constantly for her food, in all its most unsavoury shapes; tough mutton, half cold mutton, mutton served up in a mess of greasy water, with stale, not to say mouldy, bread. Under pretence of her violating her vows of poverty, her boots were taken from her; her stockings were rags; she was not allowed to wash her under clothing too often, so that it was not particularly clean. In school she was not allowed to sit down; she was watched in case she should speak to the scholars or to girls who came to the library for books; letters from her family were kept back, and to add to her punishment she was only allowed to see some of them, which were snatched from her before she had read them. Her brother died, her father was ill, but she was kept in ignorance of the one, and was not allowed to comply with the request of her mother in the other case that she might go to see her father. She was kept in a bath room, which she was not allowed to leave for any purpose whatever. She was taunted with remaining in the convent and submitting to all this, and yet she would not leave, although she was told that the Bishop had granted her a dispensation of her vows. But this she refused to receive, since it was a sentence of expulsion, affixing to her a stigma that could not be got over. In addition to the annoyances to which she was exposed, she was employed in the most menial occupations—set to scrub the floors of the school-room, compelled to keep them clean with a brush, the bristles in which had been worn off till but a few remained, and when, after the most abject supplications a new one was supplied, it was used by others in such a way as to reduce it to the condition of the one of which she complained. At last a commission was issued by the Bishop, the result of which was not doubtful, and evidence at the trial showed that the enquiry was a mockery. The other nuns who were witnesses against her there, were evidently tutored, and the Mother Superior, after fencing with the questions and skilfully parrying the cross-examination to which she had to submit in open court, was forced to admit that the written evidence on which the commission rested its decision was in-

spired by herself, and even in some cases dictated by her. At the trial before the Lord Chief Justice, which lasted for twenty days, a viler charge than any that had previously been brought forward was attempted to be fastened upon her, but the defendants were evidently afraid to press the matter too closely, foreseeing that it would do more harm to the conventual system than would the loss of the case. We have but briefly touched upon some of the points brought out in the evidence. In a trial occupying so long a period it is impossible to do more, but anyone who has waded through the wretched details of the trial must have risen with the conviction that of all the mistakes that have been committed, that of locking up a number of women together in the hope that they will thereby grow in grace, in the love of God, in the beauty of holiness, and will attain to the perfect image of the pure and holy Saviour is the greatest. The sweetest substances spoiled become the bitterest and most acrid. And woman is no exception. In the isolated position in which these women are placed, with a want of education which was evident in the testimony given, even after the grossest blunders had been corrected by the reporters, with a narrow round of duties, with small austerities enjoined upon them which they are taught to believe to be good deeds to qualify them for Heaven, a bitterness of spirit is engendered which must find an object on which to expend itself. With a subtle insight which women possess, and which enables them to detect the weak points of those with whom they are brought into contact, they can, when their lives are diverted from the true sphere of woman's duties, inflict, with an air of the most innocent unconsciousness, the most deadly wounds on those against whom their spite is directed, and these so fine and subtle that, like the poison from the ring of Lucretia Borgia, the victim can scarcely tell how the injury was caused, and can get few to believe that there is any reason for complaint. Men are duller and more awkward in their attempts. Their blows can be seen and guarded against, and at the worst strong proof of ill usage can be produced. Women, on the other hand, can keep up the constant dropping, each drop apparently harmless in itself, but the accumulated effect madness and death.

In former trials in which convent life was exposed, there was invariably room for doubt, as to the extent to which belief could be given to witnesses who were desi-