

her a queen going to be crowned," relates an eye-witness.

The second victim was Annette Pelras, Marie Henrietta in religion. She was born in Cajarc, in the diocese of Cahors, in 1760. She came of a family every member of which was the picture of holiness. When she was about sixteen years old, she, like her sisters, entered the Congregation des Dames de Nevers. Her extraordinary beauty, however, exposed her to dangers which alarmed her innocence, and she resolved to seek a refuge in the cloister from the flattery of the world. She was twenty-five years old when she had the happiness of seeing the gates of the Carmel of Compiègne opened to her. We have spoken above of her courageous bearing before the public prosecutor, and of her joy at finding herself condemned to death for God's cause. "She never looked more beautiful," says Cardinal Villecourt, "than when, as she mounted the scaffold, she raised to Heaven, for the last time, eyes sparkling with the sacred fire which consumed her soul."

On the day of her martyrdom, according to the testimony of several worthy persons, her brother, M. Jean Jacques Pelras went home at a rather late hour, and was not a little surprised to find his way lighted by a mysterious light which accompanied him through the hall, up the staircase, and into his room, while the neighboring houses were in utter darkness. He was deeply impressed by this phenomenon. His wife likewise remarked it. A few days after, he heard news of his sister's execution, whereupon he cried out: "Poor Annette! it was you who came to see me."

Following the example of Sister Mary Henrietta, each of her companions bowed in turn before the Mother Prioress to receive her last blessing, then quickly mounted the steps of the scaffold, as if each envied her who went before, the favor of being sooner admitted to the glory of Heaven. Sixteen times the hideous knife fell and the blood of the victims gushed forth. Sister of Jesus Crucified as well as her companion in age, Sister Charlotte of the Resurrection, re-

covered all the vigor of youth in offering to God the last instants of life, although both had, at first looked forward with terror to so bloody an ending. The former said to the executioners, "I forgive you with all my heart, as I desire that God may forgive me."

Like the mother of the Machabees in former days, the Mother Prioress had suffered death each time that she had seen one of her daughters beheaded. To complete this great holocaust, which she had foreseen in prayer, she mingled her pure blood with that which they had so generously shed, and gathered herself at length, the palm of martyrdom which had long been the object of her desires.

Not a cry, not a beat of the drum. A deep silence reigned in the crowd which was divided between fear, pity and admiration at the sight of these fearless virgins who, with no other arms than their ardent faith, waged victoriously the combat of God, the great battle of Christ, triumphing over the executioners, and preserving in the face of death, freedom of speech, an incorruptible soul, and divine courage.

The bodies of the victims were laid in the Picpus quarter, in one common ditch, close to the garden of the Canonesses of Saint Augustin. To-day it is the cemetery near by the community of the Nuns of the Sacred Hearts called of Picpus.

Amongst these valiant daughters of Saint Theresa, we must mention a native of Compiègne who edified the community by her spirit of great recollection and union with God. This was Marie Gabriel Trezel, called in religion Sister Saint Ignatius. After the departure of the nuns from the convent, she went, in deference to the advice of her worthy Prioress, to console her sister, whose child had just died immediately after Baptism. She took the child in her arms and said: "My dear little angel, obtain for us all that we may go and join you in Heaven, and be with us in the act of consecration to death, which we make to the Lord every day, to obtain a cessation of the evils which cover the earth and especially France your country."