

hands and under the orders of the worthless Father Ignatius Michalewicz, a Basilian monk, formerly our chaplain, and remarkable for his zeal and exemplary conduct.

In other times, when the news of the apostasy of three Graco-united Bishops, and of the persecutions they commenced, had disheartened us, the good Father encouraged and supported us most admirably in our fidelity to Catholicism. When separated from him, our most ardent wishes were to be near him again; and lo! after a week's imprisonment at Witebik, his features broke in upon us, but with a false beard.* His very first words were blasphemies and lies, uttered in the language of the Muscovites—he who always used to address us in our dear Polish tongue, and to teach us the love of God and truth! Ah! who could ever understand our grief.

'Formerly, you were our Father,' I exclaimed, sobbing; 'you helped to save our souls, and now you want to damn them! What has become of your old lessons add examples?'

'My dear children, when I preached you faithfulness to the Roman Church I was a madman—I was a blind man; but, at last, God has opened my eyes.'

And then, after repeating the whole doctrine of Siemaszko, he added: 'and now I have turned an apostle!'

'No! an apostate! an apostate!' exclaimed my sisters, all in one breath. 'No, not an apostle!'

Scenes like this were very frequent, for this miserable man was constantly by our side, superintending the forced labour to which we were condemned; and his presence was far more painful to us than his hard-dealt and repeated blows. He threatened us with the most cruel tortures, and even with slaying us alive. We answered: 'Well, slay us, slay us alive; we are ready to follow the apostle St. Bartholomew, but never an apostate!'

We were subjected to the vilest and hardest service by the Czernice. Before six o'clock in the morning we were obliged to sweep the whole house; to warm it; to prepare and carry the wood; to run for water, and to distribute it where wanted; to set all in order and decency after the revels of the preceding day.

At six o'clock, they led us out to the convicts' labour, which varied according to the season. At first, we had to hew stones and carry them about in wheelbarrows, to which we were chained. From twelve to one, one hour's rest;—from one till night, labour;—after that, we were employed either in the kitchen, or attending the cattle, making ready wood and water for the next day.

* In the Slavonian countries a long beard is the distinctive mark of the schismatical priests.

The Czernice did all in their power to make their service as difficult and painful as possible; for instance, they dirtied the kitchen and the house on purpose, spilt the water we brought, and were constant'ly scolding or beating us.

After our day's work, we were shut up in our prison without being freed from our irons. The only furniture of our prison was a little straw that served for our bed; but the true ornament of our dwelling, the delight of our hearts, the strength of our souls, was our dear crucifix brought from Minsk; to us it was a church, an altar, a master, a Father, it was our all. We passed whole nights praying and meditating at its foot. We used to begin by the prayers and devotions of our rule, which we had no leisure to go through during the day; we took scarcely two hours sleep, and this was our life for the seven years of our martyrdom. We always commenced our devotions by falling prostrate on the earth to ask of God the conversion of the Emperor Nicholas.

The food granted to us was so scanty, that we were often obliged to eat the grass in the fields during summer, and to share the fare of the cows and pigs in winter, notwithstanding the blows of the Czernice, who told us brutally—'You do not deserve the food of our pigs.'

Though the cold is so excessive in winter, we were refused fuel; our limbs were often frozen, and this made our wounds the more painful.

At the end of about two months (1838) began the torture of flagellation, to which we were submitted twice a week; Siemaszko had ordered us thirty lashes, but Michalewicz added twenty more of his own accord.

On certain weeks we were not to be whipped, but, at the suggestion of Michalewicz, Siemaszko gave orders that this torture should be applied to us oftener, to punish our faithfulness to the Holy Church.

On every occasion, I required that Siemaszko's written orders should be presented to me, and I always read them aloud, in order that they should be made known to my sister nuns.

We used to prepare for flagellation by meditating on that of our Lord Jesus Christ; his passion was our strength, our support, our consolation, our cure through all the different tortures by which they hereafter tried our fidelity and constancy.

We were whipped in a yard, under a sort of barn, exposed to the general view, under the eyes of Michalewicz, of the Czernice, Popes, Deacons, chanters, children, and of all those who lived to desecrate by their blasphemies a house dedicated to prayer and retreat by the spouses of Jesus Christ!

As soon as the order had been read, I made a