

first day's journey, with troubling ourselves about the last, and we shall not fail to make a good progress.—S. FRANCIS OF SALES.

S. Philip Neri being inflamed with the desire of martyrdom, was resolved to go and preach the faith in the Indies, but Almighty God having revealed to him that his Indies were to be at Rome, he continued there, and by leading a life full of virtuous acts he attained to a great degree of sanctity. The venerable Berchmans, in the short space of five years after having embraced the religious state, reached a great height of perfection. What then, you will ask, did he do afterwards? Nothing else, but studied how to be able to accomplish each point which he knew that he ought to gain in the path of virtue, and to acquire the highest degree of perfection which was possible, with the assistance of the divine grace. S. Gertrude on one occasion finding herself very weak in spirit, determined to force herself to say matins; and when she had finished the first nocturn, there came one of the nuns, who was ill, to beg her to say it along with her, and she immediately consented to begin it again. The next morning she had a vision, in which she beheld her soul represented as adorned with jewels of a great value, and our Lord told her, that for this act of love which she had done for his sake, she had merited this ornament, in which there were as many jewels as there were words said over again. It is related of a young Jesuit student, that one morning on a holiday, as he was on the point of going out to walk with his companions, he was asked by one of the fathers to wait for half an hour, in order that he might serve his mass. The boy immediately complied. When he was afterwards grown up, and had finished his studies, he went to preach the faith amongst the Indians, and there he was rendered worthy to obtain the crown of martyrdom; and it was then revealed to him, that this so great a grace was given him by God, in reward for that little mortification which he had voluntarily undergone in serving that mass.

Our greatest evil is, that we wish to serve God after our own fashion, and not after his: according to our own will, and not according to his. When he wishes that we should be afflicted with illness, we wish to be well; when he wishes that we should serve him in sufferings, we desire to serve him with active works; when he is anxious for us to exercise the virtue of charity, we wish to exercise that of humility; when he desires resignation from us, we seek for a sensible devotion, for fervour in prayer, or for any other virtue; and this not because the things which we desire are more grateful to him, but because they are more suitable to our own inclinations. This is certainly the greatest hindrance which we can set in the way of our arriving at perfection; it being a thing not to be doubted, that if we wish to be saints according to our own will, we shall never become so. In order to become a saint indeed, it is necessary to do all in conformity with the will of God.—S. FRANCIS OF SALES.

This most important truth was well known by S. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi; and under the gui-

dance of so clear a light, she took such pains to submit her will to that of God, that always content with what befel her each day, she never desired any thing new; and she was wont to say that she would have held it for no small fault, to beg any grace of our Lord for herself or for others with any greater earnestness than by simple prayer; and that she rejoiced and gloried in doing his will and not her own; so that she desired no other sanctity or perfection for her soul, but that which was conformable not to her desire, but to the will of God. Hence she wrote the following resolution: "I offer myself to God, and I desire all and only that perfection which he wills me to have, and in the manner and at the time which he shall choose, and not otherwise." And on one occasion, conversing with a confidential friend, she said, "The good which comes to me by any other way than the divine will, does not appear to me to be good, and I would even choose to have no other gift, except that I might always abandon my own will and my own desires to God, rather than receive any gift according to my own will or desire. Yes, yes, 'in me sint, Deus, vota tua et non vota mea.'" And this was the grace which she demanded with the greatest fervour and frequency of our Lord, that he would make her always even to death obedient and entirely subject to his divine will and pleasure. And following this course, there is no cause for wonder that she became such a saint. Amongst the heathens themselves, some have been found, who by the sole light of reason comprehended this truth; Plutarch disapproved of the common prayer of the vulgar: "May God grant thee all the blessings which you desire." "No," said he, "you ought rather to say, 'God grant that you may desire that which he desires.'" And what is more, Epictetus practised it, and uttered the following sentiment: "I am always well content with whatever befalls me each day, because I know that whatever befalls me happens by the disposition of God; and I am certain that what God wills is better than that which I can ever desire."

#### THE VIGIL OF ST. IGNATIUS.

*In the Chapel of our Lady of Montserrat.*

When at thy shrine, most holy maid!  
The Spaniard hung his votive blade,  
And bared his helmeted brow—  
Not that he feared war's visage grim,  
Or that the battle-field for him  
Had aught to daunt, I trow;

"Glory!" he cried, "with thee I've done!  
Fame! thy bright theatres I shun!  
To tread fresh pathways now;  
To track thy footsteps, Saviour God!  
With throbbing heart, with feet unshod:  
Hear and record my vow.