

discussion he declared himself ready to release them for a ransom. The sum he asked was high, and the means at the disposal of the missionaries barely sufficient to supply their wants. The poor slaves in the meantime lamented loudly.

"Father," they cried despairingly. "Father, save us! Buy our liberty. You were always kind to us. Do not allow us to perish in our present misery."

The missionary could not repress his tears. All human considerations had to yield, he would have given the last drop of his blood for these poor people. So he bought human ware: boys and girls, and loosened their fetters with his own hand. His means being finally exhausted, and the heart of the slave-hunter remaining obdurate, Fr. Benedict was about to return home sorrowfully with the ransomed children, when there arose a howling among the remainder that penetrated through the marrow of the bones. It was a hundred-fold cry of despair and deadly anguish.

Stupefied and overcome, the priest stumbled forward. An old negress cast herself at his feet and took hold of his cassock. "Wait, father, wait, buy one more, just one," she yelled piercingly in a hoarse voice, clasping in her arms the knees of the priest, and pointing to a boy, her only son, who stood aside, silent, petrified as it were, a dark frown upon his face.

Fr. Benedict looked at him in surprise, his blood stagnated in the veins, his heart was cramped by unspeakable woe, and he hastened up to him and embraced him with the word: "Paul, is it you, my good, good boy."

The sheik saw the episode with a mocking smile. "For this one," he shouted at the priest, "you have to

pay me three times the amount paid for any other one. Look at these shoulders and this back. The fellow can carry a double load of ivory. Besides I do not intend to sell him, for this Christian dog is an insolent fellow, on whom I intend to wreak my vengeance."

Paul's eyes shed lightning, and with a raised voice he cried: "Save your threats. Even if the father could buy me I would ask him not to do it."

"Yes, father," he turned to the priest, "I am strong, I can carry a heavy load. I am young and able to bear much, leave me to my fate. But take pity on my old mother and ransom her. For the love of the Blessed Virgin in heaven, I beg of you buy her freedom." With these words he pointed to the weeping woman.

And now there rose a battle between the love of a mother and the love of a child. "Free him father, save him! my only son, my good Paul," gulped out the nerveless old negress. "No, not me, buy her," asked the magnanimous son. The earth may seldom have witnessed a similar picture of heroic self-denial and the spirit of sacrifice. Everyone forgot his own woes, all looked upon mother and child. The missionary could but look up to heaven and pray.

One only saw this touching battle with diabolical delight—the sheik, who at last decided in favor of the mother. Who would be able to describe the farewell of the mother from her darling?

The father awaited himself a moment when he was not noticed to lay into the hands of Paul a Scapular, whispering: "Take this, Paul, it is the habit of Our Heavenly Queen. When you are in extreme danger put it around your neck, Mary is our refuge."

Using mild force, he led the incon-