

were not discouraged, and upon the translation of Mgr. Guibert to the See of Paris in 1871, they again presented themselves to acquaint him with their plans, and to solicit his active aid. For a time the prudent prelate hesitated, but at length, he entered heart and soul into the project.

But now arose a question. Where should the proposed temple be erected? It must be in the capital of France. That was evident. But what site within the great city would be the most suitable? Montmartre was the choice of the Archbishop, and truly it was a happy selection, for around the Mount of Martyrs may be said to centre the entire history of France, both religious and secular.

Long before the Christian era, Montmartre was already consecrated to the service of religion, and from its summit rose the principal temple of the druids, side by side with the temples of Mercury and Mars. Such was Montmartre when St. Denis the Areopagite, arrived to preach the "glad tidings of great joy" to the benighted inhabitants of Gaul. The Mountain of Mars became one of the principal theatres of his apostolic labors and there he with his two companions afterwards suffered martyrdom. His death was followed by a general persecution which soon flooded the sacred hill with the blood of Christians. The Mountain of Mars had become the Mount of Martyrs. Naturally the spot was held in peculiar veneration by the early Christians of Gaul, and in course of time became a place of regular pilgrimage. The religious history of the hill during several centuries is unfortunately wrapt in obscurity. In the 12th century, however, Louis VI established there a community of Benedictine Nuns and presented to the convent a small chapel said to have been erected by the first Christians on the spot sanctified by the blood of the martyred St. Denis. In the stormy times of the 15th century the pilgrimages increased in number and importance, and they continued with undiminished fervor amidst the tumults caused by the Reformation and the civil wars of the following century. A period of tranquility was now granted to the good religious of Montmartre, but at length came the terrible days of the revolution. The Abbey, with its precious souvenirs of past ages, was entirely des-

troyed, and for nearly one hundred years no pilgrim climbed the heights to pray at the shrine of St. Denis.

Many a scene of secular history, likewise, has been enacted about this famous mountain. Already under the Merovingian Kings, its strategic importance was recognized, and the heights were fiercely disputed in all the wars of those times. It figures in the 9th century in the defence of Paris against the Normans, and a century later Otho II of Germany there assembled 60,000 men "to chant an *Alleluia*, that might be heard at Notre Dame"—an act of bravado oftentimes repeated by the enemies of France in those early days. It is interesting to note in passing that in 1170 at the foot of the Mount of Martyrs, Henry II of England and St. Thomas Beckett held an interview that was to become historic. A few months later St. Thomas himself received the crown of martyrdom from the hands of the minions of the ruthless Plantagenet. During the One Hundred Years' War, the English twice occupied the heights of Montmartre and about its sides the Maid of Orleans for a time encamped with her army. It was from the top of the hill that Henry of Navarre pointed his cannon against the City of Paris, and in the Benedictine Abbey Charles IV of Lorraine signed, in 1662, the treaty that ceded his fair province to the crown of France. Three times within our own century have the enemies of France gazed upon Paris from Montmartre. In 1814, the Russians and Prussians encamped there previous to their entry into the capital, and one year later the English and their allies occupied the hill, while upon the same eminence the Prussians planted their batteries towards the close of the late war.

Montmartre, then, historic Montmartre, afforded the most fitting site for the temple of the Sacred Heart, but unfortunately the ministry had determined to fortify this strong position by the erection of a fortress on the heights. Mgr. Guibert had just succeeded in inducing the government to relinquish its project and cede to him the much desired property, when a new difficulty presented itself. In order that the work of the National Vow might be duly national, it was necessary that it should receive the official recognition of the Assembly. But how could