

HEROINES OF CHARITY.

The Account of a Noble and Spiritualizing Work in Paris.

In a long article on the private charities of Paris, written by Maxime Du Camp and published in the Revue des Deux Mondes some years ago, the following passage occurs, and in its grasp of the spirit which animates such charity will serve as a fitting introduction for the account of the work carried on by the Ladies of Calvary in Paris, which is taken from a recent number of Donahoe's Magazine:

"There are women of the world, young and beautiful, fitted for a life of enjoyment, accustomed to every luxury and solicited by every allurement of pleasure, who visit the poor, console the suffering and care for motherless children without allowing the world to suspect it. They are, in a measure, fortified by the very mystery which veils their devotion. Amidst the temptations which assail them they traverse life without swerving, sustained by the interior energy which makes them at once charitable and discreet. In my youth it has happened more than once that I have surprised them making this way of sorrows where each one of their stations is marked by a beneficence. Concealing myself I have followed them at a distance, I have penetrated after them into the dark huts which they entered as a ray of sunshine and where I still found some lingering reflection of the radiance that surrounded them.

"Often, in the evening, I have met the almoners of the morning in a salon or beneath the lustre of a chandelier, gay, brilliant, pleasing and pleased, but still preserving in glance and smile something of that serenity which is the perfume of a soul at peace with itself."

"Of such characters is the semi-association known as the Ladies of Calvary, founded by Madame Garnier, formed. Donahoe says of it:

"There is nothing in it, indeed, to invite attention. No vows of any kind bind together the Associates, no distinctive costume attracts the eye. Even the few ladies who reside permanently and are ever within call of the poor patients, dress as they please and furnish their rooms after their own taste. The others, who live at home, conform to all the requirements of their social condition. Only once or twice each week their absence may be noticed from early morning. On such days, sacred to suffering humanity, they are to be found in close contact with the most repulsive forms of disease. The hospital, of which they are the main support, and where they delight in forgetting all worldly distinctions, to become the humble servants of the poor, is called the 'cancer hospital,' because, although welcoming all those whose disgusting ailments make them unwelcome everywhere else, the great majority of its inmates are victims to the disease the very name of which they dread to utter. Cancer, indeed, is, in all its multitudinous forms a terrible disease. Slowly it preys, like a thing of life, upon whatever organ it seizes, steadily disintegrating its every part, and generating odors which the most assiduous care can only imperfectly dispel, and which, if at all neglected, become almost as unendurable to the patient as the cruel evil from which they emanate. How offensive it is to those who, accustomed only to sweet perfumes, are suddenly affronted by it, can be easily imagined. But the chief horror is in the sight of the patients, so misshapen, sometimes, by certain kinds of disease, that the human form is scarce recognizable in them. The most ghastly cases of all are those of cancer, settling, as it often does, on the face of the victim and slowly eating away the nose, the ears, the lips, the cheeks, as if a wild beast had devoured them. These are sights which try the courage of the bravest, and some there are who, invincibly repelled at first, go back again and again, in the hope of surmounting their repugnance, but to no purpose. They have at length to relinquish the task and content themselves with easier, though not less substantial services.

"The duties, as may be imagined, are of the most diverse kinds, and it is soon discovered that each one of the devoted ladies is best fitted for. While some feed the poor patients' sores, others feed them or move them about, like little children; or they sit beside them and brighten up their sad existence by pleasant talk. The close contact of so much kindness and refinement blended together soothes the sufferers and fills them unconsciously with patience and resignation.

"Such is the noble work which the 'Ladies of Calvary,' as they are called, have been accomplishing for many years. What the world continues to turn away from with loathing, they continue to seek out and tend with motherly care. Like the evening sun, burst at the close of a stormy day, they cause a gleam of brightness to gild the last hours of many a life which had known little but suffering and sorrow. Their relations with their charges are of the most touching kind; just such as they might have with their children or their friends; the same condescension to their wishes, which, as might be expected, are not always of the most reasonable kind.

"When first these poor people find themselves waited upon by persons of position and wealth, they can hardly credit their senses. But gradually they become accustomed to it, and occasionally grow exacting, and strange fancies have often to be indulged. It is one of their weaknesses to wish to be tended by titled ladies. A certain duchess, one of the most active asso-

ciates, is always in great demand. Although her nursing is none of the tenderest, the poor sufferers long to see her approach, and forget their sad condition in the thought of being waited upon by one who holds away in the highest social circles.

"In this way the work proceeds, the good so lovingly done to others coming back a hundred fold to these devoted women themselves. Their action, inspired by faith and charity, makes ever deeper and more abundant in their souls the sacred sources from which it flows. That unceasing contact with the sufferings of others trains them unconsciously to make light of their own. Their sympathies, constantly re-awakened, keep them from settling down in selfish enjoyment, and though living in the midst of worldliness they cannot become worldly.

"Above all, their work of mercy, scarce known outside themselves, is an unmistakable pledge of their love for God. What other motive could send them forth thus, day after day, from their pleasant and often luxurious homes, to seek out and see with their eyes and touch with their hands what others turn away from with insuperable disgust? But hidden under the disguised and repulsive traits of each sufferer, their faith reveals to them a child of God, and that is enough."

CATHOLIC MISSIONS IN JAPAN

No one can read the article on Roman Catholic missions in Japan by Rev. George William Knox, in the Independent, without being struck by the unconquerable firmness of the native Christians and the zeal of the Catholic missionaries.

At his advent to the throne the present Emperor began a persecution against four thousand native Christians of Nagasaki, who, the writer tells us, were representatives of the Roman Catholics who had received their faith from their fathers and had kept it inviolate. These native Catholics were distributed like criminals throughout the empire. This persecution lasted for six years. The writer gives some incidents of it:

"Men and women were bound and passed from hand to hand across the gangplank of the boat which waited to carry them away, handied and counted and shipped like bales of merchandise. One woman, thrown amidst, fell into the water, and her hand waved farewell in the sign of the cross as she sank never to rise again. An attempt was made by the officials to force another woman—a mother with her infant at her breast—to renounce her faith; it failed. At last they took her infant, placed it beyond her reach, and there let it wail its hungry cry two days and nights, with promises all the time of full forgiveness to the mother and the restitution of her babe if only she would recant. Recant she would not, and at last her torturers gave in, their cruelty exhausted. Fit representatives, these two, of the heroic remnant who defied the worst a ruthless Eastern tyranny could do, and in patience waited, teaching their children the same faith, until at last after so many generations a new era brought peace and safety.

"The history of the Roman Catholic Church in Japan," continues the writer, "is one of the miracles of missions, a story of great success, of tragic failure and of resurrection from the dead. Xavier landed in Japan in 1549, was welcomed, successful and laid the foundations in his brief three years. With him and after him came other Portuguese Jesuits, men of learning, breeding, devotion, adroit and fitted to victory. At the end of the century there were more than half a million Christians in the west and south.

"In 1614 the Christians numbered a million or more, and the persecution once more began, sixty priests being banished and nine churches destroyed. Thenceforth persecution followed persecution for sixty years. More than two hundred priests were killed. They dared all things, refused to go home, were concealed by their converts only to be found out by spies tempted by the large rewards. The native Christians were annihilated, friend was hired to betray friend, and at a larger price child was bought to inform on parent and parent on child. Every barbarity was employed to compel the Christians to recant, with forgiveness and reward for acceptance of the Buddhist faith. The persecution stopped only when all Christians had been destroyed, as was supposed, and for two hundred and fifty years the anti-Christian decrees remained.

"Since 1873 the Roman Catholic missionaries have carried on their work throughout Japan, chiefly by schools and hospitals and in private, without attracting much attention. Their converts are from the humblest walks in life, and the Church is composed for the part of the communities near Nagasaki, the descendants of the converts made three hundred years ago. There are one Archbishop, four Bishops, many foreign priests and nuns and 46,682 adherents."—Philadelphia Catholic Times.

The world of sense, since the fall, has lost the glory of that light which dwelt upon its countenance as it was first created. In poetry a portion of that light is restored, for poetry is an ideal art which invests objects with a grandeur, a freedom, and a purity not their own.

I feel more compassion for those who fight against God than any desire to call down greater vengeance on their heads. They are already miserable enough in the mere fact that they do so fight.—St. Francis Xavier,

DEBTS THAT CANNOT BE PAID.

There are some debts that can never be paid.

What shall this boy do to square the accounts with his mother?—the mother who, when she brought him life, went down to the very gate of death herself, not knowing whether she would return or not; the mother who, through all his babyhood, gave up herself to him that she might pour her life into his; the mother who bore with his errors and his imperfections; the mother who loved him back from his wanderings and redeemed him from his sins; the mother who took upon herself the burden of transgressions of which he himself was unconscious, that she might bear them away and he be saved from them? What service shall he render to her? What words of gratitude pour out? What love bestow? Ah, if this boy be a man, he knows that is a debt that can never be paid! Eternity of love will not pay it, for love never pays love's debts; such debts go on eternally, and love goes on eternally, and we pay and love, and love and pay, and still the process lasts.

What shall this husband pay to recompense the wife?—who left her home, her friends, her very name, and took his name up for her own, became his companion, bearing his cares more than he bore them, loving him not only for richer or poorer—that is easy—but for better or worse—that is hard. How shall this husband pay the wife that has been his counsellor and his adviser and has filled him with her love and her wisdom? Oh, what can he do but say, this is a debt I cannot pay. I can owe her love eternally; and when I have loved her as long as eternity shall last, still there will be love due to her.

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HOW A SLAVE TOOK REVENGE.

A poor negro who had been carried away from his native Africa was sold as a slave in the West Indies. There he became a Christian, and by his good conduct won the favor of his master, who trusted him in the most important matters.

One day the master wanted to buy twenty other slaves, and he took the faithful Tom with him to market where the unfortunates were exposed for sale telling him to pick out those who, in his opinion, would prove to be the best workers. He was surprised when Tom chose among the other slaves a delicate looking old man. The master refused to purchase him; and the aged negro would not have been accepted had not the slave-trader offered him at a low price, on condition that the purchaser would buy several others. After some hesitation the offer was accepted, and the sale concluded.

On returning to his master's plantation Tom was uncaring in his attention to the old man. He brought him to his own cabin, made him sit at the table with himself, led him out to sit in the sun when it was cold, and placed him under the cocoa trees when it was too hot; in a word, he did all that a grateful son might be expected to do for the best of fathers.

The master was surprised at the extraordinary care which Tom took of one over whom he had authority, and he was curious to know the motive of it. "Is this old man your father?" he asked. "No, sir, he is not my father." "Is he an older brother?" "No, sir." "Perhaps he is your uncle or some other relative?" It does not seem possible that you should take such great care of one who is a stranger to you. "No, master, he is neither a relative nor a friend of mine."

"Tell me, then, why you are so kind to him." "He is my enemy," answered the slave. "He sold me to the white men on the coast of Africa. But I can not hate him, because the missionary Father told me to love my enemy; and that if he were hungry I should give him to eat, and if thirsty I should give him to drink."—Ave Maria.

Womanhood and Marriage.

The New York Sun is unquestionably the ablest and the most religious of American newspapers. Happily, it is also by far the most influential. It is rarely that we differ with the Sun on religious questions, its instincts are so true, and so exact is its knowledge of Christian teaching. As we quote from our luminous contemporary frequently and approvingly, we feel under some obligations to combat two opinions expressed in a recent article on clerical opposition to Woman's Suffrage. It is stated that "the Christian teachers of the fourth and fifth centuries, more especially, treated womanhood with actual contempt." The very opposite of this assertion is the truth. Womanhood was exalted for all time in the Virgin-Mother of Christ; and His earliest followers held all women in honor on her account, and because of the exceptional dignity God had conferred upon her sex. St. Ambrose's famous eulogy on St. Agnes, St. Augustine's references to St. Monica in his 'Confessions,' the sermons of St. John Chrysostom, and St. Jerome's letters to St. Paula and her daughter Eustochium, afford proof that womanhood was held in the highest esteem by the most eminent Christian teachers of the first five centuries.

The same article states that St. Paul exalted celibacy and "merely tolerated marriage." It is true that the Apostle of the Gentiles exalted celibacy, and it is surprising, by the way, that so many who claim to respect his teaching should deny it and scoff at those who practise it. But St. Paul did not merely tolerate marriage: in his view it was something so high and so holy that he likened it to the union of Christ with His Church. He calls it "a great Sacrament." The Sun, we know, has great respect for the Bible, and few papers make better use of the Holy Book. Might we refer our wise contemporary to the Epistle to the Ephesians, v., 22-33?—Ave Maria.

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