

What a source of joy to these illustrious confessors, to meet thus together at the approach of the last combat ! The mandarins expected to hear them give way to violent emotions of anguish, as they had no longer any other prospect than the horrors of a dungeon and an ignominious death ; but, on the contrary, they beheld them conversing together with an air of joy, and happiness beaming from their countenances, as if they were preparing for some great feast.— Ah ! if those idolators but knew the gifts of God, and the ineffable sweetness he diffuses over the hearts of those who love him, their surprise would cease, and with the royal Prophet they would exclaim, ‘ How good is the God of Israel to them that are of a right heart !’

“ However prejudiced against us were the ministers of a cruel tyrant, they more than once rendered justice to the virtue of those they had orders to sacrifice. In the month of June, three of the faithful were arrested as Christians. In their simplicity they persuaded themselves that their innocence ought to plead in their favour ; they represented to the mandarins, that having committed no crime, they ought not to be treated as criminals. ‘ What do you say ?’ replied the mandarin : ‘ if you were malefactors, I should not have arrested you ; the half of the village where I was born is Christian. When young I often visited their Priests, and took a cup of tea with them. All those gentlemen are certainly the most inoffensive men that can be found, and yet it is those men whom the king has ordered to be put to death !’

“ Nor are such avowals surprising, when it is recollected by what virtues our Christians drag them from their persecutors. A neophyte, compromis-

ed by the relations he kept up with the Missionaries, had succeeded escaping from the most active efforts that were made to arrest him. His wife, when brought before the mandarins, loudly declared that she was a christian, and would always continue one. Impri-sonment and the cage were the reward of this generous confession. However, so far from regretting the confession she had made, she rather rejoiced at it, having an opportunity to suffer for the sake of Christ, and in the place of her husband. But the latter, moved at such proof of attachment, renounced a liberty which was purchased by the sufferings of his wife, and presented himself before the mandarins courageously solicited to wear those chains with which she was loaded, on his account. The fidelity of this neophyte has been put to severe trials ; we have not been able to ascertain with certainty whether he obtained a final victory ; it is certain he was condemned to exile, but at what period, or in what place, we have not been able to ascertain.

“ The most tender age has also had its heroes. ‘ Mandarins,’ said a child ten years old, ‘ cut off my head with a sword that I may go to my country.’ ‘ Where is your country ?’ ‘ It is heaven.’ ‘ And where are your parents ?’ ‘ They are in heaven, and I wish to be with them ; kill me, and send me to them.’ The mandarins had pity on him on account of his youth, and refused him the favour he solicited with so much ardour.

“ It was after having had frequent occasions to witness this generosity, which the Gospel inspires, that the great mandarin observed, ‘ There is truly something extraordinary in this religion of Jesus ! All those who have once embraced it, either never abandon it,