

heart propagated throughout the church; and he vouchsafed to disclose to her his adorable heart; and after having spoken of its tender and infinite love for mankind, complained in the most pathetic terms of the ingratitude which it experienced in return; that he, therefore, wished a special feast should be appointed in honor of his sacred heart, and that public atonement should be offered to it, promising that he would dilate his heart and pour forth the gifts of divine love on all who should practice this devotion. It is certain, that sister Margaret Mary was a person of eminent virtue, and was particularly remarkable for her profound humility and obedience to superiors. The celebrated Jesuit Pere Columbiere, whom she declares to have been sent by God himself, to guide her in the way of salvation, had the highest opinion of her sanctity, and most warmly patronised the devotion. The good nun declared to her dying day, with the greatest confidence, that no matter what opposition it might encounter, the devotion would extend over the whole world. Some writers have erroneously imagined, that the devotion arose from these revelations, and seem to rest a portion of its defence on their authority. But those revelations have never been approved of by the church, have never been alluded to in the various decrees of the Holy See on this subject, and not one divine of any note has introduced them into his arguments in favour of the devotion. At the same time they are not to be treated with levity or ridicule; Margaret Mary, and those who patronized her, were persons of piety and learning. The facts were well known and examined at the time, and they have come down to us with the concurrent historical sanction of various writ-

ters. Their authenticity has been believed by a very respectable number of pious and intelligent Catholics, and though we are not bound to yield them our assent, they should certainly command the respect of every rational Christian. But, whatever may be the opinions of different persons concerning those revelations, the devotion to the Sacred Heart was practised before that time. The distinguished spiritualist, Pere Eudes, who was formed to piety amongst the priests of the oratory under the devout Cardinal Berulle, and who afterwards founded a congregation of secular priests, called after him, the Eudists, declares that the devotion existed in his time. It was warmly patronized by him; and as, besides his deserved reputation for sanctity and zeal, he possessed considerable talents as a preacher, the devotion to the Sacred Heart was extensively promoted through his means, and was regularly practised in all the chapels of his order. When once made known, it progressed in despite of all opposition. It received the approbation of bishops and theologians. Confraternities and associations, in honour of the Sacred Heart, soon began to be formed, and received various privileges and indulgences from the Holy See. Even cities, churches, and altars, were dedicated to this adorable heart. One of the most remarkable events of this nature was the consecration of the city of Marseilles to the Heart of Jesus, which was made by its good bishop, M. de Belsunge, during the great plague of 1720. This dreadful scourge was brought by a vessel that arrived from Tripoli, on the 25th of May, in that year. For some time the inhabitants were totally unconscious of the impending danger; but when it burst like a torrent on every