BY THE REV. FATHER O'HAIRE, AFRICAN MISSIONARY.

There is a strong disposition on the part of men to cat off revealed religion, and because the Catholic Church is the guardian of God's revealed Word, the the determination to crush her is but a natural result. However, "the truth of the Lord remains for ever," and, brethren, though heaven and earth should pass away, be convinced that one word or one tittle, one iota of a Divine promise, shall not fail. Now, Jesus, who is God, has pledged Himsall to protect His Church even to the end of time, and hence the grandest efforts of man mer'd Himsall hence the grandest efforts of the Catholic Church, but in their regard as in regard to all their unfortunate present he words of inspiration will be fully the problems of the catholic Church, but in their regard as in regard to all their unfortunate present he words of inspiration will be fully the problems of the grandest efforts of the Catholic Church, but the three grandest efforts of the Catholic Church, but the grandest efforts of the Catholic Church and the problems of the grandest efforts of the gran

deals which have consumed all institutions fashioned by the hand or wisdom of man?

All must acknowledge that while empires have fallen, and dynasties have disappeared, and thrones have crumbled to the dust, the Catholic Church has survived every change, outlived every revolution, and proved herself to be what her Lord made her, "the pillar and ground of truth." She is wonderful in her stability, imperishable amid the ruins everywhere strewn around her. We behold her to day attached as she has ever been, but full of health and buoyant with hope, opposing her non possumus to attached as she has ever been, but full of health and buoyant with hope, opposing her non passumus to threats and injustice. Here is a phenomenon: who will explain it? Here is an institution which alone has always triumphed—which has remained unshaken in the midst of universal changes. Should not man reverently bow before that venerable institution and recognise in her the Divine power committed to her keeping, and which, according to infallible truth, was to continue in her until the consummation of ages? When we look to the past and consider the times and peoples that have long since ceased to be, the difficulties and conflicts through which she had to pass, we must acknowledge there stands before us a conclusive evidence of her Divine origin.

When Christ sent forth his Apostle to teach all nations and establish everywhere His Church on the ruins of a wide-spread and universally cherished idolatry; when He bade them fear nothing, that He would be with them all days, even to the end of the world; who, I ask, reasoning on merely humam principles, would have believed that they could have succeeded in their seemingly impossible mission!

Who could have ever dreamed that not only would their labours be crowned with the most brilliant success, but their work would survive the resolutions

ciples, would have benever that they often have succeeded in their seemingly impossible mission?

Who could have ever dreamed that not only would their labours be crowned with the most brilliant success, but their work would survive the resolutions and changes of eighteen centuries? Who could have imagined that Peter and Paul, coming from a remote and despised province of a vast empire—the former a poor pilgrim and advanced in years, the latter a prisoner in chains, on his trial for alleged crimes against the State—were to become the second founders of the great city of the Caesars; that the Cross, the emblem of redemption, their only standard, would in three centuries surmount the loftiest pinnacles of that imperial queen of the world; and that the religion of which they were the heralds would be proclaimed and acknowledged in the most remote regions of the earth? On that natural principles will the infidel account for the petent, unquestionable fact? What! a few unlettered peasants, without any remarkable talents or eloquence, without worldly influence or patronage, teaching doctrines incomprehensible to human reason, most humiliating to human pride, and at open war with men's passions; preahing the Cross, an absurity to the polished Greek and a loathing to the haughty Roman; everywhere encountering the most deadly hatred, the most inveterate opposition, daily threatened with tortures and death, and yet, most wonderful to relate, triumphing over all opposition. The victories of the Church, and the awful conflicts and fiery trials of the first two hundred and fifty years of her existance, unquestionably prove that she is the work, not of man, but of God. The infant Church had to encounter the relentless and concentrated opposition of Pagan Rome, then the mistress of the world. Her martyrs were hundreds of thousands—the blood of her children was poured out as water. Ten Roman Emperors unsheathe the sword of persecution against her, and published edicts for the utter externination of the Churitian name. For two troved!" Worse than the murder of the body was
the foul slander with which the persecutors of the
Church endeavoured to blacken her fair name.
Catholies were represented as the secret enemies of
the Empire, as magicians, as cannibals feasting on
the flesh of an infant, as enemies of the human race.
Add to all this the immense influence of a powerful
Pagan priesthood, so deeply addicted to a long cherished idolatry. Yet all this is the faintest outline
of what the Church suffered during the first three
centuries. Terrible indeed was the ordeal she had
to pass through in her infancy, yet she was victorious, for the gates of hell could not prevail against
her.

her.

It is worthy your attention that, at the very time her trials appeared most appaling, her most glorious

victories were about being accomplished. While Dioclesian and his three colleagues, as Lactantius informs us, were raging like four wild beasts against the Catholic Faith; while ber churches, cities and villages, were reduced to a heap of ruins; while her sepulchral monument had been already prepared bearing the haughty inscription "The Christian name abolished;" then it was, when the fiendish laughter was raised, and the wild shout of triumph re-echoed from shore to shore, the power of the Most High smote her persecutors, and humbled them as it did Antioches of old. She came forth from the catacombs the desert, the caverns; she cast aside the weeds of mourning, put on garments of joy, pealed forth the note of victory, and was acknowledged as the spiritual queen of the world.

A period of three hundred years constituted her first campaign; and although her garments were dripping with the blood of her children, slain in battle, her face was radiant with joy, and her brow decked with laurels of victory.

The conversion of Constantine summoned Pope Sylvester from his hiding place, and proclaimed what religion demanded—freedom of action. The heavenly Cross which appeared to him at mid-day, as he was marching against the tyrant Maxentius, was taken as the auspicious omen of future victories. The motto, "In this sign shalt thou conquer," was adopted, and, with this watchword inscribed on her banners, the Church finally triumphed.

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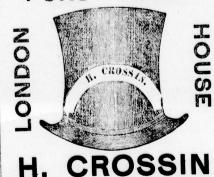
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