

She saw Jesus under the scourges ; she saw this dear fruit of her womb, expiring and pouring forth his last sigh ! Who would not share in her grief, that beheld this tender mother, enduring in herself all the torments of her Son ?

Alas ! alas ! what deep, what poignant grief,
Felt the fond mother of her only born,
In that sad hour, when sunk beyond relief,
She view'd the sufferings of her Son forlorn !
Her trembling frame, with fear and horror
shook,

At every wound she writh'd with deadly pain,
Her piteous eye expressed in every look,
Her woes too big for nature to sustain.

Ah ! say what mortal could unmoved behold,
Christ's sweetest mother thus with grief oppress'd ?

Who would not weep to see the tears that
roll'd,

Amid the storm that heav'd her sacred breast ?
Who could the burst of pious grief restrain,
To view her tender, sympathising eye,
Speak all the anguish of his bitter pain,
And hear her answer to each groan and sigh ?*

Now, Jesus had seen from the beginning his mother, who was so tender ; he had also seen the affliction of his disciple ; but before he thought of consoling his mother and disciple that were so dear to him, this Man-God had something else of a more urgent nature to perform ; he had then, (O merciful heart of Jesus !) to pray for his executioners ; he had to promise paradise to the sinner who had acknowledged him for his king on this throne of humiliation and suffering, and Jesus did so. Then he turned towards his mother, and looked upon her. When Jesus had seen his mother, (St. John,) their eyes met ; and who can tell all the grief and pain which those mutual looks inspired : the pains of the Son in the mother's heart, and those of the mother in the Son's ? It was at this moment that this divine Son pronounced that touching word, which Mary, as we have perceived, could not

but have felt to be addressed to her : Woman, behold thy Son. At the same time, his eyes sought St. John, for turning them towards him, and indicating Mary, he said : Behold thy mother.

Woman, behold thy Son. As Jesus here discharges a duty of filial piety, we must not imagine that the term of woman, and not mother, which he applies to Mary, is a new dart by which he seeks to wound and probe her maternal heart. Indeed, this appellation did not, amongst the ancients, and especially the Jews, denote that coldness and want of feeling, as it were, which it does amongst us. It was thus they addressed persons of the highest rank, without excepting even queens themselves, every time that they had reasons for not addressing them by any other denomination, or when this title was better suited to the subject which they wished to introduce. Now these two circumstances seem to have existed in this case. The Saviour had reason for not calling Mary his Mother : he would not have exposed her to the insults and annoyance of his executioners, and of all his enemies, and moreover, this very name would tend, perhaps, to augment, and not mitigate, her sorrow. But independently of this motive, the name of woman is more suited to that filial interest which Jesus felt in her regard. The weakness of a woman, and the consideration that is due to it, require that she should have support and protection. Although Mary was the valiant woman by excellence, Jesus had discharged this pious duty towards her. Jesus is about to die, and is naturally anxious to choose a person to succeed him, and his choice falls upon Saint John, whom he gives to his mother, as her support and consolation. Woman, behold thy Son—Virgin disciple, it is with great propriety a virgin mother is confided to thy care. Behold thy mother. Never-

*Stabat Mater.