

ble enough to apostatise, it is a proof that St. Basil, distinguishing the chaff from the corn, has thrown the former away; or again, that, knowing inwardly how very unworthy you were to remain among his children, you abandoned them through a double apostasy!

At these words he gnashed his teeth, and cried, Hold your tongue, you hellish fiend!

Cail me not a hellish fiend, but rather a fiend of truth.

Who makes you audacious enough to address me in such language?—God Himself.

Who told you that?—The Holy Ghost.

Do you know whom you are speaking to?—To an apostate.

Know you not that I was formerly your Bishop, your pastor, and that now I am more than Bishop, more than pastor?—True, indeed, you were our pastor; but now you are a wolf, devouring your own flock.

As he saw that all our sisters were fired with the same courage, he continued:—

Now, do stop and become again what I knew you ever to be, as good and kind as an angel, though now you appear to be like a devil.—As long as you were yourself an angel, I treated you like an angel; but since you have become a demon, I treated you as I ought to do a demon.

I pardon you in favour of the Emperor's benignity, who grants you three months for reflection. If you acknowledge truth, you may still enjoy your property and deserve the favour of his Majesty; but if you persist in your obstinate resistance, I foretell that you must expect the most shocking treatment.—Out of the most shocking treatment we will choose the very worst, in order to suffer the more; but we will never abandon our Catholic, apostolic, and Roman Faith.

When Siemaszko left us, we inquired whether the neighbouring convents had been exposed to the same trial. We learned that he had sent similar written invitations, even to Nuns belonging to the Latin rite.

The third day after the above scene had hardly begun, when Siemaszko, in company with Uszakkoff, the Civil Governor of Minsk, and an armed troop, forced open the doors of the convent, at five o'clock in the morning, and came in at the very moment when we were issuing forth from our cells to proceed to the choir. The soldiers immediately thrust themselves into the doors of our rooms to prevent our retreat. Upon seeing this danger all the sisters flocked around me (it was on Friday.)

Where are you going to? cried out Siemaszko, in an abrupt tone.—To the Meditation.

To the Meditation, to the Meditation, indeed, repeated he, with a sneer, and then added: By the order of his Majesty, I had granted you three

months, but I return on the third day, for the evil might increase. This is the last moment of freedom left you: you are still at liberty to choose between the riches you now possess, added to those you would obtain from our magnanimous Emperor, if you embrace the orthodox religion, or convicts' labour and Siberia, should you persist in your refusal.

Of these two things we choose the best, or convicts' labour with a hundred Siberias, rather than abandon Jesus Christ and his Vicar.

We shall see that in time, when I shall have whipped you out of the skin in which you were born, and a new one will have grown over your bones, you will then become more tractable.

All my sisters uttered a general cry of indignation, and I distinctly heard my sister Wawrzecka say: Flay us alive, cut our flesh to pieces, break our bones;—we shall ever remain faithful to Jesus Christ and his Vicar.

On hearing these words, Siemaszko ordered the soldiers to expel us from the house; he swore in a most horrid manner, and, infuriated against me, he exclaimed: O blood of a Polish hound! Blood of a Warsaw hound! I'll pull your tongue out of your throat!

When we were near the church-door, I threw myself at the feet, not indeed of Siemaszko, but of the Governor, asking him in a tone of ineffable grief for the permission to bid farewell to our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Sacrament. Siemaszko taunted me with some new insult, but the Governor granted my request. We all rushed into the church, sobbing, and bathed in tears; for a few minutes we remained prostrate before the Sacrament, and wrapped in prayer! O Lord! did we say, thy will is our will: accompany us, strengthen us, teach us the mysteries of thy Passion, that we may have both desire and courage to die for thee.

We were thirty-five nuns, and when the soldiers were ordered to expel us from the church, only thirty-four arose; the thirty-fifth had remained a corpse before the Blessed Sacrament; her very heart burst with grief and divine love. This good sister was named Rosalia Lanszecka, she had been a nun for thirty years, and was fifty-seven years old.

As soon as we came out of the church, I once more threw myself at the Governor's feet, begging him to let us carry away with us a crucifix, that the sight of our crucified Saviour might teach us to bear our own cross. Siemaszko contended for not giving the permission, and a silver crucifix, containing relics of St. Basil, was even taken from us through violence; however, the Governor allowed us to take a wooden crucifix which used to serve for our processions. I bore it all along the road, resting it on my left shoulder. What