

halfpenny) are pulled across to the island. "On landing, they immediately repair to the prior, humbly ask his blessing; thence to St. Patrick's altar, where, kneeling down, they say one Pater, one Ave, and one creed: rising up, they kiss the stone of the altar, and from thence go into the chapel, where they say three Paters, three Aves, and one creed. Then, beginning at a corner of the chapel, they walk round it and St. Patrick's altar seven times, saying a decal (that is, ten Ave Mary's and one Pater-oster) every round. In first and last circuit they kiss the cross that is before the chapel door, and touch it with their shoulders the last circuit, after which they go to the penitential beds, every one of which they surround thrice, outwardly saying three Paters, three Aves, and one creed. Then kneeling, they say three Paters, three Aves, and one creed, after which they enter the bed, and circling it thrice in the inside, they say three Paters, three Aves, and one creed. All this must be performed at each bed." I shall now give you a short extract from their own "Pilgrimage of Lough Dargh, approved and written by B. D." Page xii chap. 4. "Of the stations about the seven penitential beds. These seven beds are little cots that are dedicated to seven saints. The first to St. Brendan, the second to St. Catherine, the third to St. Bridget, the fourth to St. Columba, the fifth to St. Patrick, the sixth to St. Avit, the seventh to St. Blosses." Leaving the beds, they go to the water's edge. As soon as they arrive here, the above-mentioned book directs as follows:—(Page 14) "To avoid, therefore, the same doom with the wicked we go round the stones standing in the water three times to satisfy for the sins of our will, memory, and understanding, saying, in the meantime, five Paters, five Aves, and one creed, to redeem the punishment due to the sins of our five outward senses, then humbly kneeling on the sharp stones (! ! ! !) and fixing our confidence and hope in Jesus Christ, the corner stone, we say five other Paters, five Aves, and one creed, that we may extract remedies from his five sacred wounds against the transgressions of our five sacred senses, from whence we advance to a round stone at a distance out in the lough, on which we stand to signify that we beg one thing of God, to wit, life everlasting," Psal. xxiv. "From the water they return to the chapel, when they repeat the lady's psalters (which consists of fifty Aves and five Paters, or according to some, one hundred and fifty Aves and fifteen Paters)." "This psalter or rosary of the blessed virgin" they repeat in the chapel, "first thanking God, who is magnified and exceeding pleased with penance, by whose power and divine assistance we triumphed victoriously, having thrown the horse and the rider (the devil and sin ! ! !) into the sea." Exodus xv., ride "Pilgrimage," page 16. And thus they finish our station, which must be performed thrice a-day, about sun-rising, noon, and sun-setting—no other food, but, as we have said before, bread and water, with a little of the wine, being allowed them.

On the third day the prior put the pilgrims into the prison—a place into which the daylight is not permitted to enter, and which has been substituted for the cave, in which, from its closeness and want of sufficient air, many persons, from time to time, lost their senses, and some their lives, in consequence of which it was shut up in the year 1630, by an order of the Lord Justices. It was opened again in the reign of James II., and a new cave hollowed out of the rock. It remained so till about the year 1781, when it was closed by order of the prior, who considered it dangerous, on account of the number of persons who crowded into it at once, in order that, by the sufferings they endure in it, they might escape the torments to be inflicted on them in another world, from which circumstance it appears that they considered their escape as proportionate to the suffering endured in the cave. This chapel or prison house is called St. Patrick's. In this they remain twelve hours (formerly they had to remain twenty-four). During this time they are allowed no refreshment, and are prevented even from answering the necessities of nature; but, above all things, they are not allowed to sleep, the prior telling them that, if they do, the devil will certainly carry them away. In order that nature may not betray them into such pleasant company (for this is a place of penance, not pleasure), one of their number is selected, who, for the period allotted him, keeps them awake by administering to them a slight tap with a smart rod, which kind office they receive with grateful acknowledgements. After coming out of prison they repair to the water, and, plunging in, washing their heads and bodies, to signify that they are washed and cleansed from sin, and have broken the dragon's head in the waters; and that, even as the children of Israel left their enemies drowned in the Red Sea, so should they leave their spiritual enemies drowned in this Red Lough, by which we are buried with Christ unto death, that with him we might rise again to eternal glory, which I earnestly beseech our most merciful God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to both me and you. Amen." Vide "Pilgrimage," page, 19.

This ended the ceremony by which these souls say they are regenerated and made meet for heaven. The entire outlay, including the 6d. for the ferry, is only 1s. 4d., which pays all expenses, even for the wine. However, if you wish to be generous, you may. Before concluding, I should say that this station is rendered one of great celebrity by a sermon preached in favour of it by Pope Benedict XIV.

Now, my dear young friends, what are your reflections after reading this statement, I cannot tell; but I feel persuaded your first act ought to be one of thanksgiving to God that you possess so many privileges—have been reared in a christian land, where, unclouded by superstitious mystery, the truth of God is proclaimed in simplicity and honesty, and have had God-fearing parents to point you to the Lamb of God who alone can take away the sin of the world. Your second act ought to be one of prayer—that He would pour down such blessings upon the preach-

ing of the word as there would not be room to contain—that the Holy Spirit might exercise his powerful influence in calling from darkness to light the poor warm-hearted Irish peasantry. And that, where they are now the willing servants of sin, they might become vessels of honour, fitted for the Master's service. Now, if you perform these acts in the proper spirit, I am sure you will not forget the third, which is—to afford your pecuniary assistance to the great work that is going on. It is written—'delightful writing'—'Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' But it is also written, 'How shall they call on Him whom they have not believed?' and 'How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?' and 'How shall they have without a preacher?' and 'How shall they preach except they be sent?' Now some preachers have been 'sent' already, and have preached the word in localities where it had perhaps never before been heard, or where at least it certainly had not been heard for years; and the hearers have believed—have witnessed among their unbelieving friends a good confession, and in many instances, have been instrumental in the hand of the Lord of winning them over to the Lord's side. Now I entreat you as you have experienced the blessed effects of the Gospel on your own hearts and in your own country, send the Gospel to my countrymen—by the thankfulness you feel towards God for the privileges you enjoy—by the comfort you receive from his holy word—by your happy christian homes—by the lacerated knees and laggard faces of Irish pilgrims—by the wickedness which prevails—by the horrible scenes enacted—by the dismal hearths of the poor Irish; and, above all, by their ignorance of the word of God and of the means of salvation from eternal misery—I implore you to hear the cry that is now coming to you from Ireland, "Come over and help us."

DEATH OF FRANCESCO MADIAI IN PRISON IN FLORENCE.

The Church of Rome has had another victim. To the endless list of those whose lives she has exacted, there is now to be added one of the two Madiai, Francesco, who has just expired in the prison of Florence, from the combined effects of the closeness of his confinement in the dungeon to which he was consigned by popery, and the severity of the labour to which he was subjected. Nothing short of his death would satiate the vengeful spirit of the Romish church, nor is it likely, unless some strong political pressure from some of the European powers be applied to the Grand Duke, who is the veriest slave of the priests, that the surviving wife will ever cross the door of her dungeon a living woman.

Our readers are aware of the "crime" for which the Madiai were doomed, the wife to forty-six, and the husband to fifty-four months' imprisonment and hard labour. That crime was neither more nor less than the simple reading of the bible in the privacy of their humble abode. For that offence the husband has paid the penalty of his life. He paid it cheerfully. He never murmured nor repined at his cruel doom. That Divine Power which endowed him with strength to renounce the errors of Romanism, enabled him, with a calmness and resignation which have never been surpassed, to suffer and to die for his principles. The vengeance of his priestly persecutors followed him to his dungeon, and clamoured loudly until it got his life; but in the midst of all his sufferings, and in the hour of dissolution, he was happy—happier far than the ducal prince, or any of his ministers, at whose instance the sentence was passed.

It may not be known to all our readers that the Madiai were imprisoned in a loathsome dungeon ten months before the sentence was passed on them, and that all that time, as well as in the intervening months, they never were permitted to see each other. To show the spirit in which these poor pious people met the fate to which the relentless spirit of the Church of Rome subjected them, we reprint the following letter, written by Rosa Madiai to her husband, on the 7th of June, the day before the sentence of forty-six months' imprisonment, in a dark and dismal dungeon, with hard labour, was passed on her, and fifty-four months' imprisonment in a similar dungeon, with hard labour, on her husband:—

"My dear Madiai—You know that I have always loved you, but how much more ought I to love you now that we have been together in the battle of the Great King—that we have been beaten but not vanquished. I hope that, through the merits of Jesus Christ, God our father will have accepted our testimony, and will give us grace to drink, to the last drop, the portion of that bitter cup which is prepared for us, with returning of thanks. My good Madiai, life is only a day, and a day of grief. Yesterday we were young, to day we are old! Nevertheless, we can say, with old Simeon, 'Lord, now lettest thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'

"Courage, my dear, since we know by the Holy Spirit, that this Christ, loaded with opprobrium, trodden down and calumniated, is our saviour; and we, by His holy light and power, are called to defend the Holy Cross, and Christ who died for us, receiving His reproaches, that we may afterwards participate in His glory. Do not fear if the punishment be hard. God, who made the chains fall from Peter, and opened the doors of his prison, will never forget us. Keep in good spirits; let us trust entirely in God. Let me see you cheerful, as I trust, by the same grace, you will see me cheerful. I embrace you with my whole heart.

Your affectionate wife,

ROSA MADIAl."

To make any observations on such a letter would only weaken its force. Who can read it without emotion—more especially now that he to whom it is addressed is no more, while she by whom it was penned is still in chains in the loathsome dungeon from which it was written?