

people, and see my sorrow ; my virgins and my young men have gone into captivity ! " And this Mother, who saw her Eldest-Born dying of sorrow before her eyes, mourned all her other children buried in the more lamentable death of sin.

In the excess of her anguish, Mary sent forth to her Jesus a cry of agony : " Behold, O Lord, for I am distressed, my bowels are troubled. My heart is turned within me, for I am full of bitterness : abroad the sword (Thy Cross) destroyeth and at home, it is death alike " by the share that I take in the sufferings of Thy Heart.

Behold what Jesus saw, what He heard ! Behold into what an abyss of pain, agony, and darkness He was plunged by the anxious tenderness, the devoted affection, the compassion of His Heart for the best of Mothers ! O what an increase of suffering for this best of Sons ! Let it cease, O Son, Thou who dost remain even in the weakness of death, the All-Powerful ! Put an end to the sufferings of Thy Mother ! Or, at least, console her by a word, a look, a feeling of relief in the depths of her soul from Thy sovereign power, which holds souls in its hand and acts in them as it wills !

But no ! It had been decided in the council of inexorable justice that, in order to drain the chalice of filial suffering to the very dregs, Jesus should not say one word of comfort, should not cast on her one look of pity, one smile of encouragement. He will see her weighed down without the power of relieving her. He will be condemned to the punishment of being able to do nothing in time of affliction for the loved one. And if, at last, He looks upon her from the height of the Cross, if He speaks to her, it is to pierce her soul with a word sharper than the sword, the cruel nails, and the lance that tore Him from her maternal embrace. By robbing her of her own Son, they gave her John in His place, who, after all, was only a stranger, a sinner, — a man instead of a God ! Very far from lessening the pain of His Mother, who was watching Him die, that word of Jesus thrust the last sword into her heart and, according to St. Bernard, " made Mary a martyr and the Queen of Martyrs."

But to this sorrow of seeing His Mother without permitting himself to do anything for her relief, there is for the Heart of Jesus a pain still more harrowing, and that is, to know without doubt that He is the cause, the only cause of her suffering. It is most true to say that Mary suffered only on account of Jesus. The Passion of Jesus gave rise to all the compassion of Mary. The Passion was the cause, the instrument, and the measure of her compassion. It is not on record, indeed, that, during the Passion, Mary had to endure any insult or brutal treatment on the part of the judges, the executioners, or the crowd. Her grave and humble modesty, the extreme dejection of her sorrow enveloped her with