

ment.* The sentence of death has been passed on them, but its execution deferred only from fear of the retributive justice already too well impressed on the heart of the Cochin China King, which France is always ready to inflict in vindication of her sons. These five missionaries have written to us from their prisons, under date the 13th and 14th February last. The French corvette *L'Heroine*, which is just now here, has received orders to proceed immediately to the rescue of these poor captives—and I have been written to, to make preparations for their reception here on the return of the corvette.

"In the province of Setchuen, the propagation of our holy religion is proceeding on quietly; but, in the exercise of our ministry, we have been obliged to observe the most profound secrecy, solely with the view to avoid giving the least cause to the disaffected, and to those who aim at the persecution of the poor Christians; and yet, generally speaking, the people here are more liberal and conciliating than those in Cochin China and Tongkin. We go about unmolested wherever our duty calls us.

"For my part I have traversed extensive towns and villages, populated by the Chinese, but have never been taken for an European—although I have been looked upon, in some places, with much curiosity, caused by the novelty of my appearance—a tall man, much taller by far than the generality of the Chinese, with a beard eight inches long. I have visited many a province in the environs of Setchuen, and have even gone on board the vessels moored in the harbours, and well manned by the Chinese, but have invariably been successful in eluding their suspicion. The French missionaries always adopt the Chinese manner in regard to dress—and even the tail and tight boots or shoes are worn, which make them in appearance very much like the Chinese themselves. This, however, is found fault with by some of the ignorant Protestants, who, always too inert, save in their personal concerns, ridiculed the exertions by such means of the missionaries for the propagation of our holy faith.

"We have always lived in a state of uncertainty and danger, not so much from the people themselves as from the treachery of those who assume Christianity in order to betray; who, from some pique or petty revenge, have been often known to cast a snare around the poor Christians, and thus consign them to the cruelties of the oppressor. A fellow came, in

all humility, to ask alms of me, and immediately after was seen to go to the authority to indicate the dwelling of the European who had given him the charity he solicited! I once saved the sister (aged 18) of an ingrate vengabond, from a peril the most disastrous!—and three days after, this fellow, although he knew the timely assistance I had rendered to his family, betrayed me to the mandarin upon the promise of a small reward. But the result proved contrary to his anticipations. Instead of the reward, he was pretty well maltreated for his trouble. It was fortunate for me that he knew not my Chinese name, and his statement went no further than that I was the chief of the missionaries. The consequence was that the information he gave could not be substantiated, and he was forced to undergo the punishment he fully merited for his ingratitude and treachery.

"The life of a missionary is, at all times, one of hardship and danger, and yet it abounds with thousands of consolations which nerve him to the obedient and cheerful exercise of his powers and faculties in the great and holy cause entrusted to him. Judge of his hardships in a worldly point of view; thousands of miles separate him from his country, from his family, and from his friends; privations upon privations attend his every step; oppressions, persecutions, and imprisonment, are the rewards of his labour; and no one by to soothe him in his anguish—to administer to his wants: and yet from these does he derive the consolations to cheer him on to the end, until the curtain drops over the decapitated or strangled corpse of a Catholic missionary!

"Contrast the above with the life of a Protestant missionary; the comfort, the ease with which he has to labour in his ministry; his anxiety to secure a competence for himself, his wife, and children: and the want of that zeal in consequence 'which overcometh the world and its concupiscence.'

"In the one case all worldly prospects are closed, save in the blessed aim for the salvation of souls; in the other, riches, worldly honour, and personal comforts, are the sole actuating principles.—Oh! then, in what perfect keeping with their Protestant zeal is the ridicule, by such men, of our Catholic ministry!

"There are a great many Chinese at Singapore, who seem favourably inclined towards our holy religion. Twelve of them came to me the other day for instruction, and seven or eight are well prepared to be regenerated by the waters of baptism on next Easter. I have already the happiness to baptise nine Chinese on

* Since released by the interference of Captain Loreque, of the *Heroine*.