

THE VOICE OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

You were not redeemed with corruptible gold or silver, ... but with the Precious Blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and nudefiled

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THE PRECIOUS BLOOD IN THE LIGHT OF FAITH (Continued)

(3) *The scourging*: It was then a time of destruction and murder, of unbridled tyranny and unequalled barbarity. Men seemed to have for object to slaughter one another. There was no respect, no regard for human life; everywhere blood flowed in abundance under the slightest pretext or through a criminal caprice. An example of that cruelty had been given recently, when Herod, in the midst of a banquet, ordered the bloody head of Saint John the Baptist to be brought in a dish, thus complying with the request of a young princess who was most greedy for such a jewel.—We have another feature of the customs of the age in the scourging. That horrible torture, which was prevalent all over, every day caused a large number of unfortunate victims to expire under the lash.

Jesus did not hesitate to chose it; he accepted and supported all the rigours thereof. It was inflicted upon him by what was most brutal in the Roman legion so much accustomed to carnage, and hell itself came to add its instigations and all its furiousness. That gives the measure of the atrocities perpetrated by such executioners, impelled by such an influence. The Gospel presents to us Jesus with his body bruised and mangled all over under the scourge, for we read in St. Mark: "Pilate delivered up Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified." In fact, from the feet to the head, he was wholly imbrued with Blood, and no part of his body was left without wounds, thus verifying literally the prophecy of Isaias: "From the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no

soundness therein." There his Blood flowed again from all his members much more abundantly and with much more violence than in his agony.

(4) *The crowning with thorns* : The cruelty of the flagellation is also indicated by the outrages that followed ; the infernal wickedness therein displays itself in the most sacrilegious manner, defying, in broad daylight, both heaven and earth. St. Matthew describes thus the crowning with thorns : " Then the soldiers of the governor, taking " Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto him the whole " band and stripping him, they 'put a scarlet cloak about " him, and plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon " his head, and a reed in his right hand. And, bowing " the knee before him. they mocked him saying : Hail, " king of the Jews ! And spitting upon him, they took " the reed and struck his head. And after they had mock- " ed him, they took off the cloak from him, and put on " him his own garments, and led him away to crucify " him."

That series of outrages presents to our contemplation several bloody scenes ; the garments of Jesus who is all bruised are stripped from his body, and then put back with the same violence that characterized the rest ; twice his sores are revived and his Blood flows in abundance. The thorns penetrate into his forehead, his adorable head, and cause the Blood to gush out, both when the crown is set on, and when it is thrust in further with strokes of reed.

Here again the Redeeming Blood is shed with profusion to atone for our crimes.

(5) *The bearing of the cross* : While ascending Mount Calvary, Jesus continues to shed his Blood for our sake ; with It he sprinkles the dolorous road, he leaves the traces of It on the whole way, especially at the spots where he succumbed.

Those falls under a heavy burden reopened his wounds, increased them, added stil' more, and the Blood was pouring ; the cross itself accelerated the effusion whether by its overwhelming weight, by the exertion and extreme fatigue brought on by it, or by its brusing again the shoulders, the arms, whenever it came in contact with the wounds received in the scourging.

(6) *The crucifixion* : Jesus arrives on Mount Calvary,

his garments are stripped off ; his sores are reopened and the Blood flows. Jesus stretches himself upon the cross according to the wish of his executioners ; he is fastened to it, with hammer strokes enormous nails are driven in his hands, in his adorable feet ; the Blood gushes out and pours from each wound.

The cross is set up abruptly, shaken roughly ; the nails fastening the body of Jesus lacerate more and more his hands and feet, by enlarging unceasingly his sores during the three hours that lasted the crucifixion.

While that long martyrdom endures, the bloody immolation is continued, completed and terminated by the wounds inflicted either in the crucifixion or in the scourging ; the Blood flows first in abundance, is then shed drop by drop until It is completely exhausted, and until is consummated all that the redemption of mankind required to be operated by the entire effusion of the Saviour's Blood.

Jesus upon the cross, all covered with his own Blood, is the Lamb of God sacrificed in spirit from the creation of the world, immolated in the sight of heaven and earth, from thence given as a spectacle to future generations and ages, proposed since and for ever to their constant meditations ; Jesus and his Blood upon the cross become the ransom of all, the pacification of heaven and earth, the reconciliation of God with men, the Blood of the Covenant which is new, definitive, universal, eternal in all its effects and fruits.

(7) *The opening of the side* : The august Victim was not to retain any particle of Blood that should not be shed. "The soldiers came, says St. John, and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him. But after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water." John XIX, 33 and 34.

Whatever Blood remained in the heart flowed first, and the water that followed attests that, literally, not a drop of It remained to be shed.

The adorable body of Jesus, thus bedrenched with Blood, as it lay upon the cross, was taken down in that state, deposited in the arms of his mother, carefully shrou-

ded and embalmed, then placed in the sepulchre covered yet with that Redeeming Blood which his disciples had religiously adored without daring to touch It.

ANTHONY.

(To be continued.)

CHRISTMAS HYMN.

From the German.

Lovely Infant, dearest Saviour,
 Jesus, friend we love the best,
 See, we now invite Thee kindly,
 Come within our hearts to rest.

Linger not in thy rough stable,
 Stay not in the freezing cold,
 Our warm arms are widely opened
 Thee, sweet Infant, to enfold.

O! we know Thee, King of Heaven,
 Though we see Thee weak and small,
 And we say, with hearts confiding,
 Thou hast come to save us all.

We know that, on the day of judgment,
 Thou wilt come to judge the earth,
 Though we see Thee now an infant
 Poor and humble in Thy birth.

See, I come my heart to offer ;
 Make it now a crib for Thee.
 Come, oh Jesus, lovely Infant,
 Enter in and stay with me.

At the last and dreadful judgment,
 When Thou Judge of nations art,
 O remember that Thy childhood
 Found a cradle in my heart.

M. S. B.

LITTLE WOLFF'S WOODEN SHOES.

A Christmas Story for the children.

Once upon a time,—such a long time ago that everyone has forgotten the date,—in a village in the north of Europe—the name of which is so difficult to pronounce that nobody remembers it—there was a little boy, seven years of age, named Wolff.

He was an orphan, his father and mother both were dead, and he lived with an old aunt, a hard-natured, avaricious person, who never embraced her nephew, except on New Year's Day, and who sighed with regret each time that she gave him a bowl of soup.

But the good child was naturally so good hearted that he loved the old lady all the same, although he had a great fear of her and could not, without trembling, look at the big wart on the end of her nose, ornamented with four grey hairs.

Now, it was known to all the village that this old lady owned a fine house upon the street, and possessed an old woollen stocking full of gold. Therefore, she dared not send her nephew to the poor-school, but resorted to such meanness to obtain a reduction of the fees to the Country-School-Master, whose school little Wolff attended, that this unworthy pedagogue, ashamed of a pupil who paid so little and was so badly clothed, frequently punished the poor child, very unjustly made him wear the dunce's cap and placard upon his back, and even excited his school-fellows to torment him; for the other boys were all of them sons of well-off citizens, and took delight in making a laughing-stock of the poor little orphan. This poor unfortunate child was thoroughly unhappy and was wont to hide in the corners to weep over his lonely, sad lot. However the joyous Christmas time was near at hand.

On Christmas Eve, the Schoolmaster was to conduct all his pupils to Midnight Mass and then take them to their homes. Now, as the winter of that year was unusually severe, and, for several days previous to Christmas, a great quantity of snow had fallen, the scholars arrived well-wrapped up and muffled in fur-lined overcoats, their fur caps pulled down over their ears, warm gloves and

knitted mittens on their hands, thick-soled hob-nailed boots on their feet.

It was only poor Wolff who arrived, shivering in his thin garments, the same that he wore every day in the year, Sundays and Holidays included, with nothing on his feet but his little wooden shoes. The other boys laughed scornfully at the awkward appearance of the ill-clad boy and made themselves merry at his expense. But poor little Wolff was so occupied with breathing on his cold fingers, and suffered so much from his chilblains, that he did not pay attention to their jeers.

And so the urchins marched off two by two, with the Schoolmaster at the head, on their way to the Church . . .

On reaching the Church they found it beautifully illuminated with hundreds of lighted tapers, and delightfully warm. Cheered by the grateful warmth and light, and excited by the sound of the organ and the singing, for the musicians also had arrived early and were practicing the Christmas chants, the scholars profited by the noise to chatter together in a low voice. They boasted of the good things to eat awaiting them in their homes. The son of the Burgomaster had seen a big goose stuffed with truffles. In the Alderman's house a gorgeous Christmas-tree had been planted in a box, and from its branches hung funny punchinellos, candies, oranges, and all kinds of nuts and sweetmeats. The cook of the village Notary had pinned her two cap strings together on her back, a precaution that she adopted only on such days as she felt inspired and was certain of succeeding in turning out exquisite dishes.

And then they talked of what they hoped Santa Claus would bring them, of what he would put in their shoes, that they should take care to leave them near the chimney before going to bed, and the eyes of the young rogues sparkled with delightful anticipations of their joyful awakening on Christmas morning, whilst entrancing visions passed before their eyes of magnificent bags of red paper filled with burnt almonds and "bonsbons," gorgeous lead soldiers, ranged in batallions in their boxes, maneries smelling of varnished wood, gay little jumping Jacks dressed in purple, and glistening with tinsel.

Little Wolff knew, by experience, that his avaricious

old aunt would send him to bed without any supper, but as he had tried to be good and very industrious all the year, he hoped, in the depths of his innocent heart, that Santa Claus would not forget him, and, at the right moment, intended to place his little wooden shoes in the cinders of the hearth.

The Midnight Mass was ended and the faithful worshippers hastened homewards, impatient for their refreshments, and the little band of schoolboys again formed into ranks and left the church, headed by the master.

Now under the portico, seated on a stone bench surmounted by a pointed arch, was a beautiful child fast asleep. It was neatly dressed in a robe of white wool, yet, notwithstanding the cold, its little feet were bare. It was not a beggar's child, for its robe was clean and new, whilst on the floor near the child, tied up in a bundle, were a plane and square, and other carpenter's tools. Softly the light of the stars shone upon the child. Its lovely little face with closed eyes, assumed an expression of divine sweetness, whilst its long curls of golden-brown hair seemed to make a halo of glory around its head. But its little childish feet were blue with the cold of that bitter December night, and were piteous to behold.

The school-boys, so well-clothed and warm, passed by in utter indifference to the unknown child, some of them, the sons of the village notables, cast upon the infant supercilious look betraying all the insolence that many of the rich bestow on the poor.

Little Wolff was the last one to come out of the church. He stopped, deeply moved, before the sleeping child.

Alas ! said the poor orphan, this is frightful ! Here is a poor little darling without either shoes or stockings, on this cold night, and, what is worse he has not even a shoe to be filled, by Santa Claus, during his sleep. The orphan's generous heart was so grieved that he drew off the wooden shoe from his right foot, and placed it before the sleeping infant. Then, hopping off on one foot at first, and, after a while, putting his bare foot in the cold snow, all damp and hobbling, he returned to his aunt's house.

Now, when the old woman saw her nephew's bare

foot she cried out furiously: "Look at the good-for-nothing boy! What hast thou done with thy wooden shoe, little vagabond?" The poor boy knew not how to tell a falsehood, and tried to stammer out an account of his adventure, though trembling with fear when he saw the bristling gray hairs on the nose of the vixen. But the miserly old hag burst out laughing and said ironically: "Ah, my young gentleman goes barefoot for the sake of a beggar, does he? This is something quite new! and since it is thus that thou disposest of thy things, I will place thy one wooden shoe in the chimney, and when thy Santa Claus comes this night, he will leave wherewithal to flog thee in the morning when thou shalt awake. To-morrow, thou shalt pass the entire day on bread and water; and when the next vagabond comes along, we shall see if thou wilt give him thy shoes. Get thee to bed thou bad boy!"

Then did this wicked old woman box the poor child's ears soundly, and made him climb up to the old loft, where he had his miserable lodgings.

The desolate orphan sought his wretched bed in the darkness, and, after a while, fell asleep upon the hard pillow that was wet with his tears.

But the next morning, when the old woman, who had been wakened by the cold, and her catarrh, descended to the kitchen—O marvellous sight!—the great chimney corner was full of lovely playthings, sparkling in the bright light of Christmas morning. There were bags of delicious "bonbons," and more rich and tasteful articles than we could possibly enumerate. And there, before the gorgeous treasures, was the little wooden shoe that had been left at the feet of the sleeping infant, and close by was the other wooden shoe, just where the old woman had placed it, in hopes that Santa Claus would fill it with switches.

Attracted by the loud cries of his aunt, dear little Wolff hastened down to the kitchen, and danced in ecstasy on seeing what nice presents Santa Claus had brought him.

Suddenly there was a great sound of loud laughing outside. The old lady and the child went out quickly to see what it meant, and found all the village gossips gathered around the public fountain. What had happened? Why, a very

GLORY BE TO THE MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD !

curious and extraordinary thing. The sons of all the rich villagers, whose parents had wished to surprise them with the most beautiful presents had found nothing but rods in their shoes !

Now, when the old aunt and little Wolff remembered all the rich presents, in their chimney, they feared of what might happen. But soon the good village Pastor appeared on the scene. He related a wonderful circumstance. Just over the stone bench, near to the door of the church where, after Midnight Mass, the sleeping child had been seen clothed in a white robe, but with bare little feet, immediately above where his head had rested, the priest had beheld a golden circle incrusting in the wall. And then all the people piously make the sign of the cross, understanding that the beautiful sleeping Child, with the bundle of carpenter's tools, was the CHILD JESUS in person appearing, for an hour, just as He had appeared when He worked with His holy parents in the little House of Nazareth. And the good people bowed down in faith before this touching miracle by which God had seen fit to reward the charity of a child.

REFLECTIONS.

What does the short road still before us amount to ? Do you think that the days to come will have more reality than the past ? The years appear long when they are still distant ; when they have arrived, they disappear, they escape us in a moment ; and we shall scarcely have glanced around before finding ourselves, as by magic, at the fatal term which seemed so far off and as if it would never come.

MASSILLON.

My God ! who can understand the stupidity of the human mind ? . . . A trifle arrests me ; I take pleasure in squandering the time through which I can gain eternity.

MALEBRANCHE.

The liberty which death takes of turning the course

of fortune should console those who are not of the number of the successful..

Mme de SÉVIGNÉ.

It is horrible to feel that all we possess is continually slipping from us, and that we may become attached to it without wishing to enquire if there be not anything anywhere which is permanent.

PASCAL.

What I know, O my God, not doubtfully, but with certainty, is that I love Thee ! Thy word struck my heart and suddenly I loved Thee. Do not heaven, earth and all contained therein speak to me on all sides and cry to all unceasingly that we must love Thee ? But he alone, on whom it pleases Thee to take pity, hears this voice.

SAINT AUGUSTINE.

A HIGH MASS IN FAVOR OF OUR SUBSCRIBERS

On January 4th., at the Monastery of the Precious Blood, St. Hyacinthe, a High Mass will be sung for all the subscribers to "The Voice of the Precious Blood" who shall have kindly paid their subscriptions for the current year, before that date. The Religious will offer their Holy Communion for the special intentions of these generous subscribers, that they may obtain all the spiritual and temporal favors of which they stand in need for the year 1896.

Beforehand, we offer our thanks to these devoted friends of our Work : they are rendering us great service for which our prayers will be gratefully offered, and for which God will reward them.

OUR PRAYER AT THE OPENING OF THE YEAR,
FOR THE FRIENDS OF OUR INSTITUTE.

Before Thy throne prostrated, O God of love, we pray
Send down Thy choicest favors, this happy New Year's Day,
Upon our Benefactors, our Friends so kind and dear.
Oh ! may this be, sweet Jesus, for each a Happy Year !

If Thou dost see them weeping, we pray Thee dry their tears ;
If sorrow doth oppress them, dispel their griefs and fears ;
If gladness be their portion, then mingle with their joy
Celestial charms and pleasures, so free from all alloy.

But ah ! if they forget Thee, and wander far away
From Thy protecting kindness, O then, dear Lord, we pray
Pursue them with Thy mercy, and win them by Thy charms,
Forgive their sin and folly, recall them to Thine arms.

Remember all their kindness and help them in their needs ;
One hundred fold, sweet Jesus, reward their thoughtful deeds.
Through Thy dear Blood so Precious, all worthy of their zeal,
Oh ! may our Benefactors Thy kind protection feel.

S. M. A.

A FLOWER OF ROME.

“ Has thy heart felt a yearning for undying love ? ”

WHOSE who have read *Fabiola*, cannot have forgotten the holy joy which Saint Agnes experienced, when she heard, from her prison cell, the stamping of the soldiers' feet coming to conduct her to death.

“ Hush ! do you not hear ! said she transported with delight, to the trembling and weeping *Fabiola*. “ The witnesses of my marriage are approaching, they are about to present me to my spouse ! ”

Cardinal Wiseman's beautiful book has made us all familiar with the history of this sweet young girl, whose radiant image has charmed every century.

Among the heaven crowned brows there is not one more brilliant, not one more sweet, and of Christ's loved ones, none have touched the earth with a lighter or more rapid footstep. Her very name signifies purity. Like the ideal lover, she appeared only to love and then to die.

It was during the glorious and terrible epoch of the

great persecutions. Rome, mistress of the entire world, was trying to extinguish with blood the fire which Christ had brought on earth. But after three hundred years of fruitless efforts, the inextinguishable fire kept burning on.

When compared with this mysterious fire, every other died away ; it weakened every other love, and gave young girls the courage to despise the delights of this world, in order to fly to torments and to death.

Agnes belonged to a rich and noble family. Her enticing beauty won the favour of the Prefect's son, who offered her the most magnificent jewels, at the same time begging her to accept him for her spouse.

"Another possesses my heart and my faith," she answered, refusing the presents. "Do not flatter yourself with the hope that you will ever be His rival."

The young Roman, mystified, believed her to be in love with some other great lord; and such a dark and violent jealousy took possession of him that he fell sick.

The Prefect, touched by his son's great grief, went himself to Agnes and begged of her to change her mind.

"I am the Prefect of Rome," said he; "before me, every one must bend. Therefore no matter how illustrious the origin of your betrothed may be, he should resign in favour of my son."

The father met the same refusal as his son, and witnessed the same ecstasies. Greatly surprised, he expressed a wish to know the name of one who inspired such an extraordinary love.

"My Lord," said one of those who accompanied him, "be certain that this young girl is a Christian: the Crucified One has bewitched her...."

The Prefect left her, glad to have a means of revenge in his power, and the next day he summoned Agnes before him.

"Young girl," said he, "the Christians, by their witchcraft, have troubled your young mind. They have misled your heart. I wish to tear you away from this miserable superstition, unworthy of your birth."

"I will have you conducted to our great goddess, and if you persist in preserving your virginity, you may offer her sacrifices and take care of the sacred fire which

burns in her honour, with the vestal virgins, the glory of the city of Rome !”

“ Prefect,”—nobly answered the young Roman maiden, “ if I refused your son, a living man capable of thinking, feeling, walking, speaking and enjoying like myself the light of the sun,—if for the love of Christ, I would not even look at him, it was not in order to bow my head, afterwards, before soulless and lifeless idols, before cold and impassive stones.”

The Prefect could not understand how one could prefer the promises of faith to the most seductive realities, and as he felt that life was nothing for Agnes, he did not even threaten her with death ; but to this noble child, radiant with beauty and innocence, he was cowardly enough to say :

“ If you do not sacrifice to our gods I will have you taken to places of infamy, and there, to the dishonour of your ancestors and to your own, you will be abandoned to every outrage. Have pity, then, on yourself, sacrifice to Vesta, or”

“ Do not excite yourself unnecessarily,” O Prefect, Agnes quietly answered. “ I will not sacrifice to your gods, I am in your hands, but I trust in Christ to whom I am consecrated. You know not His power, but He will know how to defend me, and I shall not be defiled !”

The Prefect's only answer was to order her to be stripped.

Executors of this order were found ! But—wonderful to relate—no sooner had their sinful hands torn off the young girl's clothing, than her hair, in thick, magnificent ringlets, spread itself around her, and, better than any garment, hid her beautiful form from view.

Conducted to a house of illrepute, she found an angel waiting there to protect her, and when she entered the room prepared as a tomb for her innocence, the saintly child vanished in a dazzling light. A white garment was brought her from heaven, and, peacefully, as if she were in a sacred temple, she knelt in prayer.

The Prefect's son, for daring to approach her, was struck stone dead, by the angel ; but touched by his father's great grief, the saint restored him to life.—Then, the young man went forth from the house and proclaimed,

through the streets of Rome, that there is no other God of heaven or of earth but the God of the Christians.

On witnessing so many marvels, the Prefect would gladly have saved the holy maiden's life, but as the people, urged on by the priests of the idols, loudly demanded her death, he dared not face the universal rage, and basely retired, leaving the case in the hands of his officer, who condemned the heroic child to be burned alive.

And thereupon, an immense fire was lighted into which Agnes was thrown. But the flames, seperating, rose up like a veil around the sacred virgin, leaving her in the center without touching her, while they turned with fury on the idolators, many of whom were reduced to ashes.

In the meantime, Agnes, her arms extended, her eyes raised towards heaven, prayed in a loud voice, saying :

“ O my Father, Allpowerful, Adorable, Omnipotent God, I invoke Thee. Through the merits of Thy divine Son, I have escaped the fury of a sacrilegious tyrant, and behold now Thou dost temper the fierce heat of this fire and dost render its flames mild, its heat soothing. Permit then, that, on the wings of this same fire, my soul may soar away to Thee.”

Her face then brightened, her arms fell, and she was rapt in extasy. For her heavenly Spouse, He who had already ravished her heart, had now appeared to her, for the last time on earth. He was beautiful with that beauty which transfixes the heavens in mute admiration ; and with divine rapture she cried ; “ What I believed, I now see ; what I hoped for, I now possess ; what I loved, I now embrace : may my heart and my tongue, praise and glorify Thee, O my God ! ”

And, like a heavenly dew, her prayer quenched the fire, leaving not even a trace or a spark to be seen.

Many of the spectators were moved with deep emotion. The judge, astounded, ordered one of the executioners to plunge his sword into her throat ; but, sword in hand, the executioner trembled and dared not strike ! Agnes, seeing his hesitation, smiling sweetly seemed to say : “ Do not be afraid. . . Strike ! . . I will not turn away from you, you are a pleasing lover to me, because you are about to des-

trophy this body which is still capable of being loved by creatures whose admiration I despise. . . .”

Her horror of being admired clung to her even after death, for when she fell, stricken down by the sword, Saint Ambrose says, that her hand still veiled her face.

If among us there are still funerals which breathe life, what an immortal life, those who assisted at the funerals of the martyrs must have inhaled !

The burial of Agnes was a feast for all the faithful of Rome.

The sweet child martyr's parents, who were Christians, gave thanks to God, but a natural sentiment prevented them from abandoning their child's grave.

Eight days after her death, she appeared to them, while they were praying, with a lamb whiter than snow, at her side.

“ My dear parents,” said she, “ weep no more for me, as dead, but rejoice, for I inhabit the mansions of light, and in heaven I possess the Spouse I loved with all the ardour of my soul whilst I was on earth.”

The Church commemorates this apparition by a special feast.

The greatest doctors of the Church have proclaimed the glories of Saint Agnes with fervor. She is one of the martyrs whom the Church brings constantly to our minds during the holy sacrifice, one of the brilliant figures she always invokes upon her sacred altars.

“ Cast your eyes on us, O Agnes, and help us, for the love of Christ is languishing in our hearts. Enervated as we are by a constant seeking of our ease, by a foolish waste of what we call sentiment, we have no courage left in face of our duty. Is it not true to say that holiness is not understood ; it astonishes, it scandalizes, it is judged imprudent or extravagant. Nevertheless, O Virgin of Christ, you are there before us with your self renouncement, your heavenly ardors, your thirst for sufferings, which lead to Jesus. Pray for us, his most unworthy servants, and obtain for us a generous, fervent love, a love ever jealous of God's glory. Purify the lukewarm self complacent piety which has usurped the place of the fervor of ancient days.”

LAURE CONAN.

PURGATORY.

(Conclusion.)

If it is impossible to depict the pains endured by the Holy Souls, it is likewise beyond our power to describe their joys. These joys are immense, deep and inexhaustible. They spring from sources which are unceasingly renewed. The first is the joy, the inebriation, resulting from the certainty of salvation. They no longer have merely hope as formerly ; they have certainty. "I am saved ! I am saved ! Nothing can ever separate me from my God. What matter about time then, should I have to wait even for centuries ? What matter about pain, should it come even in oceans ? I shall see my God and enjoy Him throughout eternity !" On earth, how greatly they feared to lose Him ; how much they desired, how much they prayed ! Now, all is ended. They are sure of possessing Him.

As their suffering is extreme, they are at times ready to succumb. "How long ! O pitiless separation !" They remain as it were annihilated. But, suddenly, from their overloaded hearts bursts forth the cry, the paean : "I am saved ! I shall see my God in the land of the living !" This is the first source of their happiness.

May I venture to assert that the second springs from their very suffering ? They comprehend it. They understand its operations. They see clearly that by means of this pain all impediment to their union with God will be destroyed. Far then from repelling, they pine for it. They will never find it acute enough. They plunge into it as into a regenerating bath ; and why not, since, even on this miserable earth, similar things are found. Some souls exult amid their sufferings. Others cry : "to suffer or to die !" others again : "to suffer always, not to die !" A carmelite being asked whether, in the fearful crisis of her malady, her pain was not very great, replied : "Yes ; but unhappily it does not last."

If poor mortals still in the path of probation, linked to a perishable body, whose intellect is plunged in darkness, feel such joy amid the purifying sufferings sent them by God, what shall we say of the enlightened, loving,

pure, grace-consummated souls in Purgatory ? " These souls " in the words of Saint Catherine of Genoa, " submit to their pain so joyfully that they would not, on any account, have it lessened in the slightest degree. They realize perfectly that it is wisely ordained by God, so that far from lamenting, they accept it as joyfully as if they were already in Heaven. The fire of love is in them so active and vehement that they would willingly precipitate themselves into purgatorial fires far more terrible than those they now endure, if they could thereby sooner remove the obstacles hindering their flight towards God and their union with Him."

However, neither the joy resulting from the assurance of salvation, nor the happiness of seeing the diminution, through suffering, of the obstacles to union with God, can compare with the ineffable peace born in them through submission to God's will. They are where God wills them to be. They would not make a motion to enter Heaven before the awaited signal. Their absolute sanctity would no more admit of a desire than a regret. Where they are, they are contented, since God placed them there; they will remain contented as long as God leaves them there. There is more joy in Heaven, but not more peace.

What characterises Purgatory therefore is a singular combination of suffering and joy, sorrow and felicity. This joy does not exclude suffering; this sorrow does not diminish felicity. These two, united in an ineffable manner in the same soul, constitute a condition without analogy either in Heaven or on earth. But the end of these two states of joy and suffering is totally different; the former increasing steadily while the latter diminishes unceasingly.

" A crystal covered with a thick veil " says Saint Catherine of Genoa, " although exposed to the sun, cannot receive its rays, not by reason of any fault in the sun, for it does not fail to shine, but on account of the veil which intercepts the light. But, let the covering be gradually removed and these parts successively uncovered will receive more and more light, until the entire obstacle having been removed, the crystal will be completely penetrated. So with the souls in Purgatory. Suffering gradually consumes the rust. To complete the destruction of this obstacle, to melt this ice, add the unceasing pray-

ers of Mother Church, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the Blood of Jesus Christ poured on them by pious hands, and you will, so to speak, see the obstacle decreasing, the ice melting, and, consequently, the pain, now less and less useful, diminishing. "According as the fire consumes the rust" continues the Saint, "these souls reflect more clearly the rays of their Living Sun. Their joy augments proportionately with the disappearance of the rust and their own increased reflection of the divine light. Thus joy ever augments, while pain diminishes, until the time of expiation is over." The moment arrives when the soul, wholly purified, no longer suffers. Even should she remain eternally in the flames, they would be powerless to make her suffer. "When, from one degree to another, God has thus led the soul on to this perfect purity, she becomes henceforth impassible, because there is now no matter in her on which the fire can act; and suppose that in this condition of perfect purity she should be still detained in these flames, far from being painful, they would rather be to her the burning of divine love, without a shadow of suffering." But it is impossible for her to be left in it. God, seeing her in this state of sanctity, becomes jealous of possessing her. "He darts on her burning rays of love and draws her to Himself with force capable of annihilating her notwithstanding her immortality."

How does the departure take place? In Purgatory are souls seen ripening for Heaven as on earth we see flowers preparing to bloom? Does the golden aurora of the endless day about to break dawn on these souls gilding them with its radiance? Can their companions in exile foresee the day of their departure? What farewells then! What promises of eternal remembrance! What ineffable certainty of a speedy reunion! But these are matters which God has left unrevealed, but which, if we are worthy, we shall one day know.

MGR. BOUGAUD.

THE MOTHER IN PARADISE.

THE mother came to the gateway of Heaven. She was aged and weary. Her body was bowed and her face was wrinkled and withered, for her burden had been the burden of care and trouble and sorrow. So she was glad to be done with life, and to seek at the gateway of Heaven the fulfilment of the promise that had been her solace through all the hard, bitter years.

An angel met the mother at the gateway, and put her arms about the drooping figure and spoke gracious, tender words.

“Whom seekest thou?” asked the angel.

“I seek my dear ones who came hither before me,” answered the mother. “They are very many—my father, my mother, my husband, my children—they are all here together, and, for many and weary years, I have lived in my loneliness with no other thing to cheer me but the thought that I should follow them in good time.”

“Yes, they are here, and they await thee,” said the angel. “Lean upon me, dear mother, and I will lead you to them.”

Then the angel led the way through the garden of Paradise, and the angel and the mother talked as they walked together.

As they journeyed on their way a company came to meet them. Then the mother saw and knew her dear ones—even though the Heavenly life had glorified their countenances, the mother knew them, and she ran to greet them, and there was great joy to her and to them. Meanwhile, the angel kept steadfastly at her side.

Now the mother, when she had embraced her dear ones, looked at each of them separately once more, and then she said :

“Ye are indeed my beloved—my mother, my father, my husband, and my children ! But there is one who should be of your company whom I do not see—my babe, my little helpless babe that came hither so many, many years ago. My heart fainteth, my breast yearneth for that dear little lamb of mine ! Come, let us go together and search for her, or await me here under these pleasant

trees while I search and call in this fair garden for my dear lost little babe !”

The others answered never a word. But the angel answered :

“ I will go with thee, mother, and together we shall find thy child.”

As they went on their way, the angel said :

“ Shall I tell thee of myself? For I was a little helpless babe when I came hither to this fair garden and into this heavenly life.”

“ Perchance thou knowest her, my precious lamb-kin !” cried the mother.

“ Thy child shall be restored to thee,” said the angel, “ for she yearneth for thee, even as thou yearneth for her, only with this difference, dear mother : Thy child hath known, in the grace of Heavenly wisdom, that, one day, thy earthly sorrow should surely be rewarded with the joys of the endless reunion in Paradise.”

“ Then she hath thought of me and longed for me to come !” cried the mother. “ And my lost babe shall be restored and shall know her mother again.”

“ Ay, she loveth thee fondly.” said the angel, “ and she hath awaited thy coming, lo ! these many years. Presently thine eyes shall be opened, and thou shalt see her standing before thee in her heavenly raiment, whiter than snow, and about her neck thou shalt see her wearing most precious pearls—the tears which thou hast shed, oh, lonely mother ! and which are the pearls the little ones in Heaven gather up and cherish as an adornment most pleasing unto God and them.”

Then the mother felt that her eyes were opened, and she turned and looked upon the angel. And the mother saw that that angel was her lost beloved child whom she was seeking ; not the helpless babe that she had thought to find, but a maiden of such heavenly beauty and gentleness as only the dwellers in Paradise behold and know. And the mother spread her arms, and gave a great cry of joy. She folded her very dear one to her bosom and her happiness was eternal.

REPARATION.

By G. M. Ward (*Mrs. Pennée.*)

In these days the idea or spirit of reparation seems to pervade all those special devotions which have been newly introduced among Catholics, or, still better, which have been resuscitated and newly clothed, so to speak, so as to adapt them to the want of the present time.

This idea or spirit is a natural outcome of the present state of religious belief and practice in all parts of the world. In every country our Faith is being attacked by both open and hidden adversaries, whilst devout practices are being more and more neglected by too many professing Catholics. The spirit of the age is insensibly but necessarily affecting our asceticism. Under one name or another errors are being plausibly advocated, not only by Freethinkers and those openly opposed to religion and morality, but far more fatally by those who would, at first sight, seem to be actuated by the love of all that is holy and elevating. The age seems to be one of reasoning and discussion, devotion being looked on as a vocation.

Humble, undoubting faith, is becoming more and more rare and the consequence of this is that prayer and adoration are far too sparingly offered up to the Supreme Being, our Father in Heaven. Earnestness forms but a small part of our present system, and hence loving veneration is in great danger of growing weaker and weaker.

Our Mother the Church, has even come bountifully to the aid of those among her children who remain faithful and loving, and has even approved of all those devotional developments which have had their origin in the natural impulse of the loyal human heart to redouble its manifestations of love towards the object of that love, in order to make up for the lack of such manifestations in others. A similar impulse is laudable even in the natural order of things, as, for instance, when a child redoubles its caresses in order to soothe some sorrow from which its mother is suffering, or when a mother surrounds her afflicted or infirm child with even more tender affection than mothers are wont to bestow, lavish though that be.

In the supernatural order this loving impulse is lau-

dable in a still higher degree, specially when it expands into a sublime necessity of offering loving reparation to God, His Son, His blessed Mother, and thus making amends for the neglect and insults that are heaped on them by public prints, by individuals, by whole communities and, alas ! by entire nations.

Orders, Institutions and Confraternities that further practices of Reparation have now become an absolute necessity to fervent Catholics and, praise be to God ! opportunities are not wanting to enable all of us to give due expression to the loving sympathy and adoration with which our hearts are, or ought to be, filled.

It is well known that towards the end of the 17th century, the acceptability of a special devotion to the Sacred Heart was revealed to Blessed Mother Margaret Alacoque, a Visitation nun, and this devotion is specially one of reparation.

The communion of Reparation (a branch of the Apostolate of Prayer,) the work of Nocturnal Adoration, the work of Reparatory Adoration (by means of a weekly half-hour spent before the Blessed Sacrament in a spirit of Adoration and Expiation,) the Work of Universal Expiation, the Mass of Reparation (established by Sister Rose, a Norbertine nun,) the work of Perpetual Intercession for the Church and Sovereign Pontiff, the Devotion to the Holy Face, all these are outcomes of that same spirit of Expiation and Reparation which, as I have said, has become a part of every true hearted Catholic.

But of all devotions that have Reparation and Expiation for their chief end, non can claim to be so ancient and so effectual as that of Devotion to the Precious Blood. There is no offense against God so heinous but that it may be washed clean by the application of the Blood. There can be no offering so acceptable to God as that of His dearly beloved Son's Blood.

The spirit of evil is perpetually inspiring fresh ways of offending and blaspheming God ; the seven Blood sheddings are perpetually being applied by the Adorers of the Precious Blood to repair the insults and injuries offered to Him.

From the beginning blood was offered as a homage to God, and the blood of the victims shed on the altars of

old was accepted. But now it is no longer the blood of animals, it is the Precious Blood of our Redeemer Himself that we are permitted to offer to appease God's wrath, and this Blood we may offer unsparingly, for is it not an inexhaustible stream that will never cease flowing till sin and iniquity shall come to an end, and the triumph of good over evil shall be assured?

The practice of devotion to the Precious Blood is most easy and its advantages have been nobly set forth by the phalanx of holy priests and nuns who are giving their lives for its propagation.

Let any one look round on the state of the Catholic world in the present day, and he cannot fail to be convinced of how appropriate is the old, old devotion to the days in which we are living. As we have said, Reparation is now a necessity, and how better repair than by cleansing the gaping wounds of society by pouring into them the healing streams of life?

Whether in the application of the seven Effusions, or whether in the frequent reception of the Body and Blood, or whether in the frequent Adoration of the Sacred Host in which the Blood is still circulating, though hidden to our view, we have in this devotion, an inexhaustible mine of wealth which we may use without stint in behalf of the poor world which knows not how to lift its eyes any higher than its own head and which, without that Blood, would soon drift to utter destruction.

Let us hasten, then, to the fountain-head of all satisfaction for sin, and, in *Expiation* and *Reparation*, let us draw largely and pour forth plentifully the Precious Blood flowing for ever from the Wounds of our outraged Saviour.

CEREMONY OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION
AT THE "PRÉCIEUX SANG,"
ST. HYACINTHE.

ON November 24th., in the Chapel of the Precious Blood, his Lordship, Bishop Moreau, gave the holy habit to Miss MARIE-ANNE HAMELIN, in religion, Sister IMELDA OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT. During the same Mass, four Novices pronounced their vows... Madame MARIE-SALOMÉE D'ODET D'ORSONNENS, in religion Sister ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS, Miss ELIZA LABRANCHE, in religion Sister TERESA OF MARY, Miss ALBINA VÉZINA, in religion Sister AIMÉE OF THE SACRED HEART, Miss AMANDA JOLICŒUR, in religion Sister ST. CLARE.

It is related that Racine could never assist at a religious profession without shedding abundant tears. Such noble and profuse tears from the eyes of a great poet, were indeed a rare tribute. But it is difficult not to feel some emotion, no matter what is our belief, when present at these Divine Espousals.

Those who had the happiness to be present in the Chapel, on Nov. 24th, were so profoundly attentive, and so touched by the impressive ceremonies of profession and of giving the holy habit, that we believe it will be agreeable to our readers, if we publish the ceremonial of the Vesture and Profession.

In the Monastery of the Adorers of the Precious Blood, the Postulant does not put on worldly attire previous to assuming the religious habit, but, clothed in her black robe, girded with a red cord, with fluted cap, and simple black veil on her head, she enters the Sanctuary and kneels at the foot of the Altar before the Bishop. After having questioned the Postulant concerning her desires for religious life, the Bishop intones the *Veni Creator*, then he blesses the Habits.

On giving the Red Scapular to the kneeling Postulant the Bishop says: Receive this Scapular, which should always remind you of the Blood of Jesus, which you profess to honor by a special worship. Regard yourself as impregnated with this Divine Blood, and, meditating often

upon the charity of Jesus in shedding It for you, give your self wholly to the fire of His love.

On giving the white Mantle : Daughter of Mary Immaculate, you should imitate your Mother in her purity. The virgins who follow the Lamb without spot, should be clothed in white. Receive, my daughter, this White Mantle as a mark of the purity of heart you should preserve without stain, so that when you shall be called to the Wedding-Feast of the Lamb, you may be found wearing the nuptial robe, and be worthy to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

On giving the lighted taper : Receive, my daughter, the light of Christ, as a sign of your immortality, so that, dead to the world, you may live unto God. Rise, from among the dead, that Christ may illumine you.

On giving the Name : "He that shall overcome," saith Our Lord, shall receive from Me "a new name." Behold the new name He giveth you, to encourage you to be victorious over yourself, over the world, the flesh and the devil. And thus, in place of being called Miss N you are named Sister N N

The Profession. After the *Credo*, the Bishop, seated before the Altar, turns towards the grating of the Nun's choir and says, *Veni sponsa Christi!* The Novice responds : *Et nunc sequor in toto corde!* and, entering the Sanctuary, she kneels at the feet of the Bishop.

The Bishop : My daughter, what do you ask?

The Novice : My Lord, I ask to be admitted to the Religious Profession, in this Monastery of the Adorers of the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus-Christ.

The Bishop : Have you reflected seriously upon what you are asking, and have you sufficiently proved yourself, to know if you are called to so holy a state? You have taken upon yourself all kinds of privations, and unceasing immolations. It is question of making a choice that will affect all your life-time, and upon which your Eternity depends You are still free Think, before you engage yourself inviolably whether you have the courage to persevere, even unto death, in the life you would embrace.

The Novice : Yes, my Lord, in pronouncing my Religious Vows, I desire to consecrate my entire life to the worship of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus-Christ, and

of Mary Immaculate I desire to become a victim, to manifest my love for my Saviour, and to obtain the conversion of souls. I desire to ascend to Calvary, to unite my sufferings with those of my divine Redeemer, and to embrace all the sacrifices imposed by the state of perfection to which I aspire. Knowing my unworthiness and my natural inconstancy, I depend not upon myself, but entirely upon Him for whom I have left all. I hope that He will give me the grace to persevere in the holy state to which I believe He has called me.

The Bishop : Since you continue firm in your holy desire, I permit you, my daughter, to pronounce your Religious Vows.

The Blessed Sacrament is then exposed, and the Novice, upon her knees, with clear distinct voice, pronounces those Vows that bind her forever to her Lord, the Vows of *Poverty, Chastity, and of Obedience.*

The Blessed Sacrament being replaced within the Tabernacle, the Bishop blesses the Black Veil, the Silver Cross, and the Ring.

On giving the Veil, he says : Receive, my daughter, this sacred Veil, which expresses your hatred of the world, and your desire of being wholly and entirely united to Jesus-Christ, your Saviour.

The Professed : He puts it as a sign on my forehead that I can admit, henceforth, no other love than His.

The Bishop gives the Cross : Receive, my daughter, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and wear it upon your breast as a shield, destined to preserve you from the deceits of the enemy of your soul. The holy relics enclosed therein will encourage you in the struggle, by recalling to your mind the combats of the Saints and their triumphs.

The Professed : The Cross will be my strength and my consolation, for, by it, I will be united to my Beloved.

The Bishop places the Ring upon the annular finger of the right hand, and says :

My daughter, receive this ring as a sign of your mystic alliance with the celestial Spouse of Virgins. Wear it always upon your finger, as a pledge of the love that should unite you to Jesus, in Religion, to be fully consummated in Heaven. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

The Professed : I am the spouse of Him whom the angels adore, and whose beauty the heavens admire ; as a pledge of faith, He has given me His ring.

The Bishop places a *Wreath of Flowers* upon the head of the newly Professed, and says : And thus, as you are crowned on earth by Our hands, may you merit to be crowned with glory in Heaven, by the hands of Christ, your Spouse.

The Novices sing : *Absit mihi*, etc : God forbid that I should glory, but in the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ : by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.

The Bishop, standing up, blesses the Religious, and invites her to thank God for His mercies.

The Mass is continued.

After the Mass is finished, the Bishop intones the *Te Deum*. At the same time the newly Professed and her companions pass through the choir, where the Nuns are standing in their stalls, and all receive *the kiss of peace*, during which the singers chant the *Ecce quam bonum*, etc.

DEDICATION OF THE CHAPEL OF THE SISTERS OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

On the 15th of last November, the new chapel of the Precious Blood, situated on Putnam avenue, Brooklyn N. Y., was dedicated by Bishop McDonnell.

Immediately after the dedication, the Bishop proceeded to the consecration of three beautiful marble altars. The main one is of pure white American marble, the generous gift of Mrs. Collin of New York and a friend. The side altars of the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph, which are of Italian marble and Mexican onyx, are due to the generosity of Mrs Elizabeth Loynax of Flushing and Miss Annie Leary of New York.

The ceremony of consecration was followed by pontifical high Mass, celebrated by Bishop of Newark.

Father Alex P. Doyle of the Paulists delivered an eloquent and appropriate sermon, choosing for text " He hath made a remembrance of his wonderful works."

The Chapel, which speaks so highly of the charitable

generosity of which the Sisters of the Precious Blood have been the object since their arrival in Brooklyn, is Romanesque in design. It is 80 feet deep by 33 feet wide. About two-thirds of it is set apart for the public, the rest being occupied by the Religious of the Order, who are now twenty three in number.

The Chapel possesses some beautiful stained windows representing the "Nativity," "Agony of Jesus in the garden," Scourging, "Ecce Homo," "Meeting of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin during the Passion" and "Apparition of Our Lord to Saint Catherine."

In the afternoon of the same day, the statue of Saint Francis of Assisi was unveiled.

PRAYERS SOLICITED.

1. - That the year 1896 may prove specially favorable to the prosperity of the Holy Church, to our country, to each one of us.
2. - That the Infant of Bethlehem and His Immaculate Mother may long preserve to us Christ's representative on earth, His Holiness Pope Leo XIII.
3. - For an important affair which would contribute to the development of the devotion to the Precious Blood and would benefit our Institution.
4. - For all those in authority in Canada, and especially in our Province.
5. - Let us not cease offering the Blood of Jesus for the Catholic minority in Manitoba. The Catholic school question is not yet decided according to the dictates of *justice*. Let us not cease to multiply our prayers in behalf of a settlement.
6. - For several families in affliction ; for sinners, for the sick, for heads of families with no means of providing for their households, for poor women who recommend a father a mother, a son given to drunkenness ; for several vocations, important affairs, other particular intentions.

LET US ALSO PRAY FOR THE DEAD, particularly for : REV. F. X. BEGIN, who died at St-Pacome ; MRS. ARTHUR LAURIN, at Montreal ; MRS. AUGUSTIN PAMERLO, at St-Maxime, Beauce ; MRS. LELIE FILION, at Napierville ; MR. JULES VACTION, at Lewiston, Maine, U. S. ; MR. ETIENNE LEVASSEUR, at St-Basile ; MRS. LOUIS VINCENT, at Joliette ;

M. TELESOPHORE VANDAL, at St-Thecle ; Mr. XAVIER BORDELEAU, at St-SEVERIN ; Mr. HORACE LEROUX, at St-Cesaire ; Mr. MEDERIC CONTENT, Notary, at Montreal ; Mrs. POULIOT, at L'Islet ; Mrs. TELESOPHORE LAGUEUX, at St-Isidore of Dorchester ; Mrs. LALIBERTE, at Warwick ; Mr. ACHILLE GAGNE, at Sorel ; several persons who have died a sudden death.

For all these persons and intentions. say, morning and night :

We pray Thee, O Lord, help Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy Precious Blood.

(100 days' ind. for members of the Confraternity of the P. B.)

O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee.

† L. Z., Bp. OF ST-HYACINTHE.

THANKSGIVINGS.

GLORY BE TO THE MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD !

"I suffered for nearly one year from a malady that increased every day. After having spent much money, and received the care of very able Physicians, I had come to believe that the disease would lead me to my grave..... But, one day, I had the inspiration to write to the Monastery of the Precious Blood at St-Hyacinthe, where they made a Novena for me. I am happy to state that, since that Novena, I have been perfectly cured.

A thousand grateful thanks to the Precious Blood of Jesus !"

"After having been given-up by two Physicians, and by my intimate friends, I have been restored to health. I attribute my cure to prayers made to the Precious Blood, and to the promise that I would make known the fact, by publishing it in the Annals."

GLORY TO THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL ! CHANT FOREVER HIS HOLY PRAISES ! Several persons having informed us of their cures from long and dangerous maladies,

by the intercession of the glorious Archangel Michael and his Nine Choirs of Angels, by the means of pious Novenas made in his honor, we are, therefore, constrained to witness to the lively and deeply gratitude these persons feel for the celestial spirits, by making known, through "The Voice of the Precious Blood", these signa! favors, of which they are the joyful recipients.

"My little boy, though two years of age, could not yet walk nor even stand up. After a Novena made in union with your community, together with the promise of inserting the cure in The Voice of the Precious Blood, I had the happiness to obtain the desired grace. Praise love and thanksgiving to the Blood of Our Saviour!"

For five years I had been a prey to mental suffering and had despaired of ever being delivered from it, when, unexpectedly, this favor was granted me after having made a Novena to the Precious Blood.

For fifteen years, I suffered from a malady which the doctors pronounced to be very serious, I could only take a little milk by way of nourishment. Finding myself so reduced, I wrote to you asking your prayers—not for my cure—I no longer even wished for it—but to obtain resignation to my sufferings. Your prayer to St. Expedit fell into my hands; I commenced invoking the Blood of the Redeemer and the Saint of "the last hour," and I am now completely cured. My relations and friends did not dare expect that I should pass the winter with them, but now I can work and eat whatever I like. I can not find words to express my gratitude to that Blood which is the price of our salvation.

We comply with the desires of this favored one by relating here that the above mentioned grace was obtained by a person dwelling at Windsor Mills.
