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THE CROSS.

God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is Crucified to me, and I to the world.—St. Paul, Gal.vi. 14.

VOL. I.

HALIFAX, FRIDAY, AUGUST 11, 1843.

No. 24.

Weekly Calendar.

- August 13—Sunday X. after Pentecost, Octave of Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ
14—Monday, S. Hormisdas, Pope and Confessor
15—Tuesday, Assumption of the B.V.M. Day of particular devotion
16—Wednesday, S. Roch, Confessor
17—Thursday, Octave of Saint Laurence
18—Friday, S. Hyacinth, Confessor
19—Saturday, S. Anslem, Bishop, Conf. and Doctor. (From April 21)

From the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith.

Missions of Tong-King and Cochin China.

Extracts of a letter from the Fathers Retord, Jeantet, Charrier, and Gauthier, Missionaries-Apostolic to the two Committees of the Institution.

December, 1838.

GENTLEMEN,

In order to understand the following narration, it is necessary to recollect, that, religiously speaking, the kingdom of Annam is divided into three Vicariates-Apostolic,

namely, that of eastern Tong-King, entrusted to the Spanish Dominicans, that of western Tong-King, where we now are, and that of Cochin-China, whose Missionaries, like us, are dependent on the Seminary of Foreign Missions. Such are the three great ecclesiastical divisions of this kingdom, the three theatres of the events we are about to relate.

Rumours of the most alarming nature were in circulation with respect to measures which Minh-Menh intended to adopt towards his Christian subjects; however, as he did not put his murderous projects into immediate execution, we flattered ourselves, silly as we were, with the hope of being allowed to enjoy a few moments' peace. We fancied that the tiger, satiated with carnage, would rest himself in his den, before he would immolate fresh victims to his fury: but, if he slept, it was only for a short time, to awaken more terrible than before. 'Flog without mercy,' said he in his circular to the Mandarins, 'torture, put to death, all those who refuse to trample upon the cross! Let them know, that their refusal to do so places them in a state of rebellion; exterminate them without any form of trial,

those hardened, infatuated wretches; let not one escape.' Great and universal was the consternation of the Christians upon hearing this intelligence. The penalty of death, threatened against all those who should give us an asylum, had considerably cooled the zeal of the most devoted to our interests. No one seemed willing to receive us, so that we might say, with truth, *the foxes have holes, and the birds have nests*, but the Missionaries, like their divine Master, have not whereon to repose their heads.

On the 3d of June, Dr. Havard, our Vicar-Apostolic, obliged to fly from our College, fled to the mountains of Sanh-Ning-Bing, where he arrived in four nights, after having been exposed to a thousand dangers. Father Charrier was frequently obliged to change his place of concealment, constantly pursued by an enemy that sought him out with redoubled ardour. It was not because he feared for his own life that this Missionary took so much precaution to escape, for he ardently wished to share the sufferings of our holy Confessors. 'If I am apprehended,' says he, in a letter to Father Retord, 'I hope that God will pour into my veins some drops of our martyrs' blood.' What he dreaded was, the temporal evils which his arrest would infallibly bring down upon our Christians. As to Father Gauthier, who, since his arrival in 1836, was not attached to any particular district, he re-

mained during four months, in such profound solitude, that, when he came out he was like a dead man just risen from the grave. Fathers Jeantet and Retord, though they were not exposed to the storm in all its violence, were not, however, placed altogether beyond its reach; the first had taken refuge ever since the eve of Pentecost, amongst a small congregation of Christians at the foot of the mountains. He had no sooner arrived, than he was informed that the Mandarin was approaching with a band of soldiers—and how escape this unexpected danger? A few days before, his leg had been bitten by a dog, and the wound, inflamed by having walked so much on the preceding night, rendered it impossible for him even to stand. Father Jeantet was, therefore, obliged, in order to escape falling into the hands of the mandarin, who was at the very gates of the village, to be taken on the shoulders of a strong man, and thus carried across a marsh, which separated him from the mountains. A cave, at a considerable distance up the mountains, promised him a secure asylum; but he was scarcely half way when his strength forsok him, and, at his own request, he was left alone behind a large bush, in order that, if Providence was pleased to allow him to be discovered, those who accompanied him might not be compromised at the same time. In the evening he was removed to a dark cavern,

where he remained two days and two nights. He had scarcely returned to the village, when he was again forced to fly to the mountains: being unable to walk, he was carried in the arms of the Christians. During those days of terror, Father Retord also spent many nights wandering from place to place, unable to find a safe retreat: at last he found an old shed, which served to shelter from the rain the worm-eaten timber belonging to some nuns, whose house had been demolished during the persecution; here he spent about two months, unknown almost to every body. He afterwards partook of Father Jeantet's retreat in the mountains, which they were both often obliged to abandon, and in the night, upon some sudden alarm. But, as they could sometimes forget their troubles in the effusion of friendship, the aspect of their solitude changed in their eyes. Those dark and unhealthy caverns were, for the two exiles, delightful grottoes, rendered dear to them both by friendship and religion; the tiger, roaring in pursuit of his prey, appeared to them less terrible than majestic: so true it is, that nature charms us less by her own inherent beauties, than by the dispositions with which we contemplate them. To a heart gay and contented, there is no solitude without its embellishment, and which does not, like our soul, reflect back an image of Heaven; whilst the gilded palaces of the

great when viewed with a depressed mind, appear more gloomy than the catacombs of Rome. Oh! how sweet is friendship at all times, but particularly in the hour of misfortune, and in far distant climes!

But we have said enough of our personal sufferings; besides, they are but trifling when compared, to the events we are about to relate. We have already said that Dr. Harvard had fled towards a Christian congregation called Bach-Bat, situated near the mountains of Sanh-Ninh-Binh. He had scarcely reached this retreat, when, in consequence of alarming rumours, he was forced to abandon it and to fly to the caverns of the forest. He remained sixteen days in those unhealthy mountains, wandering about having no other food than a little cold rice, which he shared with his two catechists. The cave in which he first took refuge, afforded him considerable accommodation, but he was obliged to abandon it, in consequence of more alarming rumours which reached him. He was, therefore, conducted to a more secret place of concealment, a frightful hole, the entrance being so narrow that it was with difficulty a man could crawl into it, and the interior was horribly damp, no possibility to sit down, eaten up with fleas, and breathing a noxious atmosphere. Dr. Harvard could not remain long in this hole, without exposing himself to the unavoidable danger of contracting a mortal dis-

ease, and was induced, on that account, to return by night to his former retreat. On the 23d he came back to Bach-Bat, worn out with fatigue, weak with hunger, with his arms and legs all swollen, and covered with wounds. Soon after his return he had a slight attack of fever, but could still eat and drink, walk about, and read, little thinking he was so soon to be taken from us. He alone felt a presentiment of his approaching death; he frequently said to those around him, 'I shall not recover this time, but I do not regret to be called to lay down my life in a persecution which has proved so fatal to our churches.' His physicians, finding him in a dangerous state, recommended to him, to receive without delay, the last sacrament: being perfectly sensible of what he was doing, he then turned himself on his right side, crossed his hands on his breast, and fell into the agony of death. On the following day, the 6th of July, about three o'clock, he breathed his last; in so quiet a manner that no one perceived it. His was, most assuredly the death of an apostle—to die, five thousand leagues from his country and relatives, destitute of everything, surrounded only by a few poor neophytes, and stretched on a miserable mat, in a wretched hut—to die, without having met a single European Missionary, that could give him a word of consolation—to die in the flower of his age, his health shattered by the anxiety of his laborious ministry, and the most frightful persecution. Is not this to die the death of an apostle? Such also was the death of Fathers Candall and Vialle, whose bodies repose in the mountains, where they expired, the victims of fatigue and misery.

Here we beg leave to interrupt, for a

moment, the narration of the Missions, so as to be able to make known to the members of the Association, the virtues by which Dr. Havard had prepared himself for the ministry, which he so heroically fulfilled. The notice of his life, which we publish, has been communicated to us by Father Langlois, Superior of the Seminary of Foreign Missions.

"Dr. Joseph Marie Pelagius Havard was born on the 2nd November, 1790, at Thourie, near Rennes, department d'Ille et Vilaine, of parents who were in easy circumstances, and also respected by all who knew them. From his infancy, he gave proofs of the most happy dispositions. Having received the first notions of religion, and gone through his elementary studies with surprising success, he entered into the ecclesiastical school, directed by Father Blanchard, in the diocese of Rennes.—His progress in the sciences was so rapid, that, for many years successively, his professors, in order not to discourage the other pupils, were obliged to make him pass to a superior class, in the middle of the scholastic year. This, however did not prevent him, at the end of each year, obtaining the first prize. In 1809, he was named professor of mathematics, in the same establishment; and in 1810, in the presence of the civil authorities of the town and department, he supported a thesis, which gave rise to a learned and animated discussion, in which he obtained the admiration of all present: this was the commencement of his reputation.

"From this year he destined himself for the ecclesiastical state, and commenced the study of divinity, while he, at the same time, continued to profess Mathematics, and to give two lessons a

day in grammar and latin to his brother. In 1811 he entered the seminary, and devoted himself exclusively to his theological studies. There, as well as at school, he was soon distinguished among his fellow-students: but, in the following year, alarmed at the sanctity required for the Priesthood, he resolved to renounce his intention of embracing the ecclesiastical state. In vain did his director endeavour to calm the anxieties of his conscience; he was persuaded that he had not a vocation to so sublime a state. He left the seminary to the great regret of his masters and fellow-students, and entered upon the study of the law. After having gone through the necessary examinations, and supported his thesis with great credit, he attended, for some time, the law offices of Mr. Corbiere, who was afterwards, in 1822 minister of the interior. Solely from a love of Science, he applied himself to the study of medicine, without, however, having taken out his degrees in that faculty. He also applied himself to the study of the living languages, and learned English, German, Italian, and Spanish; he also studied Hebrew, Arabic, and Chinese—he gave his attention to mechanics, astronomy, and various branches of physics. A course of studies so varied, and pursued with so much success, procured him a great reputation for learning throughout the country; but such unremitting application undermined his health, and obliged him to travel in order to re-establish it. He went to London, and, as his active life did not allow him to remain unemployed, he became professor of the French language in a college of that city, where he did not, however, remain long; being required to conduct the pupils to a Protestant church, he refused, re-

signed the lucrative situation he held, rather than act against his conscience, and returned to Rennes, where he again resumed his literary and scientific studies. After some time he applied himself again to the study of divinity, and soon felt the desire revive of entering into the ecclesiastical state, and even of devoting himself to the foreign Missions, as the ardour of his character drew him towards great enterprises.—He was encouraged in this design by his director, Mr. Robion, formerly professor of divinity, and now Bishop of Coutances. Mr. Robion wrote himself on this subject to one of the directors of the Foreign Missions, giving to be understood, that a person endowed with so many precious qualities, would undoubtedly produce much fruit among the infidels.

“Mr. Havard came to Paris in 1818, and entered the seminary of St. Sulpice. During the three years he remained there he was remarkable for the great ardour he manifested for the sublime and perilous career to which he destined himself, and his unremitting application to study. To the love for learning he united a sincere and solid piety, and never neglected any of the religious exercises prescribed by the different rules of the seminary. The theological knowledge he had acquired by his former studies, enabled him to employ a part of his time in acquiring a greater knowledge of foreign languages. Foreseeing, that in his missionary career, he would have much to endure from the severity of the seasons, and that he would be exposed to great hardships and privations, he wished to habituate himself to all the rigours of heat and cold. With this view, during the winter, even that of 1820, which was extremely severe, he kept the windows

of his room open all the day long, from which his hands (as may well be imagined) were covered with chops and sores, and during the excessive heat of summer he walked about reading, with his head bare, under a burning sun.— Ordained Priest on the 16th of June, 1821, he entered some days after into the seminary of Foreign Missions. He left Paris on the 14th of November of the same year, to take shipping at Havre for Pondicherry, whence he went to Macao, and thence to Tong-King, the place of his destination."

We now resume the narration of the Missionaries :

"It was not enough," said they, "that our persecutors forced us to fly from all society, and drag out in the middle of the forests a miserable and suffering existence, to which we had seen the bishop of Castoria fall a victim. Minh-Menh exacted punishments of such a nature as would terrify the multitude, and draw the Christians into apostacy, so that the prisons almost daily received new confessors. How consoling would it be to us, if we could announce that all showed a courage worthy of the cause ! But alas ! amongst so many Christian heroes, there were many cowardly deserters of the faith, and it is with shame we say it, one of the most notorious renegades was an Annamite Priest, named John Duyet, who had been already interdicted by his superiors, from all ecclesiastical functions. This wretched man, who, a long time before his apostacy, had led a life of scandal, renounced his faith, and trampled upon the cross as often as he was required to do so. In vain did the Christians express aloud their horror of him. 'See,' said the Priest, Dominic Hanh, even in the presence of the mandarins, 'see your head ; it is already

bald, or scarcely covered with a few grey hairs ; how long can you hope to live ? and you abandon your God for a few days of a life which must soon slip from you ! and you bring dishonour on a sacred profession, in order to please a cruel king ! You afflict the Church, who has hitherto fed you with such tender care, and you give yourself up to Satan, who seeks your perdition !"

" ' O father,' added a soldier who was in prison with him, ' if we, men of the word, and soldiers of the king, were to act as you do, it would be no doubt an enormous crime, but which would not be very surprising in men ignorant and guilty of other sins as we are ; but you, who are learned, and who have instructed others during so many years, you who told them so often that they ought rather to die than commit a mortal sin, you who have renounced the world from your infancy ; oh ! how can you trample under foot the cross of Jesus Christ !— All this, however, made no impression upon him. And whence, may we be permitted to ask, has arisen such weakness in the hour of trial, such obstinacy against remonstrances so urgent and so affecting ? Alas ! from the same cause that has already brought perdition upon so many souls ; from pride, from immorality, from the love of the things of this world. These were the vices which brought upon him the censures of the Church, and for which God permitted him to fall into this ignominious apostacy.

" Let us now turn to a more consoling spectacle. The mandarins permitted the two Spanish Bishops and Father Fernandez, pro-Vicar-General, to be let out of their cages, in which they were confined, and allowed them to converse together for about two hours,

What a source of joy to these illustrious confessors, to meet thus together at the approach of the last combat! The mandarins expected to hear them give way to violent emotions of anguish, as they had no longer any other prospect than the horrors of a dungeon and an ignominious death; but, on the contrary, they beheld them conversing together with an air of joy, and happiness beaming from their countenances, as if they were preparing for some great feast.— Ah! if those idolators but knew the gifts of God, and the ineffable sweetness he diffuses over the hearts of those who love him, their surprise would cease, and with the royal Prophet they would exclaim, ‘How good is the God of Israel to them that are of a right heart!’

“However prejudiced against us were the ministers of a cruel tyrant, they more than once rendered justice to the virtue of those they had orders to sacrifice. In the month of June, three of the faithful were arrested as Christians. In their simplicity they persuaded themselves that their innocence ought to plead in their favour; they represented to the mandarins, that having committed no crime, they ought not to be treated as criminals. ‘What do you say?’ replied the mandarin: ‘if you were malefactors, I should not have arrested you; the half of the village where I was born is Christian. When young I often visited their Priests, and took a cup of tea with them. All those gentlemen are certainly the most inoffensive men that can be found, and yet it is those men whom the king has ordered to be put to death!’

“Nor are such avowals surprising, when it is recollected by what virtues our Christians drag them from their persecutors. A neophyte, compromis-

ed by the relations he kept up with the Missionaries, had succeeded escaping from the most active efforts that were made to arrest him. His wife, when brought before the mandarins, loudly declared that she was a christian, and would always continue one. Impri-sonment and the cage were the reward of this generous confession. However, so far from regretting the confession she had made, she rather rejoiced at it, having an opportunity to suffer for the sake of Christ, and in the place of her husband. But the latter, moved at such proof of attachment, renounced a liberty which was purchased by the sufferings of his wife, and presented himself before the mandarins courageously solicited to wear those chains with which she was loaded on his account. The fidelity of this neophyte has been put to severe trials; we have not been able to ascertain with certainty whether he obtained a final victory; it is certain he was condemned to exile, but at what period, or in what place, we have not been able to ascertain.

“The most tender age has also had its heroes. ‘Mandarins,’ said a child ten years old, ‘cut off my head with a sword that I may go to my country.’ ‘Where is your country?’ ‘It is heaven.’ ‘And where are your parents?’ ‘They are in heaven, and I wish to be with them; kill me, and send me to them.’ The mandarins had pity on him on account of his youth, and refused him the favour he solicited with so much ardour.

“It was after having had frequent occasions to witness this generosity, which the Gospel inspires, that the great mandarin observed, ‘There is truly something extraordinary in this religion of Jesus! All those who have once embraced it, either never abandon it,

or if they do, one easily can see by their sadness, that the fear of death alone has influenced them in their conduct. Those people are not bewitched, as some pretend; the love of their religion is the only tie that binds them to it: I myself am far from being at my ease. I am tormented day and night in a troubled state of mind: yes, there is something extraordinary in this religion of Jesus!

“Notwithstanding this admiration which Christianity extorts from its enemies, it does not relax their ardour in persecuting it. Three other Confessors fell into their hands: namely, Jas. Nam, an Annamite Priest, Antony Dich, a rich Christian, in whose house Father Nam was concealed; and Michael Mi, mayor of the village. We shall speak the more willingly of the courage and struggles of those three illustrious martyrs, as they belong to our Mission, and exhibited a constancy which was admired even by the pagans themselves. After having made every effort to seduce the Annamite Priest by the most flattering promises, and the threats of torture, the mandarins, perceiving that it was in vain to attempt persuasion, ceased their insidious solicitations. They did not even try his fortitude by flogging, persuaded that such a measure would only serve to add to the shame of their defeat; and what is more, touched by the affability of his manners, they paid him certain marks of attention, by putting upon him a light cangue, and permitting him to visit the other prisoners every morning. He availed himself of this permission, to take care of his brethren in the faith, and uphold their courage by his cheerfulness; and by religious consolations, which he imparted to them. This excellent father diffused joy throughout

this habitation, which every one looks upon as the dungeon of misery and despair. One of those to whom his charitable offices were most useful, was Antony Dich; this old man, sixty-nine years of age, seemed sometimes disposed to yield to the severity of his sufferings. The natural horror of a violent death, the remembrance of his family, fortune, and friends, were so many ties, which attached him strongly to life, and prevented him from entering with ardour into the arena of martyrdom. But his faith soon triumphed over the weakness of nature, and he became as invincible as his fellow-sufferers to the assaults of hell. The exhortations of Michael Mi, his son-in-law, contributed greatly to uphold his courage. ‘Reflect, father,’ said he to him, ‘that your great age does not warrant you in hoping to live long. Two kinds of death are placed before you; one of them is natural, the consequences of which are uncertain; the other, inflicted by your persecutors, which will be followed by an eternity of happiness; how can you hesitate in your choice, when it is so easy to see which is the best? If, in such circumstances, it were lawful to regret life, it is I, who am young, and vigorous, that ought to be excused for doing so; and yet you see with what joy I renounce my life, for the sake of God. Your children are all grown up, and settled in the world; during the remainder of your life, you can be of no use to them, and by dying a martyr you will be a subject of glory and edification to them. I shall leave after me a young widow with four infant children, as yet incapable of gaining a livelihood; but God who has given them to me, will not fail to provide for all their wants, and that from heaven, where we shall shortly be, and where we shall protect them

by our prayers. Is it the pain of stripes, that frightens you? Do not be afraid, father: I will receive instead of you those stripes which are destined to you; let us then be content and courageous. It is now that we must prove that we are true Christians, and are disposed to die for Jesus Christ, as he was pleased to die for us.'

"It was by these words, and such like persuasions, that the young Michael Mi encouraged his aged father, and when the mandarins summoned them to the tribunal, in order to induce them by persuasion to conform to the orders of the king, Michael Mi usually answered for both. If the judges had recourse to the lash, the young Michael lay down on the ground to receive those that were intended for him, and when they were about to subject his father-in-law to the same punishment, he would get up, covered with blood, and say to the Mandarins, 'My father is aged and infirm; have pity on him, and allow me to be flogged in his stead;' he would then lie on the ground again, and undergo a second flogging, with admirable courage and fortitude, his blood flowing from his body, his flesh torn,—but not a cry, not a sigh, escaped his lips. The mandarins made incredible efforts to make him renounce his faith; as he was mayor of the village, a particular importance seemed to be attached to conquer him. Sometimes the magistrates exhorted him with mildness, sometimes they flogged him without mercy. To subject him to fresh tortures, they did not wait till his former wounds were healed. Will it be credited, that this courageous soldier of Jesus Christ received more than five hundred lashes in the space of forty days!

"'Fool,' said the mandarins to him, 'why are you so obstinately bent on dying? Your wife and children require your presence and protection; you are young and learned, and have well founded hopes of making a fortune, and enjoying a long and happy life. Trample upon the cross, and we will let you go; many other Christians have done it, and why not imitate them? When you return home, you may fol-

low the religion of Jesus; you will be perfectly at liberty to do so.'

"'Mandarins,' he replied, 'I will never abandon a religion I have discovered to be the true one. If you were asked to trample upon the head of the king, from whom you hold your dignities and places, would you dare to do so? Do you think that I would dare to profane the image of the King of heaven whom I adore? No doubt my wife and children attach me strongly to life; but I will leave them without fear, persuaded, that he, who has entrusted them to me, will watch over them, and unite them to me in heaven: as to the example of those who have trampled upon the cross, it has no more effect upon me, than the example of deserters has upon soldiers, who are brave and faithful to their king.'

"Michael Mi generally replied to the mandarins for his father-in-law. Antony Dich had also frequent occasions of giving proof of his courage in his answers to them, and of confessing aloud the name of Jesus Christ; such strength of mind in a man so advanced in years was a subject of astonishment to them; but we who know how pure his life had always been, were not surprised that God should uphold him in the days of suffering and trials.—Besides the encouragement he received from Father Nam and Michael Mi, his family earnestly exhorted him to persevere unto death in his fidelity to God. One of his eight children gave him a strong proof of his filial piety; he went to the great mandarin, and promised him eight bars of silver, if he would allow him to suffer and die in the place of his father. The mandarin commended his attachment to his aged father, but dared not consent to his demand. Michael Mi experienced also great consolation from his family: his wife went frequently to visit him with her last infant child, and exhorted him not to be uneasy on her account, or his four young children; for, with the grace of God, she hoped to be able to bring them up alone. This strong and valiant woman proved herself a wife worthy of a martyr.

"In this admirable family, in which the most

sublime virtue seemed to be hereditary, little children recalled to mind the conduct of the young Origen, exhorting his father to martyrdom.

Michael M's daughter, eleven years of age, escaped one day from home, to visit the holy confessor in prison. She had to go a distance of half a day's journey, and penetrated without fear through soldiers and guards to her father's dungeon. One of his sons also, only nine years old, sent him word, not to renounce his religion, but to suffer martyrdom, that he might go direct to heaven, and not to be in trouble about his children, as the same God who had given them existence, would take care of them.

“The persecutors, tired at last of struggling with a constancy, which continued trials tended only to confirm, pronounced sentence of death against the holy confessors, which in a few days after was confirmed by a royal decree; and the following day they were led to execution. On this occasion the mandarins redoubled their precaution to keep at a distance the crowds, which pressed forward to gather up the blood of the martyrs; for their pride was wounded to see, that they who were punished by them as criminals, were respected by others as saints. The efforts, however, the mandarins made to keep off the crowds, only made them press more eagerly around the martyrs, and animate them to the last combat.—The praises which were loudly given to their courage, the tears of compassion which filled the eyes of all, amply compensated them for contempt with which they were treated by the government officers. Our generous champions, loaded with the cangoe and their chains, moved forward to the place of punishment with serene and joyful countenances. They conversed together on their happiness, made signs of adieu to the Christians, who saluted them with profound respect, as they passed, and earnestly recommended themselves to their prayers. Michael M distinguished himself particularly by the intrepidity he displayed. The executioner had said to him, ‘Give me five blades, and I

will sever your head at a single blow, so that you may not suffer much.’ ‘Cut it into a hundred pieces if you wish,’ replied he; ‘provided you cut it off, that is enough for me. As to the hands, though I have plenty at home, I will not give you any; I would rather give them to the poor.’

“Having reached the place of execution, the mandarins caused the martyrs to be surrounded with a double line of soldiers, in order to prevent the people from taking away any relics of the martyrs. But no sooner had their blood began to flow, than Christians and pagans rushed forward in a mass to gather it up. No rain did the soldiers (whose ranks were broken strike the crowds with the flat of their swords no one paid the least attention to them. On that day, a traffic was established, of which the history of the martyrs alone offers an example. The executioners, turning the remains of their victims to account, were seen pulling a price on the blood which adhered to their swords, selling by retail the beard of the persons executed, trading with their cangoes, their cages, and with everything else that had been an instrument of their torture. The people even fought among themselves to obtain some portion at any price. In this way the purchasers (even among the idolaters) were so numerous, that the sale was soon over. Then the crowd began to pull up the grass, and collect with care the earth of the place on which the martyrs' blood had flowed. The pagans gave their sick children some of this blood to drink; and we are assured that they were cured: the executioners say, that at the moment of striking the martyrs, an odour, as if it were perfume, was diffused around them.—It is usual to implore the pardon of those they put to death, and beg their permission to do so. The mandarins themselves have sometimes yielded to the influence of Christian virtue. At the martyrdom of Father Vien, they were seen rendering public homage to the innocence of that holy Priest. When he arrived at the place of execution, they made him sit in state, on five beautiful red carpets; the Christians were permitted to place before him a table, covered with meats, and to bid him their last farewell. The

hour of separation being arrived, the mandarin, charged with the execution of supreme justice, raised his voice, addressing the martyrs thus: 'We know that you do not merit death, and we would willingly save you; but the orders of the king do not permit us to do so: pardon us, therefore, if we are compelled to take away your life, and do not impute this crime to us.' As soon as the soldiers had retired, our Christians, (provided with a permission from the chief mandarin), carried off the three bodies, and transported them to Vinh-Tri, about five leagues from the city of Vi-Hoang. This translation, which took place on the following night was a real triumph for religion. Our Christians to the number of several hundreds, were assembled to accompany the convoy. At the head of the cortege, they carried the three tables, on which was written the condemnation of the Confessors. These sentences, which were intended to stigmatise their names, and spread terror among the people, tended, on the contrary, to increase their glory, and carried joy to the heart of their brethren in Jesus Christ. The three funeral processions advanced by the light of a great number of torches. The Christians from the surrounding country assembled in crowds along the road, and prepared tables covered with refreshments for the bearers. The enthusiasm of the Christians was such, that the pagans themselves were moved by it. After having borne the three bodies with due honour, at Vinh-Tri, the funeral repast was celebrated. That which had been prepared by the eight children of Antony Dich was very splendid for this country: there were about four hundred tables, which would lead to the conclusion, that there were 1600 guests; for here, a table is only intended for four persons. Such, then has been the end of all our enemies' fury. The chastisement which they inflicted, filled with joy, those whom they intended to punish; the pagans, who in great numbers witnessed their punishment proclaimed their innocence, their obsequies were celebrated as festivals, and now, our Christians, more familiarised with death, look upon it without terror.

"The places which were thus red with the blood of martyrs, in a very short time after became the scene of a most dreadful disaster, the principal victims of which were the pagans, the mandarins, and their satellites. On the 8th September a tremendous hurricane burst over the coast, and carried desolation far into the interior of the country. In the province of Thanh-Hoa, the fury of the tempest tore up enormous trees from the roots, and overturned a great number of pagodas and houses; even entire villages, with all the habitations, are said to have been levelled, and carried away by the whirlwind. It was chiefly in the governments of Ninh-Binh and Nam-Dich that the ravages were the most terrible. To the fury of the unchained winds was added the overflowing of the sea, which, forced by the tempest beyond its limits, inundated a vast extent of territory. More than thirty thousand persons perished; and when the sea had retired into its bed, the dead bodies of men and animals were found in heaps, near the bamboo hedges, where the waves had piled them together. Nevertheless, at the moment of the catastrophe, the mandarins continued their persecutions against the Priests, not far from the very spot where it took place. By a manœuvre, that was considered very clever, the ex-mandarin Tinh-Quanh-Krah, had caused the coast to be blockaded by three well armed bargues, while he himself, his soldiers, and his spies, scourged the country for a certain distance from the sea, thus surrounding the Missionaries on every side, who must have, unavoidably, fallen into their hands; but scarcely had they begun to put his orders into execution, than the storm broke forth, and the bargues were dashed to pieces, and their crews swallowed up, without any account having been heard of them afterwards. The number of soldiers who perished in this expedition was about three hundred. It is a remarkable thing, that the districts which suffered the most, were those in which the greatest number of martyrs had been arrested. The villages where our Christians are numerous have not been touched; whilst those which are almost entirely inhabited by idolaters, have been completely devastated.

(To be continued.)

*The Month of August, Consecrated to
the Sacred Heart of Mary.*

MEDITATION.

AUGUST 8.—Consecration of the Sacred Heart of Mary at her Presentation.

First Point—Consider that St. Anne, mindful of her vow to consecrate Mary to the Lord, delayed not to conduct her to the temple, says St. Gregory Nazianzen; according to St. Germanus, Mary was then *three years old*. Let us now look on this immaculate creature making her magnificent offering. Her beloved having said, *rise up, my Spouse, and come; forget thy people and thy father's house*; she promptly obeys the divine voice, and rapidly ascends the steps of the temple. Being arrived at the top, she enters and sheds tears of tenderness, and confirms in the hands of the High Priest, the donation she had already made of herself to God, at her immaculate conception. But who could describe her feelings? What profound humility, lively faith and ardent love, then filled her pure soul. O, great God of Abraham of Isaac and of Jacob, did she not say perhaps, you are infinite and immense, to you all honor and glory are due. I am but a poor little creature, and entirely belong to you.—What have I then to offer you but what is your own; deign however to accept it. I consecrate to you my will, dispose of it according to your good pleasure. I consecrate to you my body, may it be a fragrant lily, which will ever yield a most pleasing odor in presence of your holy Majesty. There never, until then, had been made such an offering in the temple. What must not have been the amazement of the

angels, the surprise of the assistants and the priests. In what terms must not God himself have testified his approval of it. *How beautiful are thy footsteps, O daughter of the Prince?*

We, too, have been conducted to the temple in early life, to assist at the great sacrifice which the Son of Mary makes of his body and blood. But have we truly offered ourselves to God. O, what irreverences and profanations have we not there committed; I now bewail them, my God, and offer myself wholly to you. May your blood, offered on our altars, efface my sins and effect my salvation.

Flower—Renovation of your baptismal vows.

Fruit—To consider yourself in the church as a victim bound for the sacrifice.

MEDITATION.

AUGUST 9.—The Sacred Heart of Mary, as the Temple of God, enclosed in the Temple.

First Point.—Again, consider Mary introduced into the Temple, in which she has taken up her abode. In this Temple, her heart is another temple, in which God resides. Let us listen to St. Magdalen di Pazzi, in one of her ecstasies, she says—“You were that charming Temple, O, Mary, in which should be made the worthy oblation of the saviour of men.” And a little after—“I saw the Throne of God fixed in the highest Heavens: Mary, the Mother of Jesus was seated thereon. This Throne was surrounded by lillies and borne by four angels. How can we sufficiently glorify Mary, being, as she

is, raised to so sublime a dignity as that of mother of the eternal word.

We should be the temples of the Most High ; we were rendered such in Baptism. Are we so now ? Alas, are we not rather become the temples of the unclean spirit, have we not, by our sins, driven from us the spirit of God. What tears are not necessary to purify our polluted heart ?

Flower—say often to-day—

“ Lord wash our sinful stains away,
Water from heaven our barren clay,
Our wounds and bruises heal.”

Fruit—In temptation say God forbid I should ever become the devil's slave.

MEDITATION.

AUGUST 10.—The Sacred Heart of Mary united by a chaste bond to that of Joseph in Marriage.

First Point—Mary being predestined to bring forth the Saviour of the world, should be a virgin and mother both together, and this mystery should be concealed from the devil. Hence it was necessary that she should have a spouse like other women. A man was designated to the Priests by a miraculous rod and a dove reposing on his head. What the Holy Virgin hitherto held secret, that is her vow of perpetual virginity, was at her espousals manifested to Joseph. He made a similar one, and thus these two hearts were the first united by the bonds of inviolable chastity and indissoluble marriage. What benedictions did not God pour on this marriage ? The bridegroom, by them, became eminently like God the Father, as was revealed to St. Mary Magdalen di Pazzi ; and so did Mary, by begetting in her mortal flesh that same di-

vine Word, whom he has begotten from all eternity. Behold, then, in the hearts of Mary and Joseph two sorts of love, the idea of which never entered the mind of a creature : a maternal love in the heart of Mary, a paternal love in that of Joseph, which intimately attached both to the Son of God.

Married persons should learn from so holy an example to sanctify their union, and thereby to merit the benedictions of Heaven, and the unmarried should thereby be inspired with a greater love for holy chastity. The divine root of Jesse, which blossomed in the womb of Mary, was the fruit of this precious virtue. What account do we make of it ? Alas, have we not valued it less than nothing—than iniquity itself.

Flower—Say often, “ Virgin most pure—Virgin most chaste, pray for us.”

Fruit—Scrupulous guard of purity, custody of the senses, &c.

MEDITATION.

AUGUST 11.—The Sacred Heart of Mary at the Annunciation.

First Point—Consider the trouble of the Sacred Heart of Mary at the salutation of the Angel. Hearing these magnificent words, “ Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee,” what is her reply ? she is silent and troubled, and *thinks with herself what manner of salutation this should be.* O, profound mystery ! Why is this imperturbable heart troubled ? Does she fear an illusion, or is it through modesty, seeing an angel in human shape ? No ; the text is clear, she is troubled at his words, not at his appearance, says Eusebius of E-

mese. What occasioned this trouble? Her profound humility, the hearing herself praised in terms so opposed to those in which she would have spoken to herself. If the angel had said, Mary, you are the most miserable creature on earth, she would not have been surprised. But his plaudits troubled her, says St. Bernardine: as she herself said to St. Bridget, it is not my own praise I wish for, but that of the Creator and Sovereign Lord of all things.— And yet these praises were legitimately her due. O, humility, worthy of the sublimity of a God! and capable of his immensity. O, humility, which, rendering Mary little in her own eyes, renders her great in the eyes of him whom the whole world cannot contain.

How do you relish praises? Do you like or dislike them? They are but words, and only serve to swell the heart, and yet, perhaps, you feed on them as a solid meat. Forget not, that aversion to praise raised Mary above the angels, and rendered her the mother of God, and that it was that Act which immediately preceded the Incarnation of the Word of God; whilst the vain praises of the angel of darkness, penetrating the heart of Eve, rendered her his slave. O, my God, may those who be suddenly turned backward, who say to me "'tis well, 'tis well."

Flower—Say, with extended arms, the *Gloria Patri* thrice.

Fruit—Detest and abhor praise, and refer all glory to God.

MEDITATION.

August 12.—*The Sacred Heart of Mary, at her virginal child-birth.*

First Point.—Consider the sentiments of the Sacred Heart of Mary at

that moment in which she brought forth her little infant Jesus, that she heard his cries, and saw his divine eyes bathed in tears, love, admiration, sorrow, compassion, the noblest sentiments of the soul, all affected her heart in the most lively manner, and entirely occupied it. Her lively faith made her recognise in her son the Son of God made man. Seeing his ardent love, her's became more ardent, and then what a glow in this maternal heart.— Her admiration was exceeding great; but it was, if possible, surpassed by her sorrow, seeing him born in a stable at midnight, exposed to the inclemencies of the weather, sighs on his little lips, and tears in his divine eyes, at the sight of our sins. What did she not do to shelter him from the wintry blast and the piercing cold of that dreary night? As well as she could she wrapped him in the little lincens she had procured, and placed him in the manger under the breath of the ox and the ass, while she and Joseph adored him in silent admiration.

At the contemplation of this spectacle what do our hearts feel? Do we not merit the reproach of our Lord in Isaias, "The ass knoweth his owner, and the ox the crib of his lord, but Israel has not known me." O, my Jesus and my God, who, for love of me, hast undergone such sufferings, pardon me for having so long mistaken you. In order to warm your dear little members, I unite my heart with those of Mary and Joseph. May the fire which consumes them burn and consume me, through your infinite love and mercy.

Flower—Say often "Sacred Heart of Jesus, burning with the love of us, inflame our hearts with love for thee."

Fruit—Say often with St. Francis

of Assisium, "Let us love the little Babe of Bethlehem.

MEDITATION.

AUGUST 13.—Grief of the Sacred Heart of Mary at the circumcision.

First Point.—Consider the cruel anguish of the Sacred Heart of Mary, when, for the first time, she saw flow the blood of her infant Jesus. No mother on earth ever experienced the like, even at the death of her only son, because no son was worthy of such love, and no mother so capable of loving.—Her heart was at that moment wounded so much the more deeply, as she loved the more intensely. It was a miracle that she did not expire; her natural strength being certainly insufficient to sustain her. This grief was permanent, the Sacred Heart of Mary being incessantly torn by all the torments which she foresaw Jesus was to suffer, nor did it cease but at its resurrection.

They are *my* sins which put the circumcising knife in the hands of the High Priest to inflict a deep wound in the spotless flesh of Jesus. They are my iniquities which drenched with bitter grief the most pure and innocent Heart of Mary. How can I repair them, sweet Jesus, but by this precious blood which I have caused to be shed. Ah, wash me in it from my stains, purify me in it from my filth; I detest, I abhor them.

Flower—Guard of the senses, and say the Miserere.

Fruit—Horror of the least sin.

MEDITATION.

AUGUST 14.—Maternal Solicitude

of the Sacred Heart of Mary at the flight to Egypt.

First Point—Consider the inquietude and agitation of the Sacred Heart of Mary, when in the middle of the night she is suddenly commanded to rise and fly into Egypt with her divine infant to preserve him from the fury of those who sought his life. Agar abandoned her son Ismael, in order not to see him die; not so with Mary, she forgets herself to save her son; she clasps him in her arms, covers him as well as her poverty would allow, and flies off with an agitated and palpitating heart, through bye-paths and lonely roads, without regarding either suffering, or fatigue, as long as she can hope to secure him. St. Joseph, her faithful companion and guide could alone tell us what Mary endured on this occasion.

Many, like Herod, seek Jesus in order to destroy him. It is the case of all who commit mortal sin. O, my God, how often have I thus sought you by seeking out the occasion of sin. Pardon me, I beseech you, by the loving solicitude of your Blessed Mother for your preservation. I shall ever avoid the dangerous occasions of offending you.

Flower—A visit to our Blessed Mother's oratory.

Fruit—Flight of dangerous occasions.

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