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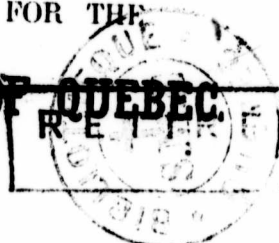
ANNALS

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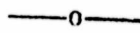
Propagation of the Faith

COMPILED FOR THE

PROVINCE OF QUEBEC



Vol. 1.—No. 1.

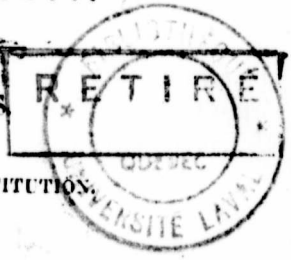


FEBRUARY, 1877.

THREE-RIVERS

RETIRÉ

PUBLISHED FOR THE INSTITUTION.



As the impending conflict between Russia and Turkey, towards which all eyes are turned, must have a powerful bearing on the interests of the propagation of the Faith, we devote this number of the Annals to a view of the Catholic Church in Russia. And in order to give a just idea of the sufferings of that martyr nation, Poland, under the cruel hand of Russian despotism, even to the present day, we cannot do better than offer our Associates an authentic relation of one of the thousands of faithful catholics, who were sent, and are still sent, to die for their faith the deserts of Siberia.

The following relation of the Abbess of the Basilian nuns of Minsk, was written from her own dictation in the year 1845, by three Roman Divines, who had been expressly appointed by the Holy Father to receive her deposition. We condense it into the present number, to the exclusion of all other matter, rather than interrupt the thrilling story.

Relation of Makrena Mieczyslawska, Abbess of the Basilian nuns of Minsk, or History of a seven years' persecution, suffered for the faith by herself and her nuns.

I

EXPULSION FROM MINSK : PRISON AND PERSECUTION IN
WITEBSK (1838-1840.)

During the summer of 1838, Siemasko, (an apostate bishop) invited us three different times, by letter, to join the schism. In his impious assaults, he called St. Basil a schismatic : he said the rule of the Basilian order was a gross error, which he, with God's assistance, had finally abandoned, and that having discovered the so-called Orthodox (greek schismatic) church to be the only true religion, he, our pastor, exhorted us, the lambs of his flock, to renounce the Church of Rome, and to abandon the rule of St. Basil.

Siemasko requested us to write under his fatal invitation these words : « *We have read it,* » which, to him, would have been equivalent to these : « *We have accepted it.* » After a first and a second refusal, he insisted strongly ; after a third one, he threatened us.

The first time he presented himself in person, after his apostacy, he asked me in an angry tone :

« Why did you not sign that paper I sent you ? »
—« Because I perceived it contained base falsehoods. »—« What do you mean ?—I mean that if you, a Basilian monk, have had the misfortune to apostatize, your defection is a proof that St. Basil, perceiving the tare amongst the wheat, has rejected it ; or that you, recognizing yourself unworthy to number amongst his children, have abandoned them by a double apostacy. »

At these words, he ground his teeth and burst out furiously :

“ Shut up, you infernal hydra ! ”—“ Don't call me an infernal hydra, but rather a hydra of truth. ”—“ Who gives you such audaciousness in my presence ? ”—“ God himself. ”—“ Who taught you such language ? ”—“ The Holy Ghost. ”—“ Do you know to whom you are speaking ? ”—“ To an apostate. ”—“ Don't you know that I have been your bishop, your pastor, and that I am now more than a bishop, more than a pastor ? ”—“ Yes, it is very true, you have been our pastor ; but now you are the wolf devouring your own flock. ”

Seeing that all our Sisters manifested the same courage, he said :

“ Come now, be like yourself again. I have always known you to be good and mild as an angel, and now you seem to have become a demon. ”—“ As long as you were an angel, I treated you as an angel ; but now that you are become a demon, I treat you as I should treat a demon. ”—“ I forgive you in the name of the Emperor, who is pleased to grant you three months for reflexion. If you open your eyes and embrace the truth, you shall enjoy your wealth and merit his Majesty's pardon ; but if you persist in your obstinate resistance, I announce to you unspeakable grief. ”—“ We accept the worst, and the more we shall have to suffer, the greater shall be our joy ; but never, never will we abandon our holy, roman, catholic and apostolic faith ! ”

When Siemasko had left us, we inquired whether the neighbouring convents had undergone a similar trial. We learned that Siemasko had sent the same written invitations, even to nuns of the latin rite.

The third day after this scene had scarcely dawned, when Siemasko, accompanied by the civil governor of Minsk, Uszakoff, and an armed troop, forced the convent doors; at five o'clock in the morning, and entered just as we were passing from our cells to the chapel. The soldiers made to the doors of our rooms, to prevent our return. In presence of the danger, the Sisters all gathered around me. It was a friday.

"Where are you going?" Siemasko asked me abruptly.—"To our meditation."—"To your meditation, to your meditation," said he, smiling.—"By order of his Majesty, he continued, I had given you three months to meditate; but I am come on the third day, for the evil might grow worse. This is your last moment of liberty. You are yet free to choose between the riches you possess, with those you may expect from the generosity of the Emperor, if you join the *orthodox religion*.—and penal servitude for life in the deserts of Siberia, if you persist in your refusal."—"Of the two, we choose the better, that is, penal servitude, and a hundred Seberias, rather than abandon Jesus-Christ and his Vicar."—"Wait a little, my lady; when my lashes shall have stripped you of the skin you were born in, and when another skin shall have covered your bones, you will not then be so stubborn."

My Sisters all screamed out with indignation, and I distinctly heard the voice of Sister Wawrzecka answering him: "Strip us of our skin, tear off our flesh, smash our bones; but we will remain faithful to Jesus-Christ and to his Vicar."

At these words, Siemasko ordered the soldiers to cast us out of the convent; he blasphemed horribly, and turning towards me in fury: "O you blood of a polish dog, you bloody varsovian dog! I will tear the very tongue out of your head!"

When we were near the door, I cast myself at the feet, not of Siemasko, but of the Governor, and asked him, with an accent of unspeakable sorrow, permission to bid farewell to Our Lord Jesus-Christ in the Blessed

Sacrament. Siemasko uttered another insult to me ; but the Governor granted my request. We rushed into the chapel in tears, and, prostrate before the Blessed Sacrament, we prayed together an instant. " O Lord Jesus, said we, thy divine will is our will ; accompany us, strengthen us, teach us the mysteries of thy Passion, that we may have the desire and the courage to die for Thee."

We were thirty-five in number, and when the soldiers received orders to turn us out of the chapel, thirty-four of us rose from the floor ; the thirty-fifth one lay dead before the Blessed Sacrament : her heart had burst with grief and love. This good Sister was named Rosalia Lauszecka ; she was fifty-seven years of age, and had been a nun thirty years. When we had left the chapel, I again cast myself before the Governor, imploring his permission to take a crucifix with us, that the sight of our crucified Saviour might give us strength to bear our cross. This Siemasko persisted in refusing us ; he had even wrested out of our hands the silver crucifix containing the relics of St. Basil, and adorned with beautiful gems ; but the Governor allowed us to take at least the wooden crucifix, the same one that used to be carried in our processions. I carried it the entire way, resting it on my left shoulder. Oh ! what consolation it afforded us during our forced march from Minsk to Witebsk ! It was indeed heavy, but its weight was far surpassed by its sweetness ! It recalled to us the whole Passion of Our Lord. Ah, how deep must have been the wound in that sacred shoulder on which our Saviour rested his cross on the way to Calvary !

When the soldiers had driven us from the convent, our children were startled from their sleep ; they ran after us in tears, exclaiming : " They have taken away our mothers ! They have taken away our mothers ! " They were our orphans, forty-seven, and our other pupils, to the number of about sixty. The cries of the children awoke the neighbours also, the most courageous and zealous of whom joined the children in our pursuit.

These good people overtook us at our first stand, near a tavern called Wygodka, about three miles distant, where the soldiers made us halt, to be tied two by two, and have fetters put on our feet.

There, surrounded with bayonets, we could offer nothing but our tears to our dear children and to these good people, who went on their knees to ask our blessing, despite the threats and blows of the soldiery.

The people were at last driven away, and we had to continue our forced march, although many of us were already bleeding from our mouth and nose, through exhaustion. Those who fell were compelled to rise by repeated blows.

When they had fettered us, they gave each of us five francs, and promised that we should receive the same amount every month for our support; but they never afterwards gave us either money or food; and the five francs had scarcely been given to us, when they were taken away again by the commanding officer, who had assumed to be our purveyor, and who, only once, bought us a little bread and milk, and some beer.

The most zealous amongst the inhabitants of Minsk followed us closely for several hours; but they were not allowed to offer us either alms or relief.

The first day, we had to walk no less than forty miles. We passed the night in a village and were lodged in the huts of the peasants, some of whom insulted us, whilst others took pity on our state, and even offered us their supper; but each of us was in the custody of two soldiers, who allowed us to receive no cooked victuals.

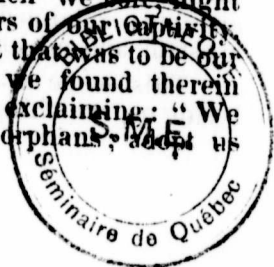
After a seven days' march of this kind, we reached Witebsk. The cross of Jesus Christ was our strength and our only consolation. The dear crucifix was upon my shoulder day and night, and on the feet of my divine Master my aching head rested incessantly. Oh! how sweet is his embrace!...

At Witebsk, we were placed under the command of a protopope, superior of a sort of convent of schismatic nuns, called *Czernices*, to whom the Basilian convent of Witebsk had been delivered over six months previous to our arrival. This convent, like all the Basilian convents in Lithuania, was under the invocation of the Most Holy Trinity. The *Czernices*, who already crowded the convent, had been transported thither from the government of *Jarostoff*: they were half-civilized women, for the most part the widows of Russian soldiers; we

never saw them either pray or work. Singing obscene songs, calling each other the vilest names, quarrelling and fighting, were there daily occupation. Such scenes were generally brought to a close by the abess, or Igumena, appearing on the scene with a kind of crosier in her hand, and condemning both parties to numerous prostrations before her, and to a fine, destined to purchase brandy, of which all drank to intoxication. These daily orgies ended by songs and *hurrahs* in honour of the Emperor Nicolas. This is the way in which the Czernices discharged their obligation to pray for the Emperor and his family, in return for the pension of 7 rubbles a month they received from government.

Such were the Czernices we found at Witebsk, in the convent of the Basilian nuns, whose persecution had commenced six months before our own. Driven from their convent, our dear Sisters had been huddled together into a cold, damp out-house, in the cattle-yard, where they were despoiled of everything, and condemned to the vilest labor in the service of the Czernices. At the time of this catastrophe, the Basilian Community of Witebsk was composed of eighteen Mothers and Sisters, under a holy abess, named *Eusebia Tyminska*, already advanced in years. We did not find her on our arrival; she had already succumbed with four of her sisters under the torments and cruel treatment they were subjected to.

When we entered this abode of sorrow, the commanding officer, in delivering us into the hands of the protopope, who promised to fulfil Siemasko's instructions punctually, offered him also what remained of the little money that had been given us near Minsk, and of which he had made himself the administrator; but the protopope told him to keep it for himself. "God reward you with it, he added, for the fidelity with which you have accompanied these prisoners." They then relieved us of the manacles that bound us two by two; but only to fetter us with chains, which we bore night and day, during the seven long years of our captivity. When we were within the apartment that was to be our prison, the thirteen Basilian nuns we found therein threw themselves at my feet in tears, exclaiming: "We have lost our mother, we are now orphans, adopt us



“ for your children, dear mother, and we shall glorify
“ the Lord together.”

The popes, the Czernices and the guards endeavoured with threats and belows to stay this effusion of heart, but to no avail; we shed our tears together; we united our prayers, and God consoled us.

Every morning, before going to our work, I used to exhort my Sisters, saying: “ We desire nothing but God’s will; let his holy will be done! Let us embrace with joy our labors and sufferings, without despise to our persecutors, because it is the will of God; it is for God we are going to labor, for Him we are going to suffer.”

The week following our arrival, we were already fallen into the hands and under the control of the unfortunate *Father Ignatius Michalewicz*, a Basilian monk, and formerly our zealous and exemplary chaplain. But a short while before, when the news of the apostacy of three united-greek bishops had stricken and prostrated us, this good Father, with admirable ardour, encouraged and sustained us in our fidelity to our faith. Separated from him, we fervently prayed for his restoration to us; and behold, the eight day of our confinement in Witebsk, he again appears to us—his face, alas! hidden under artificial beard, (the schismatic priests wear their beard as a sign of distinction); he opened his lips, but only to lie and blaspheme in the moscovite language, he, who always spoke to us in our dear polish tongue, and taught us to love God and truth. Oh! how inconceivable was our sorrow!

“ You were our Father, said I in tears, you were the saviour of our souls, and now you come to destroy them! Where are your teachings and your good examples now?”—“ My dear children, when I taught you fidelity to the Church of Rome, I was wrong, I was blind; but now God has opened my eyes, and I am come to teach you the truth.”

And after a long delivery of Siemasko’s doctrine, he said: “ And now I am an Apostle.”—“ An apostate, an apostate, exclaimed my Sisters all together, you are an apostate, and not an Apostle!!!”

This scene was usual, for the wretch was ever beside us, watching over our hard labor, and his very

presence was more painful to us than his terrible and repeated blows. He threatened us with the most horrible tortures, even to skin us alive. We would answer: "You may tear the skin off us; we are ready to follow the example of St. Bartholomew, but we never will follow the example of an apostate." We were obliged to perform the vilest and most painful services for the *czernices*. Before six o'clock in the morning, we had to heat and sweep the house, prepare the firewood, carry and distribute water, and restore order and neatness after the orgies of the eve.

At six we were led out to our compulsory labor, which varied according to the season.

We first had to cut stones and carry them in barrows we were tied to. From noon till one o'clock, rest; from one till night, hard labor, after which we were employed in the kitchen or the cattle-yard, or compelled to carry in wood and water for the morrow. The *czernices* sought every means of rendering our task still more difficult and painful. When our day's work was over, we were shut up in our prison, without even being relieved of our chains. A little straw was our only bed; we had neither table nor furniture of any description: the sole ornament of our abode, the consolation of our hearts, the strength of our souls, was the dear crucifix we had brought from Minsk: it was our chapel, our altar, our Master, our Father, our All! At its feet we passed the nights in prayer. We used to begin by the prayers and exercises of our rule, which we were unable to perform during the day. We always began our prayers by prostrating ourselves to the earth, to ask of God the conversion of the Emperor Nicolas.

Our food was so miserable, that hunger often compelled us, in summer, to eat green herbs, and in winter, to partake of the food of the cows and swine, despite the threats and blows of the *czernices*, who would say brutally: "You don't deserve the food of our hogs."

In winter, notwithstanding the excessive coldness of the climate, we were allowed no fire; our hands and feet were frequently frozen, and the cold aggravated our sores.

After about two months (1838) commenced the torture of flogging, which we had to undergo twice a

week. Siemasko had limited the operation to thirty strokes; but Michalewicz added twenty more by his own authority.

We were to have been spared the flogging some odd weeks; but Siemasko, at Michalewicz's instigation, soon ordered this sort of torture to be applied more frequently, to punish our fidelity to the Church. We always prepared ourselves by meditating on the flagellation of our divine Saviour; his Passion was our strength, our consolation and our remedy amidst the various sorts of martyrdom by which our faith and our constancy were afterwards tried.

The flogging took place in the yard, under a kind of shed open on all sides, in presence of Michalewicz, the czernices, popes, deacons, children, and of all who lived and blasphemed in this house, consecrated to the pious retreat of the spouses of Jesus-Christ!

Before each flogging, I always called for Siemasko's decrees, which I read aloud to my Sisters. Having read the decree, I always presented myself to receive the first strokes. It was not necessary to tie us; the cross of Jesus-Christ held us firm under the lashes that tore our flesh. Our only pain was to be flogged stark naked. But we united this humiliation with that of our divine Saviour.

"Oh, Jesus, save my soul by thy cross and Passion." This was our only moan, under the cruel strokes that bruised and tore our bodies. And to aggravate our tortures, we were compelled to witness each other's flagellation, whilst the czernices laughed and blasphemed, and applauded as they saw our blood flowing from our wounds. After each flagellation, we entoned the *Te Deum*, whilst our tormenters led us back to our hard labor, without allowing us a moment's rest. Our foot-steps were marked with our blood; and when the weakest of us fell to the ground, they were compelled by blows to rise again. It was after a flogging like this, that one of our Sisters, *Columba Gorska*, fainted on the way to her work. Michalewicz made her recover, by applying a few rude blows; she dragged herself to her barrow, and loaded it, but under her first effort to move it, she fell and expired. *Baptista Downar* was burned alive in an oven by the czernices, who had sent her to heat it. *Nepomuzna Grobkowska* died from the effects

of a terrible blow on the head, inflicted by the *Igumena*, or abbess, for having used a knife to scrape a spot of tar off the floor. Shortly afterwards, the terrible scourge terminated the martyrdom of two other Sisters, *Susanna Rypinska* and *Coletta Sielawa*; the latter died the day of her flagellation, after a scene which I will relate :

We were suffering greatly from hunger; but now and then God sent us food by inspiring a few poor people to throw us a little of their bread. Sister *Coletta* perceiving them that day, advanced to pick up a few crumbs; but one of the *czernices* saw her and fell upon her with her stick (for these wretches were never without their stick, which they carried at their side by way of a sword, and with which they were ever ready to strike us). Having knocked her down, she beat her on the head, tore her face, dragged her by the hair, and threw her so violently against a block of wood, that one of her ribs was broken. The good Sister offered no resistance, for we never offered any; and that same night she expired on my knees.

Some months had now elapsed since our arrival in Minsk (1839): *Michalewicz* had subjected us to all sorts of trials and torments; yet *Siemasko* reproached him for not having yet overcome our constancy and forced us to apostatize. *Michalewicz*, affrighted, wrote to *Siemasko* that we were disposed to embrace the schism, and that we were become soft as wax in his hands. Meantime he multiplied our tortures, to obtain in reality what he had falsely announced to *Siemasko*; and, to ensure success, he divided us and confined us in four separate dungeons. The one I occupied with eight of my Sisters was a cold, damp cellar, full of worms that soon covered us, entering our very eyes, mouth and nose.

Without any previous agreement, we commenced that same day a novena for each other, to obtain the grace of perseverance. The two first days, the other Sisters, who were separated from us, received each a pound of bran-bread and a pint of water; but this allowance was afterwards reduced to one-half. We got neither bread nor water; we ate the remains of a few vegetables we found in the cellar, and which the worms had not yet entirely consumed.

In our new prison we spent many happy, and even joyful moments. Our prayer was continual, and we composed a canticle that became our amusement and our consolation.

“ O my God, it is through thy holy will that we bear these chains ; accept our sufferings and sustain our courage.

“ Driven far from thy sacred abode, wherein labor for Thee was so sweet ; ah ! to whom shall we appeal against the crimes of those traitors ?

“ O my God, be thou our benefactor ; turn our sorrow into joy ; preserve our dear country from the crime of schism ; this is our only prayer.

“ O hand-maids of the Lord ! let us suffer for our divine Master ! Ah ! if we combat for Him ; He will wipe away our tears, and show us the triumph of our faith.

“ Then shall we cast away our chains, and be freed from the anguish of captivity. Blessed be thy will. O my God ; Thou wilt crown us in heaven.”

Michalewicz went around every day from one prison to the other, with a paper destined to receive our apostacy. “ Why do you resist uselessly ? he said ; your Sisters have already renounced the church of Rome ; here is the formula they have signed ; they are now free and happy, *and are just now taking their tea.* Come now, my children, sign this ; *your tea is ready.*” Then turning to me : “ Well, my Lady Abbess, had you not better become Abbess again, than let yourself be eaten alive by those worms. Come, sign this paper ; your other Sisters have already signed it.”

This is the way he tried to deceive us. We trembled for each other. At last I heard a voice telling me : “ *Seize that paper.*” I snatched it from the hands of the apostate ; I opened it..... it was perfectly blank !

“ Ah ! you traitor, Judas, liar, you envoy of Lucifer ! go back to your master.”

He had no stick with him, so he contented himself with filling my mouth with worms and filth, and went away enraged.

When the novena was over, we were taken from our prisons and brought back again to our hard labor. Finding ourselves *all* at our wheel-barrow again, we saluted each other with ineffable joy. “ Oh ! dear Mother ! exclaimed all my Sisters, you are then with us

again."—"I am with God," I answered,—“So are we, all of us, with God.”—And we knelt down to thank God for this new victory; we sang the *Te Deum*. I then said to my Sisters: “We have taken a good rest, my dear children; let us now work with renewed ardour. To work! To work!” Meanwhile Siemasko had hastened to comply with Michalewicz’s invitation. The bells announced his arrival an hour beforehand. The *czernices* went out to meet him; we awaited him in our prison. Siemasko came to us with Michalewicz, and accompanied by his clergy. He greeted us smilingly, and said: “I am happy to see you.”—“We, too, hail your presence, if you come to us as a good bishop and a good pastor. But if you present yourself again as an apostate, you may retire!”

He said he had come on our invitation; that this invitation, and our declaration to adhere to the *orthodox* faith, had dilated his heart; he called me *Mother General*, and as a token of my new and exalted dignity, he had brought me a splendid crosier with a decoration, in testimony of the satisfaction and special benevolence of his Majesty the Emperor.

We thought Siemasko was crazy; but at the same time we were seized with involuntary fear..... we feared there were a traitress among us. My Sisters looked at each other in dismay; and finally all eyes were turned upon me. “Scoundrel! I exclaimed; what did you say? How dare you come to tempt us again?”—“You asked me to come,” he said. My Sisters uttered a cry of distress..... and then ensued a perfect silence..... I was oppressed with inexpressible grief..... I grasped the pretended invitation out of Siemasko’s hands; I opened it in presence of my Sisters, and we saw that Michalewicz had signed my name in large letters; but the traitor’s hand had trembled.

“Ah! it is you, infernal monster, who have deceived even your own master, Satan”..... And I cast the fatal paper to the floor indignantly. The wretch dared to reply by another falsehood:

“You polish dog! you did, every one of you, bow down to my very feet and ask me, for mercy’s sake to write this humble petition for you.”—And you are not afraid of the God of truth, whom you thus offend by another

barfaced falsehood ? Nobody knows better than you do, that we are ready to suffer even death for our faith : how could we therefore ask you to bring us your accomplice, him, whom you recognize as your worthy archbishop, but who, to us, is nothing but an apostate like yourself." Then addressing myself to Siemasko : " This cross that you bring me in the name of the Emperor, you may suspend to your own breast, already so richly decorated. Formerly thieves were attached to the cross : but now I see the cross attached to a thief. Begone ! you shall not prevail against the servants of God. "

Siemasko appeared surprised, but he did not change his tone of voice ; he hoped to win us by his mildness. When he was gone, we shed tears of joy ; we thanked Our Lord for this new assistance of his grace, and my Sisters pressed around me in an effusion of love so long constrained by the presence of the apostate bishop.

That day, Siemasko appointed a russian pope, named Andrianow, to investigate the mystery of the petition signed by Michalewicz. He saw our constancy and threatened us with the most horrible tortures, and even with death ; but nothing could shake our courage ; God visibly sustained us, and Andrianow withdrew furious. The next day, Siemasko ordered us to be flogged under his own window, and in return for his visit, he got our blood. He then went away, after abusing Michalewicz, who revenged himself on us by increasing in cruelty.

After a few months (1839) Siemasko returned again, to consecrate, in his own way, our former church, destined henceforward to the use of the schismatics. They wanted to make us work at its reparation, but we preferred death rather than lay a hand to it.—Siemasko came himself to invite us to assist at the ceremony ; he even spoke about confession and communion. We answered him : " God will instruct us himself, and he will have mercy on us without your absolution ; you, unfortunate apostate, you have ceased to be our pastor ; therefore do not trouble yourself about our souls, but think rather, if you wish, of our bodies ; give us something to eat, for we are starving." Siemasko withdrew in anger ; he stationed himself at the church door, and ordered us to be brought in by force. We were immediately surrounded by a set of savages, who assaulted

us most brutally. All our Sisters were, on this glorious march, decorated with bleeding wounds: I received a terrible gash on the head. We arrived at the church literally covered with our blood. I exclaimed in a transport of superhuman strength: "My Sisters, in the name of Jesus-Christ, let the axe deliver us!" "At that moment Sister Wawrzecka dragged a block to Siemasko's feet. I grasped an axe that one of the worksmen, affrighted, had just dropped. The Sisters all threw themselves on their knees, and I, at their front, bending one knee to the ground, adjured Siemasko: "You have been our pastor; be now our executioner!..... Slay your own children! Take this axe; take it, and cut off our heads; throw them into your temple, for into it our feet will never walk!..... Take this axe, I conjure you, and behead us!"

I do not remember my expressions, but I will never forget the divine ardour that animated me as I cried out repeatedly: "Behead us! here is the axe, here are our heads!"

Siemasko with a blow of his fist knocked the axe out of my hands; it fell edge foremost against the leg of Sister Hortolana Jakubowska, and inflicted a deep wound. He then struck me a terrible blow on the face, and broke one of my teeth. I took the tooth, and presented it to Siemasko; "Here, monster! Keep this in remembrance of the brightest deed of your life; place this tooth amongst the diamonds that cover your heart of stone; it will shine more brilliantly than all those jewels for which you have bartered your soul!"

Here Siemasko nearly fainted; he muttered; "They have hurt me," and fell backwards into the hands of the popes, who offered him refreshments.

We were brought back to our work, and on the way we sang the *Te Deum* and dressed our wounds, which were indeed sweet.

Siemasko consoled himself for his defeat in an orgy that lasted all night, for all night long clamorous *hurrahs* in honour of the Emperor and Siemasko mingled with the sweet chants of thanksgiving that echoed through our prison.

Meanwhile the persecution became daily more violent. Michalewicz, constantly drunk since his apostacy

(he who never before used to take a drop of liquor), habitually carried a bottle of brandy in his sleeve. One day, on his way back from our prison, he slipped, fell head foremost into a pool of water, and expired. God have mercy on his soul ! (1840.) The czernices, on hearing of his death, said to us : “ It is well for you this accident happened during daytime, and not during the night ; otherwise you would have been accused and flogged to death. ” After the death of Michalewicz, we passed under the orders of another pope, named Iwanow who treated us still more cruelly, repeating incessantly : “ I am not a Michalewicz ! ”

II

DEPARTURE FOR POLOCK, AND SOJOURN AT SPAS. (1840-1843.)

Towards the close of the autumn of 1840, two years after our arrival at Witebsk, we one day perceived soldiers in the yard. We were bound hands and feet, and, tied two by two, as we had been the first time, we resumed our painful march without being even told whither we were going. Oh ! how can I express the sorrow that pierced our hearts when the soldiers wrested out of my hands the dear crucifix that had accompanied us from Minsk, and so visibly protected us at Witebsk ! They took it from us saying : “ You are not worthy to carry the cross of Christ ! ”

This was on Friday ; we marched two days, and on Sunday afternoon reached Polock. We first halted on a public square, where the good townspeople surrounded us and sought to penetrate amidst the bayonets to offer us relief and consolation, despite the efforts of the guards, who soon made us continue our painful, but now triumphant march.

That same night, we were lodged in the convent of the Basilian nuns, which we found already occupied by Russian popes and czernices. We were placed under the authority of a protopope named Iwan Wierowkin, who, always drunk, was ever ready to strike us with the knotted rope he habitually carried in his hand. In our new prison we found ten Basilian Sisters, the only survivors of the Community of Polock, composed of twenty-five Sisters before the persecution. Fifteen

Sisters had already perished before our arrival. The Mother abbess, Honora Rozanska, aged and infirm, had been one of the first victims (we found but ten Sisters and a corpse!!) When we entered, the ten Sisters threw themselves at my feet, as those of Witebsk had done, and asked me to be their Mother and Superior. We embraced each other in tears; I blessed my new daughters, and together we offered our trials and sufferings to God.

Among the Sisters of Polock, two were out of their mind in consequence of the blows and ill-treatment they had received. They were nevertheless lader: with chains like the rest, and tied to their wheel-barrows. One of them, Elizabeth Filihauzer, died shortly after our arrival: she expired on my knees from the effects of her wounds. The other, named Theresa Bieniecka, survived nearly six months with us. Her folly was peculiarly touching: she fulfilled her task in the household service without manifesting the least sign of mental aberration; but the moment she was tied to her wheel-barrow, she fell into a sort of ecstasy; she would strike her barrow as if it were a drum, and, holding her little crucifix in her hand, she would hum, with an inexpressible accent, a little song she had composed herself since her illness, although she never before had any taste for poetry. She would then raise her crucifix, press it to her heart, and terminate by pronouncing in a solemn tone these words of the gospel: *Glory be to God on high, and peace on earth to men of good will.* She would then become quiet, and recommence a few moments afterwards. One day, on our return from work, we found our dear Sister dead, her body covered with blood. She had expired under the blows of her tormenters; may her soul rest in peace!

We lost these two Sisters, not in the Basilian convent where we found them at Polock, but in another house called *Spas*, meaning *Saviour*, situated about three miles distant from the town, whither we had been transferred, to work at the construction of a palace for Siemas-ko. We were first employed in levelling the hill upon which the palace was to be built.

Our hardest labor was breaking stones. We had no tools, and had to break one stone with the other. Such

was our fatigue at this work, that we were soon unable to lift or move our arms. Our hands were torn, our sores aggravated by the cold, and our very blood spotted the rough stones and even the ground.

Our sufferings were so great and our limbs so broken with fatigue, that we could neither sleep nor even lie down, our heads ached so badly. We used to pass the night sitting and leaning against one another. Yet God gave new strength to his servants, who never ceased to be joyful at work. The labor we had to perform was evidently above our strength ; and yet we were not even allowed to assist each other, especially whilst we worked at the building of Siemasko's palace.

Several of our Sisters died on that occasion : we lost three within the space of eight days in the following manner. We had to carry mortar up to the third story of the building. The pails of mortar were exceedingly heavy, and only one Sister was allowed to lift each pail. Two or three loads exhausted the poor Sisters' strength ; the pail, full of mortar, slipped from the hand of the weakest, and fell upon the head of the next one, crushing and killing her in its fall. But what was still more painful to us, was to see the mangled bodies of our dear Sisters carried away in wheel-barrows, to be thrown we knew not where, without our being able to embrace these precious remains or accompany them to their last abode. The names of those three Sisters were : Rosalia Ilgocka, Gertruda Siciecka and Nepomucena Laudanska.

During that same summer (1841), five of our Sisters were buried alive in a loam-pit. The pit was very deep, and threatened to cave in. The popes were apprized of the danger the Sisters were in ; but their only answer was : "*May the earth swallow them up.*" That very day, their mortal remains found rest beneath the fallen pit, and their souls took flight to heaven ! Their names were : Euphemia Gurynska, Clementina Zebrowska, Catherine Korycka, Elizabeth Tyzenhauz and Irena Kwinta.

A few hours afterwards, nine other Sisters perished in the following manner :

The third story of Siemasko's palace was nearly finished ; five Sisters were working on the upper scaf-

fold, and four below them : I was myself standing on the boards, when Sister Rosalia Meduniecka, who was carrying mortar, called me, and said : " Mother, I am exhausted." I was the only one allowed to change work with those who fell exhausted. I descended immediately, and Sister Rosalia went up to take my place. I had scarcely walked a few steps away from the building, when a terrible crash shook the ground under my feet. I looked up..... the wall had fallen over, and my nine Sisters had disappeared beneath the rubbish !

Oh ! how did I survive that calamity ? Thy holy will be done, O Lord ! Why hast Thou stricken me so hard ? But thy will be done ! And I fell to the earth in a swoon. But I soon recovered ; I prayed aloud, to be heard in heaven, and complained to God for having hurt me so deeply, and yet I thanked Him from my whole heart. But my guards were not fond of prayer : they dragged me aside, and there I received the reward of my excessive sensibility ; I was cruelly flogged, and then driven back to work with imprecations like this : " Go now to your work ; you, too, will die like a dog ! God will kill you in the same way, to punish your obstinacy." The czernices were there, applauding and blaspheming.

In consequence of the loss of so many labourers, the mason-work had to be suspended, and we were employed in breaking stones, carrying timber, removing earth, etc., etc. After a few weeks, we resumed work : the building had to be completed in haste, for Siemasko was expected to arrive in a few days.

The chapel was decorated after the manner of the schismatics. One morning, the following inscription in russian verse was found in it :

Here, instead of monasteries,
You'll find Siberia and the galleys.

We were accused of having written the inscription, and were flogged twice that day, but so cruelly that two of our Sisters died from the effects. They expired on my knees, one that night, and the other the next morning.

Wierowkin wrote to Siemasko that, dismayed by the loss of so many of our Sisters, we were ready to

embrace the *orthodox religion*. This report hastened the arrival of the apostate bishop, who was occupied in closing the catholic churches of the province.

He arrived in the autumn of 1841, a year after our translation to Polock. He saluted us by asking : “ How do you do ? ” He then expressed his satisfaction to see that, overcome at last by the wrath of God, which had, he said, so evidently manifested itself upon us, we were ready to renounce our former obstinacy, and to accept the *advantages* of the *orthodox religion*. I answered : “ Who invited you to come and tempt us again ? ” — “ You did ” — “ What, I ? ” — “ If it is not you, it is then your Sisters who have invited me ” — “ Which of them ? ”

At these words, my Sisters all together denied the assertion most indignantly. “ Ah ! you apostate, said I, turning to Siemasko, you hypocrite, you want to take us by surprise, but you will not succeed ; for we are, and with the help of God, we will always be ready to die for our faith as our Sisters have done.” — “ You dare speak to me in that way ! Don't you know to whom you are speaking ? ” — “ Yes, I do ; I know I am speaking to an apostate, to a traitor to the church and to Jesus-Christ.”

He slapped me rudely on the face. “ Our Saviour, said I, tells us, if we are struck on one cheek, to present the other ; here it is, strike if you dare ” He did... and it was by thus slapping me on the face, nearly every time he came, that he broke nine of my teeth. “ I will let you know who I am, he said to me in a threatening tone ; I will show you that I and the Emperor are one.”

He then drew from his pocket a paper which he opened with care, and, placing it between my hands, he ordered me to read aloud, so that all my Sisters might hear, the *ukase* of the Emperor, couched substantially as follows :

Whatsoever the arch-arch-archrey (that is, thrice archbishop) Siemasko hath done, or may do to propagate the *orthodox religion*, I do approve, confirm and declare holy, thrice holy, and forbid any man to oppose or contradict ; I ordain also that in case of any resistance

whatever, the military authorities, at the mere requisition of the said arch-arch-archrey Siemasko, lend him the assistance he may require ; and this ukase I sign with my own hand.

Signed : NICOLAS I.

Whilst I read this ukase, Siemasko applauded with a triumphant gesture, repeating : “ Read it, examine it well, look at it with your two eyes, and not with an eye and a half ; do you hear ? look at that paper with your two eyes.”

When I had done, he showed us the petition we had sent to the Emperor on our arrival at Polock, and in which we offered to abandon our estate, and the government pension promised to us at Minsk, but which we had never received, and everything, provided we were left free to die in our holy religion.

Siemasko opened the petition carefully as he had opened the ukase, and, with the hand in which he held it, he dealt me such a violent blow on the face, that I felt its effects a year afterwards. “ I will learn you, he said, I will learn you to write to the Emperor ! ”

We recognized our petition, and saw the following words written on the margin : “ *Their request shall be granted, if they change their religion.* ”

“ You see now, added the apostate, that the Emperor and I are one ; ” and he again struck me rudely, and taking me by the shoulders, he crushed me to the floor and trod me under his feet. My Sisters screamed for help, and my Assistant, Sister Wawrzecka, said to me : “ Mother, let me bring him to reason. ” I forbid her to touch him, and she obeyed. Siemasko satisfied his rage upon me, not daring to strike Sister Wawrzecka though she came forward and defied him to attack her. When he was tired beating me, he asked : “ Who wrote that petition ? ” — “ I did, ” said I. — “ We all wrote it, ” answered my Sisters. — “ Who gave you the stamped paper ? ” — “ Some poor people bought it for us. ” — “ Who composed the petition ? ” — “ We did. ”

His rage increased beyond expression. “ When I shall have skinned you alive, and burned you like torches, you’ll tell me the truth. ” And with this he went away in fury. That evening, we were flogged

most cruelly by his orders, and another Sister, Basilissa Hofynska, died during the night ; like so many others she expired on my knees.

Siemasko returned the next morning ; when the bells announced his approach, my Sisters gathered around me, trembling : " Oh ! Mother, they said in tears, for God's sake, don't answer that monster, for he will kill you, and we will be left orphans."—" Let him kill me, my dear children, let him kill me ! If I die for God, He will not leave you orphans ; He will be your Father and your Mother !"

Siemasko soon arrived ; as usual, he exhorted us to apostatize ; he threatened and cursed us, and insisted on finding out who had composed the petition and written the verses found in the chapel, as I have already mentioned. That evening he gave me only three slaps on the face, for having called him an apostate. Seeing he could gain nothing on us, he went out saying to Wierowkin : " Torture them, torture them more and more ; I will make them submit. " Our misery consequently increased from day to day ; our labor became more painful, our tortures more intolerable.

The following winter (1841-1842) was still more terrible than the preceding winters. In the spring of 1842, our hard labor and our floggings recommenced by Siemasko's orders. We lost three Sisters under the flogging : Seraphina Szczyrbinska, seventy two years of age, was the first victim. At the thirtieth stroke her lips ceased to pronounce the sweet name of Jesus ; her soul was in haven. Twenty strokes remained to fulfil orders ; they were inflicted on her corpse ! The second Sister, Stanislas Dowgial, expired on my knees two hours after her flagellation. She too invoked incessantly the holy name of Jesus. " Oh ! she said to us, do not weep over me, for my sufferings will soon end ; weep over those that await you yet. "

Nathalia Narbut, the third Sister, prolonged her agony till that night. Stretched upon the floor with her head resting on my knees, she looked up to me with an expression of ineffable sweetness, and pressing her crucifix against heart and to her parching lips she incessantly repeated these touching words : O my Jesus, come and

console me, for I love Thee from my whole heart. " With these words on her lips, she expired.

After a sixth similar flagellation, the news of our treatment having spread in the town, the wife of the russian general in command threw herself at her husband's knees and recommended us to his charity. The good old man came to see what was going on ; he arrived just as the flogging was about to recommence. At the sight of all this torturing apparatus, the general's wife (a polish lady) fainted ; her husband, visibly moved, went directly to Wierowkin, and took Siemasko's order out of his hands, saying :

" What are you doing, you wretched pope ? Are you a hangman, to thus torture those innocent women ? " —
" I am only executing the order of the arch-arch-archrey. " — " If you execute the order of your apostate, I will hang you. The Emperor is not aware of the horrible way you torture your victims, and when he hears that I hanged you, he will probably say : The good old man was crazy ; but you, wretch, will be nevertheless hanged. "

He tore the decree to shreds, ordered us to be taken back to our prison, and left us a hundred rubbles, with which Wierowkin bought us only a little bread and salt, keeping the rest for himself as a reward for his kind services to us. Our floggings ceased ; but the general's compassion turned to our benefit, no doubt, for it became the occasion of still more cruel sufferings. He was not aware that Siemasko acted on authority from the Emperor. When the apostate bishop heard what the general had done, he became furious, and we soon felt the weight of his anger.

He soon came to Polock, to see his new palace and consecrate the church ; he accosted us with a threatening air : " What were you thinking of when you accepted the general's intervention ? I will learn him, and you too, to respect the Emperor's orders. Ah ! Ah ! he says the Emperor knew nothing about what I was doing. Do you see that ? said he, showing us again the ukase declaring *holy* and *thrice holy* whatsoever Siemas ko did or might do etc., etc. " What do you say to that ? I could hang every one of you. "

Meanwhile the devil was preparing against us the most horrible assault we have had to sustain, one which hell alone could inspire. The idea of this new sort of attack was due to Siemasko, who imagined it during a banquet. We were called in from our work earlier than usual, and, at a given moment, our prison was invaded by a set of drunken ferocious wretches, sent to outrage us most infamously. Oh ! who could ever tell the horrors of that terrible hour ? The scene was one of hell ! We were left bruised and bitten, and literally bathing in our blood. I received three terrible bites on the arm, and a deep gash in my side. My head was so awfully bruised, that I afterwards lost a piece of the skull-bone, the space of which is now covered over by a were lay of skin. Two Sisters, Justina Tur and Liberata Kormin, were crushed to death ; eight had their eyes plucked out and their face mutilated ; all were horribly mangled. Ah ! what a cruel night we passed, without being able to assist each other ! We washed our wounds with our tears, and soothed our pains by the thought of the sufferings of Jesus-Christ.

About two months after this scene (1843) we received the visit of Father Kotoski, a Franciscan monk, who lived nearly opposite our prison, in the former convent of the Jesuits, now occupied as a military school to which he was chaplain. At the sight of a catholic priest we shed tears of joy, in hopes of being able to go to confession and receive holy communion. Oh ! how happy we were to receive this unexpected visit ! Yet, it seemed strange to us that Father Kotoski, whilst sympathizing with us over our sufferings, had not a word to console us. He merely gave us a little money, with some bread and meat. He promised to return shortly again, and to visit us frequently, and so he did soon return. Our intention, this time, was to ask him to hear our confession ; but he spoke first and said : " Here is some more money and bread ; but it is especially about your souls that I wish to occupy myself today. " Then, offering us two books, he continued : " I deplore your misery, but still more your ignorance, you persist in your obstinacy without knowing for what. Listen to me. Is the Eucharist not the same under one,

or under two species ? Wherefore the united greek Church and the *uyuj* Church are the same."

After reading out of one on his books a few passages in support of what he had advanced, he continued : " If the united and the orthodox churches be the same, it follows that Siemasko's desire, that there be but one religion under the same monarch, is the holiest of desires ; and you were foolish in opposing his views by your obstinacy in a contrary opinion. If you persevere in your obstinacy, you shall be guilty before God. I, your Father, who am, and will ever be a good catholic, desire nothing in all this but the salvation of your souls."

We were stupified at these words. My Sisters looked at me : I exclaimed : " Ah ! who sent you here ? "—" God sent me to save your souls, which you have by your obstinacy doomed to hell"—" Ah ! Judas, retire from us : if our souls are doomed to hell, go back to your heaven and stay there." He raised his hand to strike me : but my Sisters advanced to protect me ; Wawrzecka seized him by the shoulders, and, assisted by the other Sisters, in the twinkling of an eye she landed him outside. We never saw him afterwards.

III

SOJOURN AT MIADZIOLY.—PRISON AND ESCAPE. (1843-1845.)

One day, towards the close of spring, in the year 1843, our guards sent us out into our prison yard ; Sister Wawrzecka, perceiving soldiers, said to us immediately : " My Sisters, we are going to travel again ; they are coming to dress us ; here are our bracelets." Effectively we were bound two together as usual, surrounded with bayonets and compelled to set out again, we knew not whither. It occurred to us that we were to be transported to Sibéria. " So much the better, we shall have more to suffer," said the Sisters, and we entoned a hymn in honour of the Archangel Michael.

Wierowkin accompanied us as far as the river Dwina, which we crossed in a boat. He embarked with us. His restless appearance amused us, whilst Sister Wawrzecka said to him : You are quite mistaken if you think we are going to drown ourselves ; the Dwina is not heaven, that we should throw ourselves into it.

After a march of about twelve days, we reached Miadzioly, a small town situated within the district of Minsk. We were here given over to the protopope Danilo Skrypin, superior of the czernices who had recently invaded the convent of the Carmelites. Popes and czernices surrounded us immediately, exclaiming : “ How well you do look ! you are quite strong and fleshy ; you have suffered nothing ? you have been doing nothing ? Wait a while ; we’ll soon wear you down. Bravo ! Bravo ! ! now we have servants ; we’ll make them work ! ” And they clapped their hands for joy. We were immediately applied to the most painful and disgusting work in their service.

Siemasko arrived during the fall of that same year (1843). This time, he did not come himself to see us, but ordered me and my assistant, Sister Wawrzecka, to be conducted to his palace. There, in presence of the czarnices and of a certain number of russian schismatic children who were being educated in the house, he exhorted us touchingly and in our own polish tongue : “ What do you expect to gain, he said, by persisting in your obstinacy ? You have already lost a great many of your companions : had you not better avail yourselves of the benevolence of the Emperor ? God would bless and reward your obedience. Do you see these children ? I am willing to trust you with the care of these pure and innocent souls : ” And, pointing to a little parcel upon the table : “ There is moreover a reward all ready for you, if you embrace the orthodox religion ” — “ You have already sufficiently tried our constancy, and you know very well that we are ready to suffer any tortures, and even death, for the love of Jesus-Christ ; it is for Him alone, that we live and wish to die. We desire to serve Him alone, and our neighbour for his sake. We could never consent to educate schismatics, unless it were to teach them the catholic religion. ”

A piercing voice was heard among the czernices : “ They are accursed ! they are accursed ! ” Siemasko threatened us with flogging ; Wawrzecka answered : “ That is just what we were going to ask you. ” — “ You injure your respectable, but desolated family, by your obstinacy. Fear the everlasting pains of hell, if you persist. ” — “ You may well speak of hell, you, who have just come from

there to tempt us."—The tumultuous shouts of the *czernices* brought the scene to a close, and Siemasko expelled us in fury. When he had left, we were compelled to purify with fire and water the spot whereon we had stood in his presence, defiled by what the *czernices* called our *accursed polish blood*.

To cool down that *polish blood* of ours, Siemasko ordered us to be plunged into the lake extending before Miadzioly. The decree having been read to us, we were, except those who were blind, vested with a sort of linen gown, something like a wheat-sack, but, with only one sleeve for both arms. In this state, with a rope around our neck, we were led through the town. A number of Jews followed us, weeping. A few small boats awaited us at the lake, each manned by two guards: two unfortunate apostate monks, Wasilewski and Komorowski, were among the number.

The protopope Skrypin first said: "If you don't embrace our religion, I will drown you like dogs."—"You may if you wish; but we will not abandon Jesus-Christ nor his Church." The boats were launched out, and we were dragged by the neck into the icy water: each man dragged a victim.

When the water was up to our waist, we were again invited to apostatize. On our refusal, we were led out into the deep water, where we were hauled and dragged about by the neck for nearly three hours. Finally, Skrypin, exasperated by our constancy, cried out in fury: "Drown them, drown them like dogs." We were led back to our prison amidst the wailings of the kind-hearted Jews, who sought in vain to offer us some relief and consolation. The dipping process was repeated six times within a fortnight, and was abandoned only through fear of the Jews. Four Sisters were drowned in this manner.

The Jews always showed themselves kind and charitable to us: may God enlighten and save them!

The following winter (1843-1844) was a cruel one for us: our sores were renewed by the contact of the cold water, and our infirmities considerably aggravated by cold and hardship. We were allowed to go out and

gather wood in the neighbouring forest ; but, trammelled as we were by our fetters, we were unable to carry it through the deep snow. Moreover, our only stove was in such bad order, and so filled our apartment with smoke, that one of our Sisters, Martha Balinska, was suffocated.

The winter following (1844-1845) our sufferings increased with our infirmities. Seven of our Sisters were now completely disabled, besides the eight blind Sisters, whose eyes had been plucked out during the horrible scene at Polock. Towards the close of winter, there were amongst us but four Sisters able to assist the others, and yet we were threatend with transportation to Siberia ; we were even assured that orders to that effect had been already received from the Emperor.

It was then (1845) that God inspired us with the design to attempt our escape, and he soon offered us a favorable opportunity.

To celebrate in a becoming manner Shrypin's birthday, the popes, czernices and guards drank themselves blind during three successive days. The night following the third day, whilst our guards were fast asleep, we managed to work off our fetters, and made our escape in the following manner.

We raised up against the prison wall a long trunk of wood, by means of which we reached the top of the wall. I ascended first, and contemplated for a moment the appalling height of three stories, that separated me from the ground below. I again asked God if it were his holy will that we should escape, and having invoked the Blessed Trinity, and made the sign of the cross, I precipitated myself into the air. God protected me, and I fell upon the soft snow without receiving the slightest injury. Sister Eusebia Wawrzecka followed me in the same manner. Then came Sister Clotilda Konarska, who had lost an eye at Polock ; the fourth, Irena Pomarnacka, was some time before she appeared. We were beginning to fear something had happened, when at last we heard her in the air above pronouncing these words : " The Lord be praised ", and she fell upon the snow. She rose nimbly to her feet, wrapped in a mantle she had

taken from a russian guard dead drunk, whilst we were awaiting her in anxiety.

All this took place about midnight from the 31 march to the 1 of April of this present year 1845.

God willed it so. He will take care of our blind and infirm Sisters, whom we abandoned without apprising them of our departure ; for if they had asked us to remain with them, we never would have been able to abandon them, and yet it was necessary to escape ; God willed it so.

I have since learned that two of our infirm Sisters died a few days afterwards, and that the others were placed in an hospital, after a long opposition from Siemasko, who persisted in refusing his permission, unless they consented to receive communion at least once from the hand of a schismatic pope. The Sisters having constantly refused, he finally gave his consent, but forbid the guardians of the hospital to ever allow them to see a catholic priest.

After shaking off the snow that covered us, we proceeded to the ruins of a neighbouring chapel, on which we knelt and recited together our midnight prayers ; we invoked the assistance of the Most Holy Trinity and the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary ; we recommended ourselves to our guardian angels and patron saints ; we embraced each other in tears, and then we separated, each one taking a different direction, to more easily elude the pursuit of the police, and in order that one of us at least might be happy enough to reach the feet of the Vicar of Jesus-Christ, and tell him the trials and sorrows of a nation suffering martyrdom for its faith, of a people loudly calling for their priests, dying in prison or freezing to death on the icy deserts of Siberia for their fidelity to the holy Roman Church, of a people loudly demanding the restoration of their ruined or profaned Sanctuaries. After wandering for nearly three months through the forests of Lithuania, without food or clothing, spied and tracted, and yet preserved from all dangers by divine Providence, I travelled across Prussia and France, and am now happily arrived in Rome, where, by command of the Holy Father, I have related what I remember of the

events that took place during the seven years we had the happiness to suffer for our faith.

I earnestly request that no publicity be given to anything that might bring trouble upon the charitable persons who, from time to time, afforded us some relief. May God bless and reward them, not only for the assistance they gave us (always at their own peril) but also for all they were willing to do for us, for the love of God.

And may the name of the Blessed and Most Holy Trinity be praised and glorified everywhere, and in all things for ever and ever, Amen.

MAKRENA MIECZYSLAWSKA

