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THE CROSS.

God forbid that I shou'ld 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. 1. HALIFAX, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1843. No. 31.

Weekly Calendar.

- October 1. Sunday XVII after Pent. Solemnity of the Rosary.
2. Monday. Feast of the Holy Guardian Angels.
3. Tuesday. S. Francis Caracciolo Conf. (from June 1.)
4. Wednesday. S. Francis of Assisium
5. Thursday S. Galla, Widow.
6. Friday. S. Bruno, Conf.
7. Saturday. S. Mark, Pope & Conf.

Instructions on the Choice of a State of Life.*

At your present age you should think of choosing a state of life; and there is nothing more necessary for you to know than the importance of this choice, and the rules by which you should be guided in making it. You have asked me for some instruction on this point, and I willingly comply with a request, that is so reasonable, and so worthy of your piety and wisdom.

I. Be deeply impressed with this great maxim, that there is nothing on which salvation depends more than on the choice of a state of life, because it is certain, that nearly all the sins of men proceed from the

engagement of their state. How many reprobates does God behold in hell, who would now be saints, if they had embraced, for instance, the religious state! and how many saints are there in heaven, who would be eternally damned, if they had lived in the world! This is what is called the secret of predestination, which principally turns on the choice of a state of life. Strive then to comprehend this truth deeply, that you may be well directed in an affair of so much importance. For what would become of you if you should deceive yourself and select a state different from that to which God has called you, and to which he has annexed the graces of your salvation?

II. The most essential matter in choosing a state of life is, never to enter it without a vocation, that is, without having been called by God. For it does not belong to you to dispose of yourself as you please, or select a state according to your own fancy. Belonging to God, as we do, it is for him to speak to us according to the views and designs of his Providence; and if, to the prejudice of so holy an obligation, we rashly engage ourselves in a state to which he has not called us, he

* These instructions were written for a young lady.

has, thenceforward a right to abandon us there, and to grant us no longer that special protection with which he favours the just. Now, what a misfortune, if this should ever happen to you, and if you should one day have to reproach yourself with being in a state for which God did not destine you? In this case, though you should be on the first throne in the world, though you should be a queen and a sovereign, you would have to bemoan your lot, and regard it as the most deplorable condition.

III. Nevertheless, behold the disorder, and at the same time the misery of states in the world. They are embraced through interest, through ambition, through passion, and for the establishments of fortune. God is never, or almost never thought of, and the last thing done is to examine whether the state of life be chosen according to his will, and whether salvation can be ensured in it. This is too frequently the case. For example, if an alliance is going to take place between two young persons, by the tie of marriage, what is it they pay most attention to? It is to consider if there be a suitable fortune at each side, if there be birth and rank, if a connection with such a family will bring any worldly honour and advantages. The moment these questions are satisfactorily answered, there is no concern about a divine vocation, or rather, it is supposed to

be infallibly connected with these advantages.

IV. Not that it is absolutely bad to have some regard to these things. There is a human prudence which is not contrary, provided it be subordinate, to the wisdom of the gospel. But the abuse consists in listening only to this worldly prudence, in being guided by the principles of the world, in considering the matter only in reference to the world, and in forming decisions on merely worldly considerations. For this is offering to God the same outrage and injustice, as would be offered by a master to his servant, if he wished to make himself independent of him, and would act only under the orders and authority of another.

V. From hence it happens, that there are few persons in the world, who can reasonably flatter themselves on being in the state of life to which God has called them. By this I do not wish you to suppose, that the different states which compose what we call the world, are not generally connected with the vocation of God. It was he established them, he that divided them, he that by his infinite wisdom disposed and arranged them. Now, he did not establish and regulate them, in order that they should remain vacant, or without subjects to fill them. Whence, it undeniably follows, that there are a great number amongst mankind whom he has created for these states, and destined to fill them, so that it would be a

grievous error to imagine, that if one be engaged in the world, he is outside the ways of God, as if God had condemned all states in the world, and that none of them could be embraced with a lawful and holy vocation. The world, by the operation and grace of the Holy Ghost, has produced perfect Christians in every state, and peopled heaven with a countless multitude of saints. But supposing all this, the proposition I have advanced, and which I resume is no less true; namely, that there are very few in the world who can have a reasonable and prudent certainty, that they are in that state of life to which God has called them. For, in order to have this assurance it is not enough, that I might have been called by God to any state in general. I require more. I should know in particular, and as far as I have the means of ascertaining, that God in his eternal predestination, has really marked out such or such a state for me, in preference to any other. This I can ascertain either by an express revelation from God, which the persons I speak of assuredly have not, or by the pains I shall take to the utmost of my power to discern the will of God in my regard. Now, it is evident, that people in the world generally take neither pains nor trouble for this purpose; they have therefore no reason to suppose, that their present state is that which God has allotted them in his adorable decrees. For to say that God, despite of their neglect, would guide them in so

dangerous a matter—that without their taking any trouble to learn his will, he should reveal it himself—that he would not in such a case leave them to their ignorance, and deliver them up to their blindness—this would be a presumption a thousand times condemned by the Word of God himself and by the sacred oracle of scripture. Thus they have no solid foundation for confidence, nay, I assert, on the contrary, they have more reason to fear the accomplishment of our Saviour's threats, who has so loudly and frequently assured us, that he will confound the false wisdom of the world, and abandon it to its own deceitful views and perverted understanding.

VI. You are at present anxious to know what you should do to discover the designs of heaven in your regard, and the nature of your vocation. This is what I am about to explain, and I will comprise in three points, which serve as so many rules, and which I beseech you to follow with entire fidelity. The first is, to have recourse to God; the second, to consult his ministers next; and the third, to consult yourself. Every thing that has any solid relation to the choice of your state of life, I mean, a good, wise, and Christian choice, will be found included in these three duties, which you will reduce to practice, as follows:

VII. As God immediately explains him to us only by interior inspirations, you should, in the bottom of your heart attend and listen to this secret . . .

with which he is wont to speak to his elect. But in order to engage him to reveal himself beforehand, and to communicate his lights, there is no more efficacious or certain method than prayer. Go, therefore, as often as you can, prostrate yourself before him, and say to him with Samuel: Speak, O Lord, thy servant heareth; speak and discover to me your designs with regard to me. Behold, I am ready to hear you, to obey you, to execute all your commands. Whatever difficulty there may be in any thing you prescribe me, or however it may be opposed to my inclinations, from the moment I understand it is your will, I hesitate no longer, but will consider it my duty to accomplish it without delay. Such, O my God! is my resolution, and I hope with your grace, that nothing will be able to shake or to change it. To this prayer you may also add, that of David: *Shew me, O Lord, the way in which I should walk, for to thee I have lifted up my soul.* Ps. 142. The Prophet here uses a powerful reason to touch the heart of God: *Because I have lifted up my soul to thee!* And indeed, if God wishes nothing more ardently than to see us correspond with his Providence and walk in his ways, will he leave us in ignorance of them, and will he have no regard to the desire which we manifest, and the righteous intention which we have of obeying his will?—To interest him in your favour, and dispose him to grant your request, add some particular devotions, and good

works, especially frequent communion, and even some practice of Christian penance; for, according to St. Paul, these are the victims and sacrifices by which God is appeased.

VIII. After having discharged your first duty to God, you should then address yourself to the ministers of God. These are our guides, our conductors, and they have been appointed to give us salutary advice. It is for this purpose God specially enlightens themselves, and it often happens, that he teaches us through their mouths, what he would not reveal to us himself.—Hence, in the old law, the prophets were called *seers*, and it was to them God sent his people to receive all the necessary decisions and advice. Now, by the ministers of God, I understand two kinds of persons. First, in the most general and proper sense they are the priests of the Lord, our confessors, and the directors of our conscience.—Choose a wise director, a man of God, in whom you can have confidence, and explain to him with simplicity and candour, all your views and thoughts, all the good and evil dispositions of your soul. Propose to him your doubts.—Point out to him for what you feel an attraction, and to what a repugnance.—Use no dissimulation with him; and when you believe you have told him every thing, beg of him to examine you himself, and answer his questions with the humility of a child. Above all things, make him feel that he can speak to you with perfect freedom, and ask

to decide for you in whatever manner he shall consider in the sight of God, and not in the way that would be most agreeable to you, according to nature and the world. When you act with this uprightness and good faith, you have every reason to hope, that God will preside at the judgment of his minister, and that the spirit of truth will inspire him with a just decision in your regard, and one that you may safely follow. But in the second place, you ought to reckon amongst the ministers of God, both your parents from whom you have received life. Fathers and mothers are, after God, and according to the order of God, the first superiors of their children, and instead of gospel liberty, it would be a culpable independence, to withdraw ourselves absolutely from the paternal authority in the choice of a state of life. It is true, that we are not always bound to conform to the desires of a father and mother, who are too full of the spirit of the world, and that there are occasions when we may answer them in the words of the Apostles: *Is it just that we should obey you in preference to God?* Acts iv. But we should, at least, listen to them, examine their reasons, and yield to them if we have no stronger to advance; in a word, whether we agree to their desire, or act differently for the sake of our salvation, we should always give them proofs of our filial submission and respect.

IX. It remains, that you consult, or in St. Paul's language, that you *prove*

yourself. For God has given us discernment and reason, that we may use them in all our affairs, but particularly those which are of so much consequence to us as the choice of a state of life. Examine then, without deceiving yourself, what state of life that is, in which above all others you can give most glory to God, in which it will be most easy to work out your salvation, and for which you are most suited, by the qualities of your mind and heart.— For it may be, that with the natural dispositions which God has given you, you might be lost in a state in which another would be saved, or the contrary. At all events, you should remember, that every deliberation of yours should be referred to your salvation, as to your only end; that you should not form an opinion of a state of life, nor value one state more than another, only, inasmuch as it will more surely conduce to your salvation; that all you have to consider in yourself should be reduced to that single question, which the young man in the gospel addressed to Jesus Christ: *What must I do to obtain eternal life?* Luke x. For, the grand principle which you should lay down, and from which you should draw all its consequences is, *I desire to work out my salvation; and I desire to secure it at any price.* On this point, I require no deliberation; my mind is already determined. But there are many ways of securing my salvation, and one of the most effectual is a state of life.— Now, of all the states of life which pre-

sent themselves to my mind, I have to consider in the presence of God, which of them will be most useful in guiding me to my end—which is always the salvation of my soul. If my only objects were to raise myself in the world, to lead a pleasant and agreeable life in the world, I might be certain of succeeding in such or such a state. But, I again repeat, this is not the end I have in view; and therefore, I should pay no attention to all this. My object is to attain everlasting life. Now, I know, or I sincerely believe I know, that in no other state can I more surely obtain it than in this particular one. I therefore conclude, that it is upon this my choice should fall.

X. After having deliberated with yourself in this manner, if you do not seem to be perfectly determined, there are two rules from the exercises of St. Ignatius, which you should observe:—

1. What advice would I give to another if he were in my place, and asked my opinion? to another who would have the same inclinations or the same defects as I? What answer should I make him, or what kind of life should I recommend him to adopt? For, when others are concerned, we are much more disinterested in general, and on that account much more likely to choose the better part. Now, why should I not have the same zeal and charity for myself, as I would have for another? If one of my friends was deliberating, and was concerned only to secure his salvation, I know what I should say to

him. And why should I not say the same to myself? O my God! deliver me from all the illusions of self-love, which blind me, and which prevent me from thinking as safely on what concerns myself, as on the affairs of my neighbour. 2. Amongst these different states of life, which would I wish to have chosen at the hour of death? For, it is then I shall form a solid estimate of things, and neither the passions nor prejudices of the world shall any longer obscure my reason. What I should therefore wish to have done at this last moment, is what I should do to-day; and this is undoubtedly the most certain and infallible rule which I can follow. If I act otherwise, I must expect that I shall one day suffer extreme regret. And would it not be the last degree of folly, to do any thing of which I shall have hereafter to repent? O my God! I thank you, for this light which you have given me. Grant, O Lord, that I may profit by it as a most excellent means of forming a Christian decision. Yes, my God, it is by this I wish to decide my lot in your presence. I desire to live in that state in which I should die with the greatest peace.—Woe be to me, if I embrace any condition which will be a source of fear and regret at the hour of my death!

XI. Without pretending to give you my formal opinion on the state of life which would suit you best, I conclude, by repeating to you, with regard to the religious state, what St. Paul said to the primitive Christians concerning celiba-

ey. This passage is admirable, and full of meaning and religion. "Now, concerning virgins, I have no precept of the Lord: but I give counsel, as having obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. I think therefore that this is good for the present necessity, that it is good for a man so to be. Art thou bound to a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But if thou take a wife, thou hast not sinned. And if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned: nevertheless, such shall have tribulation of the flesh. But I spare you. This therefore I say, brethren: the time is short: it remaineth, that they also who have wives, be as if they had none: And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as if they possessed not; and they that use the world, as if they useth it not: for the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you to be without solicitude. He that is without a wife, is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife: and he is divided. And the unmarried woman, and the virgin, thinketh on the things of the Lord: that she may be holy both in body and in spirit." 1 Cor. vii. It will be easy for you to apply these words to the religious profession. I shall say no more upon it. It will be for the Lord himself to explain his will, and you will be always safe under his vocation and guidance.

Spiritual Maxims of St. Vincent of Paul.

OCTOBER.

1.

Simplicity makes our words ever conformable to the sentiments of our heart; it does not, however, wish that we should disclose all our thoughts, because this virtue is not contrary to prudence, which makes us understand when we should speak, and when be silent, and which also teaches us what to say, and what to keep secret.

2.

Murmurs against the orders of superiors in a religious house, are a kind of apostacy; and as one falls into a kind of exterior apostacy, by quitting the habit and the order to which he is attached, so he is guilty of interior apostacy if he separate himself from the thoughts, or the will, or dispositions of his superior, to follow his own sentiments.— This is the greatest misfortune that can befall a community.

3.

Obedience does not consist merely in doing what we are directed, but in a continual disposition of accomplishing on every occasion, whatever we shall be commanded.

4.

God sends us trouble and affliction to exercise our patience, and to teach us sympathy for the misfortunes of others.

5.

Reputation is an empty bubble, when it is not founded on truth, and when established on this basis we have nothing to fear.

6.

A superior should have a friendship, a paternal tenderness for his inferiors ; he should treat them so affectionately as to make each of them believe he was tenderly loved.

7.

Motives altogether human, concealed under the pretext of zeal, and the glory of God, cause works to be often undertaken, of which God is not the author, and which his wisdom does not crown with success.

8.

There are many persons who are satisfied with a very modest exterior, and great sentiments of God in their interior ; but if they have to endure great fatigues for God, to instruct the poor, to suffer to be mortified, to receive sickness with joy, to be exposed to calumny or disgrace, their courage fails and everything vanishes.

9.

We ought to abandon ourselves entirely to the hands of God. We ought to believe that his providence disposes for our greater good, every thing that he wishes or permits to happen to us.

10.

Excesses are blameable in every-

thing, but are particularly so in prayer ; we ought to conduct ourselves with moderation at this holy exercise, and above all preserve the peace of the spirit and the heart during our prayer.

11.

Fraternal charity is the seal of our predestination, as it shows that we are the true disciples of Jesus Christ.

12.

Humility is a virtue which Jesus Christ has exceedingly loved, and which he came to teach to the world. The most powerful weapon to conquer the devil is humility.

13.

We ought to treat those who present themselves to make the spiritual exercise of a retreat, as men sent to us by God himself ; we should make no distinction between them, but treat the rich and the poor alike ; we should rather give the preference to the latter, as their life is more conformable to that which Christ led on earth.

14.

Undertakings which are begun in the simple and ordinary ways, are more favoured by God, than those in which we use extraordinary and remarkable means.

15.

God is extremely glorified, when we abandon ourselves to his good pleasure, without seeking to penetrate his motives, being satisfied to think that his

will is his motive, and his motive his will.

16.

Too great mental application for the purpose of rendering spiritual things sensible, warms the imagination and affects the head; in like manner acts of will, which are repeated too often, and with too much violence, weaken and dry up the heart; we should therefore use moderation in all things.

17.

Fraternal charity is the soul of virtues, and the paradise of religious communities.

18.

If we were deeply convinced of our incapacity, we should be careful not to put our reaping hook into the corn of another, nor to offer ourselves for a preference over other workmen, whom perhaps God has chosen for the accomplishment of his work.

19.

It is not the studied and refined eloquence of a discourse, that contributes to the salvation of souls. Simplicity and humility alone dispose and open hearts for the operations of grace.

20.

In addition to the grace which is merited by the practice of obedience, the Lord is also pleased to do the will of those who through love of him, submit their will to that of their superiors.

21.

As the members of the human body, aid and strengthen each other for the advantage and preservation of the whole body, so the members of a community ought to have a mutual condescension for each other. The learned, where there is no danger of error or of sin, should condescend to the weakness of the ignorant, the wise and the prudent to that of the humble and the simple.

22.

Families as well as individuals should look on it as a misfortune to be always tranquil, to see every thing succeeding to their wishes, and to have nothing to suffer for the love of God.

23.

No one should introduce himself to the functions of the ecclesiastical state, and particularly into dignities, both because he should imitate in this point the Son of God, who being a High Priest for ever, did not usurp its functions, but awaited the appointment of God his Father, and because he should conform to the rules of the Church, which forbid such presumption.

24.

The most glorious and desirable death is that which surprises us with arms in our hands for the service of the Lord.

25.

A superior should quit every other occupation, in order to listen to his subjects, and to give them time to explain to him every thing they wish; he owes them this condescension, no matter how inconvenient it may be to him.

26.

O how miserable it is to be without a cross! When we have nothing to suffer we are not conformable to Jesus Christ, although, this conformity is the true mark of our predestination.

27.

In the storms and injuries which calumny excites against us, we ought not to seek to justify ourselves, if we are sincerely tending to perfection; but we should receive the confusion, bear every thing with patience, and abandon ourselves to God, in the expectation that his hour will arrive.

28.

The spirit of Jesus Christ is one of uprightness and sincerity. He that is called to glorify this loving God, ought not to act according to his spirit.

29.

Those who believe themselves the authors of the good they have done, or who flatter themselves with having the least share in the world in it, or take complacency in such thoughts, lose more than they gain, even when the works on which they are engaged are good and holy.

30.

As our divine Redeemer has told us, Blessed are you when men shall persecute you, and say all manner of evil concerning you, it is an exceeding great happiness to be treated as Jesus Christ our Saviour was treated.

31.

The perfection of prayer, as well as an interior perfection, does not consist in prayer of more or less sublimity, but in charity.

MISSIONS OF INDIA.

Letter of the Rev. Louis Garnier, Jesuit Missionary, to a Father of the same Society.

Madura, November 10, 1841.

“ REVEREND FATHER,

“ Our preceding letters have frequently spoken to you concerning our Christians, our labours, our toils, our consolations, and our hopes; yet the wish which I feel of communicating with you, induces me to imitate the gleaner, who carefully picks up the ears of corn that have escaped the attention of the reapers; I may, perhaps, even light upon some details worthy to interest you.

“ You used to say to me, that an apostolical man is not intended to go in quest of the little consolations of the holy ministry, and to seek after the praises of men; that he ought to rejoice for labouring in the midst of the poor, of the sick, and ignorant, satisfied even when he finds, after being exhausted with fatigue, only a morsel of black bread, and still more happy if he be insulted, calumniated, maltreated, by the administrators of justice. Here a Missionary has frequent opportunities of putting in practice these instructions, in the ministry exercised amongst the Parias: there are no corporal penalties, certainly, to undergo, but in their stead, he has to bear numerous fines, insults of every description, and persecutions raised up against him by every sort of persons; there is no black bread, it is true, but very often, after having run about the whole day, his entire meal consists of a little rice steeped in peppered water: such are some of the thorns of our crown, may we be able at this cost to save many souls, and enter heaven in company with them!

“ The principle obstacle to the accomplish-

ment of this wish will always proceed from the sheep-like spirit of the Indians, who follow with blind submission the good or bad guidance of those who walk at their head. You cannot believe to what a degree the persons of the same caste are united amongst themselves, and with what facility they suffer themselves to be guided by their chiefs or other influential members.—The result of this common feeling is, that the discontent of a single individual, becomes the discontent of all: oftentimes a wrong head is sufficient to ruin whole families; all the relations consider themselves as mutually bound and responsible to each other. In their eyes the party of the greater number is always the best: *Sallon per sonnapadi kelkavenu*, that is, *one must abide by the decision of ten*. Ten signifies for them riches, authority: thus they will say in India of an opulent person: he has ten fanons in his hand, (ten pieces of ten halfpence) to express that he has crowns. We see at present amongst the deserters who, twelve years ago, passed over in a body to Calvinism, Christians who were entirely strangers to religious controversies, and undoubtedly more Catholic than Protestant; but they had to follow the example of their chief, under pain of being excluded from the caste, and incurring the disgrace attached to the refusal to profess the common error. This known character causes me much fear. What will become of the poor Indians of a tribe, when the majority has once decided in favour of heresy?

“— I resume my letter, commenced yesterday, to lay before you a very curious account. It rained a great deal last night: yet the river *Vai-Vairon*, which passes by *Madura*, and falls into the sea near *Ramnad*, was only knee-deep when the criminals condemned to hard labour passed in the morning, in order to be employed on the other side in forming a road. Towards eight o'clock a great noise was heard; people ran to the banks of the river, and they saw waves of a reddish water approach, that rolled forward with impetuosity. In a moment the vast bed of the river was filled; the unfortunate convicts could return no more. It

became then necessary to load the largest elephant of the pagoda with rice, wood, and such other provisions as were necessary for persons in want of every thing. The elephant crossed the river without difficulty; the water touching his back: he marched majestically through the middle of the rushing torrent, without tottering in the least from the violence of the current.— He raised his large trunk and lashed from time to time the surface of the water. Our city inhabitants in Europe would pay a high price to witness such a sight.

“These sudden risings of the water often stop the Missionary in the midst of his journeys; he finds himself on these occasions in the midst of an unexpectedly-formed river, without bridge or boat by which to cross it. The following passage, extracted from the letter of a colleague, will show you how ingenious our Indians become under such circumstances: ‘I dismounted from horseback,’ said he ‘one of my guides took the saddle on his head, and carried it thus above the water: the other guided my beast by the bridle to the other side.— Three men then stooped down; two interlaced their arms; upon which a third, placed behind, rested his extended hands. I placed myself on this seat, with my feet in their hands; the three men then stood up, cheerfully took to the water, and carried me to the other side of the river. All the inconvenience I experienced from this mode of transit, was the bathing of my feet.

“I am, in union with your prayers,
 LOUIS GARNIER, *Missionary, S. J.*’

Extract from a Letter of the Rev. Joseph Bertrand, S. J., Superior of the Mission of Madura, to a Father of the same Society.

Trichinopoly, August 20, 1841.

“REVEREND AND DEARLY-BELOVED FATHER,

“— Although the picture of our Indians has been often drawn, the interest which you take in their instruction, the desire that you manifest of knowing their character and the kind of devotion which they prefer, make it my duty to return again to the subject. If what I communicate have not the merit of novelty, these

repetitions will, I expect, be pardoned of a father who speaks of his children.

"You, who know how many are the occupations of the Missionaries in Madura, will be, perhaps, tempted to ask how they are equal to them; particularly if you add to the fatigues of the apostleship, the continual annoyances that the schism creates for us. Happily our Christians do not exact much from us; their patience lightens somewhat the weight of our ministry; thus, they fear not to come in search of the priest from the distance of six leagues and more, in order to receive spiritual relief. All the faithful who are not at a greater distance than five miles, are required to assist at Mass on Sunday; and they come in great numbers even from four and five leagues. When we celebrate the feasts with solemnity and processions they flock in crowds from the distance of twenty, thirty, and forty miles.

The journeys on those occasions cause them no inconvenience; the infants at the breast are carried in their mother's arms, or in a cloth, of which the four corners are tied together across a long pole; when they stop, the cloth is suspended to the branch of a tree. The children of three, four, five, and six years old, run beside their mother, holding by her dress, or they repose astride on their father's back, holding on by the little tuft of hair that adorns the top of his head; while their elders carry the rice and cooking requisites. The whole forms a truly interesting caravan.

"The sick even are often carried to considerable distances to receive the extreme-unction. I recollect a poor invalid who was thus brought from a distance in order to be reconciled to God: I heard his confession; but being obliged to depart immediately after, I could not give him the holy Viaticum, which he ardently desired. Some days after, being more than thirty leagues from the place where I first met him, I saw him arriving, carried upon a hand-barrow; he heard Mass and received the holy Communion with the most affecting piety, and returned home, saying, that henceforth he had nothing more to desire, and that he would die content. And it is at their last moments that may be

seen realized in our Indians the oracular words of the Saviour: '*Blessed are the poor in spirit.*'— They are free from regret, because they have little to leave, and that they easily make themselves familiar with the ideas and expectations of another life. Hence there is no necessity of long circumlocutions for the purpose of announcing to them that they are going to appear before God. I was lately administering the consolations of religion to an old woman; the catechist that accompanied me said to her, according to his ordinary formula, 'It is now necessary for you to hold yourself ready to die.'— 'Oh, yes,' she answered. 'Do you willingly renounce this life and all desire of the things of this world?' 'Ah,' she replied, 'what is this world for me? what have I to do with its desires?'

"I shall not enter into a detail of the prayers that accompany our religious exercises; they are adapted to the taste and feeling of the country, and remind the faithful with particular care of the principal truths of Faith. Being drawn up for the most part in the dialogue form, they win easily on the attention of the Indians; they might, perhaps, have an equally good effect elsewhere. A single quotation will enable you to judge of their merit: 'Lord, my God, you have produced me from nothing.' The people respond, 'Lord, to you be glory and praise.' The person presiding continues: 'On account of sin, I was a child of wrath; I could not of myself satisfy your justice; you became man, and by your sufferings made satisfaction in my place. Lord, to you be glory and praise. By baptism you communicated to me all your merits? Lord, to you be glory and praise. After baptism I sinned, and by means of the sacrament of penance you have purified me from all my sins; instead of casting me into hell, you have replaced me on the way to heaven. Lord, to you be glory and praise. Even this day you have loaded me with benefits. Lord, to you be glory and praise. Grant me the favour to know my faults and to detest them.' Next follows the examinations of conscience.

"Besides these religious exercises, which are common to all the Christians, there are here, as

elsewhere, peculiar practices, which, although left to the devotion of each person, are not on that account the less generally observed. A very great number of Catholics fast on Saturday, that is, on that day, make but one meal towards sunset. How many times, on my journeys, have I not heard my travelling companion reply to those who would ask him if he had eaten that day, 'And do you not know that to-day is Saturday?' And yet the poor Indian had followed me the whole morning, carrying on his head a large bundle, he had exhausted himself with fatigue to facilitate the success of my ministry! There are countries of India where this practice is almost universal, even amongst the agricultural labourers; several of them, particularly when they are in good circumstances, prefer to work only the half of the day, in order to be able to sleep until evening their only rest.

"This spirit of mortification often affords to me on occasion of being edified in the holy tribunal: thus, when I happen to impose, as penance, some fast on Saturday, a great number of neophytes will answer me, 'I fast every Saturday.—That is enough,' is my decision; but they are rarely content with it. If I appoint Wednesday or Friday, I frequently find one or other already engaged by some fast of devotion. Lately, I had just prescribed a similar good work; my penitent appeared much embarrassed. 'What is the matter?' said I. 'Father,' I was answered, 'for three years I eat but once in the day; and what shall I do to accomplish the fast you impose on me?' These examples, I repeat, are not rare amongst our Christians.—You will pray for them, Reverend Father, and for him who has the honour of being, &c.

BERTRAND, S. J."

Extract of a Letter of the Rev. Louis Tassis, Jesuit Missionary, to a Father of the same Society.

Palamcottah, November 6, 1811.

REVEREND FATHER,

"After some months devoted to the study of the Tamoul, I was sent to a village near Aour.

to take up there my ordinary residence, and to direct, novice as I was in the language of the country, this poor, pastorless Congregation.—There I inhabited a little House which was quite in the Indian fashion, that is, a mud-cabin covered with leaves, where the rats, the bats, and lizards, had free entry, and frequently visited me.

"At the first sight, I did not consider my lodging over grand; but since that I have inhabited other huts in the Mission where I am now, the first appears to me to have been tolerably commodious. For, although, as to furniture, I was reduced to the most simple description, I had, however, what was necessary: a bed of boards, it is true, but it was a bed; a chair, a table, and a lamp; four pieces of furniture rarely found together in the district of Palamcottah; sometimes one is wanted, sometimes another, and they almost smile with satisfaction when all are not wanted at the same time. I had, moreover, a window, and a window that gave light, a thing uncommon in the Indian houses. The ancient philosophers, who prided themselves with having need of little, would have been according to their wish in this country: our worthy Indians are philosophers without suspecting it. How many things are regarded by the strangers as indispensable, of which they do not even imagine the use! They have no business with a chair, bed, or table, &c., the ground supplies for them the place of all these. During the day, if they wish to see clear, they open their door; in the night they have the light of a sort of sick-chamber lamp, which never leaves the hole contrived for it in the wall. If they are at a distance from the light they draw near to it, but the lamp never quits its post.

"I dwelled for some months in this first habitation, leading a rather solitary life. Fortunately I had a clever catechist, who gave me lessons in the Tamoul tongue; the difficulty was to understand him; but at length, by dint of making him repeat his periods, and of turning over my dictionary, I succeeded in comprehending the catechism which we explained together. Whilst

awaiting the time when I could converse with the men, I made the acquaintance of a little friend, who, without saying a word, procured for me some moments of innocent recreation.— I had tamed a palm-tree rat, which willingly kept me company: this pretty little animal is a species of squirrel, much smaller than the squirrel of Europe; it is grey, with large black and white streaks upon the back; its principal ornament is a long, party-coloured tail, which it takes care to raise at every instant, to keep it clean; its little eyes are of an incomparable loveliness; continually on the watch, it flies at the least noise. The one of which I speak followed me everywhere, came upon my person, entered my pockets, and complained in a cry, very like the singing of a bird, when I drove it away. Alas! it did not advance to old age; when it found no longer the description of food it required, it died of hunger.

“I arrived at Tutucurin towards the end of May. I was sent, after some days’ repose, to the Pearl Coast, there to exercise the holy ministry. I had at first a very advantageous idea of this celebrated coast, which produces pearl and coral, and which I figured to myself almost as a terrestrial paradise. How the most vaunted things suffer on being closely seen! It would be difficult to find a more melancholy desert, and one of a more monotonous aspect, than this arid shore. The villages of the Paravers, who are pearl-fishers every ten years, and fishermen daily are composed of some wretched cabins, built, or thrown here and there, without order and without symmetry, in the midst of moving sands. These sands, driven by a perpetual wind, rise in such thick clouds, that the robbers often take advantage of them to plunder the passengers, without being seen; they penetrate everywhere, roll like waves around the houses that they bury in their course, and change in a few years the face of an entire locality; every day the domain of cultivation diminishes, and vegetation flies before their continually rising tide.— In all the places where I have been, I have heard my guides say, ‘There, under these sterile downs, vast and delightful gardens lie buried.’—

It appears that formerly the coast was more agreeable, and also more peopled; if we are to believe the traditions of the country, it contains scarcely a quarter of its ancient inhabitants.

“Three handsome churches are still to be seen; one at Vaimbar, another at Tutucurin, and the third at Virpaundipatuam; and, by the way, I must remark, that the maps very inaccurately make of the latter place two villages.— These churches, which we are assured, were built by a captain, on account of a vow, if he should escape from a tempest, are of a size quite disproportioned to the small number of the present Paravers. I asked what was become of the ancient Christians: I was answered, that death had extinguished several families; that the others had been obliged by a scarcity to seek their fortune elsewhere; on all hands it was agreed that formerly there was in the country a vast deal more wealth than at the present day.

“The first religious act that I performed upon this coast was at an interment. I had not as yet been witness to this ceremony in India, and I was greatly astonished at seeing practises so different from ours. I was conducted to the house of the deceased, a woman who had died in giving birth to her first child. She was laid on a state bed, around which all the family was assembled. I was allowed to conclude the prayers very quietly; but I had no sooner finished than the relatives flung themselves upon the body, with cries and frightful howlings. I knew not what they were going to do: it was to embrace it, but with such strong marks of affection, that the deceased never before in all probability received the like. Some of her relatives repeated to her the most endearing expressions, and the most suited to induce her to remain amongst them; the others reproached her with her hardness in leaving them so soon; all spoke to her at once, and in such a manner, that had the poor woman been alive, she would not have known to which to reply.

“When the moment arrived for carrying away the corpse, the scene became still more animated: the relatives would not let it go, and it was not without difficulty that it was rescue-

from their hands: each one pulled it in his direction, each one wished to embrace it once more; they all had something to say to it. At length they became resigned to allow it to be removed; all the family accompanied it to the grave: when the moment came of consigning it to the earth, the cries, bidding farewell, and lamentations, recommenced. I did not see the conclusion; my duty being fulfilled, I retired.— What struck me particularly, was, that in the midst of all the demonstrations of grief, I saw but few tears fall. The whole appeared to me forced, and prepared according to usage; for usage regulates everything in this country, even the feelings of the heart.

“In certain castes there prevails a very laudable custom. When the dying are in the last agony, the family assembles around the death-bed: at the moment of expiring all present kneel down, and pray for the soul just departed; tears are forbidden until this pious duty has been discharged. On the day of the death, all the friends of the deceased Indian repair to the house of his nearest relative, to mourn with him, and to share in his affliction; they accompany him during the funeral ceremonies, and also take their last farewell of the deceased.— Having returned from the funeral, they assemble at an appointed place, and conclude their condolence by an act which you will consider singular, to say no more of it—they smoke a cigar each in token of mourning.

“The ignorance of this people is what afflicts the Missionary the most: the fatigue, the privations, the rigour of the climate, are nothing, in comparison with what he feels from the prevailing darkness; inasmuch as the deficiency of the instruction, united to the inconstancy of the Indians, causes frequent defections. A trifling interest, a frivolous reason, is sufficient to induce several of them to pass over to schism, or to the exterior profession of heresy. When we shall speak their language well, and that we shall be in sufficient number to visit them several times in the year, we shall I hope, effect much good; for the present we can only prevent the Catho-

lic faith from being completely extinguished here; and our Christians from again becoming pagans. This is something, certainly, but is not enough for the heart of a Missionary.

“Accept, &c.,

“LOUIS TASSIS,
“Missionary-Apostolic.”

Association for the Propagation of the Faith.

A meeting of the Committee and Collectors of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith will be held in the new Vestry, on Monday evening, 2d October, at 7 o'clock.

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September 26, 1843.

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