







MADAM GUYON, *Jeanne*
" *Marie (Bouvier*
de La Motte)
AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

ABRIDGED
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INTRODUCTION.

FEW paths have been more strewn with crosses than the one which was trod by Madam Guyon. It can be truly said of her, she "followed in His train." No cross was too heavy for her to bear gladly, and no tribulation so grievous but that she gloried in it.

She lived, labored, suffered and died in the Roman Catholic Church—a great light in the dense darkness that characterized the age of Louis XIV. She was naturally endowed with beauty, wit and ability, yet from early childhood she desired to become a saint, and had her father consented, would have spent her life in a cloister. An early, loveless marriage to a man many years her senior, and a heartless, selfish mother-in-law, caused her to seek the Lord and to renounce self; her desires were all turned to the silent path of suffering that Christ might be formed within her.

After becoming a widow she was greatly used of the Lord in leading others into the *interior path*, among them many of noble rank, and here suffered the severest persecution from ecclesiastical sources. She was imprisoned for ten years, on a false charge, and banished for an equal number of years. Her autobiography, which has passed through a number of editions, was written while she was in prison, by the authority of her spiritual director.

We make no apology for putting another edition before the public. The Christian world is just beginning to appreciate the depths in God this martyr spirit reached. As the light grows brighter and brighter on the teaching of holiness and the operations and workings of the Holy Spirit, the soul more and more thirsts for the Spirit-filled life, and nothing is so help-

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INTRODUCTION

ful as to study the lives of those who have gone through the experience of putting off self and putting on Christ.

Much has been written along the line of sanctification and kindred themes, but no exposition of scripture or statement of abstract truth is so helpful as the actual demonstration of that truth. Seekers after God have been flooded with sermons, and have devoured volumes on the subject of sanctification, but the great need of the Christian world is a practical demonstration of the doctrine. Such was Madam Guyon. With her was laid down all earthly desire, as well as all earthly support; with her, times and places were annihilated; prosperity and adversity, friendships and enmities, all equally the will of God.

Her autobiography tells the secret of how she reached the place of rest and perfect submission to the will of God. Whether riding along a precipice, upheld only by the hand of God, traveling through a wood and accosted by robbers, or in the Bastille, where darkness and daylight were hardly distinguishable, she was ever unmoved, and her soul preserved a triumphant and joyful peace. She says that during her imprisonment "the stones of her prison looked in her eyes like rubies." and her heart was so filled that she sang songs of joy.

This edition is much abbreviated, though nothing that is vital has been omitted. It is sent out with the prayer that the valuable lessons contained therein will be helpful to every reader.

A. C. R.

Chicago, November, 1911.

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LOVE CONSTITUTES MY CRIME.

LOVE constitutes my crime;
For this they keep me here,
Imprisoned thus so long a time
For Him I hold so dear;
And yet I am as when I came,
The subject of this holy flame.

How can I better grow!
How from my own heart fly!
Those who imprisoned me should know
True love can never die.
Yea, tread and crush it with disdain,
And it will live and burn again.

And am I then to blame?
He's always in my sight;
And having once inspired the flame,
He's always kept it bright.
For this they smite me and reprove,
Because I cannot cease to love.

What power shall dim its ray,
Dropped burning from above!
Eternal life shall ne'er decay,
God is the life of love.
And when its source of life is o'er,
And only then shall shine no more.

—*Madam Guyon.*

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By Anna C. Reiff.

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I. EARLY RELIGIOUS IMPRESSIONS.

AS you thought there were omissions of importance in the former narration of my life, I willingly comply with your desire, in giving you a more circumstantial relation; though the labor seems rather painful, as I cannot use much study or reflection. My earnest wish is to paint in true colors to your view, the goodness of God to me, and the depth of my own ingratitude—but it is impossible, as numberless little circumstances have escaped my memory, and you are also unwilling I should give you a minute account of my sins. I shall, however, try to leave out as few faults as possible, and I depend on you to destroy it, when your soul hath drawn those spiritual advantages therefrom, which God intended, and for which purpose I am willing to sacrifice all things, being fully persuaded of His designs toward you, as well for the sanctification of others, as for your own sanctification.

I was born on the 18th of April, 1648. My parents, particularly my father, were extremely pious; but to my father it was in a manner hereditary, as many of his forefathers were saints.

My mother, in the eighth month, was accidentally frightened, which caused an abortion; and it is generally imagined that a child born in that month cannot survive; indeed, I was so excessively ill, immediately after my birth, that all about me despaired of my life, and were apprehensive I should die without baptism; but perceiving some signs of vitality, they ran to

acquaint my father, who immediately brought a priest; but, on entering the chamber they were told, those symptoms which had raised their hopes were only expiring struggles, and that all was now over.

I had no sooner shown signs of life again, than I again relapsed, and remained so long in an uncertain state, that it was some time before they could find a proper opportunity to baptize me, and I continued very unhealthy until I was two and a half years old, when they sent me to the convent of the Ursulines, where I remained a few months.

On my return, my mother neglected to pay due attention to my education. She was not fond of daughters, and therefore abandoned me wholly to the care of servants; indeed, I should have suffered severely from their inattention to me, had not an all-watchful Providence been my Protector; for through the liveliness of my disposition, I met with various accidents. I frequently fell into a deep vault that held our fire-wood; however, I always escaped unhurt.

At the age of four I was placed in the Convent of the Benedictines, where I was guilty of frequent and dangerous irregularities, and remember to have committed serious faults. Yet I had good examples before me, and being naturally well inclined, I quickly followed them, when there were none to turn me aside. I loved to hear God spoken of, to be at Church, and to be dressed in a religious habit. One day I was told of the terrors of hell, which I imagined were intended to intimidate me, as I was exceedingly lively, and full of a little petulant vivacity, which they called wit. The succeeding night I dreamt of hell, and though I was so young, yet time has never since been able to efface the fright-

ful ideas which were then impressed upon my imagination. All appeared horrible darkness, where souls were punished, and my place amongst them was pointed out. At this I wept bitterly, and cried, "Oh, my God, if Thou wilt have mercy upon me, and spare me yet a little longer, I will never more offend Thee." And Thou didst, O Lord, in mercy hearken unto my cry, and pour upon me strength and courage to serve Thee, in an uncommon manner for one of my age. I wanted to go privately to confession, but being so little, the mistress of the boarders carried me to the priest, and stayed with me while I was heard singly; but she was much astonished when I came to mention that I had suggestions against the faith, and the confessor began to laugh, and enquire what they were. I told him that till then I had doubted there was such a place as hell, and supposed my mistress had spoken of it merely to make me good, but that now my doubts were all removed. After confession my heart glowed with a kind of fervor, and at one time I felt a desire to suffer martyrdom.

At my solicitation, and on account of my falling so frequently sick, I was at length taken home; but not without having met a variety of little crosses, proportioned to my age. On my return, my mother having a maid in whom she placed confidence, left me again to the care of servants. I must here mention it as a great fault, of which mothers are guilty, when under pretext of external devotions, or other engagements, they suffer their daughters to be absent from them; nor can I forbear condemning that unjust partiality with which parents treat some of their children. It is frequently productive of divisions in families, and even the ruin

of some; whereas impartiality, by uniting children's hearts together, lays the foundation of lasting harmony and unanimity.

My father, who loved me tenderly, seeing how little my education was attended to, sent me to a convent of the Ursulines. I was then near seven years old. In this house were two half sisters of mine, the one by my father, the other by my mother. My father placed me under his daughter's care, whom I may affirm to be a person of the greatest capacity and most exalted piety, and excellently qualified for the instruction of youth. This was a singular dispensation of God's providence and love towards me, and proved the first means of my salvation. She loved me tenderly, and her affection made her discover in me many amiable qualities, which the Lord of great goodness had implanted in me. She endeavored to improve these good qualities, and I believe that had I continued in such careful hands, I should have acquired as many virtuous habits as I afterwards contracted evil ones.

This good sister employed her time in instructing me in piety, and in such branches of learning as were suitable to my age and capacity. She had good talents, and improved them well; was frequent in prayer, and her faith was as great as that of most persons. She denied herself every other pleasure, to be with me and instruct me. Nay, such was her affection for me, that it made her find, as she told me, more pleasure with me than anywhere else.

If I made her agreeable answers, though more from chance than from judgment, she thought herself well paid for all her labor. In short, under her care I soon became mistress of most studies suitable for me,

insomuch that many grown persons of rank could not have answered the questions which I did.

As my father often sent for me, desiring to see me at home, I found at one time the Queen of England there. I was then near eight years of age. My father told the Queen's confessor, that if he wanted a little amusement, he might entertain himself with me, and propound some questions to me. He tried me with several very difficult ones, to which I returned such pertinent answers, that he carried me to the Queen, and said to her, "Your majesty must have some diversion with this child." She also tried me, and was so well pleased with my lively answers and my manners, that she demanded me of my father with no small importunity, assuring him that she would take particular care of me, designing me for maid of honor to the princess. But my father resisted so far as to disoblige her. Doubtless it was God who caused this refusal, and thereby turned off the stroke which might have probably intercepted my salvation; for being so weak as I was, how could I have withstood the temptations and distractions of a Court?

I went back to the Ursulines, where my good sister continued her affection. But as she was not the mistress of the boarders, and I was obliged sometimes to go along with them, I contracted bad habits. I became addicted to lying, peevishness and indevotion, passing whole days without thinking on God; though He watched continually over me, as the sequel will manifest. I did not remain long under the power of such vicious habits, for my sister's care recovered me. I loved much to hear of God, was not weary of Church, loved to pray, had tenderness for the poor, and a

natural dislike for persons whose doctrine was judged unsound. God has always continued to me this grace, in the midst of my greatest infidelities.

There was at the end of the garden connected with this convent, a little chapel dedicated to the child Jesus. To this I betook myself for devotion; and, for some time, carrying my breakfast thither every morning, I hid it all behind His image; for I was so much a child, that I thought I made a considerable sacrifice in depriving myself of it. Being also delicate in my choice of food, I wished to mortify myself, but found self-love still too prevalent, to submit to such mortification. After this, when they were cleaning out this chapel, they found behind the image what I had left there, and presently guessed that it was I, as they had seen me every day going thither. I believe that God, who lets nothing pass without a recompense, soon rewarded me with interest for this little infantine devotion.

I continued some time with my sister, where I retained the love and fear of God. My life was easy; I was educated agreeably with her. I improved much while I had my health; but very often I was sick, and seized with maladies as sudden as they were uncommon. In the evening well, and in the morning swelled and full of bluish marks, symptoms of a fever which soon followed. At nine years of age, I was taken with so violent a fit of hemorrhage, that they thought I was going to die. I was rendered exceedingly weak thereby.

A little before this severe attack, my other sister became jealous, wanting to have me in her turn. Though she led a good life, yet she had not a talent

for the education of children. At first she caressed me much; but all her caresses made no impression upon my heart. My other sister did more with a look, than she with either caresses or threatenings. As she saw that I loved her not so well as the other, she changed her fondling to rigorous treatment. She would not allow me to speak to my other sister; and when she knew I had spoken to her, she had me whipped, or else beat me herself. I could no longer hold out against such severe usage, and therefore requited with apparent ingratitude all the favors of my paternal sister, going no more to see her. But this did not hinder her from giving me marks of her usual goodness, in the severe malady just mentioned. She kindly construed my ingratitude to be rather owing to my fear of chastisement, than to a bad heart. Indeed, I believe this was the only instance in which fear of chastisement operated so powerfully upon me, for, from that time I suffered more in occasioning pain to one I loved, than in suffering myself at their hand. Thou knowest, O my Beloved, that it was not the dread of Thy chastisements that sunk so deep, either into my understanding or my heart; it was the sorrow for offending Thee which ever constituted the whole of my distress; which was so great, that I imagine if there were neither heaven nor hell I should always have retained the same fear of displeasing Thee. Thou knowest that after my faults, when, in forgiving mercy, Thou wert pleased to visit my soul, Thy caresses were a thousand-fold more insupportable than Thy rod.

My father being informed of all that passed, took me home again. I was at that time near ten years of age. I stayed only a little while at home, for a nun of

the order of St. Dominie, of a great family, and one of my father's intimate friends, solicited him to place me in her convent, of which she was the prioress, promising she would take care of me herself, and make me lodge in her own chamber, for this lady had conceived a great affection for me. But she was so taken up with her community, in which many troublesome events occurred, that she was not at liberty to take much care of me. Here I had the chicken-pox, which made me keep my bed three weeks, in which I had very bad attendance, though my father and mother thought I was under excellent care. The ladies of the house had such a dread of the small-pox, as they imagined mine to be, that they durst not come near me. I passed almost all the time without seeing anybody but a lay-sister, who only brought me my allowance of diet at the set hours, and then immediately went off again. I providentially found a Bible in my chamber, and having both a fondness for reading and a happy memory, I spent whole days in reading it from morning to night, and learned entirely the historical part. Yet, I was really very unhappy in this house; for the other boarders, being large girls, distressed me with very grievous persecutions. I was so much neglected, as to food, that I fell away, and became quite emaciated. Several other crosses I had, which were very hard for me to bear.

II. CONFLICTS IN YOUTH.

AFTER having been here about eight months, my father took me home again. My mother kept me more with her, beginning to have a higher regard for me than before; yet she still preferred my brother, which was so visible, that every one spoke of it with dislike. Even when I was sick and met with anything I liked, he demanded it. It was then taken from me, and given to him, though he was in perfectly good health. He was continually giving me new vexations. One day he made me mount upon the top of the coach; when he had done that, he threw me down on the ground, and by the fall I was very much bruised. At other times he beat me. But whatever he did, however wrong, it was winked at, or had the most favorable construction put upon it. This conduct soured my temper. I had little disposition to do good, saying I was never the better for it. It was not then for Thee alone, O God, that I did good; since I ceased to do it, when it met not with such a reception from others as I wanted. Had I known how to make a right use of this Thy crucifying conduct toward me, I should have made a good progress. Far from turning me out of the way, it would have made me turn more wholly to Thee.

I looked with jealous eyes on my brother, seeing the difference made betwixt him and me. Whatever he did was considered well; but if there was blame, it fell on me. My step-sisters by the mother, gained her good will by caressing him and persecuting me. It

is true, I was bad. I relapsed into my former faults of lying and peevishness. With all these faults I was very tender and charitable to the poor, prayed to God assiduously, loved to hear any one speak of Him, and to read good books.

I doubt not that you will be amazed at such a series of inconsistencies; but what succeeds will surprise you yet more, when you see this manner of acting gain ground with my years, and that as my reason ripened, it was so far from correcting such irrational conduct, that sin grew more powerful in me. O my God, Thy grace seemed to be redoubled in proportion to the increase of my ingratitude.

I cannot bear to hear it said, "We are not free to resist grace." I have had too long and fatal an experience of my liberty. I closed up the avenues of my heart, that I might not so much as hear that secret voice of God, which was calling me to Himself. I have indeed, from my tenderest youth, passed through a series of grievances, either by maladies or by persecutions. The girl to whose care my mother left me, in dressing my head used to beat me, and did not make me turn it but with rage and blows. Everything seemed in concert to punish me, but this instead of making me turn unto Thee, O my God, only served to afflict and embitter my mind. My father knew nothing of all this, for his love to me was such that he would not have suffered it. I loved him very much, but at the same time I feared him, so that I told him nothing of it. My mother was often teasing him with complaints of me, to which he made no other reply than, "There are twelve hours in the day; she'll grow wiser." This rigorous proceeding was not the worst

for my soul, though it soured my temper, which was otherwise mild and easy. But what caused my greatest hurt was, that not being able to endure those who treated me ill, I chose to be among those who caressed me, in order to corrupt and spoil me.

My father, seeing I was now grown pretty tall, placed me in Lent among the Ursulines, to receive my first communion at Easter, at which time I was to complete my eleventh year. And here my most dear sister, under whose inspection my father placed me, redoubled her cares, to cause me to make the best preparation possible for this act of devotion. I thought now of giving myself to God in good earnest. I often felt a combat between my good inclinations and my bad habits. I even did some penances. As I was almost always with my sister, and as the boarders in her class, which was the first, were very reasonable and civil, I became such also, while among them. It had been cruel to educate me badly; for my very nature was strongly disposed to goodness, and I loved everything that tended thereto. Easily won with mildness, I did with pleasure whatever my good sister desired. At length Easter arrived, and I received the communion with much joy and devotion.

As I now grew very tall for my age, and more to my mother's liking than before, she took care to deck and dress me out, to make me see company, and to take me abroad with her. She took an inordinate pride in that beauty with which God had formed me only to bless and praise Him, which, however, was perverted by me into a source of pride and vanity. Several suitors offered to me; but as I was not yet twelve years of age, my father would not listen to any pro-

posals. I loved reading much, and shut myself up alone every day to read without interruption.

What proved effectual to gain me over entirely to God, at least for a time, was that a nephew of my father's passed by our house, going on a mission to Cochin, China. I happened at that time to be taking a walk with my companions, which I seldom did. At my return he was gone. They gave me an account of his sanctity, and the things he had said. I was so touched therewith, that I was overcome with sorrow. I cried all the rest of the day and of the night. Early in the morning, I went in great distress to seek my confessor. I said to him, "What! my father, am I the only person in our family to be lost? Alas! help me in my salvation." He was greatly surprised to see me so much afflicted, and comforted me in the best manner he could, not thinking me so bad as I was; for in the midst of my backslidings I was docile, punctual in obedience, careful to confess often, and since I went to him my life was more regular. Oh, Thou God of love, how often hast Thou knocked at the door of my heart! how often terrified me with appearances of sudden death! Yet all these only made a transient impression. I presently returned again to my infidelities; but this time Thou didst take, and I may say quite carried off my heart.

I immediately applied myself to every part of my duty. I made a general confession with great compunction of heart. I frankly confessed all that I knew with many tears. I became so changed that I was scarce to be known. I would not for ever so much have made the least voluntary slip, and they found not any matter for absolution when I confessed. I

discovered the very smallest faults, and God did me the favor to enable me to conquer myself in many things. There were left only some remains of passion, which gave me some trouble to conquer. But as soon as I had by means thereof, given any displeasure, even to the domestics, I begged their pardon, in order to subdue at the same time, my wrath and pride, for wrath is the daughter of pride. A person truly humbled suffers not anything to put him in a rage. As it is pride which dies the last in the soul, so it is passion which is last destroyed in the outward conduct. A soul thoroughly annihilated, or dead to itself, finds nothing of rage left.

I followed my religious exercises. I shut myself up all the day to read and pray. I gave all I had to the poor, taking even linen to their houses to make them necessaries. I taught them the catechism; and, when my parents dined abroad, I made them eat with me, and served them with great respect. I read the works of St. Francis de Sales and the life of Madam de Chantal. There I first learnt what mental prayer was, and I besought my confessor to teach me that kind of prayer, but as he did not, I used my own endeavors to practice it, though without success, as I then thought, because I could not exercise the imagination; and persuaded myself, that that prayer could not be made without forming to one's self certain ideas and reasoning much. The difficulty gave me no small trouble, for a long time. I was nevertheless very assiduous therein, and prayed earnestly to God to give me the gift of prayer. All that I saw in the life of M. de Chantal charmed me; and I was so much a child, that I thought I ought to do everything I saw in it.

All the vows she had made I made also, as that of ever aiming at the highest perfection, and of doing the will of God in everything.

After this, I turned all my thoughts to become a nun, very often going to the visitation; because the love which I had for St. Francis de Sales did not permit me to think of any other community than this of which he was the founder. I frequently went to beg the nuns there to receive me into their convent. Often I stole out of my father's house to go thither, and repeatedly solicited them to consent to my admission. But, though it was what they eagerly desired, even as a temporal advantage, yet they never durst let me enter their house, as they very much feared my father, whose fondness for me they were no strangers to. There was then at that house a niece of my father's, to whom I am under great obligations. Fortune had not been very favorable to her father, and had reduced her in some measure to depend on mine, to whom she made known my inclination. Although he would not for anything in the world have hindered a right vocation, yet he could not hear of my design without shedding tears. But as he happened at this time to be abroad, my cousin went to my confessor, to desire him to forbid my going to the visitation. He durst not, however, do it plainly, for fear of drawing on himself the resentment of that community. Yet I still wanted to be a nun, and importuned my mother excessively to take me to that house, but she would not do it, for fear of grieving my father, who was yet absent.

III. LAPSINGS AND INCONSISTENCIES.

NO sooner was my father returned home, than he fell into a violent illness. My mother was at the same time indisposed in another part of the house. I was then all alone with him, ready to render him every kind of service I was capable of, and to give him all the dutiful marks of a most sincere affection. And I do not doubt but my assiduity was very agreeable to him. I performed the most menial offices unperceived by him, taking the time for it when the servants were not at hand, as well to mortify myself as to pay due honor to what Jesus Christ said, that He came not to be ministered to, but to minister. When he made me read to him, I read with such heart-felt devotion that he was surprised at it. I remembered the instruction my sister had given me, and the ejaculatory prayers and praises I had learned from her. She had taught me to praise Thee, O my God, in all Thy works. All that I saw called upon me to render Thee homage.

My cousin aforementioned helped not a little to support me in these good sentiments; for I was often with her, and loved her, as she took great care of me, and treated me with much gentleness. Her fortune being equal neither to her birth nor her virtue, she did with charity and affection what her condition obliged her to. My mother grew jealous, fearing I should love my cousin too well and herself too little. She who had left me in my young years to the care of her maids, and since that to my own, only inquiring if

I was in the house and troubling herself no further, now required me always to stay with her, and never suffered me to be with my cousin but with very great reluctance. My cousin fell ill; she took that occasion to send her home, which was a very severe stroke to my heart, as well as to that grace which began to dawn in me.

Though my mother acted thus, she was a very virtuous woman. But God permitted it for my exercise. She was one of the most charitable women of her age. She not only gave away the surplus, but even the necessaries of the house. Never were the needy neglected by her. Never any wretch came to her without succor. She furnished poor mechanics wherewith to carry on their work, and needy tradesmen wherewith to supply their shops. From her, I think, I inherited my charity and love for the poor; for God favored me with the blessing of being her successor in that holy exercise. There was not one in the town, or its environs, who did not praise her for this great virtue. She has sometimes given to the last penny in the house, though she had so large a family to maintain, and yet she did not fail in her faith.

After my cousin left me I continued for some time in those sentiments of piety I have mentioned. And God granted me the grace to forgive injuries with such readiness, that my confessor was surprised; as he knew that some young ladies had, out of envy, traduced me; and that I spoke well of them as occasion offered.

Near a twelvemonth after, we went to pass some days in the country. My father took along with us one of his relations, a very accomplished young gen-

tleman. He had a great desire to marry me, but my father, who had resolved not to give me to any near kinsman, on account of the difficulty of obtaining dispensations, put him off. As this young gentleman was very devout, and every day said the office of the Virgin, I said it with him, and to have time for it, left off prayer, which was to me the first inlet of evils. Yet, I kept up for a long time some share of the spirit of piety; for I went to seek out the little shepherdesses, to instruct them in their religious duty. Yet this spirit gradually decayed, not being nourished by prayer. Hereby I became cold toward God. All my old faults revived, to which I added an excessive vanity. The love I began to have for myself, extinguished what remained in me of the love of God.

I did not wholly leave off mental prayer, without asking my confessor's leave. I told him I thought it better to say the office of the Virgin every day, than to practice prayer, as I had not time for both. I saw not that this was a stratagem of the enemy to draw me from God, and to entangle me in the snares he had laid for me. In truth I had time sufficient for both, as I had no other occupation than what I prescribed to myself. My confessor was easy in the matter; not being a man of prayer, he gave his consent, to my great hurt.

Oh, my God, if the value of prayer were but known, the great advantage which accrues to the soul from conversing with Thee, and what consequence it is of to salvation, everyone would be assiduous in it. It is a stronghold into which the enemy cannot enter. He may attack it, besiege it, make a noise about its walls, but while we are faithful and hold our station, he can-

not hurt us. It is alike requisite to dictate to children the necessity of prayer as of their salvation; but alas! unhappily, it is thought sufficient to tell them that there is a heaven and a hell; that they must endeavor to avoid the latter and attain the former; and yet they are not taught the shortest and easiest way of arriving at it. The only way to heaven is prayer; a prayer of the heart, which every one is capable of, and not of reasonings which are the fruits of study, or exercise of the imagination, which, in filling the mind with wandering objects, rarely settle it; and instead of warming the heart with love to God, leave it cold and languishing. Let the poor come, let the ignorant and carnal come; let the children without reason or knowledge come, let the dull or hard hearts which can retain nothing come to the practice of prayer, and they shall become wise. But if you quit it, alas! the enemy has the ascendant. He will give you of his poisoned draughts, which may have an apparent sweetness, but will assuredly rob you of life.

Thus, I forsook the fountain of living water when I left off prayer. I became as a vineyard exposed to pillage, whose hedges torn down give liberty to all the passengers to ravage it. I began to seek in the creature what I had found in God. He left me to myself, because I first left Him; and it was His will by permitting me to sink into the horrible pit, to make me feel the necessity I was in of approaching Him in prayer. Thou hast said, that Thou wilt destroy those adulterous souls who depart from Thee. Alas! it is their departure alone which causes their destruction, since in departing from Thee, O Sun of Righteousness, they enter into the regions of darkness and the coldness of

death, from which they would never rise, if Thou didst not revisit them; if Thou didst not by Thy divine light, illuminate their darkness, and by Thy enlivening warmth, melt their icy hearts, and restore them to life.

I fell then into the greatest of all misfortunes; for I wandered yet further and further from Thee, O my God, and Thou didst gradually retire from a heart which had quitted Thee. Yet such is Thy goodness, that it seemed as if Thou hadst left me with regret; and when this heart was desirous to return again unto Thee, with what speed didst Thou come to meet it. This proof of Thy love and mercy, shall be to me an everlasting testimony of Thy goodness and of my own ingratitude.

I became still more passionate than I had ever been, as age gave more force to nature. I was frequently guilty of lying; I felt my heart corrupt and vain; the spark of divine grace was almost extinguished in me, and I fell into a state of indifference and indevotion; though I still carefully kept up outside appearances; and the habit I had acquired of behaving at Church, made me appear better than I was. Vanity, which had been excluded from my heart, now resumed its seat. I began to pass a great part of my time before a looking-glass. I found so much pleasure in viewing myself therein, that I thought others were in the right who practiced the same. Instead of making use of this exterior, which God had given me, that I might love Him the more, it became to me only the means of a vain complacency. All seemed to me to look beautiful in my person, but I saw not that it covered a polluted soul. This rendered me so inwardly vain, that I doubt whether any ever exceeded me

therein; but there was an affected modesty in my outward deportment that would have deceived the world.

The high esteem I had for myself made me find faults in everyone else of my own sex. I had no eyes but to see my own good qualities, and to discover the defects of others. I hid my own faults from myself, or if I remarked any, yet to me they appeared little in comparison of others. I excused, and even figured them to myself as perfections. Every idea I had of others and of myself was false. I loved reading to such excess, particularly romances, that I spent whole days and nights at them; sometimes the day broke whilst I continued to read, insomuch, that for a length of time I almost lost the habit of sleeping. I was ever eager to get to the end of the book, in hopes of finding something to satisfy a certain craving which I found within me, but my thirst for reading was only increased the more I read. These books are strange inventions to destroy youth; for if they caused no other hurt than the loss of our precious time, is not that too much? I was not restrained, but rather encouraged to read them under this fallacious pretext—that they taught one to speak well.

Meanwhile, through Thy abundant mercy, O my God, Thou camest to seek me from time to time. Thou didst indeed knock at the door of my heart,—I was often penetrated with the most lively sorrow and shed abundance of tears,—I was afflicted to find my state so different from what it was when I enjoyed Thy sacred presence; but my tears were fruitless and my grief in vain. I could not of myself get out of this wretched state. I wished some hand as charitable as powerful would extricate me, but as for myself I had no power.

If I had had any friend, who would have examined the cause of this evil, and made me have recourse again to prayer, which was the only means of relief, all would have been well. I was (like the prophet) in a deep abyss of mire, which I could not get out of. I met with reprimands for being in it, but none were kind enough to reach out a helping hand to free me. And when I tried vain efforts to get out, I only sunk the deeper, and each fruitless attempt only made me see my own impotence, and rendered me more afflicted.

Oh, how much compassion has this sad experience given me for sinners, as it has taught me why so few of them emerge from the miserable state into which they have fallen. The only true remedy for them is prayer; to present themselves before God as criminals; and to beg strength of Him to rise out of this state. Then would they soon be changed, and brought out of the mire and clay. But the devil has falsely persuaded the doctors and the wise men of the age, that, in order to pray, it is necessary first to be perfectly converted. Hence people are dissuaded from it, and hence there is rarely any conversion that is durable. The devil is outrageous only against prayer, and those that exercise it; because he knows it is the true means of taking his prey from him. No sooner does one enter into a spiritual life, a life of prayer, but they must prepare for strange crosses; as all manner of persecutions and contempts in this world are reserved for that life.

Miserable as the condition was to which I was reduced by my infidelities, and the little help I had from my confessor, I did not fail to say my vocal prayers every day, to confess pretty often, and to par-

take of the communion almost every fortnight. I loved to hear anyone speak of God, and would never tire of the conversation. When my father spoke of Him, I was transported with joy; and when he and my mother went on any pilgrimage, and were to set off early in the morning, I either did not go to bed the night before, or hired the girls to wake me early. My father's conversation at such times was always of divine matters, which afforded me the highest delight, and I preferred that subject to any other. I also loved the poor, and was charitable, even whilst I was so very faulty as I have described. How strange may this seem to some, and how hard to reconcile things so very opposite.

IV. BEGINNING OF SORROWS.

AFTERWARDS we came to Paris, where my vanity increased. No course was spared to make me appear to advantage. I was forward enough to show myself and expose my pride, in making a parade of this vain beauty, wanting to be loved of everyone and to love none. Several apparently advantageous offers of marriage were made for me; but God, unwilling to have me lost, did not permit matters to succeed. My father still found difficulties, which my all-wise Creator raised for my salvation; for had I married any of these persons, I should have been much exposed, and my vanity would have had means to extend itself in a wider circle.

There was one person who had asked for me in marriage for several years, whom my father, for family reasons, had always refused. His manners were opposite to my vanity. But, a fear lest I should leave my country, together with the affluent circumstances of this gentleman, induced my father, in spite of both his own and my mother's reluctance, to promise me to him; which was done without consulting me. They made me sign the marriage articles without letting me know what they were; though I was well pleased with the thoughts of marriage, flattering myself with a hope of being thereby set at full liberty, and delivered from the ill-treatment of my mother, which I drew upon myself by want of docility. Yet God ordered it far otherwise; and the condition which I found myself

in afterwards, frustrated my hopes, as I shall show in the sequel.

Pleasing as my marriage was to my thoughts, I was all the time, after my being promised, and even long after my marriage, in extreme confusion, which arose from two causes: The first was my natural modesty, which I did not lose. I had much reserve towards men. The other was my vanity; for though the husband provided was a more advantageous match than I merited, yet I did not think him such. And the figure which the others made, who had offered to me before, was vastly more engaging. Their rank would have placed me in view. And as I consulted in these things, nothing but my vanity, whatever did not flatter that, was to me insupportable. Yet this very vanity was, I think, of some advantage to me; for it hindered me from falling into such things as cause ruin of families. I would not do anything which in the eye of the world might render me culpable; so strictly did I guard my exterior conduct. As I was modest at Church, and had not been used to go abroad without my mother. and as the reputation of our house was great, I passed for virtuous.

I did not see my spouse elect (at Paris) till two or three days before our marriage. I caused masses to be said all the time after my being contracted, to know the will of God, as I wished to do it in this affair, at least. Oh, my God, how great was Thy goodness, to bear with me at this time, and to allow me to pray to Thee with as much boldness, as if I had been one of Thy friends, I who had rebelled against Thee as Thy greatest enemy.

The joy of our nuptials was universal through our village. Amidst this general rejoicing, there appeared none sad but myself. I could neither laugh as others did, nor even eat; so much was I depressed, though as yet I knew not the cause. But it was a foretaste which God gave me of what was to befall me. The remembrance of the desire I had of being a nun, came pouring in upon me. All who came to compliment me, the day after, could not forbear, rallying me, because I wept bitterly. I answered them: "Alas! I had desired so much to be a nun; why then am I now married? And by what fatality has such a revolution befallen me?" No sooner was I at the house of my new spouse, than I perceived that it would be for me a house of mourning.

I was obliged here to change my conduct, for their manner of living was very different from that in my father's house. My mother-in-law, who had long been a widow, regarded nothing else but economy; whereas, at my father's house they lived in a noble manner, and great elegance; and what my husband and mother-in-law called pride, and I called politeness, was observed there. I was very much surprised at this change, and so much the more, as my vanity wished to increase, rather than to be diminished.

At the time of my marriage I was a little past fifteen years of age. My surprise increased greatly, when I saw I must lose what I had acquired with so much application. At my father's house we were obliged to behave in a genteel way, and to speak with propriety. There all that I said was applauded. Here they never hearkened to me, but to contradict and find fault. If I spoke well, they said it was to give them

a lesson. If any questions were started at my father's, he encouraged me to speak freely on such occasions; but here, if I spoke my sentiments, they said it was to enter into a dispute. They put me to silence in an abrupt and shameful manner, and scolded me from morning till night.

I should have some difficulty to give you an account of such matters, if you had not forbidden me to omit any one article. But I request you not to look at things on the side of the creature, which would make these persons appear worse than they were; for my mother-in-law had virtue, my husband had religion, and not any vice. It is requisite to look at everything on the side of God, who permitted these things only for my salvation, and because He would not have me lost. I had beside so much pride, that had I received any other treatment, I should have continued therein, and should not, perhaps, have turned to God, as I was afterwards induced to do, by the oppression of a multitude of crosses.

To return to my subject, my mother-in-law conceived such a desire to oppose me in everything, that, in order to vex me, she made me perform the most humiliating offices; for her humor was so extraordinary, having never surmounted it in her youth, that she could hardly live with anybody. Saying no other than vocal prayers, she did not see this kind of fault; or seeing it, and not drawing from the forces of prayer, she could not get the better of it. I was then made the victim of her humors. All her occupation was to thwart me continually, and she inspired the like sentiments into her son. They would make persons far my inferiors take place above me. My

mother, who had a high sense of honor, could not endure that. And when she heard it from others (for I told her nothing of it) she chided me, thinking I did it, not knowing how to keep my rank, and that I had no spirit; and upbraided me with many other things of that sort. I durst not tell her how it was with me, but I was almost ready to die with the agonies of grief and continual vexation. And what aggravated them all, was the remembrance of the persons who had proposed for me, the difference of their humor and manners, the love they had for me with their agreeableness and politeness. All this made my present position very doleful, and my burden intolerable. My mother-in-law upbraided me in regard to my family, and spoke to me incessantly to the disadvantage of my father and mother. I never went to see them, but I had some bitter speeches to bear on my return.

On the other hand, my mother complained that I did not come often enough to see her. She said I did not love her, that I was alienated from my own family, by being too much attached to my husband; so that I had a great deal of heavy suffering to undergo on both sides.

What still augmented my crosses was, that my mother related to my mother-in-law the pains I had cost her from my infancy. After which they reproached me, saying, I was a changeling, and an evil spirit. My husband obliged me to stay all night long in my mother-in-law's room, without any liberty of retiring into my own apartment, so that I had not a moment's respite to breathe a little. She spoke disadvantageously of me to everybody, to lessen the affection and esteem which some had entertained for me, and galled me

with the grossest affronts before the finest company. This had not the effect she wanted, for the more patiently they saw me bear it, the higher esteem they had for me.

Indeed, she found the secret of extinguishing my vivacity, and rendering me stupid; so that some of my former acquaintances hardly knew me. Those who had not seen me before, said, "Is this the person famed for such abundance of wit? She can't say two words. She's a fine picture." I was not yet sixteen years old. I was so much intimidated, that I durst not go out without my mother-in-law, and in her presence I could not speak. I knew not what I said, so much fear had I of putting her out of humor, and drawing some bitter speech on myself.

To complete my affliction, they presented me with a waiting-maid who was everything with them. She kept me in sight like a governess, and treated me in a strange manner. For the most part I bore with patience these evils which I had no way to avoid. But sometimes I let some hasty answer escape me, which was a source of grievous crosses to me, and violent reproaches for a long time together. When I went out, the footman had orders to give an account of everything I did. It was then I began to eat the bread of sorrows, and to mingle tears with my drink. At the table they always did something to me which covered me with confusion, I could not forbear tears, and thence had a double confusion,—one for what they said to me, and the other for not being able to refrain from weeping. I had no one to confide in who might share my affliction, and assist me to bear it. When I would impart some hint of it to my mother, I drew

upon myself new crosses, so that I resolved to have no confidant of my trouble. It was not from any natural cruelty that my husband treated me thus; for he loved me even passionately, but he was warm and hasty, and my mother-in-law continually irritated him about me.

It was in a condition so deplorable, O my God, that I began to perceive the need I had of Thy assistance. For this situation was perilous to me, as I met with none but admirers abroad, and such as flattered me to my hurt, it were to be feared, lest at such a tender age, amidst all the strange domestic crosses I had to bear, I might be drawn away. But Thou, by Thy goodness and love, gave it quite another turn. By these redoubled strokes Thou didst draw me to Thyself, and by Thy crosses effected what Thy caresses could not effect. Nay, even then Thou madest use of my natural pride, to keep me within the limits of my duty. I knew that a woman of honor ought never to give suspicion to her husband. I was so very circumspect on that head, that I often carried it to excess.

Such weighty crosses made me return to God. I began to deplore the sins of my youth; for since my marriage I had not committed any voluntarily. Yet I still had some sentiments of vanity remaining, which I wished not to have. However, my troubles now counter-balanced them. Moreover, many of them appeared my just desert according to the little light I then had; for I was not illuminated to penetrate the essence of my vanity; I fixed my thoughts only on its appearance. I tried to amend my life by penance, and by a general confession, the most exact that I ever yet had made. I laid aside the reading of romances, for which I lately had such a fondness. Though some

time before my marriage it had been dampened by reading the Gospel, I was so much affected therewith, and discovered that character of truth therein, as to put me out of conceit with all the other books. Novels appeared then to me only full of lies and deceit. I now put away even indifferent books, to have none but such as were profitable. I resumed the practice of prayer, and endeavored to offend my God no more. I felt His love gradually recovering the ascendant in my heart, and banishing every other. Yet I had still an intolerable vanity and self-complacency, which has been my most grievous and obstinate sin.

My crosses redoubled every day. What rendered them more painful was, that my mother-in-law, not content with the bitterest speeches which she uttered against me, both in public and private, would break out in a passion about the smallest trifles, and scarcely be pacified for a fortnight together. I passed a part of my time in bewailing myself when I could be alone; and my grief became every day more bitter. Sometimes I could not contain myself, when the girls, who were my domestics, and owed me submission, treated me so ill. Nevertheless, I did what I could to subdue my temper, which has cost me not a little.

Such stunning blows so impaired the vivacity of my nature, that I became like a lamb that is shorn. I prayed to our Lord to assist me, and He was my refuge. As my age differed from theirs (for my husband was twenty-two years older than I) I saw well that there was no probability of changing their humors, which were fortified with years. As I found that whatever I said was offensive, not excepting those things which others would have been pleased with, I knew

not what to do. One day, weighed down with grief and despair, about six months after I was married, being alone, I was tempted even to cut out my tongue, that I might no longer irritate those who seized every word I uttered with rage and resentment. But Thou, O God, didst stop me short and showed me my folly. I prayed continually, and wished even to become dumb, so simple and ignorant was I. Though I have had my share of crosses, I never found any so difficult to support, as that of perpetual contrariety, without relaxation; of doing all one can to please, without succeeding therein, but even still offending by the very means designed to oblige; and being kept with such persons in a most severe confinement, from morning till night, without ever daring to quit them. I have found that great crosses overwhelm, and stifle all anger at once. But such a continual contrariety irritates and stirs up a sourness in the heart. It has such a strange effect, that it requires the utmost efforts of self-restraint, not to break out into vexation and rage.

Thus my condition in marriage was rather that of a slave than of a free person. And for a new augmentation of my disgraces, I perceived, four months after my marriage, that my husband was gouty. This malady caused me many crosses, both within and without. He had the gout twice the first year, six weeks each time. Soon afterward it returned again, and he had it still worse than before. He was so much plagued with it, that he came no more out of his room, nor often out of his bed, which he usually kept for several months. I carefully attended him, though so very young. I did not fail to exert myself to the utmost in the performance of my duty. But, alas! all this did

not gain me their friendship. I had not the consolation to know whether what I did was agreeable. I denied myself all the most innocent diversions, to continue with my husband; and did whatever I thought would please him. Sometimes he quietly suffered me, and then I esteemed myself very happy; but at other times I seemed insupportable to him. My particular friends said I was of a fine age indeed to be a nurse to an invalid, and that it was a shameful thing that I did not set more value on my talents. I answered them,—“Since I have a husband, I ought to share his painful as well as his pleasing circumstances.” Besides this, my mother, instead of pitying me, reprimanded me sharply for any assiduity to my husband, assuring me that I should render myself unhappy by it, and that he would afterwards demand, as a duty, what I now did from choice. But, O my God, how different were Thy thoughts from theirs,—how different that which was without, from what passed within! My husband had that foible, that when anyone said anything to him against me, he flew into a passion at once. It was the conduct of Providence over me, for he was a man of reason and loved me much. When I was sick, he was inconsolable. I believe, had it not been for my mother-in-law, and the girl I have spoken of, I should have been very happy with him, for most men have their passions, and it is the duty of a reasonable woman to bear them peaceably, without irritating them more by cross replies.

These things Thou hast ordered, O my God, in such a manner, by Thy goodness, that I have since seen it was necessary, to make me die to my vain and haughty nature. I should not have had power to destroy it

myself, if Thou hadst not accomplished it by an all-wise economy of Thy providence. I prayed for patience with great earnestness; nevertheless, some sallies of my natural liveliness escaped me, and vanquished the resolutions I had taken of being silent. This was doubtless permitted, that my self-love might not be nourished by my patience; for even a moment's slip caused me months of humiliation, reproach and sorrow, and proved the occasion of new crosses.

V. THE HAND OF PROVIDENCE.

DURING the first year I did not make a proper use of my afflictions. I was still vain. I sometimes lied, to excuse myself to my husband and mother-in-law, because I stood strangely in awe of them. Sometimes I fell into a passion, their conduct appeared so very unreasonable, and especially their countenancing the most provoking treatment of the girl who served me. For as to my mother-in-law, her age and rank rendered her conduct more tolerable. But Thou, O my God, opened my eyes to see things in a different light. I found in Thee reasons for suffering, which I had never found in the creature. I afterwards saw clearly and reflected with joy, that this conduct, as unreasonable as it seemed, and as mortifying as it was, was quite necessary for me, for had I been applauded here as I was at my father's, I should have grown intolerably proud. I had a fault common to most of our sex,—I could not hear a beautiful woman praised without finding fault in her; artfully causing something to be remarked, to lessen the good which was said of her. This fault of mine continued long, and was the fruit of gross and malignant pride. Extravagantly extolling anyone proceeds from a like source.

Just before the birth of my first child, they were induced to take great care of me, and my crosses were thereby somewhat mitigated. Indeed, I was so ill that it was enough to excite the compassion of the most indifferent. Besides this, they had so great a desire

of having children to inherit their fortunes, that they were continually afraid lest I should any way hurt myself. Yet, when the time of my delivery drew near, this care and tenderness of me abated; and once, as my mother-in-law had treated me in a very grating manner, I had the malice to feign a colic, to give them in my turn some alarm; but as I saw this little artifice gave them too much pain, I told them I was better. No creature could be more heavily laden with sickness than I was during this period. After my delivery I continued weak a long time. There was indeed sufficient to exercise patience, and I was enabled to offer up my sufferings to our Lord. I took a fever, which rendered me so weak, that after several weeks I could scarcely bear to be moved, to have my bed made.

The event mentioned improved my appearance, and consequently served to increase my vanity. I was glad to call forth expressions of regard; and, far from avoiding the occasions thereof, I went to the public promenades (though but seldom), and when in the streets I pulled off my mask out of vanity, and drew off my gloves to show my hands. Could there be greater folly? After falling into these weaknesses, I used to weep bitterly at home; yet when occasion offered, I fell into them again.

There happened in the family a matter of great importance, in regard to our temporal affairs. My husband lost considerably. This cost me strange crosses for above a year; not that I cared for the losses, but I seemed to be the butt of all the ill-humors of the family. It would require a volume to describe all that I suffered during this time. With what pleas-

ure did I sacrifice these temporal blessings; and how often felt willing to have even begged my bread, if God had so ordered it. But my mother-in-law was inconsolable. She bid me pray to God for these things, but to me that was wholly impossible. O my dearest Lord, never could I pray to Thee about the world, or the things thereof; nor sully my sacred addresses to Thy Majesty with the dirt of the earth. No; I rather wish to renounce it all, and everything beside whatsoever, for the sake of Thy love, and the enjoyment of Thy presence in that kingdom which is not of this world. I wholly sacrificed myself to Thee, even earnestly begging Thee rather to reduce our family to beggary, than suffer it to offend Thee. In my own mind I excused my mother-in-law, saying to myself, "If I had taken the pains to scrape and save like her, I would not be so indifferent at seeing so much lost. I enjoy what cost me nothing, and reap what I have not sowed." Yet all these thoughts could not make me sensible to our losses. No state appeared to me so poor and miserable, which I would not have thought easy, in comparison to the continual domestic persecutions I underwent; but my father, who loved me tenderly, and whom I honored beyond expression, knew nothing of it. God so permitted it, that I should have him also displeased with me for some time, for my mother was continually telling him that I was an ungrateful creature, showing no regard for them, but all for my husband's family. Appearances were against me; for I did not go to see them near as often as I should have done. But they knew not the captivity I was in, and what I was obliged to bear in defending them. These complaints of my mother, and a trivial affair

that fell out, lessened a little my father's fond regard for me; but it did not hold long. My mother-in-law reproached me, saying no afflictions befell them till I came into the house. All misfortunes came along with me. On the other side my mother wanted me to exclaim against my husband, which I could never submit to do.

We continued to meet with loss after loss, the King retrenching a considerable share of our revenues, besides great sums of money, which we lost by L'Hotel de Ville. I could have no rest or peace, in the midst of such great afflictions. I had no mortal either to console me, or to advise me. My sister, who had educated me, had died two months before my marriage, and I had no other for a confidant.

I declare that I find much repugnance in saying so many things of my mother-in-law, and yet more in what I mention of my husband, as I have no doubt but my own indiscretion, my caprice, and the occasional sallies of a warm temper, drew many of the crosses upon me. And although I had what the world calls patience, yet I had neither a relish nor love for the cross, and hence I fell into so many faults. Their conduct towards me, which appeared so unreasonable, should not be looked upon with worldly eyes; we should look higher, and then we shall perceive that it was directed by Providence for my eternal advantage.

I now dressed my hair in the most modest manner, never painted, and to subdue the vanity which still had possession of me, I rarely looked in the glass. My reading was confined to books of devotion, such as Thomas a'Kempis, and the works of St. Francis de

Sales. I read these aloud for the improvement of the servants, whilst the maid was dressing my hair; and I suffered myself to be dressed just as she pleased, which freed me from a great deal of trouble, and took away the occasions wherein my vanity used to be exercised. I knew not how things were, but they always liked me, and thought all well in point of dress. If on some particular days I wanted to appear better, it proved worse, and the more indifferent I was about dress, the better I appeared. How often have I gone to Church, not so much to worship God as to be seen. Other women, jealous of me, affirmed that I painted, and told my confessor, who chided me for it, though I assured him I was innocent. I often spoke in my own praise, and sought to raise myself by depreciating others. Yet these faults gradually decreased; for I was very sorry afterwards for having committed them. I often examined myself very strictly, writing down my faults from week to week, and from month to month, to see how much I was improved or reformed. But, alas! this labor, though fatiguing, was of but little service, because I trusted in my own efforts. I wished indeed to be reformed, but my good desires were weak and languid.

I fell into a languishing state; I loved my God and was unwilling to displease Him, and I was inwardly grieved on account of that vanity, which still I found myself unable to eradicate. These inward distresses, together with those oppressive crosses, which I had daily to encounter, at length threw me into sickness; and as I was unwilling to incommode the Hotel de Longueville, I had myself moved to another house. The disease proved violent and tedious, insomuch that

the physicians despaired of my life. The priest, who was a pious man, seemed fully satisfied with the state of my mind, and said, I should die like a saint. But my sins were too present to my mind, and too painful to my heart, to have such a presumption. At midnight they administered the sacrament to me, as they hourly expected my departure. It was a scene of general distress in the family, and among all that knew me. There were none indifferent to my death but myself. I beheld it without fear, and was rendered insensible to its approach. It was far otherwise with my husband. He was inconsolable, and in an agony of grief, when he saw there was no hope left; but I no sooner began to recover, than notwithstanding all his love, his usual fretfulness returned. I now recovered almost miraculously; and to me this disorder proved a great blessing, for beside a very great patience under violent pains, it served to instruct me much in my view of the emptiness of all worldly things; it detached me from myself and gave me new courage to suffer better than I had yet done. The love of God gathered strength in my heart, with a desire to please and be faithful to Him in my condition. I reaped several other advantages from it which I need not relate, I had yet six months to drag along with a slow fever. It was thought that it would terminate in death. But Thy time, O my God, had not yet arrived for taking me to Thyself. Thy designs over me were widely different from the expectations of those about me; it being Thy determination to make me both the object of Thy mercy and the victim of Thy justice.

VI. INFLUENCES OF RELIGIOUS PERSONS.

AFTER long languishing, at length I regained my former health; about which time my dear mother departed this life in great tranquillity of mind; having, beside her other good qualities, been particularly charitable to the poor. This virtue, so acceptable to God, He was graciously pleased to commence rewarding even in this life, with such a spirit of resignation, that though she was but twenty-four hours sick, she was made perfectly easy about everything that was near and dear to her in this world,—I now applied myself to my duties, never failing to practice that of prayer twice a day. I watched over myself, to subdue my spirit continually. I went to visit the poor in their houses, assisting them in their distempers and distresses; and did all the good I knew. Thou, O my God, increased both my love and my patience, in proportion to my sufferings. I regretted not the temporal advantages with which my mother distinguished my brother above me, yet at home they fell on me about that, as about everything else.

A lady, who was an exile, came to my father's house. He offered her an apartment in it which she accepted, and stayed there a long time. She was one of true piety and inward devotion. She had a great esteem for me, because I desired to love God, and employed myself in the exterior works of charity. She remarked that I had the virtues of an active and bustling life, but had not yet attained the simplicity of

prayer which she experienced. Sometimes she dropped a word to me on that subject, but as my time had not yet come, I did not understand her. Her example instructed me more than her words. I observed on her countenance something which marked a great enjoyment of the presence of God. This I tried, by the exertion of studied reflection and thoughts, to attain, but with much trouble and to little purpose. I wanted to have by my own efforts what I could not acquire but in ceasing from all efforts.

My father's nephew, of whom I have made mention before, returned from Cochin, China. I was exceedingly glad to see him, well remembering what good his first passing by had done me. The lady above mentioned was no less rejoiced than I; they understood each other immediately and conversed together in a spiritual language. The virtue of this excellent relation charmed me, and I admired his continual prayer without being able to comprehend it. I endeavored to meditate, and to think on God without intermission, to utter prayers and ejaculations, but could not acquire, by all my toil, what God at length gave me Himself, and which is experienced only in simplicity. My cousin did all he could to attach me more strongly to God. He conceived an exceedingly great affection for me. The purity he observed in me from corruptions of the age, the abhorrence of sin at a time of life when others are beginning to relish the pleasures of it, (for I was not yet eighteen), gave him a great tenderness for me. I complained to him of my faults ingenuously; for these I saw clearly; but as the difficulties I found, of entirely reforming myself, much abated my courage, he cheered

and exhorted me to support myself, and to persevere in my good endeavors for it. He would fain have introduced me into a more simple manner of prayer, but I was not yet prepared for it.

I believe his prayers were more effectual than his words; for no sooner was he gone out of my father's house, than Thou, O my Divine Love, manifested Thy favor to me. The desire I had to please Thee, the tears I shed, the manifold pains I underwent, the labors I sustained, and the little fruit I reaped from them, moved Thee with compassion. Such was the state of my soul, when Thy goodness, surpassing all my vileness and infidelities, and abounding in proportion to my wretchedness, now granted me in a moment, what all my own efforts could never procure. For, beholding me rowing with such laborious toil, the breath of thy divine operations turned in my favor, and carried me full sail over this sea of affliction.

I had often spoken to my confessor about the great anxiety it gave me to find I could not meditate, nor exert my imagination in order to pray. Subjects of prayer which were too extensive were useless to me; such as were short and pithy suited me better; but my confessor, I found, did not comprehend the matter, or understand my meaning.

At length, God permitted a very religious person, of the order of St. Francis, to pass by my father's habitation. He had intended going another way, that was shorter and more commodious; but a secret power changed his design. He saw there was something for him to do, and imagined that God had called him for the conversion of a man of some distinction in that country, but his labors there proved fruitless. It was

the conquest of my soul which was designed. As soon as he arrived in our country, he came to see my father, who was rejoiced at his coming. At this time I was about to be delivered of my second son, and my father was dangerously ill, and was expected to die. For some time they concealed his sickness from me, on account of my condition, till an indiscreet person abruptly told me. Instantly I arose, as weak as I was, and went to see him at the hazard of my life, and a dangerous illness it cost me. My father was recovered, but not entirely; yet enough to give me new marks of his affection. I told him of the strong desire I had to love God, and my great sorrow at not being able to do it fully. As he had a great fondness for me, he thought he could not give me a more solid indication thereof, than in procuring me an acquaintance with this worthy man. He told me what he knew of him, and urged me to go and see him.

I therefore took a kinswoman along with me, and went. At first he seemed a little confused; for he was reserved towards women. Being newly come out of a five years' solitude, he was surprised that I was the first to address him. He spoke not a word for some time. I knew not what to attribute his silence to. I did not hesitate to speak to him, and to tell him in a few words, my difficulties about prayer. He presently replied, "*It is, madame, because you seek without what you have within. Accustom yourself to seek God in your heart, and you will there find Him.*"

Having said these words, he left me. They were to me like the stroke of a dart, which penetrated through my heart. I felt at this instant a very deep wound, a wound so delightful that I desired not to be cured.

These words brought into my heart what I had been seeking so many years; or rather they discovered to me what was there, and which I had not enjoyed for want of knowing it. O my Lord, Thou wast in my heart, and demanded only a simple turning of my mind inward, to make me perceive Thy presence. Oh, Infinite Goodness! how was I running hither and thither to seek Thee, my life was a burden to me, although my happiness was within myself. I was poor in the midst of riches, and ready to perish with hunger, near a table plentifully spread, and a continual feast. It was for want of understanding these words of Thy Gospel, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there: For behold, the kingdom of God is within you." This I now experienced, for Thou becamest my King, and my heart Thy kingdom, wherein Thou didst reign supreme, and performed all Thy sacred will.

I told this good man that I did not know what he had done to me, that my heart was quite changed, that God was there; for from that moment He had given me an experience of His presence in my soul; not by thought or any application of mind, but as a thing really possessed after the sweetest manner. I experienced these words in the Canticles: "Thy name is as precious ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love Thee." For I felt in my soul an unction which, as a salutary balsam, healed in a moment all my wounds. I slept not that whole night, because Thy love, O my God, flowed in me like a delicious oil, and burned as a fire which was going to devour in an instant all that was left of self. I was suddenly so altered that I was hardly to be known either by myself

or others. I found no longer those troublesome faults or reluctances. They all disappeared, being consumed like chaff in a great fire.

I now became desirous that the instrument hereof might become my director, preferable to any other. This good father, however, could not readily resolve to charge himself with my conduct, though he saw so surprising a change effected by the hand of God. Several reasons induced him to excuse himself; first my person, then my youth, for I was only nineteen years of age; and lastly, a promise he had made to God, from a distrust of himself, never to take upon himself the direction of any of our sex, unless God, by some particular providence, should charge him therewith. However, upon my earnest and repeated request to him to become my director, he said he would pray to God thereupon, and desired that I should do so, too. As he was at prayer, it was said to him, "Fear not that charge; she is My spouse." When I heard this, it affected me greatly. "What (said I to myself) a frightful monster of iniquity, who has done so much to offend my God, in abusing His favors, and requiting them with ingratitude; and now to be declared His spouse!" After this he consented to my request.

Nothing now was more easy to me than prayer. Hours passed away like moments, while I could hardly do anything else but pray. The fervency of my love allowed me no intermission. It was a prayer of rejoicing and possessing, devoid of all busy imaginations and forced reflections; it was a prayer of the will, and not of the head, wherein the taste of God was so great, so pure, unblended and uninterrupted, that it drew and absorbed the power of my soul into a profound

recollection without act or discourse. For I had now no sight but of Jesus Christ alone. All else was excluded, in order to love with the greater extent, without any selfish motives or reasons for loving.

This sovereign power, the will, absorbed the two others, the memory and understanding into itself, and concentrated them in love;—not but that they still subsisted, but their operations were in a manner imperceptible and passive; for they were no longer stopped or retarded by the multiplicity, but collected and united in one. So the rising of the sun does not extinguish the stars, but overpowers and absorbs them in the lustre of his incomparable glory.

VII. VISIONS AND GIFTS.

SUCH was the prayer that was given me at once, which is far above ecstasies, transports, or visions. All these gifts are less pure, and more subject to illusion or deceits from the enemy.

Visions are in the inferior powers of the soul, and cannot produce true union,—therefore, the soul must not dwell or rely upon them, or be retarded by them; they are but favors and gifts,—'tis the Giver alone must be our object and aim.

It is of such that St. Paul speaks, when he says, that “Satan transforms himself into an angel of light,” 2 Cor. xi. 18; which is generally the case with such as are fond of visions, and lay a stress on them; because they are apt to convey a vanity to the soul, or at least hinder it from humbly attending to God only.

Ecstasies arise from a sensible relish, and may be termed a kind of spiritual sensuality, wherein the soul letting itself go too far, by reason of the sweetness it finds in them, falls imperceptibly into decay. The crafty enemy presents such sort of interior elevations and raptures, for baits to entrap the soul; to render it sensual, to fill it with vanity and self-love, to fix its esteem and attention on the gifts of God, and to hinder it from following Jesus Christ in the way of renunciation, and of death to all things.

And as to distinct interior words, they too are subject to illusion; the enemy can form and counterfeit them. Or if they come from a good angel, (for God Himself never speaks thus), we may mistake and

misapprehend them; for they are spoken in a divine manner, but we construe them in a human and carnal manner.

But the immediate word of God has neither tone nor articulation. It is mute, silent, and unutterable; for it is Jesus Christ Himself, the real and essential Word—who in the centre of the soul, that is disposed for receiving Him, never one moment ceases from His living, fruitful, and divine operation.

Oh, Thou Word made flesh, whose silence is inexpressible eloquence, Thou canst never be misapprehended or mistaken. Thou becomest the life of our life, and the soul of our soul. How infinitely is Thy language elevated above all the utterances of human and finite articulation. Thy adorable power, all efficacious in the soul that has received it, communicates itself through them to others, and as a divine seed becomes fruitful to eternal life.

The revelations of things to come are also very dangerous; for the devil can counterfeit them, as he did formerly in the heathen temples, where he uttered oracles. Frequently they raise false ideas, vain hopes, and frivolous expectations; take up the mind with future events, hinder it from dying to self, and prevent it following Jesus Christ in His poverty, abnegation, and death.

Widely different is the revelation of Jesus Christ, made to the soul when the eternal Word is communicated—Gal. 1:16. It makes us new creatures, created anew in Him. This revelation is what the devil cannot counterfeit. From hence proceeds the only safe transport or ecstasy, which is operated by naked faith alone, and dying even to the gifts of God, how sublime and

excellent soever they may appear; because as long as the soul continues resting in them, it does not fully renounce itself; and so never passing into God, loses the real enjoyment of the Giver, by attachments to the gifts. This is truly an unutterable loss.

Lest I should let my mind go after these gifts, and steal myself from Thy love, O my God, Thou wast pleased to fix me in a continual adherence to Thyself alone. Souls thus directed get the shortest way. They are to expect great sufferings, especially if they are mighty in faith, in mortification and deadness to all but God. A pure and disinterested love, and intense-ness of mind for the advancement of Thy interest alone—these are the dispositions Thou didst then implant in me, and even a fervent desire of suffering for Thee. The cross, which I had hitherto borne only with resignation, was now become my delight, and the special object of my rejoicing.

I wrote an account of my wonderful change, in point of happiness, to that good father who had been made the instrument of it. It filled him both with joy and astonishment. O my God, what penances did the love of suffering induce me to undergo! I was impelled to deprive myself of the most innocent indulgences; all that could gratify my taste was denied it, and I took everything that could mortify and disgust it, insomuch that my appetite, which had been extremely delicate, was so far conquered, that at length I could scarcely prefer one thing to another.

I dressed loathsome sores and wounds, and gave remedies to the sick. When I first engaged in this sort of employment, it was with the greatest difficulty I was able to bear it. But as soon as my aversion

ceased, and I could stand the most offensive things, other channels of employment were opened to me. For I did nothing of myself, but left myself to be wholly governed by my Sovereign in all things.

When that good father asked me how I loved God, I answered, "Far more than the most passionate lover his beloved;" and that even this comparison was inadequate, since the love of the creature never can attain to this, either in strength or in depth. This love of God occupied my heart so constantly and so strongly, that I could think of nothing else, as indeed I judged nothing else worthy of my thoughts.

The good father above mentioned was an excellent preacher. He was desired to preach in the parish to which I belonged. When he came, I was so strongly absorbed in God, that I could neither open my eyes, nor hear anything he said. I found that Thy Word, O my God, made its own impression on my heart, and there had its effect, without the mediation of words, or any attention to them. And I have found it so ever since, but after a different manner, according to the different degrees and states I have passed through. So deeply was I settled in the inward spirit of prayer, that I could scarce any more pronounce the vocal prayers.

I now quitted all company, bade farewell forever to all plays and diversions, dancing, unprofitable walks and parties of pleasure. For two years I had left off dressing my hair,—it became me, and my husband approved it. My only pleasure now was to steal some moments to be alone with Thee, O Thou who art my only Love! All other pleasure was a pain to me.

VIII. DEATH OF THE SENSES.

MY senses were continually mortified, and under perpetual restraint. For it should be well noted, that to conquer them totally, it is necessary to deny them the smallest relaxation, until the victory is completed. We see those who content themselves in practicing great outward austerities, and yet by indulging their senses in what is called innocent and necessary, they remain forever unsubdued; so that austerities, however severe, will not conquer the senses. To destroy their power, the most effectual means, is in general, to deny them firmly what will please, and to persevere in this, until they are reduced to be without desire or repugnance. But if we attempt, during the warfare, to grant them any relaxation, we act like those, who, under pretext of strengthening a man, who was condemned to be starved to death, should give him from time to time a little nourishment which indeed would prolong his torments, and postpone his death.

It is just the same with the death of the senses, the powers, the understanding, and self-will; for if we do not eradicate every remains of self subsisting in these, we support them in a dying life to the end. This state and its termination are clearly set forth by St. Paul. He speaks of bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. (2 Cor. iv. 10.) But, lest we should rest here, he fully distinguishes this from the state of being dead, and having our life hid with Christ in

God. It is only by a total death to self we can be lost in God.

He who is thus dead has no further need of mortification; for the very end of mortification is accomplished in him, and all is become new. It is an unhappy error in those good souls, who have arrived at a conquest of the bodily senses, through this unremitting and continual mortification, that they should still continue attached to the exercise of it; they should rather drop their attention thereto, and remain in indifference, accepting with equality the good as the bad, the sweet as the bitter, and bend their whole attention to a labor of greater importance; namely, the mortification of the mind and self-will, beginning by dropping all the activity of self, which can never be done without the most profound prayer; no more than the death of the senses can be perfected without profound recollection joined to mortification; and indeed recollection is the chief means whereby we attain to a conquest of the senses, as it detaches and separates us from them, and sweetly saps the very cause from whence they derive their influence over us.

The more Thou didst augment my love, and my patience, O my Lord, the less respite had I from the most oppressive crosses; but love rendered them easy to bear. O ye poor souls, who exhaust yourselves with needless vexation, if you would but seek God in your hearts, there would be a speedy end to all your troubles, for the increase of crosses would proportionately increase your delight.

Love, at the beginning, athirst for mortification impelled me to seek and invent various kinds, and it is surprising, that as soon as the bitterness of any new

mode of mortification was exhausted, another kind was pointed to me, and I was inwardly led to pursue it. Divine love so enlightened my heart, and so scrutinized into its secret springs, that the smallest defects became exposed. If I was about to speak, something wrong was instantly pointed to me, and I was compelled to silence; if I kept silence, faults herein were presently discovered,—in every action there was something defective—in my mortifications, my penances, my almsgiving, my retirement, I was faulty. When I walked, I observed there was something wrong; if I spoke any way in my own favor, I saw pride. If I said within myself, alas, I will speak no more, here was self. If I was cheerful and open, I was condemned. This pure love always found matter for reproof in me, and was jealous that nothing should escape unnoticed. It was not that I was particularly attentive over myself, for it was even with constraint that I could look at all at myself; as my attention towards God, by an attachment of my will to His, was without intermission, I waited continually upon Him, and He watched incessantly over me, and He so led me by His providence, that I forgot all things. I knew not how to communicate what I felt to anyone. I was so lost to myself, that I could scarcely go about self-examination; when I attempted it all ideas of myself immediately disappeared, and I found myself occupied with my one object, without distinction of ideas. I was absorbed in peace inexpressible; I saw by the eye of faith that it was God that thus wholly possessed me, but I did not reason at all about it.

It must not, however, be supposed that Divine Love suffered my faults to go unpunished. O Lord! with

what rigor, dost Thou punish the most faithful, the most loving and beloved of Thy children. I mean not externally, for this would be inadequate to the smallest fault, in a soul that God is about to purify radically; and the punishments it can inflict on itself, are rather gratifications and refreshments than otherwise. Indeed, the manner in which He corrects His chosen, must be felt, or it is impossible to conceive how dreadful it is, and in my attempt to explain it, I shall be unintelligible, except to experienced souls. It is an internal burning, a secret fire, sent from God to purge away the fault, giving extreme pain, until this purification is effected. It is like a dislocated joint, which is in incessant torment, until the bone is replaced. This pain is so severe, that the soul would do anything to satisfy God for the fault, and would rather be torn in pieces than endure the torment. Sometimes she flies to others, and opens her state that she may find consolation, but thereby she frustrates God's designs towards her. It is of the utmost consequence to know what use to make of the distress, as the whole of one's spiritual advancement depends thereon. We should at these seasons of internal anguish, obscurity and mourning, co-operate with God, and endure this consuming torture in its utmost extent (whilst it continues) without attempting to lessen or increase it; but bear it passively, nor seek to satisfy God by anything we can do of ourselves. To continue passive at such a time is extremely difficult, and requires great firmness and courage. I knew some, who being defective herein, never advanced farther in the spiritual process, because they grew impatient, and sought means of consolation.

The treatment of my husband and mother-in-law, however rigorous and insulting, I now bore silently—and made them no replies; and this was not so difficult for me, for the greatness of my interior occupation, and what passed within, rendered me insensible to all the rest; yet there were times when I was left to myself. And then I could not refrain from tears, when they fell violently on me. I did the lowest offices for them, to humble myself. Yet all this did not win their favor. When they were in a rage, although I could not find that I had given them any occasion for it, yet I did not fail to beg their pardon, and even from the girl I have spoken of. I had a good deal of pain to surmount myself, as to the last, because she became the more insolent for it, reproaching me with things which ought to have made her blush, and to have covered her with shame. As she saw that I contradicted and resisted her no more in anything, she proceeded to treat me still worse. And when I asked her pardon for the very offences which she had given me, she triumphed, saying, “I knew very well I was in the right.” Her arrogance rose to that height, that I would not have treated the meanest slave, or vassal, as she treated me.

One day, as she was dressing me, she pulled me very roughly, and spoke to me very insolently. I said to her, “It is not on my account that I am willing to answer you, for you give me no pain, but lest you should act thus before persons to whom it would give offence. Moreover, as I am your mistress, God is assuredly offended therewith.” She left me that moment, and ran like a mad woman to meet my husband, telling him she would stay no longer, I treated her

so ill, and that I hated her for the care she took of him in his indispositions, which were continual, wanting her not to do any service for him. As my husband was very hasty, he took fire at these words. I finished the dressing of myself alone, since she had left me, and I durst not call another girl; for she would not suffer another girl to come near me. All on a sudden, I saw my husband coming like a lion, for he was never in such a rage as this. I thought he was going to strike me; I waited the blow with tranquillity; he threatened me with his uplifted crutch; I thought he was going to knock me down with it, and holding myself closely united to God, I beheld it without pain. However, he did not strike me, for he had presence of mind enough to see what an indignity it would be, but in his rage he threw it at me. It fell near me, but it did not touch me; after which he discharged himself in such language as if I had been a street beggar, or the most infamous of all creatures. I kept a profound silence, being recollected in the Lord, to suffer for His love all these things.

The girl in the meantime came in. At the sight of her his rage redoubled. I kept near to God, as a victim disposed to suffer whatever He would permit. My husband ordered me to beg her pardon, which I readily did, and thereby appeased him. I went presently into my dear closet, where I no sooner was, than my divine Director impelled me to make this girl a present, to recompense her for the cross which she had caused me, which I did. She was a little astonished, but her heart was too hard to be gained.

I often acted thus, for she frequently gave me such opportunities. She had a singular dexterity in attend-

ing the sick, and my husband ailing almost continually, no other person would be suffered to administer to him. For this reason he had a very great regard for her. Moreover, she was so artful, that in his presence she affected an extraordinary respect for me, but when he was not present, if I said a word to her, though with the greatest mildness, if she heard him coming, she cried out with all her might, that she was unhappy, and acted like one distressed in such a manner, that without informing himself of the truth, he was irritated against me, as was also my mother-in-law.

The violence I did to my proud and hasty nature was so great, that I could hold out no longer. I was quite spent with it. It seemed sometimes as if I was inwardly rent, and I have often fallen sick with the struggle. She did not forbear exclaiming against me, even before persons of distinction, who came to see me. If I was silent, she took offence at that yet more, and said I despised her. She cried me down, and made complaints of me to everybody. But all this redounded to my honor and her own disgrace. My reputation was so well established, on account of my exterior modesty, my devotion, and the great acts of charity which I did, that nothing could shake it.

Sometimes she ran out into the very street, crying out against me. At one time she exclaimed, "Am not I very unhappy to have such a mistress?" People gathered about her to know what I had done to her, and not knowing what to say, she answer I had not spoken to her all day. They returned, laughing, and said, "She has done you no great harm then."

I am surprised at the blindness of confessors, and at their permitting their penitents to conceal so much

of the truth from them—for the confessor of this girl made her pass for a saint. This he said in my hearing. I answered nothing, for love would not permit me to speak of my troubles, but that I should consecrate them all to God by a profound silence.

My husband was out of humor with my devotion. It became insupportable to him. "What," said he, "you love God so much, that you love me no longer." So little did he comprehend that the true conjugal love is that which the Lord Himself forms in the heart that loves Him. Oh, Thou who art pure and holy, Thou didst imprint in me from the first such a love of chastity, that there was nothing in the world which I would not have undergone to possess and preserve it. I endeavored to be agreeable to my husband in anything, and to please him in everything he could require of me. God gave me such a purity of soul at that time, that I had not so much as a bad thought. Sometimes my husband said to me, "One sees plainly that you never lose the presence of God."

The world, seeing I quitted it, persecuted and turned me into ridicule. I was its entertainment, and the subject of its fables. It could not bear that a woman, who was scarce twenty years of age, should thus make war against it, and overcome. My mother-in-law took part with the world, and blamed me for not doing many things, that in her heart she would have been highly offended had I done them. I was as one lost, and all alone; so little communion had I with the creature, farther than necessity required. I seemed to experience literally those words of St. Paul, "I live, yet, no more I, but Christ liveth in me;" for He was become the soul of my soul, and the life of my life. His

operations were so powerful, so sweet, and so secret, all together, that I could not express them. We went into the country on some business. Oh! what unutterable communications did I there experience in retirement!

I was insatiable for prayer; I arose at four o'clock in the morning to pray. I went very far to the Church, which was so situated, that the coach could not come to it. There was a steep hill to go down and another to ascend. All that cost me nothing; I had such a longing desire to meet with God, as my only good, who on His part was graciously forward to give Himself to His poor creature, and for it to do even visible miracles. Such as saw me lead a life so very different from the women of the world, said I was a fool. They attributed it to stupidity. If I went into company, often I could not speak, so much was I engaged within, so inward with the Lord, as not to attend to anything else. If any near me spoke, I heard nothing of what they said. I generally took one with me, that this might not appear. I took some work, to hide under that appearance the real employ of my heart. When I was alone, the work dropped out of my hands; and I could do nothing else but resign myself to be wholly taken up with love. I wanted to persuade a relation of my husband's to practice prayer. She thought me a fool, for depriving myself of all the amusements of the age. But the Lord has since opened her eyes, to make her despise them. I could have wished to teach all the world to love God; and thought it depended only on them to feel what I felt. The Lord made use of my thinking thus, to gain many souls to Himself.

The good father I have spoken of, who was the instrument of my conversion, made me acquainted with Genevieve Granger, prioress of the Benedictines, one of the greatest servants of God of her time, who proved of very great service to me. My confessor, who had told everyone that I was a saint before, when so full of miseries, and so far from the condition to which the Lord in His mercy had now brought me, seeing I placed a confidence in the father of whom I have spoken, and that I steered in a road which was unknown to him, declared openly against me, and the monks of his order persecuted me much. They even preached publicly against me, as a person under a delusion.

My husband and mother-in-law, who till now had been indifferent about this confessor, then joined him and ordered me to leave off prayer, and the exercise of piety; but that I could not do. Even when I was in company, the Lord seized my heart more powerfully. There was carried on a conversation within me, very different from that which passed without. I did what I could to hinder it from appearing, but could not. The presence of so great a Master manifested itself, even on my countenance, and that pained my husband, as he sometimes told me. I did what I could to hinder it from being noticed, but was not able completely to hide it. I was so much inwardly occupied that I knew not what I eat. This deep inward attention suffered me scarcely to hear or see anything. I still continued to use many severe mortifications and austerities; yet they did not in the least diminish the freshness of my countenance,

I had often grievous fits of sickness and no consolation in life, but in the practice of prayer, and in seeing Mother Granger. How dear did these cost me, especially the former! But what do I say, O my Love! Is this esteeming the cross as I ought?—should I not rather say that prayer to me was recompensed with the cross, and the cross with prayer. Oh, ye inseparable gifts, united in my heart and life! When your eternal light arose in my soul, how perfectly it reconciled me, and made ye the object of my love! From the moment I received Thee I have never been free from the cross, nor it seems without prayer—though for a long time I thought myself deprived thereof, which exceedingly augmented my afflictions.

My confessor at first exerted his efforts to hinder me from practicing prayer, and from seeing Mother Granger. And he violently stirred up my husband and mother-in-law to hinder me from praying. The method they took to effect it was, to watch me from morning till night. I durst not go out from my mother-in-law's chamber, or from my husband's bedside. Sometimes I carried my work to the window, under a pretence of seeing better, in order to relieve myself with some moment's repose; but they came to watch me very closely, to see if I did not pray instead of working. When my husband and mother-in-law played at cards, if I did but turn towards the fire, they watched to see if I continued my work or shut my eyes. If they observed I closed them, they would be in a fury against me for several hours. But what is most strange, when my husband went abroad, having some days of health, he would not allow me to pray in his absence. He marked my work, and sometimes, after he was just

gone out, returning immediately, if he found me in my closet, he would be in a rage. In vain I said to him, "Surely, sir, what matters it what I do when you are absent, if I be assiduous in attending you when you are present?" That would not satisfy him; he insisted upon it that I should no more pray in his absence than in his presence.

I believe there is hardly a torment equal to that of being ardently drawn to retirement, and not having it in one's power to be retired. But, O my God, the war they raised, to hinder me from loving Thee, did but augment my love; and while they were striving to prevent my address to Thee, Thou drewest me into an inexpressible silence; and the more they labored to separate me from Thee, the more closely didst Thou unite me to Thyself. The flame of Thy love was kindled, and kept up by everything that was done to extinguish it.

Often through compliance I played at piquet with my husband, and at such times was even more interiorly attracted than if I had been at Church. I was scarce able to contain the fire which burned in my soul, which had all the fervor of what men call love, but nothing of its impetuosity; for the more ardent, the more peaceable it was. This fire gained strength from everything that was done to suppress it. And the spirit of prayer was nourished and increased, from their contrivances and endeavors to disallow me any time for practicing it. I loved, without considering a motive, or reason for loving; for nothing passed in my head, but much in the innermost recesses of my soul. I thought not about any recompense, gift, or favor, which He could bestow or I receive. The Well-beloved

was Himself the only object which attracted my heart. I could not contemplate His attributes. I knew nothing else, but to love and to suffer. Oh, ignorance more truly learned than any science of the doctors, since it taught me so well Jesus Christ crucified, and brought me to be in love with His holy cross. I could then have wished to die, in order to be inseparably united to Him who so powerfully attracted my heart. As all this passed in the will, the imagination and the understanding being absorbed in it, in an union of enjoyment, I knew not what to say, having never read or heard of such a state as I experienced. I dreaded delusion and feared that all was not right, for before this I had known nothing of the operations of God in souls. I had only read St. Francis de Sales, Thomas a' Kempis, The Spiritual Combat, and the Holy Scriptures. I was quite a stranger to those spiritual books wherein such states are described.

Then all those amusements and pleasures that are prized and esteemed, appeared to me dull and insipid, so that I wondered how it could be that I had ever enjoyed them. And indeed since that time, I could never find any satisfaction or enjoyment out of God, although I have sometimes been unfaithful enough to endeavor it. I was not astonished that martyrs gave their lives for Jesus Christ. I thought them happy, and sighed after their privilege of suffering for Him;—for I so esteemed the cross, that my greatest trouble was the want of suffering as much as my heart thirsted for.

This respect and esteem for the cross continually increased, and although afterwards I lost the sensible relish and enjoyment thereof, yet the love and esteem

has no more left me than the cross itself. Indeed, it has ever been my faithful companion, changing and augmenting, in proportion to the changes and dispositions of my inward state. O blessed cross, thou hast never quitted me, since I surrendered myself to my divine crucified Master, and I still hope that thou wilt never abandon me. So eager was I for the cross, that I endeavored to make myself feel the utmost rigor of every mortification, and felt them to the quick. Yet this only served to awaken my desire of suffering, and to show me that it is God alone that can prepare and send crosses suitable to a soul that thirsts for a following of His sufferings, and a conformity to His death. The more my state of prayer augmented, my desire of suffering grew stronger, as the full weight of heavy crosses from every side came thundering upon me.

The peculiar property of this prayer of the heart is to give a strong faith. Mine was without limits, as was also my resignation to God, and my confidence in Him,—my love of His will, and of the order of His providence over me. I was very timorous before, but now feared nothing. It is in such a case that one feels the efficacy of these words of the Gospel, “My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matt. xi. 30.

IX. LIGHTS AND SHADOWS.

I HAD a secret desire given me from that time to be wholly devoted to the disposal of my God, let that be what it would. I said, "What couldst Thou demand of me, that I would not willingly offer Thee? Oh, spare me not." The cross and humiliations were represented to my mind in the most frightful colors,—but this deterred me not. I yielded myself up as a willing victim, and indeed our Lord seemed to accept of my sacrifice, for His divine providence furnished me incessantly with occasions and opportunities for putting it to the test.

I could scarce hear God or our Lord Jesus Christ spoken of, without being almost transported out of myself. What surprised me the most was, the great difficulty I had to say the vocal prayers I had been used to repeat. As soon as I opened my lips to pronounce them, the love of God seized me so strongly, that I was swallowed up in a profound silence, and an inexpressible peace. I made fresh attempts, but still in vain. I began again and again, but could not go on. And as I had never before heard of such a state, I knew not what to do. My inability still increased, because my love to the Lord was still growing more strong, more violent and more overpowering. There was made in me, without the sound of words, a continual prayer, which seemed to me to be the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself; a prayer of the Word, which is made by the Spirit, that according to St. Paul, "asketh

for us that which is good, perfect, and conformable to the will of God." Rom. viii. 26-27.

My domestic crosses continued. I was prevented from seeing or even writing to Mrs. Granger. My very going to divine service or the blessed sacrament, was a source of woeful offences; and the only amusement I had left me, was the visiting and attending the sick poor, and performing the lowest offices for them.

But now my prayer-time began to be exceedingly distressing. I compelled myself to continue at it, though deprived of all comfort and consolation; and yet when I was not employed therein, I felt an ardent desire and longing for it. I suffered inexpressible anguish in my mind, and endeavored with the severest inflictions of corporeal austerities to mitigate and divert it—but in vain; the dryness and barrenness still increased; I found no more that enlivening vigor which had hitherto carried me on with great swiftness. My passions (which were not thoroughly mortified) revived, and caused me new conflicts. I relapsed into a vain complacency and fondness for myself. My propensity to pride and vanity, which seemed quite dead, while I was so filled with the love of God, now showed itself again, and gave me severe exercise which made me lament the exterior beauty of my person, and pray to God incessantly, that He would remove from me that obstacle, and make me ugly. I could even have wished to be deaf, blind and dumb, that nothing might divert me from my love of God.

I set out on a journey, which we had then to make, and here I appeared more than ever like those lamps which emit a new glimmering flash, when they are just on the point of extinguishing. Alas! how many snares

were laid in my way! I met them at every step. I even committed infidelities through unwatchfulness. But, O my Lord, with what rigor didst Thou punish them! A useless glance was checked as a sin. How many tears did those inadvertent faults cost me which I fell into, through a weak compliance, and even against my will! Thou knowest, O my Love, that Thy rigor, exercised after my slips, was not the motive of those tears which I shed. With what pleasure would I have suffered the most rigorous severity to have been cured of my infidelity; and to what severe chastisement did I not condemn myself!

When I was at Paris, and the clergy saw me so young, they appeared astonished. Those to whom I opened my state told me, that I could never enough thank God for the graces conferred on me; that if I knew them I should be amazed at them; and that if I were not faithful, I should be the most ungrateful of all creatures. Some declared that they never knew any woman whom God held so closely, and in so great a purity of conscience. I believe what rendered it so was the continual care Thou hadst over me, O my God, making me feel Thy intimate presence, even as Thou hast promised it to us in Thy Gospel,—“If a man love me, my Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him. John xiv. 23. Thou, O my Love, wast my faithful Keeper, who didst defend my heart against all sorts of enemies, preventing the least faults, or correcting them, when vivacity had occasioned their being committed. But alas! my dear Love, when Thou didst cease to watch for me, or left me to myself, how weak was I, and how easily did my enemies prevail over me! Let others ascribe their

victory to their own fidelity. As for me, I shall never attribute them to anything else than Thy paternal care over me. I have too often experienced, to my cost, what I should be without Thee, to presume in the least on any cares of my own. It is to Thee, and to Thee only, that I owe everything, O my Deliverer; and my being indebted to Thee for it gives me infinite joy.

While I was at Paris, I relaxed in my usual exercises, on account of the little time I had, and the dryness and distress which had seized my heart, the hand which sustained me being hid, and my Beloved withdrawn. I did many things which I should not, for I knew the extreme fondness which some had for me, and suffered them to express it, without checking it as I ought. I fell into other faults too, as having my neck a little too bare, though not nearly so much as others had. I wept bitterly because I plainly saw I was too remiss; and that was my torment. I sought all about for Him who had secretly inflamed my heart. I inquired for tidings of Him. But alas! hardly anybody knew Him. I cried, "Oh, Thou best beloved of my soul, hadst Thou been near me these disasters had not befallen me. Tell me where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon, in the bright day of eternity, which is not, like the day of time, subject to night and eclipses?" When I say that I spoke thus to Him, it is but to explain myself. In reality, it all passed almost in silence, for I could not speak. My heart had a language which was carried on without the sound of words, understood of its Well-beloved, as He understands the language of the Word ever eloquent which speaks incessantly in the innermost recesses of the soul. Oh, sacred language! which experience only

gives the comprehension of! Let not any think it a barren language, and effect of the mere imagination. Far different—it is the silent expression of the Word in the soul. As He never ceases to speak, so He never ceases to operate. If people once came to know the operations of the Lord, in souls wholly resigned to His guiding, it would fill them with reverential admiration and awe.

As I saw that the purity of my state was like to be sullied by too great a commerce with the creatures, I made haste to finish what detained me at Paris, in order to return to the country. 'Tis true, O my Lord, I felt that Thou hadst given me strength enough to avoid the occasions of evil—but when I had so far yielded as to get into them, I found I could not resist the vain complaisances, and a number of other foibles which they ensnared me into. The pain which I felt after my faults was inexpressible. It was not an anguish that arose from any distinct idea or conception, from any particular motive or affection—but a kind of devouring fire which ceased not, till the fault was consumed and the soul purified by it. It was a banishment of my soul from the presence of its Beloved, its Bridegroom. I could have no access to Him, neither could I have any rest out of Him. I knew not what to do. I was like the dove out of the ark, which finding no rest for the sole of her foot, was constrained to return to the ark; but, finding the window shut, could only fly about and about it. In the meantime, through an infidelity which will ever render me culpable, I strove to find some satisfaction without, but could not. This served to convince me of my folly, and of the vanity of those pleasures which are called

innocent. When I was prevailed on to taste them, I felt a strong repulse, which, joined with my remorse for the transgression, changed the diversion into torment. "Oh, my Father," said I, "this is not Thee; and nothing else, beside Thee, can give solid pleasure."

One day, as much through unfaithfulness as complaisance, I went to take a walk at some of the public parks, rather from excess of vanity to show myself there, than to take the pleasure of the place. Oh, my Lord! how didst Thou make me sensible of this fault? But far from punishing me in letting me partake of the amusement, Thou didst it in holding me so close to Thyself, that I could give no attention to anything but my fault and Thy displeasure. After this I was invited with some other ladies to an entertainment at St. Cloud. Through vanity and weak compliance, I yielded and went. The affair was magnificent; they, wise in the eye of the world, could relish it, but I was filled with bitterness. I could eat nothing. I could enjoy nothing,—my disquiet appeared on my countenance. Oh, what tears did it cost me! For above three months my Beloved withdrew His favoring presence, and I could see nothing but an angry God.

After this, my husband, enjoying some intermission of his almost continual ailments, had a mind to go to Orleans, and from thence into Touraine. In this journey my vanity made its last blaze. I received abundance of visits and applauses. But how clearly did I see the folly of men who are so taken with vain beauty! I disliked the passion, yet not that in myself which caused it, though I sometimes ardently desired to be delivered from it. The continual combat of nature and grace cost me no small affliction. Nature was

pleased with public applause; but grace made me dread it. What augmented the temptation was, that they esteemed in me virtue, joined with youth and beauty, not knowing that all the virtue was only in God, and all the weakness in myself.

I went in search of confessors, to accuse myself of my failings, and to bewail my backslidings; but they were utterly insensible of my pain. They esteemed what God condemned. They treated as a virtue what to me appeared detestable in His sight. Far from measuring my faults by His graces, they only considered what I was, in comparison of what I might have been. Hence, instead of blaming me, they only flattered my pride, and justified me in what incurred His rebuke; or only treated as a slight fault what in me was highly displeasing to Him, from whom I had received such signal mercies.

The heinousness of sins is not to be measured singly by their nature, but also by the state of the person who commits them, as the least unfaithfulness in a spouse is more injurious to her husband, than far greater ones in his domestics. I told them all the trouble I had been under, for not having entirely covered my neck, though it was covered much more than by other women of my age. They assured me that I was very modestly dressed; and as my husband liked my dress, there could be nothing amiss in it. My inward Director taught me quite the contrary; but I had not courage enough to follow Him, and to dress myself differently from others at my age. Beside, my vanity furnished me with pretences seemingly just, for following the fashions. Oh, if pastors knew what hurt they do in humoring female vanity, they would be

more severe against it. Had I found but one person honest enough to deal plainly with me, I should not have gone on thus; no, not for a moment. But my vanity, siding with the declared opinion of all others, reduced me to think them in the right, and my own scruples to be mere fancy.

We met with accidents in this journey, sufficient to have terrified anyone; and though corrupt nature prevailed so far as I have just mentioned, yet my resignation to God was so strong, that I passed fearless, even where there was apparently no possibility of escape. At one time we got into a narrow pass, and did not perceive, until we were too far advanced to draw back, that the road was undermined by the river Loire, which ran beneath, and the banks had fallen in, so that in some places the footmen were obliged to support one side of the carriage. All around me were terrified to the highest degree, yet God kept me perfectly tranquil.

On my return, I went to see Mrs. Granger, to whom I related how it had been with me while abroad. She strengthened and encouraged me to pursue my first design, and she advised me to cover my neck entirely, which I have done ever since, notwithstanding the singularity of it.

The Lord, who had so long deferred the chastisement merited by such a series of infidelities, now began to punish me with double rigor for the abuse of His grace. Sometimes I wished to retire to a convent, and thought it lawful, as I judged it impossible to correspond so fully with the divine operations, whilst engaged in worldly matters. I found wherein I was weak, and that my faults were always of the same

nature; it was therefore I sought so ardently to shun the occasion. I wished to hide myself in some cave, or to be confined in a dreary prison, rather than enjoy a liberty by which I suffered so much. Divine Love gently drew me inward, and vanity dragged me outward, and my heart was rent asunder by the contest, as I neither gave myself wholly up to the one nor the other.

I besought my God to deprive me of power to displease Him, and cried,—“Art Thou not strong enough wholly to eradicate this unjust duplicity out of my heart?” For my vanity broke forth when occasions offered; yet I quickly returned to God, and He, instead of repulsing or upbraiding me, often received me with open arms, and gave me fresh testimonials of His love, which filled me with the most painful reflections on my offence; for though this wretched vanity was still so prevalent, yet my love to God was such, that after my wanderings, I would rather have chosen His rod than His caresses. His interests, so to speak, were more dear to me than my own, and I wished He would have done Himself justice upon me. My heart was full of grief and of love, and I was stung to the quick for offending Him, who showered His grace so profusely upon me.

X. THE FURNACE OF AFFLICTION.

ON my arrival at home, I found my husband taken with the gout, and his other complaints, my little daughter ill, and like to die of the smallpox; my eldest son, too, took it, and it was of so malignant a type, that it rendered him as disfigured, as before he was beautiful. As soon as I perceived the small-pox was in the house, I had no doubt but I should take it. Mrs. Granger advised me to leave if I could. My father offered to take me home, with my second son, whom I tenderly loved, but my mother-in-law would not suffer it. She persuaded my husband it was useless, and sent for a physician, who seconded her in it, saying, "I should as readily take it at a distance as here, if I were disposed to take it." Had she known what followed, I doubt not but she would have acted otherwise. All the town stirred in this affair. Everyone begged her to send me out of the house, and cried out that it was cruel to expose me thus. They set upon me, too, imagining I was unwilling to go; for I had not told that she was so averse to it. I had at that time no other disposition, than to sacrifice myself to divine Providence, and though I might have removed, notwithstanding my mother-in-law's resistance, yet I would not without her consent, because it looked to me as if her resistance was order from heaven. Oh, divine will of my Lord! Thou wast then my only life, in the midst of all my miseries.

I continued in this spirit of sacrifice to God, waiting from moment to moment in an entire resignation,

for whatever He should be pleased to ordain. I cannot express what nature suffered, for I was like one who sees both certain death and an easy remedy, without being able to avoid the former, or try the latter. I had no less apprehension for my younger son than for myself. My mother-in-law so excessively doted on the eldest, that the rest of us were indifferent to her. Yet I am assured, if she had known that the younger would have died of the small-pox, she would not have acted as she did. God makes use of creatures, and their natural inclinations to accomplish His designs. When I see in the creatures a conduct which appears unreasonable and mortifying, I mount higher, and look upon them as instruments both of the mercy and justice of God, for His justice is full of mercy.

When I told my husband that my stomach was sick, and that I was taking the small-pox, he said it was only imagination. I let Mrs. Granger know the situation I was in. As she had a tender heart, she was affected by the treatment I met with, and encouraged me to offer myself up to the Lord. At length, nature finding there was no resource, consented to the sacrifice which my spirit had already made. The disorder gained ground apace,—I was seized with a great shivering, and a pain both in my head and stomach. They would not yet believe that I was sick, but in a few hours it went so far, that they thought my life in danger; for I was also taken with an inflammation on my lungs, and the remedies for the one disorder were contrary to the other. My mother-in-law's favorite physician was not in town, nor the resident surgeon. Another surgeon was sent for, who said I must be bled; but my mother-in-law would not suffer it at that time

to be done. So little attention was paid me, that I was on the point of death for the want of proper assistance. My husband, not being able to see me, left me entirely to his mother. She would not allow any physician but her own to prescribe for me, and yet did not send for him, though he was within a day's journey of us. In this extremity I opened not my mouth to request any succor. I looked for life or death from the hand of God, without testifying the least uneasiness at such extraordinary conduct. The peace I enjoyed within, on account of that perfect resignation, in which God kept me by His grace, was so great, that it made me forget myself, in the midst of such violent and oppressive disorders.

But the Lord's protection was indeed wonderful. How oft have I been reduced to extremity, yet He never failed to succor, when things appeared most desperate. It pleased Him so to order it, that a skilful surgeon, who had attended me before, passing by our house, inquired after me. They told him I was extremely ill. He alighted immediately, and came in to see me. Never was a man more surprised, when he saw the frightful condition I was in. The small-pox, which could not come out, had fallen on my nose with such force, that it was quite black. He thought there had been a gangrene in it, and that it was going to fall off. My eyes were like two coals; but I was not alarmed, for at that time I could have made a sacrifice of all things, and was pleased that God should avenge Himself on that face, which had betrayed me into so many infidelities. He was so affrighted that he could not hide his surprise, and went into my mother-in-law's chamber and told her, it was most shameful to let

me die in that manner, for want of bleeding. She still opposed it violently; in short, she told him flatly she would not suffer it, until the physician returned. He flew into such a rage at seeing me thus left without sending for the physician, that he reproved my mother-in-law in the severest manner, but all in vain. Upon that he came up again presently into my chamber, and said, "If you choose, I will bleed you, and save your life." I held out my arm to him, and though it was extremely swelled, he bled me in an instant. My mother-in-law was in a violent passion about it. The small-pox came out immediately and he ordered that they should get me bled again in the evening, but she would not suffer it; and for fear of displeasing my mother-in-law, and through a total resignation of myself into the hands of God, I durst not retain him, whatever occasion I had for it.

I am more particular in this relation, to show how advantageous it is to resign one's self to God without reserve. Though in appearance He leaves us for a time to prove and exercise our faith, yet He never fails us, when our need of Him is the more pressing. One may say with the Scripture, "It is God who bringeth down to the gates of death, and raiseth up again." The blackness and swelling of my nose went off, and I believe, had they continued to bleed me, I had been pretty easy; but for want of that I grew worse again. The malady fell into my eyes and inflamed them with such severe pain that I thought I should lose them both.

I had those violent pains for three weeks, during which I got very little sleep. I could not shut my eyes, they were so full of the small-pox, nor open them by reason of the pain I endured. There was the great-

est probability that I should lose my sight, but I was wholly reconciled to the loss. My throat, palate, and gums were likewise so filled with the pock, that I could not swallow broth or take any nourishment without suffering extremely. My whole body looked like that of a leper. All that saw me said they had never seen such a shocking spectacle. But as to my soul, it was kept in a contentment not to be expressed. The hopes of its liberty, by the loss of that beauty which had so frequently brought me under bondage, rendered me so well satisfied, and so united to God, that I would not have changed my condition for that of the most happy prince in the world.

Everyone thought I would be inconsolable, and several expressed their sympathy in my sad condition, as they judged it; while I lay still, in the secret fruition of a joy unspeakable, in this total deprivation of what had been a snare to my pride, and to the passions of men. I praised God in profound silence. None ever heard any complaints from me, either of my pains or the loss I sustained. The only thing that I said was that I rejoiced at, and was exceedingly thankful, for the interior liberty I gained thereby; and they construed this as a great crime. My confessor, who had been dissatisfied with me before, came to see me. He asked me if I was not sorry for having the small-pox, and he now taxed me with pride for my answer.

My youngest little boy took the distemper the same day with myself, and died for want of care. This blow indeed struck me to the heart, but yet, drawing strength from my weakness, I offered him up, and said to God as Job did, "Thou gavest him to me, and Thou takest him from me; blessed be Thy holy name." The

spirit of sacrifice possessed me so strongly, that, though I loved this child tenderly, I never shed a tear at hearing of his death. The day he was buried, the doctor sent to tell me he had not placed a tombstone upon his grave, because my little girl could not survive him two days. My eldest son was not yet out of danger, so that I saw myself stripped of all my children at once, my husband indisposed, and myself extremely so. The Lord did not take my little girl then. He prolonged her life some years.

At last my mother-in-law's physician arrived, at a time wherein he could be of but little service to me. When he saw the strange inflammation in my eyes, he bled me several times, but it was too late. And those bleedings which would have been so proper at first, did nothing but weaken me now. They could not even bleed me in the condition I was in, but with the greatest difficulty, for my arms were so swelled, that the surgeon was obliged to push in the lance to a great depth. Moreover, the bleeding being out of season had liked to have caused my death. This, I confess, would have been very agreeable to me. I looked upon death as the greatest blessing for me. Yet I saw well I had nothing to hope on that side, and that instead of meeting with so desirable an event, I must prepare myself to support the trials of life.

After my eldest son was better, he got up and came into my chamber. I was surprised at the extraordinary change I saw in him. His face, lately so fair and beautiful, was become like a coarse spot of earth, all full of furrows. That gave me the curiosity to view myself in the looking-glass. I felt shocked, for I saw that God had ordered the sacrifice in all its reality.

I was as a victim incessantly offered upon the altar, to Him who first sacrificed Himself for love. "What shall I render to the Lord, for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." These words, I can truly say, O my God, have been the delight of my heart, and have had their effect on me, through my whole life, for I have been continually heaped with Thy blessings and Thy crosses. My principal attraction, besides that of suffering for Thee, has been to yield myself up without resistance, interiorly and exteriorly, to all Thy divine disposals.

They sent me pomatums to recover my complexion, and to fill up the hollows of the small-pox. I had seen wonderful effects from it upon others, and therefore at first had a mind to try them. But Love, jealous of His work, would not suffer it. There was a voice in my heart which said, "If I would have had thee fair, I would have left thee as thou wert." I was therefore obliged to lay aside every remedy, and to go into the air, which made the pitting worse; and to expose myself in the street to the eyes of everyone, when the redness of the small-pox was at the worst, in order to make my humiliation triumph, where I had exalted my pride.

My husband kept his bed almost all that time, and made good use of his indisposition. Only as he now lost that, which before gave him so much pleasure in viewing me, he grew much more susceptible of impressions which any gave him against me. In consequence of this, the persons who spoke to him of my disadvantage, finding themselves now better hearkened to, spoke more boldly and more frequently. There was only Thou, O my God, who changed not for me.

XI. IN THE WILL OF GOD.

MY waiting-maid became every day more haughty. Seeing that her scoldings and outcries did not now torture me, she thought, if she could hinder me from going to the communion, she would give me the greatest of all vexations. She was not mistaken, O divine Spouse of pure souls, since the only satisfaction of my life was to receive and to honor Thee. I gave everything, of the finest I had, to furnish the Churches with ornaments, and contributed to the utmost extent of my abilities, to make them have silver plates and chalices. "Oh, my Love," I cried, "let me be Thy victim! Spare nothing to annihilate me." I felt an inexpressible longing to be more reduced, and to become, as it were, nothing.

This girl then knew my affection for the holy sacrament, where, when I could have liberty for it, I passed several hours on my knees. She took it in her head to watch me daily. When she discovered me going thither, she ran to tell my mother-in-law and my husband. They needed no more to chagrin them. Their invectives lasted the whole day. If a word escaped me in my own justification, it was enough to make them say I was guilty of sacrilege, and to raise an outcry against all devotion. If I made them no answer at all, they still heightened their indignation, and said the most grating things they could devise. If I fell sick, which often happened, they took occasion to come to quarrel with me in my bed, saying, my communion and prayers were what made me sick, as if there had been

nothing else could make me ill, but my devotion to Thee, O my Beloved!

She told me one day, in her passion, that she was going to write to him who she thought was my director, to get him to stop me from going to the communion, for that he did not know me. And when I made her no answer, she cried out as loud as she could, that I treated her ill and despised her. When I went out to go to prayers (though I had taken care to arrange everything about the house), she ran to tell my husband that I was going abroad, and had left nothing in order. When I returned home, rage fell on me in all its violence. They would hear none of my reasons, but said they were all a pack of lies. My mother-in-law persuaded my husband that I let everything go to wreck, and that if she did not take the care of things, he would be ruined. He believed it, and I bore all with patience, endeavoring, as well as I could, to do my duty. What gave most trouble was the not knowing what course to take; for when I ordered anything without her, she complained that I showed her no respect, that I did things of my own head, and that they were done always the worse for it. Then she would order them quite contrary. If I consulted her to know what or how she would have anything to be done, she said I compelled her to have the care and trouble of everything.

I had scarcely any rest but what I found in the love of Thy will, O my God, and submission to Thy orders, however rigorous they might be. They incessantly watched my words and actions, to find occasion against me. They chided me all the day long, contin-

ually repeating, and harping over and over the same things, and that even before the servants.

Yet, if I happened to be for some days freed from the exterior cross, it was a most sensible distress to me, and indeed a punishment more difficult to bear than the severest trials. I then comprehended what St. Teresa says, "Let me suffer or die." For this absence of the cross was so grievous to me, that I languished with the ardency of desire for its return. But no sooner was this earnest longing granted, and the blessed cross returned again, than strange as it may seem, it appeared so weighty and burdensome, as to be almost insupportable.

Though I loved my father extremely, and he loved me very tenderly, yet I never spoke to him of my sufferings. One of my relations, who loved me very much, perceived the little moderation they used toward me. They spoke very roughly to me before him. He was highly displeased, and told my father of it, adding, that I would pass for a fool. Soon after I went to see my father, who, contrary to his custom, sharply reprimanded me, for suffering them to treat me in such a manner, without saying anything in my own defence, adding, everyone talked of me for it; that it looked as if I had neither sense nor spirit to vindicate myself. I answered, "If they knew what my husband said to me, that was confusion enough for me, without my bringing any more of it on myself by replies; that if they did not notice it, I ought not to cause it to be observed, nor expose my husband's weakness; that remaining silent stopped all disputes, whereas I might cause them to be continued and increased, by my replies." My father answered, I did well, and that I

should continue to act as God should inspire me. And after that, he never spoke to me of it any more.

They were ever talking to me against my father, my relations, and all such as I esteemed most. I felt this more keenly than all they could say against myself. I could not forbear defending them, and therein I did wrong; as whatever I said served only to provoke them. If any complained of my father or relations, they were always in the right. If any, whom they had disliked before, spoke against them, they were presently approved of. If any showed friendship to me, such were not welcome. A relation whom I greatly loved for her piety, coming to see me, they treated her in such a manner as obliged her to go, which gave me no small uneasiness. When any person of distinction came, they would speak against me, even to those who knew me not, which surprised them.

It mattered not what they said against me, Love would not allow me to justify myself. I spoke not to my husband of what either my mother-in-law or the girl did to me, except the first year, when I was not sufficiently touched with the power of God, to suffer such treatment. Nay, I did more than this, for as my mother-in-law and my husband were both passionate, they often quarreled. Then I was in favor, and to me they made their mutual complaints. I never told the one what the other had said. And though it might have been of service to me, humanly speaking, to take advantage of such opportunities, I never made use of them to complain of either. Nay, on the contrary, I did not rest till I had reconciled them. I spoke many obliging things of the one to the other, which always made them friends again, though I knew by frequent

experience that I should pay dear for their re-union. For scarcely were they reconciled, but they joined together against me.

All my crosses to me would have seemed little, if I might have had liberty to pray, and to be alone, to indulge the interior attraction which I felt. But I was obliged still to continue in their presence, with such a subjection as is scarcely conceivable. My husband looked at his watch, if at any time I had liberty allowed me for prayer, to see if I stayed above half an hour. If I exceeded it, he grew very uneasy. Sometimes I said to him, "Grant me one hour to divert and employ myself as I have a mind." And though he would have granted it to me for other diversions, yet for prayer he would not. I confess that inexperience caused me much trouble, and I have often thereby given occasion for what they made me suffer. For ought I not to have looked on my captivity as an effect of the will of my God, to content myself therein, and to make it my only desire and prayer? But I often fell back again into the anxiety of wishing to get time for prayer, which was not agreeable to my husband. It is true, those faults were more frequent in the beginning. Afterwards I prayed to God in His own retreat, in the temple of my heart, and then I went out no more.

We went into the country, where I committed many faults, letting myself go too much after my inward attraction. I thought I might do it then because my husband diverted himself with building. If I stayed from him he was dissatisfied, which sometimes happened, as he was continually talking with the workmen. I set myself in a corner, and there had my work with me, but could scarcely do anything by reason of

the force of the attraction which made the work fall out of my hands. I passed whole hours this way, without being able either to open my eyes or know what passed in me; but I had nothing to wish for, nor yet to be afraid of. Everywhere I found my proper center, because everywhere I found God.

My heart could then desire nothing but what it had; for this disposition extinguished all its desires; and I sometimes said to myself, "What wantest thou? What fearest thou?" And I was surprised to find upon trial that I had nothing to fear. Every place I was in was my proper place.

When I wanted to hear from, or write to Mother Granger, I often felt a strong propensity to go to the door. There I found a messenger with a letter from her, which could not have fallen into my hands but for that. But this is only a small instance of these continual providences. She was the only person I could be free to open my state to, when I could get to see her, which was with the greatest difficulty, and through providential assistance; having not only been prohibited by my confessor and my husband, but all means that could be devised were put in practice by my mother-in-law to prevent it. I placed an extreme confidence in Mother Granger. I concealed nothing from her, either of my sins or my pains. I would not have done the least thing without telling her. There was nothing which I kept from her but my interior dispositions; those I was scarcely able to tell, because I knew not how to explain myself thereon, being very ignorant of those matters, having never read or heard of them.

One day when they thought I was going to see my father, I ran off to Mother Granger. It was discovered, and cost me such crosses as I cannot express. Their rage against me was so excessive, that it would be incredible. Even my writing to her was extremely difficult. For as I had the utmost abhorrence of a lie, I forbade the footman to tell any. When they were met they were asked whither they were going, and if they had any letters. My mother-in-law set herself in a little passage, through which those who went out must necessarily pass by her. She asked them whither they were going and what they carried. Sometimes going on foot to the Benedictines, I caused shoes to be carried, that they might not perceive by the dirty ones that I had been far. I durst not go alone; and those who attended me had orders to tell every place I went to. If they were discovered to fail in doing it, they were either corrected or discharged.

My husband and mother-in-law were always inveighing against that good woman, though in reality they esteemed her. I sometimes made my own complaint to her: and she replied, "How should you content them, when I have been doing all in my power for these twenty years to satisfy them without success?" For as my mother-in-law had two daughters under her care, she was always finding something to say against everything she did in regard to them.

But the most grievous cross to me now was the revolting of my own son against me, whom they inspired with so great a contempt for me, that I could not bear to see him without extreme affliction. When I was in my chamber with some of my friends, they sent him to listen to what we said; and as he saw this

pleased them, he invented a hundred things to tell them. What gave me the severest pang was the loss of my child. If I caught him in a lie, as I frequently did, he would upbraid me, saying, "My grandmother says you have been a greater liar than I." I answered him, "Therefore I know the deformity of that vice, and how hard a thing it is to get the better of it; and for this reason, I would not have you suffer the like." He spoke to me things very offensive, and because he saw the awe I stood in of his grandmother and his father, if in their absence I found fault with him for anything, he insultingly upbraided me, and said that now I wanted to set up for his mistress, because they were not there. All this they approved of, in so much as to strengthen him in his most perverse inclinations. One day he went to see my father, and rashly began talking against me to him, as he was used to do to his grandmother. But there it did not meet with the same recompense. It affected my father to tears. He came to our house to desire he might be corrected for it. They promised it should be done, and yet they never did it. I was grievously afraid of the consequences of so bad an education. I told Mother Granger of it, who consoled me, and said that since I could not remedy it, I must suffer and leave everything to God, and that this child would be my cross.

XII. EARTHLY LOSSES; HEAVENLY GAINS.

ABOUT eight or nine months after my recovery from the small-pox, Father La Combe, passing by our house, brought me a letter from Father de la Mothe, recommending him to my esteem, and expressing the highest friendship for him. I hesitated much, for I was very loth to make new acquaintances, but the fear of offending my brother prevailed. After a short conversation we both desired a farther opportunity. I thought that he either loved God, or was disposed to love Him, and I wished everybody to love Him. God had already made use of me for the conversion of three of his order. The strong desire he had of seeing me again induced him to come to our country house, which was about half a league from the town. A little incident which happened, opened a way for me to speak to him. As he was in discourse with my husband, who relished his company, he was taken ill, and retired into the garden. My husband bade me go and see what was the matter with him. He told me he had remarked in my countenance a deep inwardness and presence of God, which had given him a strong desire of seeing me again. And God then assisted me to open to him the interior path of the soul, and conveyed so much grace to him through this poor channel, that he has owned to me since, that he went away changed into quite another man. I preserved an esteem for him, for it appeared to me that he would be devoted to God; but little did I then foresee that I should ever be led to the place where he was to reside.

My disposition at this time, as I have said, was a continual prayer, without knowing it to be such; for the presence of God was so plentifully given, that it seemed to be more in me than my very self. The sensibility thereof was so powerful, so penetrating, it seemed to me irresistible; and Love took from me all liberty of my own. At other times I was so dry, I felt nothing but the pain of absence, which was the keener to me, as the divine Presence had before been so sensible. In these alternatives, when Love was present, I forgot in such a manner all my troubles and pains, that it appeared to me as if I had never experienced any. And, in its absence, it seemed as if it would never return again. I still thought it was through some fault of mine it was withdrawn, and that rendered me inconsolable. Had I known it had been a state through which it was necessary to pass, I should not have been troubled; for my strong love to the will of God would have rendered everything easy to me; the property of this prayer being to give a great love to the order of God, with so sublime and perfect a reliance on Him, as to fear nothing, whether danger, thunders, spirits, or death. It gives a great abstraction from one's self, our own interests and reputation, with an utter disregard to every thing of the kind; all being swallowed up in the esteem of the will of God.

At home, I was accused of everything that was ill done, spoiled or broken. At first I told the truth, and said it was not I. They persisted, and accused me of lying. I then made no reply. Besides, they told all their tales to such as came to the house. But when I was afterwards alone with the same persons, I never undeceived them. I often heard such things said of

me, before my friends, as were enough to make them entertain a bad opinion of me. My heart kept its habitation in the tacit consciousness of my own innocence, not concerning myself whether they thought well or ill of me, excluding all the world, all opinions or censures, out of my view, and minding nothing else but the friendship of God only.

If through infidelity I happened at any time to justify myself, I always failed, and drew upon myself new crosses, both within and without. But notwithstanding all this, I was so enamored with it, that the greatest cross of all would have been to be without any. When the cross was taken from me for any short space, it seemed to me that it was because of the bad use I made of it; and that my unfaithfulness deprived me of so great an advantage; for I never knew its value better than in its loss. Oh, dear cross, my faithful companion! As my Savior became incarnate, only to die in thy arms, should I not be conformable to Him in that? And wilt not thou be the means of uniting me to Him forever? O my Love, I cried, punish me any way, but take not the cross from me. This amiable cross returned to me with so much the more weight, as my desire was more vehement. I could not reconcile two things, they appeared to me so very opposite; viz., To desire the cross with so much ardor, and to support it with so much difficulty and pain.

God knows well, in the admirable economy He observes how to render the crosses more weighty, conformable to the ability of the creature to bear them; giving them always something new and unexpected. Hereby my soul began to be more resigned, and to comprehend that the state of absence, and of wanting

what I longed for, was in its turn more profitable than that of always abounding; because this latter nourished self-love. If God did not act thus, the soul would never die to itself. That principle of self-love is so crafty and dangerous, that it cleaves to everything.

What gave me most uneasiness, in this time of darkness and crucifixion, both within and without, was an inconceivable readiness to be quick and hasty. When any answer a little too lively escaped me (which served not a little to humble me), they said I was fallen into a mortal sin. A conduct no less rigorous than this was quite necessary for me, for I was so proud, passionate, and of a humor naturally thwarting, wanting always to carry matters my own way, and thinking my own reasons better than those of others, that, hadst Thou, O my God, spared the strokes of Thy hammer, I should never have been formed to Thy will, to be an instrument for Thy use; for I was ridiculously vain. Applause rendered me intolerable. I praised my friends to excess, and blamed others without reason. But, the more criminal I have been, the more I am indebted to Thee, and the less of any good can I attribute to myself.

In acts of charity I was very assiduous. So great was my tenderness for the poor, that I wished to have supplied all their wants. I could not see their necessity without reproaching myself for the plenty I enjoyed. I deprived myself of all I could to help them. The very best at my table was distributed among them. There were few of the poor where I lived, who did not partake of my liberality. It seemed as if Thou hadst made me Thy only almoner there, for being refused by others, they all came to me. "Oh, my divine Love,"

I cried, "it is Thy substance; I am only the steward. I ought to distribute it according to Thy will." I found means to relieve them without letting myself be known, because I had one who dispensed my alms privately. When there were families who were ashamed to take it in this way, I sent it to them as if I owed them a debt. I clothed such as were naked, and caused young girls to be taught how to earn their livelihood, especially such as were handsome; to the end that being employed, and having whereon to live, they might not be under a temptation to throw themselves away. God made use of me to reclaim several from their disorderly lives; and there was one of beauty and distinction, who has since made a happy end. I went to visit the sick, to comfort them, to make their beds. I made ointments, dressed their wounds, buried their dead. I privately furnished tradesmen and mechanics wherewith to keep up their shops. My heart was much opened toward my fellow-creatures in distress, and few indeed could carry charity much farther than our Lord enabled me to do, according to my state, both while married and since.

To resume the thread of my history, the small-pox had so much hurt one of my eyes, that it was feared I would lose it. The gland at the corner of my eye was much injured. An imposthume arose from time to time between the nose and the eye, which gave me exquisite pain till it was lanced. It swelled all my head to that degree, that I could not bear even a pillow. The least noise was agony to me, though sometimes they made a great commotion in my chamber. And yet this was a precious time to me, for two reasons: the first, because I was left in bed alone, where I

had a sweet retreat without interruption; the other, because it answered the desire I had for suffering,—which desire was so great, that all the austerities of the body would have been but as a drop of water to quench so great a fire; and indeed the severities and rigors which I then exercised were extreme—but they did not appease this appetite for the cross. It is Thou alone, O crucified Savior, who canst make the cross truly effectual for the death of self. Let others bless themselves in their ease or gaiety, grandeur or pleasures, poor temporary heavens; as for me, my desires were all turned another way, even to the silent path of suffering for Christ, and to be united to Him, through the mortification of all that was of nature in me, that my senses, appetites and will, being dead to these, might wholly live in Him.

I obtained leave to go to Paris for the cure of my eye; and yet it was much more through the desire I had to see Monsieur Bertot, a man of profound experience, whom Mother Granger had lately assigned to me for my director. I went to take leave of my father, who embraced me with peculiar tenderness, little thinking then that it would be our last adieu.

Paris was a place now no longer to be dreaded as in times past. The throngs only served to draw me into a deep recollection, and the noise of the streets but augmented my inward prayer. I saw Monsieur Bertot, who did not prove of that service to me, which he would have been if I had then—the power to explain myself; but though I wished earnestly to hide nothing from him, yet God held me so closely to Him, that I could scarcely tell him anything at all. As soon as I spoke to him, everything vanished from my mind,

so that I could remember nothing but some few faults which I told him. As I saw him very seldom, and nothing stayed in my recollection, and as I read of nothing any way resembling my case, I knew not how to open myself upon it. Besides, I desired to make nothing known, but the evil which was in me. Therefore Monsieur Bertot knew me not, even till his death. This was of great utility to me, by taking away every support, and making me truly die to myself.

I went to pass the ten days, from the Ascension to Whitsuntide, at an abbey four leagues from Paris, the abbess of which had a particular friendship for me. Here my union with God seemed to be deeper and more continued, becoming always simple, but at the same time more close and intimate.

One day I awoke suddenly at four o'clock in the morning, with a strong impression on my mind that my father was dead; and though at the same time my soul was in a very great contentment, yet my love for him affected it with sorrow, and my body with weakness. Under the strokes and daily troubles which befell me, my will was so subservient to Thine, O my God, that it appeared absolutely united to it. There seemed, indeed, to be no will left in me but Thine only. My own disappeared, and no desires, tendencies or inclinations were left, but to the one sole object of whatever was most pleasing to Thee, be it what it would. If I had a will, it was in union with Thine, as two well tuned lutes in concert,—that which is not touched renders the same sound as that which is touched; it is but one and the same sound, one pure harmony. It is this union of the will which establishes in perfect peace. Yet, though my own will

was lost, as to its operations, I have found since, in the strange states I have been obliged to pass through, how much it had yet to cost me to have it totally lost, as to all its properties in all the circumstances, and whole extent thereof, so that the soul should retain no more any interest or desire of its own, of either time or eternity, but only the interest of God alone, in the manner that is known to Himself, and not in our way of conceiving. How many souls are there which think their own wills quite lost, while they are yet very far from it! They would find they still subsist, if they met with severe trials. Who is there who does not wish something for himself, either of interest, wealth, honor, pleasure, conveniency, liberty, etc.? And he who thinks his mind loose from all these objects, because he possesses them, would soon perceive his attachment to them, were he stripped of those he is possessed of. If there are found in a whole age three persons so dead to everything, as to be utterly resigned to Providence without any exception, they may well pass for prodigies of grace.

In the afternoon as I was with the abbess, I told her I had strong presentiments of my father's death. Indeed I could hardly speak, I was so affected within, and enfeebled without. Presently one came to tell her that she was wanted in the parlor. It was a messenger come in haste, with an account from my husband that my father was ill. And as I afterwards found, he suffered only twelve hours. He was therefore by this time dead. The abbess returning, says, "Here is a letter from your husband, who writes that your father is taken violently ill." I said to her, "He is dead, I cannot have a doubt about it." I sent away to Paris

immediately, to hire a coach, to go the sooner; mine waited for me at the midway. I went off at nine o'clock at night. They said I was going to destroy myself for I had no acquaintance with me, as I had sent away my maid to Paris, to put everything in order there, and being in a religious house, I had no mind to keep any footman with me. The abbess told me that since I thought my father was dead, it would be rashness in me to expose myself, and run the risk of my life in that manner; that coaches could hardly pass the way I was going, it being no beaten road. I answered that it was my indispensable duty to go to assist my father, and that I ought not, on a bare apprehension, to exempt myself from it. I then went alone, abandoned to Providence, with people unknown. My weakness was so great, that I could hardly keep my seat in the coach, and yet I was often forced to alight, on account of dangerous places in the road.

In this way I was obliged, about midnight, to cross a forest, notorious for murders and robberies. The most intrepid dreaded it, but my resignation left me scarce any room to think at all about it. Oh, what fears and uneasiness does a resigned soul spare itself! Thus all alone I arrived within five leagues of my own habitation, where I found my confessor who had opposed me, with one of my relations, waiting for me. The sweet consolation I had enjoyed, when alone, was now interrupted. My confessor, ignorant of my state, restrained me entirely. My grief was of such a nature that I could not shed a tear. And I was ashamed to hear a thing which I knew but too well, without giving any exterior mark of grief. The inward and profound peace I enjoyed dawned on my countenance, and the

state I was in did not permit me to speak, or to do such things as are usually expected from persons of piety. I could do nothing but love and be silent.

I found on my arrival at home, that my father was already buried, on account of the excessive heat. It was ten o'clock at night. All wore the habit of mourning. I had traveled thirty leagues in a day and a night. As I was very weak, not having taken any nourishment, I was instantly put to bed.

About two o'clock in the morning my husband got up, and having gone out of my chamber, he returned presently, crying out with all his might, "My daughter is dead!" She was my only daughter, as dearly beloved as truly lovely. She had so many graces, both of body and mind conferred on her, that one must have been insensible not to have loved her. She had an extraordinary share of love to God. Often was she found in corners at prayer. As soon as she perceived me at prayer, she came and joined; and if she discovered that I had been without her, she would weep bitterly and cry, "Ah, mamma, you pray but I don't." When we were alone and she saw my eyes closed—she'd whisper, "Are you asleep?" and then cry out, "Ah no, you are praying to our dear Jesus;" and dropping on her knees before me, she would begin to pray too. She was several times whipped by her grandmother, because she said she would never have any other husband but our Lord, yet she could never make her say otherwise. She was innocent and modest as a little angel; very dutiful and endearing, and withal very beautiful. Her father doted on her, and to me she was very dear, much more for the qualities of her mind than those of her beautiful person. I looked

upon her as my only consolation on earth, for she had as much affection for me, as her brother had aversion and contempt. She died of an unseasonable bleeding.

There now remained to me only the son of my sorrow. He fell ill to the point of death, but was restored at the prayer of Mother Granger, now my only consolation after God. I no more wept for my child than for my father. I could only say, "Thou, O Lord, gave her to me; it pleases Thee to take her back again, for she was Thine." As for my father, his virtue was so generally known, that I must rather be silent, than enter upon the subject. His reliance on God, his faith and patience were wonderful. Both died in July, 1672. From henceforth crosses were not spared me, and though I have had abundance of them hitherto, yet they were only the shadows of those which I have been since obliged to pass through, pursuant to a marriage contract, which I had lately entered into with our Lord Jesus Christ. In this spiritual marriage I claimed for my dowry only crosses, scourges, persecutions, ignominies, lowliness, and nothingness of self, which in His great goodness, and for wise ends, as I have seen, He has been pleased to grant and confer upon me.

One day, being in great distress on account of the redoubling of outward and inward crosses, I went into my closet to give vent to my grief. M. Bertot was brought into my mind, with this wish, "Oh, that he was sensible of what I suffer!" Though he wrote but very seldom, and with great difficulty, yet he wrote me a letter dated the same day about the cross, the finest and most consolatory he ever wrote me on that subject.

XIII. SEVEN YEARS OF DARKNESS.

ALADY of rank, whom I sometimes visited, took a particular liking to me, because she said that she observed in me something extraordinary and uncommon. I believe it was the inward attraction of my soul that appeared on my very countenance, for one day a gentleman of fashion said to my husband's aunt, "I saw the lady your niece; and it is very evident that she lives in the presence of God." I was surprised at this, as I little thought such an one as he could know what it was to have God thus present. This lady, I say, began to be touched with the sense of God. For, wanting once to take me to the play, I refused to go (as I never went to plays); making use of the pretext of my husband's continual indispositions. She pressed me exceedingly, and said I should not be prevented by his sickness from taking some amusement, and that I was not of an age to be confined with the sick like a nurse. I told her my reasons for acting so by my husband. She then perceived that it was more from a principle of piety, than the indispositions of my husband, that I did not go. Insisting to know my sentiment of plays, I told her I entirely disapproved of them, and especially for a Christian woman. And as she was far more advanced in years than I was, what I then said made such an impression on her mind, she never went again.

Being once with her and another lady, who was fond of talking and who had read the fathers, they spoke much of God. This lady spoke learnedly of Him.

I said scarcely anything, being inwardly drawn to silence, and troubled at such kind of conversation about God. My acquaintance came next day to see me,—the Lord had so touched her heart, that she could hold out no longer. I attributed this touch to something the other lady had said, but she said to me, “Your silence had something in it which penetrated to the bottom of my soul; and I could not relish what the other said.” Then we spoke to one another with open hearts.

It was then that God left indelible impressions of His grace on her soul, and she continued so athirst for Him, that she could scarcely endure to converse on any other subject. That she might become wholly His, He deprived her of a most affectionate husband, and visited her with such severe crosses, and at the same time poured His grace so abundantly into her heart, that He soon became the sole master thereof. After the death of her husband, and the loss of most of her fortune, she went to reside four leagues from our house, on a small estate, which she had yet left. She obtained my husband’s consent to my going to spend a week with her, to console her under her losses. God gave her by my means all she wanted. She had a great share of understanding, but was surprised at my expressing things to her so far above my natural capacity. I should have been surprised at it myself, had I reflected on it. But it was God who gave me the gift for her sake, diffusing a flood of grace into her soul, without regarding the unworthiness of the channel He was pleased to make use of. Since that time her soul has been the temple of the Holy Ghost, and our hearts have been indissolubly united.

My husband and I took a little journey together, in which both my resignation and humility were exercised, yet without difficulty or constraint, so powerful was the influence of divine grace. We had all liked to have perished in a river. The rest of the company in a desperate fright threw themselves out of the coach, which sunk in the moving sand. I continued so much inwardly occupied, that I did not once think of the danger. God delivered me from it without my thought of avoiding it. I was quite content to be drowned, had He permitted it. It may be said I was rash. I believe I was so; yet I rather chose to perish, trusting in God, than make my escape in a dependence on myself. But what say I? We do not perish, but for want of trusting in Him. My pleasure is to be indebted to Him for everything. This renders me content in my miseries, which I would rather endure all my life long, in a state of resignation to Him, than put an end to them, in a dependence on myself. However, I would not advise others to act thus, unless they were in the same disposition which I was in at that time.

As my husband's maladies daily increased, he resolved to go to St. Reine. He appeared very desirous of having none but me with him, and told me one day, "If they never spoke to me against you, I should be more easy, and you more happy." In this journey I committed many faults of self-love and self-seeking, and being in a deep interior resignation, experienced thereby what I should be without Thy fatherly care, O Lord. For some time past Thou hadst withdrawn from me that sweet interior correspondence which before I had only to follow. I was become like a poor traveller that had lost his way in the night, and could

find no way, path or track. But I reserve for another place a description of the terrible darkness through which I passed. My husband, in his return from St. Reine, passed by St. Edm. Having now no children but my first-born son, who was often at the gates of death, he wished exceedingly for heirs, and prayed for them earnestly. God granted his desire, and gave me a second son. As I was several weeks without any one daring to speak to me, on account of my great weakness, it was a time of retreat and of silence, wherein I tried to indemnify myself for the loss of time I had sustained, to pray to Thee, O my God, and to continue alone with Thee. I may say that God took a new possession of me, and left me not. It was a time of continual joy without interruption. As I had experienced many inward difficulties, weaknesses and withdrawals of my Love, it was a new life. It seemed as if I was already in the fruition of beatitude. But how dear did this happy time cost me, since it was only a preparative to a total privation of comfort for several years, without any support, or hope of return! It began with the death of Mrs. Granger, who had been my only consolation under God. Before my return from St. Reine I heard she was dead.

When I received this news, I confess it was the most afflicting stroke I had ever felt. I thought, had I been with her at her death, I might have spoken to her, and received her last instructions; but God has so ordered it that I was deprived of her assistance in almost all my losses, in order to render the strokes more painful. Some months indeed before her death, it was shown to me, that though I could not see her but with difficulty, and suffering for it, yet she was

still some support to me, and the Lord let me know that it would be profitable for me to be deprived of her. But at the time she died I did not think so. It was in that trying season when my paths were all blocked up, she was taken from me, she who might have guided me in my lonesome and difficult road,—bounded as it were with precipices, and entangled with briars and thorns.

Oh, adorable conduct of my God! there must be no guide for the person whom Thou art leading into the regions of darkness and death; no conductor for the man whom Thou art determined to destroy, (that is, to cause to die totally to himself). After having saved me with so much mercy, O my Love; after having led me by the hand in rugged paths, it seems Thou wast bent on my destruction. May it not be said that Thou dost not save but to destroy, nor go to seek the lost sheep, but to cause it to be yet more lost; that Thou art pleased in building what is demolished, and in demolishing what is built. Thus Thou wouldst overturn the temple built by human endeavors, with so much care and industry—in order as it were miraculously to erect a divine structure—a house not built with hands, eternal in the heavens.

My brother now openly showed his hatred for me. He married at Orleans, and my husband had the complaisance to go to his marriage, though he was in a poor state of health, the roads bad, and so covered over with snow, that we had like to have been upset twelve or fifteen times. And yet, far from appearing obliged by his politeness, my brother quarrelled with him more than ever, and without any reason, too, and I was the butt of both their resentments. While I was at Orleans,

meeting with one whom at that time I thought highly of, I was too forward and free in speaking to him of spiritual things, thinking I was doing well, but had a remorse for it afterwards; which I so remembered, that I no more fell into the like fault again. How often we mistake nature for grace! One must be dead to self, when such forwardness comes from God only.

On my return, my brother treated me with the utmost contempt. Yet, my mind was so fully drawn inward, that although we had much more danger on the road than in going, I had no thought about myself, but all about my husband; so that seeing the coach overturning, I said, "Fear not, it is on my side that it falls; it will not hurt you." I believe, had all perished I should not have been moved. My peace was so profound that nothing could shake it. If these times continued, we should be too strong. But they now began to come but seldom, and were followed with long and wearisome privations. Since that time my brother has changed for the better, and has turned on the side of God, but he has never turned to me. It has been by particular permission of God, and the conduct of His providence over my soul, that has caused him and other religious persons, who have persecuted me, to think they were rendering glory to God, and doing acts of justice therein.

After this there fell out a very perplexing affair, which caused me great crosses, and seemed designed for nothing else. A certain person conceived so much malice against my husband, that he was determined to ruin him if possible. He found no other way to attempt it, but by entering into a private engagement with my brother; by which he obtained a power to demand,

in the name of the king's brother, two hundred thousand livres, which he pretended that my brother and I owed him. My brother signed the processes, upon an assurance given him that he should not pay anything. I think his youth engaged him in what he did not understand. This affair so chagrined my husband, that I have reason to believe it shortened his days. He was so angry with me, although I was innocent, that he could not speak to me but in a fury. He would give me no light into the affair, and I did not know in what it consisted. In the height of his rage, he said he would not meddle with it, but give me up my portion, and let me live as I could, with many other things still more grating. On the other side, my brother would not move in it, nor suffer anything to be done. The day when the trial was to come on, after prayer, I felt myself strongly pressed to go to the judges. I was wonderfully assisted herein, even so as to discover and unravel all the turns and artifices of this affair, without knowing how I could have been able to do it. The first judge was so surprised to see the affair so very different from what he had thought it before, that he himself exhorted me to go to the other judges, and especially to the intendant, who was just then going to court, and was quite misinformed about the matter. God enabled me to manifest the truth in so clear a light, and gave such power to my words, that the intendant thanked me for having so seasonably come to undeceive, and set him right in the affair. Had I not done this, he assured me the cause had been lost. And as they saw the falsehood of every point, they would have condemned the plaintiff to pay the costs, if he had not been so great a prince, who lent his name to the scheme.

To save the honor of the prince, they ordered us to pay him fifty crowns. Hereby the two hundred thousand livres were reduced to only one hundred and fifty. My husband was exceedingly pleased at what I had done, but my brother appeared as outrageous against me, as if I had caused him some very great loss.

About this time I fell into a state of total privation which lasted nearly seven years. I seemed to myself cast down, as it were, from a throne of enjoyment, like Nebuchadnezzar, to live among beasts; a deplorable state, yet of the greatest advantage to me, by the use which divine wisdom made of it. This state of emptiness, darkness and impotency, went far beyond any trials I had ever yet met with. I have since experienced, that the prayer of the heart, when it appears most dry and barren, nevertheless is not ineffectual nor offered in vain. For God gives what is best for us, though not what we most relish or wish for. Were people but convinced of this truth, they would be far from complaining all their life long. By causing us death He would procure us life, for all our happiness, spiritual, temporal and eternal, consists in resigning ourselves to God, leaving it to Him to do in us and with us as He pleases, and with so much the more submission, as things please us less. By this pure dependence on His Spirit, everything is given us admirably. Our very weaknesses, in His hand, prove a source of humiliation. If the soul were faithful to leave itself in the hand of God, sustaining all His operations, whether gratifying or mortifying, suffering itself to be conducted, from moment to moment, by His hand, and annihilated by the strokes of His Providence, without complaining, or desiring anything but what it

has, it would soon arrive at the experience of the eternal truth, though it might not at once know the ways and methods by which God conducted it thereto.

But the misfortune is, that people want to direct God, instead of resigning themselves to be directed by Him. They want to show Him a way, instead of passively following that wherein He leads them. Hence many souls, called to enjoy God Himself, and not barely His gifts, spend all their lives in running after little consolations, and feeding on them; resting there only, and making all their happiness to consist therein.

For you, my dear children, if my chains and my imprisonment in any way afflict you, I pray that they may serve to engage you to seek nothing but God for Himself alone, and never to desire to possess Him but by the death of your whole selves; never to seek to be something in the ways of the Spirit, but choose ye to enter into the most profound nothingness.

I had an internal strife, which continually racked me;—two powers which appeared equally strong, seemed equally to struggle for the mastery within me. On the one hand, a desire of pleasing Thee, O my God, a fear of offending, and a continual tendency of all my powers to Thee;—on the other side, the view of all my inward corruptions, the depravity of my heart, and the continual stirring and rising of self. Oh, what torrents of tears, what desolations have these cost me? “Is it possible,” I cried, “that I have received so many graces and favors from God—only to lose them;—that I have loved Him with so much ardor, but to be eternally deprived of Him;—that His benefits have only produced ingratitude,—His fidelity been repaid with infidelity;—that my heart has been emptied of all crea-

tures, and created objects, and filled with His blessed presence and love,—in order now to be wholly void of divine power, and only filled with wanderings and created objects!”

I could now no longer pray as formerly. Heaven seemed shut to me, and I thought justly, too. I could get no consolation, or make any complaint thereupon; nor had I any creature on earth to apply to, or to whom I might impart a knowledge of my condition. I found myself banished from all beings, without finding a support or refuge in anything. I could no more practice any virtue with facility; such as had formerly been so familiar seemed now to have left me. “Alas!” said I, “is it possible that this heart, formerly all on fire, should now become like ice?” I often thought all creatures combined against me. Laden with a weight of past sins, and a multitude of new ones, I could not think God would ever pardon me, but looked on myself as a victim designed for hell. I would have been glad to do penances, to make use of prayers, pilgrimages and vows. But still, whatever I tried for a remedy seemed only to increase the malady. I may say that tears were my drink, and sorrow my food. I felt in myself such a pain as I never could bring any to comprehend, but such as have experienced it. I had within myself an executioner who tortured me without respite. Even when I went to Church, I was not easy there. To sermons I could give no attention; they were now of no service or refreshment to me. I scarcely conceived or understood anything in them, or about them.

XIV. A NEW CRISIS.

AS my husband drew near his end, his distempers had no intermission. No sooner was he recovered from one but he fell into another. He bore great pains with much patience, offering them to God, and making a good use of them. Yet his anger toward me increased, because reports and stories of me were multiplied to him, and those about him did nothing but vex him. He was the more susceptible of such impressions, as his pains gave him a stronger bent to vexation. At this time the maid, who had used to torment me, sometimes took pity on me. She came to see me as soon as I was gone into my closet, and said, "Come to my master, that your mother-in-law may not speak any more to him against you." I pretended to be ignorant of it all, but he could not conceal his displeasure, nor even suffer me near him. My mother-in-law at the same time kept no bounds. All that came to the house were witnesses of the continual scoldings, which I was forced to bear, and which I bore with much patience, notwithstanding my being in the condition I have mentioned.

My husband having, sometime before his death, finished the building of the chapel in the country, where we spent a part of the summer, I had the convenience of hearing prayers every day, and of the communion; but not daring to do it openly every day, the priest privately admitted me to the communion. They solemnized the dedication of this little chapel, and though I had already begun to enter into the condi-

tion I have described, yet when they began to bless it, I felt myself all on a sudden inwardly seized, which continued more than five hours, all the time of the ceremony, when our Lord made a new consecration of me to Himself. I then seemed to myself a temple consecrated to Him, both for time and for eternity; and said within myself (speaking both of the one and the other), "May this temple never be profaned;—may the praises of God be sung therein forever!" It seemed to me at that time as if my prayer was granted. But soon all this was taken from me, and not so much as any remembrance thereof left to console me.

When I was at this country house, which was only a little place of retreat before the chapel was built, I retired for prayer to woods and caverns. How many times, here, has God preserved me from dangerous and venomous beasts! Sometimes, unawares, I kneeled upon serpents, which were there in great plenty, and they fled away without doing me any harm. Once I happened to be alone in a little wood wherein was a mad bull; but, without offering me the least hurt, he betook himself to flight. If I could recount all the providences of God in my favor, it would appear wonderful. They were indeed so frequent and continual, that I could not but be astonished at them. God everlastingly gives to such as have nothing to repay Him. If there appears in the creature any fidelity or patience, it is He alone who gives it. If He ceases for an instant to support,—if He seems to leave me to myself, I cease to be strong, and find myself weaker than any other creature. If my miseries show what I am, His favors show what He is, and the extreme necessity I am under of ever depending on Him.

At last, after passing twelve years and four months in the crosses of marriage, as great as possible, except poverty which I never knew, though I had much desired it, God drew me out of that state to give me still stronger crosses to bear, and of such a nature as I had never met with before. Amidst the great troubles imposed upon me, when they said I was in a mortal sin, I had nobody in the world to speak to. I could have wished to have had somebody for a witness of my conduct; but I had not any. I had no support, no confessor, no director, no friend, no counsellor. I had lost all. And after God had taken from me one after another, He withdrew also Himself.

My husband's illness grew every day more obstinate. He apprehended the approach of death, and even wished for it, so oppressive was the languishing life he dragged on. The doctor advised him to go into the country. There for a few days at first he seemed to be better, when he was suddenly taken with a complication of diseases. His patience increased with his pain. I saw plainly he could not live long. It was a great trouble to me, that my mother-in-law kept me from him as much as she could, and infused into his mind such a displeasure against me, that I was afraid lest he should die in it. I took a little interval of time when she happened not to be with him, and drawing near his bed, I kneeled down and said to him, that if I had ever done anything that displeased him I begged his pardon, assuring him it had not been voluntary. He appeared very much affected, and as he had just come out of a sound sleep, he said to me, "It is I who beg your pardon. I did not deserve you." After that time he was not only pleased to see me, but gave me advice what I

should do after his death; not to depend on the people on whom I now depended. He was for eight days very resigned and patient, though on account of the prevailing gangrene, he was cut and opened with a lance. I sent to Paris for the most skilful surgeon, but when he arrived my husband was dead.

No mortal could die in a more Christian disposition, or with more courage than he did, after having received the sacrament in a manner truly edifying. I was not present when he expired, for out of tenderness he had made me retire. He was above twenty hours unconscious and in the agonies of death. Thou didst order, O my God, that he should die on Magdalene's eve, to show me that I was to be wholly Thine. I renewed every year, on Magdalene's day, the marriage contract which I made to Thee, my Lord; and I found myself at that time free to renew it, and that most solemnly. It was in the morning on the 21st of July, 1676, that he died. Next day I entered into my closet, in which was the image of my dear and divine spouse, the Lord Jesus Christ. I renewed my marriage-contract, and added thereto a vow of chastity, with a promise to make it perpetual, if M. Bertot, my director, would permit me to do it. After that I was filled with great interior joy, which was new to me, as for a long time past I had been plunged in the deepest bitterness.

As soon as I heard that my husband had just expired, "Oh, my God," I cried, "Thou hast broken my bonds, and I will offer Thee a sacrifice of praise." After that I remained in a deep silence, both exterior and interior, quite dry and without any support. I could neither weep nor speak. My mother-in-law said very fine things, and was very much commended for it by

everyone. They were offended at my silence, which they attributed to want of resignation. But I could not say one single word, let me strive as I would.

I was indeed very much exhausted; for although I was but recently delivered of my daughter, yet I attended and sat up with my husband four and twenty nights before his death. I was more than a year after in recovering the fatigue, joined to my great weakness and pain both of body and of mind. The great depression, or dryness and stupidity which I was in, was such that I could not say a word about God. It bore me down in such a manner, that I could hardly speak. I saw well that my crosses would not fail, since my mother-in-law had survived my husband. Also I was still tied, in having two children given me in so short a time before my husband's death, which has evidently appeared the effect of divine wisdom; for had I only my eldest son, I would have put him in a college; and have gone myself into the convent of the Benedictines, and so frustrated all the designs of God upon me.

There was one matter of great importance. A number of persons, who had been contending at law for several years, applied to my husband to settle their affairs. There were twenty actions one upon another, and in all twenty-two persons concerned, who could not get any end put to their differences, by reason of new incidents continually falling out. My husband charged himself with getting lawyers to examine their papers, but died before he could make any procedure therein. After his death I sent for them to give them their papers; but they would not receive them, begging of me that I would accommodate them, and prevent their ruin. It appeared to me as ridiculous, as impossible,

to undertake an affair of so great consequence, and which would require so long a discussion. Nevertheless, relying on the strength and wisdom of God, I consented. I shut myself up about thirty days in my closet, for all these affairs, without ever going out, but to mass and to my meals. The arbitration being at length prepared, they all signed it without seeing it. They were all so well satisfied therewith, that they could not forbear publishing it everywhere. It was God alone who did those things; for after they were settled I knew nothing about them; and if I now hear any talk of such things, to me it sounds like Arabic.

Being now a widow, my crosses, which one would have thought should have abated, only increased. That turbulent domestic I have so often mentioned, instead of growing milder, now that she depended on me, became more furious than ever. In our house she had amassed a good fortune, and I settled on her, besides, an annuity for the remainder of her life, for the services she had done my husband. She swelled with vanity and haughtiness. Having been used to sit up so much with an invalid, she had taken to drink wine, to keep up her spirits. This had now passed into a habit. As she grew aged and weak, a very little affected her. I tried to hide this fault; but it grew so that it could not be concealed. I spoke of it to her confessor, in order that he might try, softly and artfully to reclaim her from it; but instead of profiting by her director's advice, she was outrageous against me. My mother-in-law, who could hardly bear the fault of intemperance, and had often spoken to me about it, now joined in reproaching me and vindicating her. This strange creature, when any company came, would

cry out with all her might that I had dishonored her, thrown her into despair, and would be the cause of her damnation, as I was taking the ready course to my own. Yet at this time God gave me an unbounded patience. I answered only with mildness and charity all her passionate invectives, giving her besides every possible mark of my affection. If any other maid came to wait on me, she would drive her back in a rage, crying out that I hated her on account of the affection with which she had served my husband. When she had not a mind to come, I was obliged to serve myself; and when she did come, it was to chide me and make a noise. When I was very unwell, as was often the case, this girl would appear to be in despair. From hence I thought it was from Thee, O Lord, that all this came upon me; for without Thy permission, she was scarcely capable of such unaccountable conduct. She seemed not sensible of any faults, but always to think herself in the right. All those whom Thou hast made use of to cause me to suffer, thought they were rendering service to Thee in so doing.

The Lord took from me all the sensibility which I had for the creatures, or things created, even in an instant, as one takes off a robe, in such sort that after that time I had none for any whatsoever. Though He had done me that favor, for which I can never be sufficiently grateful, I was, however, neither more contented nor less confused by it. My God seemed to be so estranged and displeased with me, that there remained nothing but the grief of having lost His blessed presence through my fault.

I became more impotent for every kind of exterior works, as I could not go to see the poor, nor stay at

Church, nor practice prayer, and as I became colder towards God, in proportion as I was more sensible of my wrong steps, all this destroyed me the more both in my own eyes and in those of others. There were in the meantime, some very considerable gentlemen who made proposals for me, and even such persons as according to the rules of fashion ought not to think of me. They presented themselves during the very depth of my outward and inward desolation. At first it appeared to me a means of drawing me out of the distress I was in. But it seemed to me then, notwithstanding my pains of body and mind, that if a king had presented himself to me, I would have refused him with pleasure to show Thee, O my God, that with all my miseries I was resolved to be Thine alone, and that if Thou wouldst not accept of me, I should at least have the consolation of having been faithful to Thee, to the utmost of my power. For as to my inward state, I never mentioned it to anybody. I never spoke thereof, nor of the suitors, though my mother-in-law would say if I did not marry, it was because none would have me. It was sufficient for me that Thou, O my God, knewest that I sacrificed them to Thee (without saying a word to anybody), especially one whose high birth and amiable exterior qualities might have tempted both my vanity and inclination.

I was for five or six weeks at the last extremity. I could not take any nourishment. A spoonful of broth made me faint. My voice was so gone, that when they put their ears close to my mouth, they could scarcely distinguish my words. I could not see any hope of salvation, yet was not unwilling to die, as I bore a strong impression that the longer I lived the more I

would sin. Of the two, I thought I would rather choose hell than sin. All the good, which God made me do, now seemed to me evil, or full of faults. All my prayers, penances, alms and charities, seemed to rise up against me, and heighten my condemnation. I thought there appeared on the side of God, on my own, and from all creatures, one general condemnation, my conscience was a witness against me, which I could not appease; yet what may appear strange, the sins of my youth did not then give me any pain at all. They did not rise up in judgment against me, but there appeared one universal testimony against all the good I had done, and all the sentiments of evil I had entertained. If I went to confessors, I could tell them nothing of my condition; and if I could have told them, they would not have understood me. They would have regarded as eminent virtues, what, O my God, Thy eyes all pure and chaste rejected as infidelity. It was then that I felt the truth of what Thou hast said, that Thou judgest our righteousness. Oh, how pure art Thou! Who can comprehend it? It was then that I turned my eyes on every side, to see what way succor might come to me; but my succor could come no way but from Him who made heaven and earth. As I saw there was no safety for me, or spiritual health in myself, I entered into a secret complacency in seeing no good in myself whereon to rest, or presume for salvation. The nearer my destruction appeared, the more I found in God Himself, wherewith to augment my trust and confidence, notwithstanding He seemed so justly irritated against me.

XV. ALONE IN THE DESERT.

THE first religious person that God made use of to draw me to Himself, to whom (according to his desire) I had written from time to time, wrote to me in the depth of my distress, desiring me to write to him no more, signifying his disapprobation of what came from me, and that I displeased God greatly. A father, a Jesuit, who had esteemed me much, wrote to me in like manner. I thanked them for their charity, and commended myself to their prayers. It was then so indifferent to me to be decried of everybody, even of the greatest saints, that it added but little to my pain. The pain of displeasing God, and the strong propensity I felt in myself to all sorts of faults, caused me most lively and sensible pain.

I had been accustomed from the beginning to dryness and to privation. I even preferred it to the state of abounding, because I knew that I must seek God above all. I had even, at the first beginnings, an instinct of my inmost soul to pass over every manner of thing whatsoever, and to leave the gifts to run after the Giver.

I was obliged to go about some business to a town where some near relations of my mother-in-law lived. How did I find things changed here! When I was there before, they entertained me in a most elegant and obliging manner, regaling me from house to house with emulation. But now they treated me with the utmost contempt, saying they did it to revenge what I made their relation suffer. As I saw the thing went so far,

and that notwithstanding all my care and endeavors to please her, I had not been able to succeed, I resolved to come to an explanation with her. I told her that there was a current report that I treated her ill, though I made it a study to give her every mark of my esteem. If the report were true, I desired her to allow me to remove from her; for that I would not choose to stay to give her pain, but only with a quite contrary view. She answered very coldly I might do what I would; for she had not spoken about it, but was resolved to live apart from me. This was fairly giving me my discharge, and I thought of taking my measures privately to retire. As I had not, since my widowhood, made any visits but such as were of pure necessity, or charity, there were found too many discontented spirits, who made a party with her against me; while the Lord required of me an inviolable secrecy of all my pains, both exterior and interior. There is nothing which makes nature die so much, as to find neither support nor consolation. In short I saw myself obliged to go out, in the middle of winter, with my children and my daughter's nurse. At that time there was no house empty in the town, hence the Benedictines offered me an apartment in theirs.

I was now in a great strait; on one side fearing lest I was shunning the cross, on the other side thinking it unreasonable to impose my stay on one to whom it was only painful. Besides what I have related of her behavior, which still continued, when I went into the country to take a little repose, she complained that I left her alone. If I desired her to come thither she would not. If I said I durst not ask her to come, for fear of incommoding her, by changing her bed,

she replied it was only an excuse, because I would not have her go; and that I only went to be away from her. When I heard that she was displeased at my being in the country, I returned to the town. Then she could not bear to speak to me, or to see me. I accosted her without appearing to notice how she received it, but instead of making me any answer, she turned her head another way. I often sent her my coach, desiring her to come and spend a day in the country. She sent it back empty, without any answer. If I passed some days there without sending it, she complained aloud. In short, all I did to please her soured her, God so permitting it, for she had in the main a good heart, but was troubled with an uneasy temper.

Being with her on Christmas day, I said to her with much affection: "My mother, on this day was the King of peace born, to bring it to us; I beg peace of you in His name." I think that touched her, though she would not let it appear.

One day during my husband's life-time, laden with sorrow, and not knowing what to do, I wished to speak to a person of distinction and merit, who came often into the country, and passed for one deeply interior. I wrote to request an opportunity with him, for that I wanted his instruction and advice. But soon after I felt remorse for it, and this voice spoke in my heart, "What—dost thou seek for ease, and to shake off My yoke?" Hereupon I instantly sent a note again to desire him to excuse me, adding that what I had written was only from self-love, and not necessity; that as he knew what it was to be faithful to God, I hoped he would not disapprove my acting with this Chris-

tian simplicity. Yet he resented it, which surprised me much, as I had conceived a high idea of his virtue. Virtues he has, but such as are full of the life and activities of nature, and unacquainted with the paths of mortification and death. Thou, O my God, hast been my Conductor even in these paths, as with admiration I have discovered since they are past. Blessed be Thy name forever. I am obliged to bear this testimony to Thy goodness.

Before I continue my narration, I must add one remark, which the Lord gave me to make upon the way by which He, in His goodness, was pleased to conduct me; which is, that this obscure path is the surest to mortify the soul, as it leaves it not any prop to lean upon for support. Though it has no application to any particular state of Jesus Christ, yet, at its coming out it finds itself clothed with all His dispositions and divine states, having truly put on Christ. The impure and selfish soul, is hereby purified, as gold in the furnace. Full of its own judgment, and its own will before, but now obeys like a child, and finds no other will in itself. Before, it would have contested for a trifle; now it yields at once, not with reluctance and pain, by way of practicing virtue, but as it were naturally. Its own vices are vanished. This creature so vain before now loves nothing but poverty, littleness and humiliation. Before, it preferred itself above everybody, now everybody above itself, having a boundless charity for its neighbor, to bear with his faults and weaknesses, in order to win him by love, which before it could not do but with very great constraint. The rage of the wolf is changed to the meekness of the lamb.

During all the time of my experiencing my miseries and my deep trials, I went after no fine sights or recreations. When others went, I stayed at home. I wanted to see and know nothing but Jesus Christ. My closet was my only diversion. Even when the queen was near me, whom I had never seen, and whom I had desire enough to see, I had only to open my eyes, and look out to see her, yet did not do it. I had been fond of hearing others sing; and yet I was once four days with one who passed for the finest voice in the world, without ever desiring her to sing; which surprised her, because she was not ignorant that, knowing her name, I must know the charming excellence of her voice. However, I committed some infidelities, in inquiring what others said of me by way of blame. I met with one who told me everything. And though I shewed nothing of it, it served only to mortify me, as I saw I was yet too much alive to self, and that self-love and nature had put me upon this inquiry.

Laden with miseries of all sorts, weighed down with oppressions, and crushed under continual crosses, I thought of nothing else but ending my days thus. There remained in me not the least hope of ever emerging out of so distressing a state. But, notwithstanding, I thought I had lost grace forever, and the salvation which it merits for us, I longed at least to do what I could for God, though I feared I should never love Him; and seeing the happy state from whence I had fallen, I wished in gratitude to serve Him, though I looked on myself as a victim doomed to destruction. Sometimes the view of that happy period caused secret desires to spring up in my heart, of recovering it again; but I was instantly rejected and thrown back

into the depth of the abyss, from whence I could scarcely utter a sigh; I judged myself to be in a state which was due to unfaithful souls. I seemed, O my God, as if I was forever cast off from Thy regard, and from that of all creatures. By degrees my state ceased to be painful. I became even insensible to it, and my insensibility seemed like the final hardening of my reprobation. My coldness appeared to be a mortal coldness. And it was truly so, O my God, since I thus died to self, in order to live wholly in Thee, and in Thy precious love, as I am going to relate.

To resume then my history, a servant of mine wanted to become a Barnabite. I wrote about it to Father de la Mothe; he answered me, that I must address Father La Combe, who was then the superior of the Barnabites of Tonon. That obliged me to write to him. I had always preserved secret respect and esteem for him, as one under grace. I was glad of this opportunity of recommending myself to his prayers. I wrote to him about my fall from the grace of God, and that I had requited His favors with the blackest ingratitude; that I was miserable, and a subject worthy of compassion; and that, far from having advanced towards God, I was become entirely alienated from Him. He answered me in such a manner, as if he had known, by a supernatural light, notwithstanding the frightful description I have given of myself that my condition was of grace. But I could not then believe it.

In the midst of my miseries, Geneva came into my mind, in a singular manner, which caused me many fears. "What," said I, "to complete my reprobation, shall I go to such an excess of impiety, as to quit the faith through apostasy? (The inhabitants of Geneva

being generally Protestant Calvinists.) Am I then about quitting that Church, for which I would give a thousand lives? Or, shall I ever depart from that faith which I would even wish to seal with my blood?" I had such a distrust of myself, that I durst hope for nothing, but had a thousand reasons for fear, after the experience I had of my weakness. Nevertheless the letter, which I had received from Father La Combe, in which he wrote to me an account of his present disposition, somewhat similar to mine, had such an effect, as to restore peace and calmness to my mind. I felt myself inwardly united to him, as to a person of great fidelity to the grace of God. Afterwards a woman appeared to me in a dream to be from heaven, to tell me that God demanded me at Geneva.

About eight or ten days before Magdalene's day, 1680, it came into my mind to write to Father La Combe, and to request him, if he received my letter before that day, to pray particularly for me. And it was so ordered, contrary even to my expectations, that he received my letter on St. Magdalene's eve, and when praying for me the next day, it was said to him, thrice over, with much power, "Ye shall both dwell in one and the same place." He was very much surprised, as he never had received interior words before. I believe, O my God, that that has been much more verified, both in our inward sense and experience, and in the same crucifying events which have befallen us, pretty much alike; and in Thyself, who art our dwelling, than in any temporal abode.

On that happy Magdalene's day my soul was perfectly delivered from all its pains. It had already begun since the receipt of the first letter from Father La

Combe, to recover a new life. It was then indeed only like that of a dead person raised, though not yet unbound from his grave-clothes. But on this day I was, as it were, in perfect life, and set wholly at liberty. I then found myself as much raised above nature, as before I had been depressed under its burden. I was inexpressibly overjoyed to find Him, whom I thought I had lost forever, returned to me again with unspeakable magnificence and purity. It was then, O my God, that I found again in Thee with new advantages, in an ineffable manner, all I had been deprived of; and the peace I now possessed was all holy, heavenly and inexpressible; all I had enjoyed before was only a peace, a gift of God, but now I received and possessed the God of peace. Yet the remembrance of my past miseries still brought a fear upon me, lest nature should find means to take to itself any part therein. As soon as it wanted to see or taste anything, the Spirit ever watchful crossed and repelled it. I was far from elevating myself then, or attributing to myself anything of this new state, for my experience made me sensible of what I was.

I hoped I should enjoy this happy state for some time, but little did I think my happiness so great and immutable as it was. If one may judge of a good by the trouble which precedes it, I leave mine to be judged of by the sorrows I had undergone before my attaining it. The Apostle Paul tells us, that "the sufferings of this life are not to be compared with the glory that is prepared for us." How true is that even of this life? One day of this happiness was worth more than years of suffering. It was, indeed, at that time well worth all I had undergone, though it was

then only dawning. An alacrity for doing good was restored to me, greater than ever. It seemed all quiet, free and natural to me. At the beginning, this liberty was less extensive; but as I advanced it grew still greater. I felt a kind of beatitude every day increasing in me. I did all sorts of good, without selfishness or premeditation. Whenever a self-reflective thought was presented to my mind, it was instantly rejected, and as it were a curtain in the soul drawn before me. My imagination was kept so fixed, that I had now very little trouble on that head. I wondered at the clearness of my mind and the purity of my whole heart.

I received a letter from Father La Combe, wherein he wrote that God had discovered to him that He had great designs in regard to me. "Let them be," then said I to myself, "either of justice or mercy, all is equal to me." I still had Geneva deeply at heart; but said nothing of it to anybody, waiting for God to make known to me His all-powerful will, and fearing lest any stratagem of the devil should be concealed therein, that might tend to draw me out of my proper place, or steal me out of my condition. The more I saw my own misery, incapacity and nothingness, the plainer it appeared that they rendered me fitter for the designs of God, whatever they might be. "Oh, my Lord," said I, "take the weak and the wretched to do Thy works, that Thou mayest have all the glory of them, and that man may attribute nothing of them to himself. If Thou shouldst take a person of eminence and great talents, one might attribute to him something thereof; but if Thou takest me, it will be manifest that Thou alone art the Author of whatever good shall be done." I

continued quiet in my spirit, leaving the whole affair to God, being satisfied if He should require anything of me, that He would furnish me with the means of performing it. I held myself in readiness with a full resolution to execute His orders, whenever He should make them known, though it were to the laying down of my life. I was released from all crosses. I resumed my care of the sick, and dressing of wounds, and God gave me to cure the most desperate. When surgeons could do no more, or were going to cut off limbs, it was then that God made me cure them.

Oh, the joy that accompanied me everywhere, finding still Him who had united me to Himself, in His own immensity and boundless vastitude! Oh, how truly did I experience what He said in the Gospel, by the four Evangelists, and by one of them twice over, "Who-soever will lose his life for My sake shall find it; and whosoever will save his life shall lose it."

When I had lost all created supports, and even divine ones, I then found myself happily compelled to fall into the pure divine, and to fall into it through all those very things which seemed to remove me further from it. In losing all the gifts, with all their supports, I found the Giver. In losing the sense and perception of Thee in myself—I found Thee, O my God, to lose Thee no more in Thyself, in Thy own immutability. Oh, poor creatures, who pass all your time in feeding upon the gifts of God, and think therein to be the most favored and happy, how I pity you if you stop here, short of the true rest, and cease to go forward to God Himself, through the loss of those cherished gifts which you now delight in. How many pass all their lives in this way, and think highly of themselves there-

in! There are others who being called of God to die to themselves, yet pass all their time in a dying life, and in inward agonies, without ever entering into God, through death and a total loss of self, because they are always willing to retain something under plausible pretexts, and so never lose themselves to the whole extent of the designs of God. Wherefore, they never enjoy God in all His fulness; which is a loss that cannot be perfectly known in this life.

Oh, my Lord, what happiness did I not largely taste in my solitude, and with my little family, where nothing interrupted my tranquillity! As I was in the country, and the slender age of my children did not require my application too much, they being in good hands, I retired a great part of the day into a wood, where I passed as many days of happiness as I had had months of sorrow. Thou, O my God, dealt by me as by Thy servant Job, rendering me double for all Thou hadst taken from me, and delivering me from all my crosses. Thou gavest me a marvelous facility to satisfy everyone. What was surprising now, was that my mother-in-law, who had ever been complaining of me, without my doing anything more than usual to please her, declared now that none could be better satisfied with me than she was. Such as before had cried me down the most, now testified their sorrow for it, and became full of my praises.

XVI. IN LABORS MORE ABUNDANT.

I WAS obliged to go to Paris about some business. Having entered into a Church, that was very dark, I went up to the first confessor I found, whom I did not know, nor have ever seen since. I made a simple and short confession; but to the confessor himself I said not a word. He surprised me much in saying, "I know not who you are, whether maid, wife or widow; but I feel a strong inward motion to exhort you to do what the Lord has made known to you that He requires of you. I have nothing else to say." I answered him, "Father, I am a widow who has little children. What else could God require of me, but to take due care of them in their education?" He replied, "I know nothing about this. You know if God manifests to you that He requires something of you; there is nothing in the world which ought to hinder you from doing His will. One may have to leave one's children to do that." This surprised me much. However, I told him nothing of what I felt for Geneva. I disposed myself submissively to quit everything, if the Lord required it of me.

On my return from Paris, I left myself in the hands of God, resolved not to take any step, either to make the thing succeed or to hinder it, either to advance or retard it, but singly to move as He should be pleased to direct me. I had mysterious dreams, which portended nothing but crosses, persecutions and afflictions. My heart submitted to whatever it should please God to ordain.

I received letters from sundry religious persons, some of whom lived far from me, and from one another, relating to my going forth in the service of God, and some of them to Geneva in particular, in such a manner as surprised me. One of them intimated that I must there bear the cross and be persecuted; and another of them that I should be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and arms to the maimed.

At the same time with these letters, I received one from Father La Combe, who wrote to me that the Lord had given him a certainty, as He had given to several of His good and faithful servants and hand-maids, that He wanted me at Geneva. The writers of these two letters lived above a hundred and fifty leagues from each other; and yet both wrote the same thing. I could not but be somewhat surprised to receive at the same time two letters so exactly alike, from two persons living so far distant from each other.

As soon as I became fully convinced of its being the will of the Lord, and saw nothing on earth capable of detaining me, my senses had some pain about leaving my children. And upon reflecting thereon a doubt seized my mind. O my Lord! Had I rested on myself, or on the creatures, I would have revolted; and "leaned on a broken reed, which would have pierced my hand." But relying on Thee alone, what needed I to fear? I resolved then to go, regardless of the censures of such as understand not what it is to be a servant of the Lord, and to receive and obey His orders. I firmly believed that He, by His providence, would furnish the means necessary for the education of my children. I put everything by degrees in order, the Lord alone being my Guide.

Whilst Providence, on the one hand, appointed my forsaking all things, it seemed on the other to make my chains the stronger, and my separation the more blamable; for none could receive stronger marks of affection from an own mother than those which I received at this time from my mother-in-law; even the least sickness which befell me made her very uneasy. She said she had veneration for my virtue. I believe what contributed not a little to this change was, that she had heard that three persons had offered suit to me, and that I had refused them, although their fortune and quality were quite superior to mine. She remembered how she had upbraided me on this head, and I answered her not a word, whereby she might understand that it depended on myself to marry to advantage. She began to fear lest such rigorous treatment, as hers had been towards me, might excite me to deliver myself by such means, with honor, from her tyranny, and was sensible what damage that might be to my children. So she was now very tender to me on every occasion.

I fell extremely ill. I thought that God had accepted of my willingness to sacrifice all to Him, and required that of my life. During this illness, my mother-in-law went not from my bedside; her many tears proved the sincerity of her affection. I was very much affected at it, and thought I loved her as my true mother. How, then, should I leave her now, being so far advanced in age? The maid, who till then had been my plague, took an inconceivable friendship for me. She praised me everywhere, extolling my virtue to the highest; and served me with extraordinary respect.

She begged pardon for all that she had made me suffer, and died of grief after my departure.

There was a nun in a monastery I often went to, who was entered into a state of purification, which everyone in the house looked on as distraction; and therefore they locked her up, which had like to have destroyed her. All that went to see her called it phrenzy or melancholy. I knew her to be devout and requested to see her. As soon as I approached, I felt an impression that she sought purity. I desired of the Superior that she should not be locked up, nor should people be admitted to see her, but that she would confide her to my care; for I hoped things would change. I discovered that her greatest pain was at being counted a fool. I advised her to bear the state of foolishness, since Jesus Christ had been willing to bear it before Herod. This sacrifice gave her a calmness at once. But as God was willing to purify her soul, He separated her from all those things for which she had before the greatest attachment. At last, after she had patiently undergone her sufferings, her Superior wrote to me that I was in the right, and that she had now come out of that state of dejection, in greater purity than ever. The Lord gave to me alone at that time to know her state. This was the commencement of the gift of discerning spirits, which I afterwards received more fully.

The winter before I left home was one of the longest and hardest that had been for several years, viz., that of 1680. It was followed with extreme scarcity, which proved to me an occasion of exercising charity. My mother-in-law joined me heartily herein, and appeared to me so much changed, that I could not but

be both surprised and overjoyed at it. We distributed at the house ninety-six dozen loaves of bread every week, but the private charities to the bashful poor were much greater. I kept poor boys and girls employed at work. And the Lord gave such blessings to my alms, that I did not find that my family lost anything by it. Before the death of my husband, my mother-in-law told him, that I would ruin him with my charities, though he himself was so charitable, that in a very dear year, while he was young, he distributed a considerable sum; but now she repeated this to him so often, that he commanded me to set down in writing all the money I laid out, both what I gave for the expense of the house, and all that I caused to be bought, that from thence he might better judge of what I gave to the poor. This new obligation, which I was brought under, appeared to me so much the harder, as for above eleven years we had been married I never before had this required of me. What troubled me most was the fear of having nothing to give to such as wanted. However, I submitted to it, without retrenching any part of my charities. I did not indeed set down any of my alms, and yet my account of expenses was found to answer exactly. I was much surprised and astonished at it, and esteemed it one of the wonders of Providence, for I saw plainly it was simply given out of Thy treasury, O my Lord, that made me more liberal of what I thought was the Lord's, and not mine.

What gave me now no small concern was the tenderness I had for my children, especially my younger son, whom I had strong reasons for loving. I saw him inclined to be good, and everything seemed to favor

the hopes I had conceived of him. I thought it running a great risk to leave him to another's education. My daughter I designed to take with me, though she was at this time ill of a very tedious fever. Providence was pleased, however, so to order it that she speedily recovered. The ties, with which the Lord held me closely united to Himself, were infinitely stronger than those of flesh and blood. Though I often hesitated, and doubted much before I went, I never doubted after my going off, of its being His will; and though men, who judge of things only according to the success they seem to have, have taken occasion from my disgraces and sufferings, to judge of my calling, and to run it down as error, illusion and imagination; it is that very persecution, and the multitude of strange crosses it has drawn upon me (of which this imprisonment I now suffer is one), which have confirmed me in the certainty of its truth and validity; nay, I am more than ever convinced that the resignation which I have made of everything is in pure obedience to the divine will. The gospel effectually in this point shows itself to be true, which has promised to those that shall leave all for the love of the Lord, "an hundred fold in this life, and persecutions also." And have not I infinitely more than an hundred fold, in so entire a possession as Thou, O my Lord, hast taken of me; in that unshaken firmness which Thou givest me in my sufferings, in a perfect tranquillity in the midst of a furious tempest, which assaults me on every side; in an unspeakable joy, enlargedness and liberty which I enjoy in a most straight and rigorous captivity. I have no desire that my imprisonment should end before the right time. I love my chains. Everything is equal to me, as I have no will of my own,

but purely the love and will of Him who possesses me. My senses indeed have not any relish for such things, but my heart is separated from them, and borne over them; and my perseverance is not of myself, but of Him who is my life; so that I can say with the apostle, "It is no more I that live, but Jesus Christ that liveth in me." It is He in whom I live, move, and have my being.

I was not so reluctant now to go with the New Catholics, as I was to engage with them, not finding a sufficient attraction, though I sought for it. I longed indeed to contribute to the conversion of wandering souls, and God made use of me to convert several families before my departure, one of which was composed of eleven or twelve persons. Besides, Father La Combe had written to me, to make use of this opportunity for setting off, but did not tell me whether I ought to engage with them or not. Thus it was the Providence of my God alone, which ordered everything, to which I was resigned without any reserve, and that hindered me from engaging with them.

One day, through infidelity, reflecting humanly on this undertaking of mine, I found my faith staggering, weakened with a fear lest I were under a mistake, which slavish fear was increased by an ecclesiastic at our house, who told me it was a rash and ill-advised design. Being a little discouraged, I opened the Bible, and at first met with this passage in Isaiah, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel. I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the holy one of Israel." Chap. lxi. 14, and near it, "Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee," etc. I had very great courage

given me for going, but could not persuade myself that it would be best to settle with the New Catholics.

My first thought had been (before I heard of the New Catholics going to Gex) to go directly to Geneva, as at this time there were Catholics there in service, and otherwise; and to take some little room without any noise, and without declaring myself at first; and as I knew how to make up all sorts of ointments to heal wounds and especially the king's evil, of which there is abundance in that place, and for which I had a most certain cure, I hoped easily to insinuate myself by this way, and with the charities which I should have done to have won over many of the people. I have no doubt but, if I had followed this impulse, things would have succeeded better. But I thought I ought to follow the sentiments of the Bishop rather than my own. What am I saying? Has not Thy eternal Word, O my Lord, had its effect and accomplishment in me? Man speaks as man; but when we behold things in the Lord, we see them in another light. Yes, my Lord, Thy design was to give Geneva not to my cares, words or works, but to my sufferings; for the more I see things appear hopeless, the more do I hope for the conversion of that city by a way known to Thee only.

Father La Combe has told me since, that he had a strong impulse to write to me, not to engage with the New Catholics; that he believed it not to be the will of the Lord concerning me; but he omitted doing it. As to my director, M. Bertot, he died four months before my departure. I had some intimations of his death, and it seemed as if he bequeathed me a portion of his spirit to help his children.

XVII. NEW SCENES AND EXPERIENCES.

I WENT off, in a strange renunciation, and in great simplicity, scarcely able to render the reason why I should in such a manner quit my family, which I most tenderly loved. Being without any positive assurance, yet hoping even against hope itself. I went to the New Catholics at Paris, where Providence wrought wonders to conceal me. They sent for the Notary, who had drawn up the contract of engagement. When he read it to me, I felt such a repugnance to it, that I could not bear to hear it to the end, much less sign it. I was enabled through divine assistance, to put my affairs in very good order, and to write sundry letters by the inspiration of God, and not by my own spirit. This was what I had never experienced before. It was given me at that time only as a beginning, and has since been granted me much more perfectly.

I took with me my only daughter, and two maids to serve us both. We set off in a boat upon the river, though I had taken places in the stage-coach, in order that, if they searched for me in the coach, they might not find me. I went to Melun to wait for it there.

It was surprising that in this boat the child, without adverting to what she did, could not forbear making crosses, employing a person to cut rushes for her to use for that purpose. She then put around, and all over me, above three hundred of them. I let her do it, and inwardly apprehended that it was not without its meaning. I felt an interior certainty that I was going

to meet with crosses in abundance; and that this child was sowing the cross for me to reap it. Sister Garnier, who saw that they could not restrain her from covering me with crosses, said to me, "What that child does appears to be significant;" and turning to the little girl, she said, "Give me some crosses, too, my pretty pet." "No," she replied, "they are all for my dear mother." Soon she gave her one to stop her importunity, then continued putting more on me; after which she desired some river-flowers, which floated on the water, to be given her; and braiding a garland she put it on my head, and said to me, "After the cross you shall be crowned." I admired all this in silence, and offered myself up to the pure love of God, as a victim, free and willing to be sacrificed to Him.

Some time before my departure, a particular friend of mine, who is a true servant of God, related to me a vision she had respecting me. She saw my heart surrounded with thorns; that our Lord appeared in it well pleased; that, though the thorns seemed likely to tear it, yet, instead of doing that, they only rendered it fairer, and our Lord's approbation the stronger.

At Corbeil (a little town on the river Seine, sixteen miles south of Paris), I met with the priest whom God had first made use of, so powerfully to draw me to His love. He approved of my design to leave all for the Lord; but he thought I should not be well suited with the New Catholics. He told me some things about them, to show that our leadings were incompatible. He cautioned me not to let them know that I walked in the inward path; that, if I did, I must expect nothing but persecution from them. But it is in vain to contrive to hide, when God sees it best for us to suffer,

and when our wills are utterly resigned to Him, and totally passed into His.

While at Paris I gave the New Catholics all the money I had. I reserved not to myself a single penny, rejoicing to be poor after the example of Jesus Christ. I brought from home nine thousand livres. As by my donation I had reserved nothing to myself, and by a contract lent them six thousand, which returned to my children but none of it to me, which gives me no trouble; for poverty, thus procured, constitutes my riches. The rest I gave entirely to the sisters that were with us, well as to supply their travelling expenses, as for the purchase of furniture. I did not reserve so much as my linen for my own use, putting it in the common fund. I had neither a locked coffer nor purse. I had brought but little linen for fear of mistrust; and lest, in wanting to carry off clothes, I should have been discovered. My persecutors did not fail to report that I had brought great sums from home, which I had imprudently expended, and given to the friends of Father La Combe, which is as false, as it is true I had not a penny. On my arrival at Annecy, a poor man asking alms, I, having nothing else, gave him the buttons from my sleeves. At another time I gave a poor man a little plain ring, in the name of Jesus Christ, which I had worn as a token of my marriage with Him.

We joined the flying stage at Melun, where I left Sister Garnier, and went on with the other sisters, with whom I had no acquaintance. These carriages were very fatiguing, and I got no sleep through so long a journey; and although my daughter, a very tender child, only five years of age, got scarcely any, yet we bore so great a fatigue without falling sick by the

way. This child had not an hour's uneasiness, although she was only three hours in bed every night. At another time, half this fatigue, or even the want of rest, would have thrown me into a fit of sickness.

As soon as we arrived at the inn, I went to Church and stayed there till dinner time. In the coach, my divine Lord communed with me, and in me, in a manner which the others could not comprehend, and indeed did not perceive. The cheerfulness I showed, in the greatest dangers, encouraged them. I even sang hymns of joy at finding myself disengaged from the riches, honors and entanglements of the world. God in such a manner protected us, that He seemed to be to us "a pillar of fire by night, and a pillar of cloud by day." We passed over a very dangerous spot between Lyons and Chamberry. Our carriage broke as we were coming out of it. Had it happened a little sooner, we must have perished.

We arrived at Annecy on Magdalene's eve, 1681; and on Magdalene's day the Bishop of Geneva performed divine service for us, at the tomb of St. Francis de Sales. There I renewed my spiritual marriage with my Redeemer; as I did every year on this day.

That day we left Annecy, and on the next went to prayers at Geneva, at the house of the French resident. I had much joy at the communion; and it seemed to me as if God more powerfully united me to Himself. And there I prayed to Him for the conversion of that great people. That evening we arrived late at Gex, where we found only bare walls; though the Bishop of Geneva had assured me that the house was furnished, as undoubtedly he believed it to be. We lodged at

the house of the sisters of charity, who were so kind as to give us their beds.

I was in great pain of mind for my daughter, who visibly fell away. I had a strong desire to place her with the Ursulines at Thonon. My heart was so affected on her behalf, that I could not forbear weeping in secret for her in bed. Next day I said I would take my daughter to Thonon, and leave her there, till I should see how we might be accommodated here. They opposed it strongly, after a manner which seemed very hard-hearted as well as ungrateful, seeing she was worn away to a skeleton. I looked upon the child as a victim whom I had imprudently sacrificed. I wrote to Father La Combe, entreating him to come and see me, to consult together about it, thinking I could not in conscience keep her in this place any longer. Several days passed without my having any answer. In the meantime I became resigned to the will of God, whether to have succor or not.

Our Lord took pity on the lamentable condition of my daughter, and so ordered it, that the Bishop of Geneva wrote to Father La Combe, to come as speedily as possible to see us, and to console us. As soon as I saw that father, I was surprised to feel an interior grace, which I may call Communication; and such as I had never had before with any person. I had no doubt of its being from God; so far from turning the mind from Him, it tended to draw it more deeply into Him. It dissipated all my pains, and established me in the most profound peace.

God gave him at first much openness of mind toward me. He related to me the mercies God had shown him, and several extraordinary things, which

gave me at first some fear. I suspected some illusion, especially in such things as flatter, in regard to the future, little imagining then, that God would make use of me to draw him from that state, and bring him into that of naked faith. But the grace, which flowed from him into my soul, recovered me from that fear, as I saw that it was joined with extraordinary humility; and that far from being elevated with the gifts which God had liberally conferred upon him, or with his own profound learning, no person could have a lower opinion of himself than he had. He told me as to my daughter, it would be best for me to take her to Thonon, where he thought she would be very well situated. And as to myself, after I had mentioned to him my dislike to the manner of life of the New Catholics, he told me that he did not think that it would be my proper place to be long with them; but that it would be best for me to stay there, free from all engagements, till God, by the guidance of His providence, should make known to me how He would dispose of me, and draw my mind to the place whither He would have me remove. I had already begun to awake regularly at midnight, in order to pray. At this time I awoke with these words suddenly put in my mind, "It is written of me, I will do thy will, O my God." This was accompanied with the most pure, penetrating, and powerful communication of grace that I had ever experienced. From midnight I continued on my knees till four o'clock in the morning, in prayer, in a sweet intercourse with God, and did the same thing also the night following.

The next day, after prayers, Father La Combe told me, that he had a very great certainty, that I was a

stone which God designed for the foundation of some great building. But what that building was he knew no more than I. After whatever manner then it is to be, whether His divine Majesty will make use of me in this life, for some design known to Himself only, or will make me one of the stones of the new and heavenly Jerusalem, it seems to me that such stone cannot be polished, but by the strokes of the hammer; and that our Lord has given to this soul of mine the qualities of the stone, viz., firmness, resignation, insensibility, and power to endure hardness under the operations of His hand.

I carried my little daughter to the Ursulines at Thonon. That poor child took a great fondness for Father La Combe, saying, "He is a good father, one from God." Here I found a hermit, whom they called Anselm. He was a person of the most extraordinary sanctity, that had appeared for some time. He was from Geneva; and God had miraculously drawn him from thence at twelve years of age. He had at nineteen years of age taken the habit of hermit of St. Augustine. He and another lived alone in a little hermitage, where they saw nobody but such as came to visit their chapel. He had lived twelve years in this hut, never eating anything but pulse with salt, and sometimes oil. Three times a week he lived on bread and water. He never drank wine, and generally made but one meal in twenty-four hours. He wore for a shirt a coarse hair cloth, and lodged on the bare ground. He lived in a continual state of prayer, and in the greatest humility. God had done by him many signal miracles.

This good hermit had a great sense of the designs of God on Father La Combe and me. But God showed him at the same time that strange crosses were preparing for us both, and that we were both destined for the aid of souls. I did not find, as I expected, any suitable place for my daughter at Thonon. In regard to her, I thought myself like Abraham, when going to sacrifice his son. I found little encouragement to leave her there, and could not keep her with myself, because we had no room; and the little girls, whom they took to make Catholics, were all mixed with us, and had contracted such habits as were pernicious. To leave her there I thought not right. The language of the country, where scarce anyone understood French, and the food, which she could not take, being so far different from ours, were great hardships. All my tenderness for her was awakened, and I looked on myself as her destroyer. I experienced what Hagar suffered when she put away her son Ishmael in the desert, that she might not be forced to see him perish. I thought, that even if I had ventured to expose myself, I ought at least to have spared my daughter; as the loss of her education, and even of her life, appeared to me inevitable. Everything looked dark in regard to her.

She could eat nothing of what was offered her. All her subsistence was a little unpleasant and disagreeable broth, which I forced her to take against her will. I seemed like a second Abraham, holding the knife over her to destroy her. Our Lord would have me make a sacrifice to Him, without any consolation, and plunged in sorrow, night was the time in which I gave vent to it. He made me see, on one side, the grief of her grandmother, if she should hear of her death, which

she would impute to my taking the child away from her, and the great reproach, it would be accounted among all the family. The gifts of nature she was endowed with were now like pointed darts which pierced me. I believe that God so ordered it, to purify me from too human an attachment, which was still in me, for after I returned from the Ursulines at Thonon, they changed her manner of diet, and gave her what was suitable to her delicacy, whereby, in a short time she recovered finely.

As soon as it was known in France that I was gone, there was a general outcry. Father de la Mothe wrote to me, that all persons of learning and of piety united in censuring me.

Here I both ate and slept little. The food which was given us was putrid and full of worms, by reason of the great heat of the weather, and being kept too long; insomuch, that what I should have formerly beheld with the greatest abhorrence, now became my only nourishment; and yet everything was rendered easy to me. In God I found, without increase, everything which I had lost for Him. That spirit, which I once thought I had lost in a strange stupidity, was restored to me with inconceivable advantages. I was astonished at myself. I found there was nothing which I was not fit for, or in which I did not succeed. Those who observed this, said I had a prodigious capacity. I well knew that I had but meagre capabilities, but that in God my spirit had received a quality which it had never had before. I thought I experienced something of the state which the apostles were in, after they had received the Holy Ghost. I knew, I comprehended, I understood, I was enabled to do everything requisite.

I had every sort of good thing, and no want of anything. I remembered that fine passage of wisdom, "All good things came to me with her." (Wisdom of Sol. vii. 2.) When Jesus Christ, the eternal wisdom, is formed in the soul, after the death of the first Adam, it finds in Him all good things communicated to it.

Sometime after my arrival at Gex, the Bishop of Geneva came to see us. He was so clearly convinced, and so much affected, that he could not forbear expressing it. He opened his heart to me on what God had required of him. He confessed to me his own deviations and infidelities. Every time, when I spoke to him, he entered into what I said, and acknowledged it to be the truth, as indeed it was the Spirit of truth which inspired me to speak to him, without which I should be only a mere simpleton. And yet as soon as persons spoke to him, who sought for pre-eminence, and who could not suffer any good but what came from themselves, he was so weak as to let himself be imposed on with impressions against the truth. This weakness has hindered him from doing all the good which otherwise he might have done in his diocese.

After I had spoken to him, he said he had it in his mind to give me Father La Combe for director; for that he was a man illuminated of God, who well understood the inward path, and had a singular gift of pacifying souls. These were his own words. Greatly was I rejoiced when the Bishop appointed him, seeing thereby his authority united with the grace which already seemed to have given him to me, by a union and effusion of supernatural life and love. The fatigues I had, and watchings with my daughter, threw me into a violent sickness, attended with exquisite pain. The

physicians judged me in danger, and yet the sisters of the house quite neglected me; especially the stewardess. She was so penurious, that she did not give me what was necessary to sustain life. I had not a penny to help myself with, as I had reserved nothing to myself. And beside, they at that time received all the money which was remitted to me from France, which was very considerable. Thus I practiced poverty, and was in necessity even among those to whom I had given all. They wrote to Father La Combe, desiring him to come to me, as I was so extremely ill. On hearing of my condition, he was so touched with compassion, as to walk on foot all night, it being eight great leagues; but he travelled not otherwise, endeavoring in that, as in everything else, to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ.

As soon as he entered the house, my pains abated; and when he had prayed and blessed me, laying his hand on my head, I was perfectly cured, to the great astonishment of my physicians, who were not willing to acknowledge the miracle; being not well pleased, as they knew that we were come on a religious motive, and their sentiments and profession was so opposite to ours. These sisters advised me to return to my daughter. Father La Combe returned with me. A violent storm arose on the lake, which made me very sick, and seemed likely to upset the boat. But the hand of Providence remarkably appeared in our favor; so much so, that it was taken notice of by the mariners and passengers, who looked upon Father La Combe as a saint.

XVIII. SANCTIFICATION BY FAITH.

I WOULD willingly suppress what I am now about to write if anything of it were my own, as well on account of the difficulty of expressing myself thereon, as because few souls are capable of understanding divine leadings which are so little known, and so little comprehended. I have myself never read of anything like it. I shall say something of the interior dispositions I was then in, and I shall think my time well employed, if it serves you who are willing to be of the number of my children, and if it serves such as are already my children, to induce them to let God glorify Himself in them after His manner, and not after their own. If there be anything which they do not comprehend, let them die to themselves, and they will find it much easier to learn by experience than from anything I could say; for expression never equals experience.

After I had come out of the trying condition I have spoken of, I found it had purified my soul, instead of blackening it as I had feared. I possessed God after a manner so pure, and so immense, as nothing else could equal. In regard to thoughts or desires, all was so clean, so naked, so lost in the divinity, that the soul had no selfish movement, however plausible or delicate; both the powers of the mind and the very senses being wonderfully purified. Sometimes I was surprised to find that there appeared not one selfish thought. The imagination, formerly so restless, now no more troubled me. I had no more perplexity or uneasy reflections.

The will, being perfectly dead to all its own appetites, was become void of every human inclination, both natural and spiritual, and only inclined to whatever God pleased, and to whatever manner He pleased. This vastness or enlargedness, which is not bounded by anything, however plain or simple it may be, increases every day; so that my soul in partaking of the qualities of her Spouse, seems also to partake of His immensity. My prayer was in an openness and singleness inconceivable. I was, as it were, borne up on high, out of myself. I believe God was pleased to bless me with this experience, at the beginning of the new life, to make me comprehend, for the good of other souls, the simplicity and desirableness of this passage of the soul into God.

When I went to confess, I felt such an immersion of the soul into Him, that I could scarcely speak. This ascension of the spirit, wherein God draws the soul so powerfully, not into its own inmost recess, but into Himself, is not operated till after the death of self.

It is certain that the soul, by death to itself, passes into its divine Object; and this is what I then experienced. I found, the farther I went, the more my spirit was lost in its Sovereign, who attracted it more and more to Himself. And He was pleased at first that I should know this for the sake of others, and not for myself. Indeed He drew my soul more and more into Himself, till it lost itself entirely out of sight, and could perceive itself no more. It seemed at first to pass into Him.

The joy which such a soul possesses in its God is so great, that it experiences the truth of those words of the royal prophet, "All they who are in Thee, O Lord,

are like persons ravished with joy." To such a soul the words of our Lord seem to be addressed, "Your joy no man shall take from you." John xvi. 22. It is as it were plunged in a river of peace. Its prayer is continual. Nothing can hinder it from praying to God, or from loving Him. Oh, unutterable happiness! Who could ever have thought that a soul, which seemed to be in the utmost misery, should ever find a happiness equal to this? Oh happy poverty, happy loss, happy nothingness, which gives no less than God Himself in His own immensity, no more circumscribed to the limited manner of the creature, but always drawing it out of that, to plunge it wholly into His divine essence.

Then the soul knows that all the states of self-pleasing visions, openings, ecstasies and raptures, are rather obstacles; that they do not serve this state which is far above them; because the state which has supports, has pain to lose them, and yet cannot arrive at this without such loss. In this are verified the words of an experienced saint: "When I would," says he, "possess nothing through self-love, everything was given me without going after it." Oh happy dying of the grain of wheat, which makes it produce an hundred-fold! The soul is then so passive, so equally disposed to receive from the hand of God either good or evil, as is astonishing.

After I finished my retreat with the Ursulines at Thonon, I returned through Geneva, and, having found no other means of conveyance, the French resident lent me a horse. As I knew not how to ride on horseback, I made some difficulty of doing it; but as he assured me that it was a very quiet horse, I ventured to mount him. There was a sort of a smith, who looking at me with a wild haggard look, struck the horse a blow on

the back, just as I had got upon him, which made him give a leap. He threw me on the ground with such force that they thought I was killed. I fell on my temple. My cheek-bone and two of my teeth were broken. I was supported by an invisible hand; and in a little time I mounted as well as I could on another horse and had a man by my side to keep me up.

My relations left me in peace at Gex, testifying their esteem for me, and as they had heard at Paris of my miraculous cure, it made a great noise there. Many persons in reputation for sanctity then wrote to me. I received letters from Mademoiselle De Lamoignon, and another young lady, who was so moved with my answer, that she sent me a hundred pistoles for our house, and let me know beside that, when we wanted money, I had only to write to her, and that she would send me all I could desire.

My near relations did not signify any eager desire for my return. The first thing they proposed to me, a month after my arrival at Gex, was not only to give up my guardianship, but to make over all my estate to my children, and to reserve an annuity to myself. This proposition, coming from people who regarded nothing but their own interest, to some might have appeared very displeasing, but it was in no wise so to me. I had not any friend to advise with. I knew not anyone whom I could consult about the manner of executing the thing, as I was quite free and willing to do it. It appeared to me that I had now the means of accomplishing the extreme desire I had of being conformable to Jesus Christ, poor, naked, and stripped of all. They sent me an article to execute, which had been drawn under their inspection, and I innocently signed it, not

perceiving some clauses which were inserted therein. It expressed that, when my children should die, I should inherit nothing of my own estate, but that it should devolve to my kindred. There were many other things, which appeared to be equally to my disadvantage. Though what I had reserved to myself was sufficient to support me in this place, yet it was scarcely enough to do so in some other places. I then gave up my estate with more joy, and being thereby conformed to Jesus Christ, I have never repented of it, nor had any uneasiness about it. What pleasure to lose all for the Lord! The love of poverty, thus contracted, is the kingdom of tranquillity.

I forgot to mention that, towards the end of my miserable state of privation, when just ready to enter into newness of life, our Lord illuminated me clearly to see that the exterior crosses came from Him, and that I could not harbor any resentment against the persons who procured me them. On the contrary, I felt the tenderness of compassion for them, and had more pain for those afflictions which I innocently caused to them, than for any which they had heaped upon me. I saw that these persons feared the Lord too much to oppress me as they did, had they known it. I saw His hand in it, and I felt the pain which they suffered, through the contrariety of their humors. It is hard to conceive the tenderness which the Lord gave me for them, and the desire which I have had, with the utmost sincerity, to procure them every sort of advantage.

After the accident which befell me, of the fall from the horse, from which I soon wonderfully recovered, the devil began to declare himself more openly mine enemy, to break loose and become outrageous. One

night, when I least thought of it, something very monstrous and frightful presented itself. It seemed a kind of face, which was seen by a glimmering blueish light. I don't know whether the flame itself composed that horrible face or appearance, for it was so mixed and passed by so rapidly, that I could not discern it, but my soul rested in its calm situation and assurance, and it appeared no more after that manner. As I arose at midnight to pray, I heard frightful noises in my chamber, and after I had lain down they were still worse; my bed often shook for a quarter of an hour at a time, and the paper sashes were all burst. Every morning while this continued, they were found shattered and torn, yet I felt no fear. I arose and lighted my wax-candle at a lamp which I kept in my chamber, looking all over the chamber, and at the sashes, at the very time the noise was strongest. As he saw that I was afraid of nothing, he left off all on a sudden, and attacked me no more in person; but he stirred up men against me, and that succeeded far better with him; for he found them disposed to do what he prompted them to, zealously, inasmuch as they counted it a good thing to do me the worst of injuries.

One of the sisters whom I had brought with me, a very beautiful girl, contracted an intimacy with an ecclesiastic, who had authority in this place. At first he inspired her with an aversion for me, being well assured that if she placed confidence in me, I should advise her not to suffer his visits so frequently. She was undertaking a religious retreat. That ecclesiastic was desirous to induce her to make it, in order to gain her entire confidence, which would have served as a cloak to his frequent visits. The Bishop of Geneva

had given Father La Combe for director to our house, and as he was going to cause retreats to be made, I desired her to wait for him. As I had gained some share in her esteem, she submitted thereto, even against her inclination, which was to have made it under this ecclesiastic. I began to talk to her on the subject of inward prayer, and drew her into the practice of this duty. Our Lord gave such a blessing thereto, that this girl gave herself to God in right earnest, and with her whole heart; and the retreat completely won her over. She then became more reserved, and on her guard, towards this ecclesiastic, which exceedingly vexed him. It enraged him both against Father La Combe and me, and proved the source of the persecutions which afterwards befell me.

He began to talk privately of me with much contempt. I knew it, but took no notice of it. There came a certain friar to see him, who mortally hated Father La Combe, on account of his regularity. These combined together to force me to quit the house, that they might become masters of it themselves. All the means they could devise they used for that purpose.

I saw crosses in abundance likely to fall to my lot. At the same time these words came into my mind, "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross." Heb. xii. 2. I prostrated myself for a long time with my face on the ground, earnestly desiring to receive all Thy strokes. Oh, Thou who spared not Thine own Son! Thou couldst find none but Him worthy of Thee, and Thou still findest in Him hearts proper for Thee.

A few days after my arrival at Gex, I saw in a sacred and mysterious dream Father La Combe fastened up to

an enormous cross, stripped in like manner as they paint our Savior. I saw around it a frightful crowd, which covered me with confusion, and threw back on me the ignominy of his punishment. He seemed to have most pain, but I more reproaches than he. I have since beheld this fully accomplished.

The aforesaid ecclesiastic won over to his party one of our sisters, who was the house-steward, and soon after the prioress. I was of a very delicate frame, the good inclination which I had did not give strength to my body. I had two maids of my own with me to serve me; yet, as the community had need of one of them for their cook, and the other to attend the door and other occasions, I gave them up, not thinking but they would allow them to serve me sometimes, and assist me in things I was not able to do myself; for besides this, I let them still receive all my income, they having had already my first half of this year's annuity. yet they would not permit either of my maid-servants to do anything for me. By my office of sacristan I was obliged to sweep the Church, which was large, and they would not let anyone help me in it. I have several times fainted away over the broom, and have been forced to rest myself in little corners, quite spent. This obliged me to beg them, that they would suffer it sometimes to be swept by some of the strong country girls which were there, New Catholics, which at last they had the charity to consent to. But what most embarrassed me was that I never had washed, and was now obliged to wash all the vestry linen. I took one of my maids to help me, because in attempting it by myself, I had done up the linen most awkwardly. But these sisters pulled her by the arms out of my chamber,

telling her she should do her own business. I let it quietly pass, without making any objection to it. The other good sister, the girl I just mentioned, grew more and more fervent, by the practice of prayer in her dedication of herself to the Lord, more and more tender in her sympathy with me, which irritated this ecclesiastic; insomuch that, after all his impotent attempts here, he went off to Annecy, in order to sow discord, and to effect more mischief to Father La Combe.

He went directly to the Bishop of Geneva, who till then had manifested much esteem and kindness for me, and persuaded him that it would be proper to secure me to that house, to oblige me to give up to it the annual income I had reserved to myself; and to engage me thereto, by making me prioress. He had gained such an ascendancy over the Bishop, that the people in the country called him the Little Bishop. Wherefore he drew him to enter heartily and with zeal into this proposition, and to resolve to bring it about whatever it should cost him.

The ecclesiastic, having so far carried his point, and being swelled with his success in this first essay, no longer kept any measures in regard to me. He began with causing all the letters which I sent, and those which were directed to me, to be stopped; in order to have it in his power to make what impressions he pleased on the minds of others, and that I should neither be able to know it, nor to defend myself, nor to give or send to my friends any account of the manner in which I was treated. One of the maids I had brought wanted to return, as she could have no rest in this place, and the other that remained was infirm, and too much taken up by others to help me in anything.

As Father La Combe was soon to come, I thought he would soften the violent spirit of this man, and that he would give me proper advice.

In the meantime they proposed to me the engagement, and the post of prioress. I answered that as to the engagement it was impossible for me, since my vocation was elsewhere. And I could not regularly be the prioress, till after passing through the novitiate, in which they had all served two years before their being engaged; that when I should have done as much, I should see how God would inspire me. The prioress replied pretty tartly that if I would ever leave them it were best for me to do it immediately. Yet I did not offer to retire, but continued still to act as usual. However, I saw the sky gradually thickening, and storms gathering on every side. The prioress then affected a milder air. She assured me that she had a desire, as well as I, to go to Geneva; that I should not engage, but only promise her to take her with me, if I went thither. She pretended to place a great confidence in me, and professed a high esteem for me. As I am very free, and have nothing but uprightness, I let her know that I had no attraction for the manner of life of the New Catholics, by reason of the intrigues from without. Several things did not please me, because I wanted them to be upright in everything. She signified that she did not consent to such things, but because that ecclesiastic told her they were necessary to give the house a credit in distant parts, and to draw charities from Paris. I answered that if we walked uprightly God would never fail us. He would sooner do miracles for us. I remarked to her that when, instead of sincerity, they had recourse to artifice,

charity grew cold, and kept herself shut up. It is God alone who inspires charity; how, then, is it to be drawn by disguises?

Soon after, Father La Combe came about the retreats. This was the third and last time that he came to Gex. The prioress, after she had been tampering a good deal with me hereupon, having written him a long letter before his coming, and received his answer, which she showed me, now went to ask him whether she would one day be united to me at Geneva. He answered her with his usual uprightness, "Our Lord has made it known to me that you shall never be established at Geneva." And soon after she died. When he had uttered this declaration, she appeared enraged against both him and me, and went directly to that ecclesiastic, who was in a chamber with the house-steward, and they took their measures together, to oblige me either to engage or retire. They thought that I would sooner engage than retire, and they narrowly watched my letters.

With a design to lay snares for him, he requested Father La Combe to preach, which he did—on this text, "The king's daughter is beautiful within." That ecclesiastic, who was present with his confidant, said it was preached against him, and was full of errors. He drew up eight propositions, and inserted in them what the other had not preached, adjusting them as maliciously as ever he could, and sent them to one of his friends in Rome, to get them examined by the Sacred Congregation, and by the Inquisition. Though he had very illy digested them, at Rome they were pronounced good. That greatly disappointed and vexed him. After having been treated in this manner, and opprobriously

reviled by him in the most offensive terms, the father with much mildness and humility, told him that he was going to Annecy about some affairs of the convent; and that if he had anything to write to the Bishop of Geneva, he would take care of his letter. He then desired him to wait awhile, as he was going to write. The good father had the patience to wait above three hours, without hearing from him; though he had treated him exceedingly ill, so far as to snatch out of his hands a letter I had given him for that worthy hermit I have mentioned. Hearing he was not gone, but was still in the Church, I went to him, and begged him to send to see if the other's packet was ready; because the day was so far gone, that he would be obliged to lodge by the way. When the messenger arrived, he found a servant of the ecclesiastic on horseback, ordered to go at full speed, to be at Annecy before the father. He then returned an answer that he had no letters to send by him. This was so contrived, that he might gain time to prepossess the Bishop for his purposes. Father La Combe then set off for Annecy, and on his arrival found the Bishop prepossessed, and in an ill humor. This was the substance of their discourse:

Bishop.—You must absolutely engage this lady to give what she has to the house at Gex, and make her the prioress of it.

Father La Combe.—You know, sir, what she has told you herself of her vocation, both at Paris and in this country. I do not believe that she will engage; nor is there any likelihood that, after quitting her all, in the hope of entering Geneva, she should engage elsewhere. She has offered to stay with those sisters as a

boarder. If they are willing to keep her as such, she will remain with them; if not, she is resolved to retire into some convent, till God shall dispose of her otherwise.

Bishop.—I know all that; but she is so very obedient, that, if you order her, she will assuredly do it.

F. La Combe.—It is for that reason, sir, that one ought to be cautious in the commands laid on her. Can I induce a foreign lady, who, for all her subsistence, has nothing but a small pittance she has reserved to herself, to give that up in favor of a house which is not yet established, and perhaps never will be? If the house should happen to fail, or be no longer of use, what shall that lady live on? Shall she go to the hospital?

Bishop.—These reasons are good for nothing. If you do not make her do what I have said, I will degrade and suspend you.

This manner of speaking somewhat surprised the father, who well understood the rules of suspension, which are not executed on such things. He replied:

“I am ready, sir, not only to suffer the suspension, but even death, rather than do anything against my conscience.”—Having said that, he retired.

He directly sent me this account by an express, to the end that I might take proper measures thereon. I had no other course to take but to retire into a convent. I received a letter informing me that the nun to whom I had entrusted my daughter had fallen sick, and desired me to go to her for some time. I showed this letter to the sisters of our house, telling them I had a mind to go; but if they ceased to persecute me, and would leave Father La Combe in peace, I would return

as soon as the mistress of my daughter recovered. Instead of this, they persecuted me more violently, wrote to Paris against me, stopped all my letters, and sent libels against me around the country.

The day after my arrival at Thonon, Father La Combe set off for the valley of Aoust, to preach there in Lent. He had come to take leave of me, and told me he should go from thence to Rome, and perhaps not return, as his superiors might detain him there; that he was sorry to leave me in a strange country, without succor, and persecuted of everyone. I replied, "My father, that gives me no pain; I use the creatures for God, and by His order. Through His mercy, I do very well without them, when He withdraws them; and I am very well contented never to see you, and to abide under persecution, if such be His will." He said he would go well satisfied to see me in such a disposition, and then took his leave and departed.

As soon as I got to the Ursulines, a very aged and pious priest, who for twenty years past had not come out of his solitude, came to find me. He told me that he had a vision relative to me; that he had seen a woman in a boat on the lake, and that the Bishop of Geneva, with some of his priests, exerted all their efforts to sink the boat she was in, and to drown her; that he continued in this vision above two hours, with pain of mind; that it seemed sometimes as if this woman were quite drowned, as for some time she quite disappeared, but afterwards she appeared again, and ready to escape the danger, while the Bishop never ceased to pursue her. This woman was always equally calm, but he never saw her entirely free from him. From that he concluded that the Bishop would persecute me without intermission.

XIX. GATHERING CLOUDS.

AFTER Father La Combe was gone, the persecution raised against me became more violent. But the Bishop of Geneva still showed me some civilities, as well to try whether he could prevail on me to do what he desired, as to sound how matters passed in France, and to prejudice the minds of the people there against me, always preventing me from receiving the letters sent me. The ecclesiastic and his family had twenty-two intercepted letters, opened, on their table. There was one wherein was sent me a power of attorney to sign, of immediate consequence. They were obliged to put it under another cover, and send it to me. The bishop wrote to Father La Mothe, and had no difficulty to draw him into his party, for he was displeased with me on two accounts. First, that I had not settled on him a pension, as he expected, and as he told me very roughly several times. Secondly, I did not take his advice in everything. He at once declared against me. The bishop made him his confidant. It was he who uttered and spread abroad the news about me, which they sent him. They imagined, as was supposed, that I would annul the donation I had made, if I returned; that, having the support of friends in France, I would find the means of breaking it; but in that they were much mistaken, for I had no thought of loving anything but the poverty of Jesus Christ.

The bishop continued to treat me with a show of respect; and yet at the same time he wrote to many

persons at Paris, as did also the sisters of the house, to all those persons of piety who had written letters to me, to bias them as much as possible against me, and to avoid the blame which ought naturally to fall upon them, for having so unworthily treated a person who had given up everything to devote herself to the service of that diocese; for after I had done this, and was not in a condition to return to France, they treated me extremely ill in every respect. There was scarcely any kind of false or fabulous story, likely to gain any credit, which they did not invent to cry me down. Beside my having no way to make the truth known in France, our Lord inspired me with a willingness to suffer everything, without justifying myself; so that in my case nothing was heard but condemnation, without any vindication.

I was in this convent, and had seen Father La Combe no further than I have mentioned, yet they did not cease to publish, both of him and me, the most scandalous stories, as utterly false as anything could be, for he was then a hundred and fifty leagues from me.

For some time I was ignorant of this. As I knew that all my letters were kept from me, I ceased to wonder at receiving none. I lived in this house with my little daughter in a sweet repose, which was a very great favor of Providence. During this time my mind was preserved calm and resigned to God. My silence was great; and for some time I had leisure to taste of and enjoy the Divinity in my little cell. Afterwards that good sister almost continually interrupted me, and I answered everything she desired of me, both out

of condescension, and from a principle which I had to obey like a child.

When I was in my apartment, without any other director than our Lord by His Spirit, however favored therein, as soon as one of my little children came to knock at my door, He required me to admit the interruption. He showed me that it is not the actions in themselves which please Him, but the constant ready obedience to every discovery of His will, even in the minutest things, with such a suppleness, as not to stick to anything, but still to turn with Him at every call. My soul was then, I thought, like a leaf, or a feather, which the wind moves what way soever it pleases; and the Lord never suffers a soul so dependent upon, and dedicated to Him, to be deceived.

My soul was in a state of entire resignation, and very great content, in the midst of such violent tempests. Persons came to tell me extravagant stories against Father La Combe. The more they said to me to his disadvantage, the more esteem I felt for him. I answered them, "Perhaps I may never see him again, but I shall ever be glad to do him justice. It is not he who hinders me from engaging at Gex. It is only because I know it to be none of my vocation." They asked me, "Who could know that better than the Bishop?" They farther told me I was under a deception, and my state was good for nothing. This gave me no uneasiness, having referred to God the care of requiring, and of executing what He requires, and in whatever manner He demands it.

A soul in this state seeks nothing for itself, but all for God. Some may say, "What, then, does this soul?" It leaves itself to be conducted by God's providences.

Outwardly, its life seems quite common; inwardly, it is wholly resigned to the divine will. The more everything appears adverse, and even desperate, the more calm it is, in spite of the annoyance and pain of the senses. But when the soul is entirely passed into its original Being, all these things no more cause any separation or partition. It finds no more of that impurity which came from self-seeking, from a human manner of acting, from an unguarded word, from any warm emotion or eagerness, which caused such a mist, as it then could neither prevent nor remedy, having so often experienced its own efforts to be useless, and even hurtful, as they did nothing else but still more and more defile it. There is in such case no other way or means of remedy, but in waiting till the Sun of Righteousness dissipate those fogs, as the whole work of purification comes from God only. Afterwards this conduct becomes natural; and then the soul can say, with the royal prophet, "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. Though war should rise against me, in Him will I confide." For then, though assaulted on every side, it continues fixed as a rock. Having no will but for what God sees meet to order, be it what it may, high or low, great or small, sweet or bitter, honor, wealth, life, or any other object, what can shake its peace? It is true, our nature is so crafty that it worms itself through everything; and a selfish sight is like the basilisk's, it destroys.

Trials are suited to the state of the soul, whether conducted by lights, gifts or ecstasies, etc., or by the entire destruction of self in the way of naked faith. Both these states are found in St. Paul. He tells us,

“And lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.” He prayed thrice, and it was said to him, “My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” He proved also another state when he thus expressed himself, “Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” To which he replies, “I thank God, it is done through Jesus Christ our Lord.” It is He who conquers death in us through His own life. Then there is no longer a sting in death, or thorn in the flesh, capable of paining or hurting any more.

At first indeed, and for a pretty long time after, the soul sees that nature wants to take some part with it in its trials; and then its fidelity consists in withholding it, without allowing it the least indulgence, till it leaves everything to go on with God in purity as it comes from Him. Till the soul be in this state, it always sullies, by its own mixture, the operation of God, like those rivulets which contract the corruption of the places they pass through, but, flowing in a pure place, they then remain in the purity of their source. Unless God through experience, makes known His guidance to the soul it can never comprehend it.

Oh, if souls had courage enough to resign themselves to the work of purification, without having any weak and foolish pity on themselves, what a noble, rapid and happy progress would they make! But few are willing to lose the earth. If they advance some steps, as soon as the sea is ruffled they are dejected; they cast anchor, and often desist from the prosecution of the voyage. Such disorders occasion selfish interest

and self-love. It is of consequence not to look too much at one's own state, not to lose courage, not to afford any nourishment to self-love, which is so deep-rooted, that its empire is not easily demolished. Often the idea which a man falsely conceives of the greatness of his advancement in divine experience, makes him want it to be seen and known of men, and to wish to see the very same perfection in others. He conceives too low ideas of others, and too high of his own state. Then it becomes a pain to him to converse with people too human; whereas, a soul truly mortified and resigned would rather converse with the worst, by the order of Providence, than with the best, of its own choice; wanting only to see or to speak to any as Providence directs, knowing well that all beside, far from helping, only hurt it, or at least prove very unfruitful to it.

What, then, renders this soul so perfectly content? It neither knows, nor wants to know, anything but what God calls it to. Herein it enjoys divine content, after a manner vast, immense, and independent of exterior events; more satisfied in its humiliation, and in the opposition of all creatures, by the order of Providence, than on the throne of its own choice.

It is here that the apostolic life begins. But do all reach that state? Very few, indeed, as far as I can comprehend. There is a way of lights, gifts and graces, a holy life in which the creature appears all admirable. As this life is more apparent, so it is more esteemed of such, at least, as have not the purest light. The souls which walk in the other path are often very little known, for a length of time, as it was with Jesus Christ Himself, till the last years of His life. Oh, if I could

express what I conceive of this state! But I can only stammer about it.

Being, as I have said, with the Ursulines at Thonon, after having spoken to the Bishop of Geneva, and seeing how he changed, just as others turned him, I wrote to him and to Father La Mothe, but all my efforts were useless. The more I endeavored to accommodate matters, the more the ecclesiastic tried to confound them, hence I ceased to meddle.

One day I was told that the ecclesiastic had won over the good girl whom I dearly loved. So strong a desire I had for her protection that it had cost me much. I should not have felt the death of a child so much as her loss; at the same time I was told how to hinder it, but that human way of acting was repugnant to my inward sense; and these words arose in my heart, "Except the Lord build the house," etc.

And indeed He provided herein Himself, hindering her from yielding to this deceitful man, and thwarting the designs of him and his associates. As long as I was with her she still seemed wavering and fearful, but oh, the infinite goodness of God, to preserve without our aid what without His we should inevitably lose! I was no sooner separated from her, but she became immovable.

As for me, there scarcely passed a day but they treated me with new insults; their assaults came on me at unawares. The New Catholics, by the instigation of the Bishop of Geneva, the ecclesiastic, and the sisters at Gex, stirred up all the persons of piety against me. I had but little uneasiness on my own account. If I could have had it at all, it would have been on account of Father La Combe, whom they vilely aspersed,

though he was absent. They even made use of his absence, to overset all the good he had done in the country, by his missions and pious labors, which were inconceivably great. At first I was too ready to vindicate him, thinking it justice to do it. I did not do it at all for myself, and our Lord showed me that I must cease doing it for him, in order to leave him to be more thoroughly annihilated, because from thence he would draw a greater glory than ever he had done from his own reputation.

Every day they invented some new slander. No kind of stratagem, or malicious device in their power, did they omit. They came to surprise and ensnare me in my words; but God guarded me so well, that therein they only discovered their own malevolence. She who had the care of my daughter behaved roughly to me. Such are the persons who regulate themselves only by their gifts and emotions. When they do not see things succeed, and as they regard them only by their success, and are not willing to have the affront of their pretensions being thought uncertain, and liable to mistake, they seek without for supports. As for me who pretended to nothing, I thought all succeeded well, inasmuch as all tended to self-annihilation. On another side, the maid I had brought, and who stayed with me, grew tired out. Wanting to go back again, she stunned me with her complaints, thwarting and chiding me from morning till night, upbraiding me with what I had left, and coming to a place where I was good for nothing. I was obliged to bear all her ill-humor and the clamor of her tongue.

My own brother, Father La Mothe, wrote to me that I was a rebel to my bishop, staying in his diocese

only to give him pain. Indeed, I saw there was nothing for me to do here, so long as the bishop should be against me. I did what I could to gain his good will, but this was impossible on any other terms than the engagement he demanded, and that I knew to be my duty not to do. This, joined to the poor education of my daughter, affected my heart. When any glimmering of hope appeared, it soon vanished, and I gained strength from a sort of despair.

During this time Father La Combe was at Rome, where he was received with so much honor, and his doctrine was so highly esteemed, that the Sacred Congregation was pleased to take his sentiments on some points of doctrine, which were found to be so just, and so clear, that it followed them.

About July, 1682, my sister, who was an Ursuline, got permission to come to the waters. She assisted in the education of my daughter, but she had frequent jarring with her tutoress—I labored but in vain for peace. By some instances which I met with in this place, I saw clearly that it is not great gifts which sanctify, unless they be accompanied with a profound humility; and that death to everything is infinitely more beneficial; for there was one who thought herself at the summit of perfection, but has discovered since, by the trials which have befallen her, that she was yet very far from it. O, my God, how true it is that we may have of Thy gifts, and yet be very imperfect, and full of ourselves!

How very straight is the gate which leads to a life in God! how little one must be to pass through it, it being nothing else but death to self! But when we have passed through it, what enlargement do we find!

David saith (Psalm xviii. 19), "He brought me forth into a large place." And it was through humiliation and abasement that he was brought thither.

The first Lent which I passed with the Ursulines, I had a very great pain in my eyes; for that same imposthume which I formerly had between the eye and the nose, returned upon me three times. The bad air, and the noisome chamber which I was in, contributed hereto. My head was frightfully swelled, but great was my inward joy. It was strange to see so many good creatures, who did not know me, love and pity me; and all the rest enraged against me, and most of them on reports entirely false, neither knowing me, nor why they hated me. To swell the stream of affliction yet more, my daughter fell sick and was likely to die; there was but little hope of her recovery, when her mistress also fell ill. My soul, leaving all to God, continued to rest in a quiet and peaceable habitation. The senses indeed are sometimes ready to start aside, and to run off like truants; but every trouble flies before the soul which is entirely subjected to God. By speaking of a fixed state, I do not mean one which can never decline or fall, that being only in heaven. I call it fixed and permanent compared with the states which have preceded it, which were full of vicissitudes and variations. I do not exclude a state of suffering in the senses, or arising from superficial impurity, which remains to be done away, and which one may compare to refined but tarnished gold. It has no more need to be purified in the fire, having undergone that operation, but needs only to be burnished. So it seemed to be with me at that time.

XX. CLIMBING SPIRITUAL HEIGHTS.

MY daughter had the small-pox. They sent for a physician from Geneva, who gave her over. Father La Combe then came in to visit, and pray with her. He gave her his blessing; and soon after she wonderfully recovered. The persecutions of the New Catholics against me continued and increased; yet, for all that, I did not fail to do them all the good in my power. Father La Combe regulated many things in regard to my daughter, which vexed her mistress so much, that her former friendship was turned into coldness. She had grace, but suffered nature too frequently to prevail. I told her my thought on her faults, as I was inwardly directed to do; but though, at that time, God enlightened her to see the truth of what I said, and she has been more enlightened since, yet the return of her coldness towards me ensued upon it. The debates between her and my sister grew more tart and violent. My daughter, who was only six years and a half old, by her little dexterities, found a way to please them both, choosing to do her exercises twice over, first with the one, then with the other, which continued not long, for as her mistress generally neglected her, doing things at one time, and leaving them at another, she was reduced to learn only what my sister and I taught her. Indeed the changeableness of my sister was so excessive, that without great grace it was hard to suit one's self to it, and yet she appeared to me to surmount herself in many things. Formerly, I could scarce bear her man-

ners, but I have since loved everything in God, who has given me a very great facility to bear the faults of my neighbor, with a readiness to please and oblige everyone, and such a compassion for their calamities or distresses as I never had before.

I have no difficulty to use condescension with imperfect persons; I should be secretly smitten if I failed therein, but with souls of grace I cannot bear this human manner of acting, nor suffer long and frequent conversations. It is a thing which few are capable of. Some religious persons say that these conversations are of great service. I believe it may be true for some, but not for all; for there is a period wherein it hurts, especially when it is of our own choice, the human inclination corrupting everything. The same things which would be profitable, when God, by His Spirit, draws to them, become quite otherwise, when we of ourselves enter into them.

The order of Divine Providence makes the whole rule and conduct of a soul entirely devoted to God. While it faithfully gives itself up thereto, it will do all things right and well, and will have everything it wants, without its own care; because God in whom it confides, makes it every moment do what He requires, and furnishes the occasions proper for it. God loves what is of His own order, and of His own will, not according to the idea of the merely rational or even enlightened man; for He hides these persons from the eyes of others, in order to preserve them in that hidden purity for Himself.

But how comes it that such souls commit any faults? Because they are not faithful, in giving themselves up to the present moment. Often too eagerly bent on

something, or wanting to be over-faithful, they slide into many faults, which they can neither foresee nor avoid. Does God then leave souls which confide in Him? Surely not. Sooner would He work a miracle to hinder them from falling, if they were resigned enough to Him. They may be resigned as to the general will, and yet fail as to the present moment. Being out of the order of God, they fall. They renew such falls as long as they continue out of that divine order. When they return into it, all goes right and well.

Most assuredly if such souls were faithful enough, not to let any of the moments of the order of God slip over, they would not thus fall. This appears to me as clear as the day. As a dislocated bone out of the place in which the economy of divine wisdom had fixed it, gives continual pain till restored to its proper order, so the many troubles in life, come from the soul not abiding in its place, and not being content with the order of God, and what is afforded therein from moment to moment. If men rightly knew this secret, they would all be fully content and satisfied. But alas! instead of being content with what they have, they are ever wishing for what they have not, while the soul, which enters into the divine light begins to be in paradise. What is it that makes paradise? It is the order of God, which renders all the saints infinitely content, though very unequal in glory! From whence comes it that so many poor indigent persons are so contented, and that princes and potentates, who abound to profusion, are so wretched and unhappy? It is because the man who is not content with what he has, will never be without craving desires; and he who is the prey of an unsatisfied desire, can never be content.

All souls have more or less of strong and ardent desires, except those whose will is lost in the will of God. Some have good desires, so as to suffer martyrdom for God; others thirst for the salvation of their neighbor, and some pant to see God in glory. All this is excellent. But he who rests in the divine will, although he may be exempt from all these desires, is infinitely more content, and glorifies God more.

After Father La Combe was returned from Rome, well approved, and furnished with testimonials of his life and doctrine, he performed his functions of preaching and confessing as usual. I gave him an account of what I had done and suffered in his absence, and what care God had taken of all my concerns. I saw His providence incessantly extended to the very smallest things. After having been several months without any news of my papers, when some pressed me to write, and blamed my neglect, an invisible hand held me back; my peace and confidence were great herein. I received a letter from the ecclesiastic at home, which informed me that he had orders to come and see me, and bring me my papers. I had sent to Paris for a pretty considerable bundle of things for my daughter, and heard they were lost on the lake, as I could learn no further tidings about them.

But I gave myself no trouble, I always thought they would be found. The man who had taken the charge of them made a search after them a whole month, in all the environs, without hearing any news about them. At the end of three months they were brought to me, having been found in the house of a poor man, who had not opened them, nor knew who had brought them there. Once I had sent for all the money which was

to serve me a whole year; the person who had been to receive cash for the bill of exchange, having put that money in two bags on horseback, forgot that it was there, and gave the horse to a little boy to lead. The money fell from the horse in the middle of the market at Geneva. That instant I arrived, coming on the other side, and having alighted from my litter, the first thing I found was my money, in walking over it. What was surprising, a great throng was in this place, and not one had perceived it. Many such things have attended me, but these may suffice to show the continual protection of God.

The Bishop of Geneva wrote to me, with politeness and thanks for my charities at Gex, while at the same time he said to others that I gave nothing to that house. He wrote against me to the Ursulines with whom I lived, charging them to hinder me from having any conferences with Father La Combe, for fear of bad consequences. The superior of the house, a man of merit, and the prioress, as well as the community, were so irritated at this, that they could not forbear testifying it to himself. He then excused himself with a pretended respect, saying he did not mean it that way. They wrote to him that I did not see the father but at the confessional; that they were so much edified by me, as to think themselves happy in having me, and to esteem it a great favor from God. What they said out of pure charity was not pleasing to the Bishop, who, seeing they loved me in this house, said that I won over everybody to myself and that he wished I were out of the diocese. Though I knew all this, and these good sisters were troubled at it, I could have no trouble by reason of the calm establishment which I was in, the

will of God rendering everything equal to me. The creatures, however unreasonable or passionate they appear, not being regarded in themselves but in God, for an habitual faith causes everything to be seen in God without distinction. Thus, when I see poor souls so ruffled, so uneasy for explanations, I pity them for their want of light. They have reasons, I know, which self-love causes to appear very just.

To relieve myself a little from the fatigue of continual conversation, as my body grew weak, I desired Father La Combe to allow me a retreat. It was then I perceived the quality of a spiritual mother; for the Lord gave me what I cannot express for the perfection of souls. This I could not hide from Father La Combe. It seemed to me as if I entered into the inmost recesses of his heart. Our Lord showed me he was His servant, chosen among a thousand, singularly to honor Him; but that He would lead him through total death, and the entire destruction of the old man; that He would have me contribute thereto, and be instrumental to cause him to walk in the way in which he had led me first, in order that I might be in a condition to direct others therein, and to tell them the way through which I have passed; that the Lord would have us to be conformed, and to become one in Him; that though my soul was more advanced now, yet he should one day pass beyond it, with a bold and rapid flight. God knows how I rejoiced herein, and with what joy I would see my spiritual children surpass their mother in glory.

In this retreat I felt a strong propensity to write, but resisted it till I fell sick. I had nothing to write about, not one idea to begin with. It was a divine

impulse with such a fulness of grace as was hard to contain, or bear. I opened this disposition of mine to Father La Combe. He answered me that he had a strong impulse to command me to write, but had not dared to do it yet, on account of my weakness. I told him that weakness was the effect of my resistance, and I believed it would, through my writing, go off again. He asked me, "But what is it you will write?" I replied, "I know nothing of it, nor desire to know, leaving it entirely to God to direct me." He ordered me to do so. At my taking the pen I knew not the first word I should write, but when I began, suitable matter flowed copiously, nay, impetuously, and as I was writing I was relieved and grew better. I wrote an entire treatise on the interior path of faith, under the comparison of torrents, or of streams and rivers; and though it is pretty long, the comparison in it holds out to the end.

As the way, wherein God now conducted Father La Combe, was very different from that in which he had formerly walked; which had been all light, knowledge, ardor, assurance, sentiment, but now the poor, low, despised path of faith, and of nakedness; he found it very hard to submit thereto, which caused me no little suffering. Who could express what it has cost my heart before he was formed according to the will of God? Meanwhile, the possession which the Lord had of my soul became every day stronger, insomuch that I passed whole days without being able to pronounce one word; for the Lord was pleased to make me pass wholly into Him by an entire internal transformation. He became more and more the absolute master of my heart, to such a degree as not to leave me a movement

of my own, in order that I might be continually supple to every intimation of His will. This state did not hinder me from condescending to my sister, and the others in the house. Nevertheless, the useless things with which they were taken up could not interest me.

I had at that time so ardent a desire for the perfection of Father La Combe, and to see him thoroughly die to himself, that I could have wished him all the crosses and afflictions imaginable, that might conduce to this great and blessed end. Whenever he was unfaithful, or looked at things in any other light than the true one, viz., to tend to this death of self, I felt myself on the rack, which, as I had till then been so indifferent, very much surprised me. To the Lord I made my complaint, who graciously encouraged me, both on this subject and on that entire dependence on Himself which He gave me, which was such that I was like a new born infant.

My sister had brought me a maid, whom God was willing to give me, to fashion her according to His will, not without some crucifixion to myself; for I believe it never is to fall out, that our Lord will give me any persons without giving them wherewith to make me suffer for them, whether it be for the purpose of drawing them into a spiritual life, or never to leave me without the cross. She was one on whom the Lord had conferred very singular graces. She was in high reputation in the country, where she passed for a saint. Our Lord brought her to me, to let her see the difference between the sanctity conceived and comprised in those gifts, with which she was endowed, and that which is obtained by our entire destruction, even by the loss of those very gifts, and of all that raised us in

the esteem of men. Our Lord had given her the same dependence on me, as I had in regard to Father La Combe, nevertheless with some difference.

This girl fell grievously sick. I was willing to give her all the assistance in my power; but I found I had nothing to do but to command her bodily sickness, or the disposition of her mind; and all that I said was done. It was then that I learned what it was to command by the Word, and to obey by the Word. It was Jesus Christ in me equally commanding and obeying.

She, however, continued sick for sometime. One day, after dinner, I was moved to say to her, "Rise and be no longer sick." She arose and was cured. The nuns were very much astonished; and as they knew nothing of what had passed, but saw her walking, who in the morning had appeared to be in the last extremity, they attributed her disorder to a vivid imagination.

I have at sundry times experienced, and felt in myself, how much God respects the freedom of man, and even demands his free concurrence; for when I said, "Be healed," or, "Be free from your troubles," if such persons acquiesced therein, the Word was efficacious, and they were healed. If they doubted, or resisted, though under fair pretexts, as saying, "I shall be healed when it pleases God, I will not be healed till He wills it;" or, in the way of despair, "I cannot be healed; I will not quit my condition," then the Word had no effect. I felt in myself, that the divine virtue retired in me. I experienced what our Lord said, when the woman afflicted with the issue of blood touched Him, and He instantly asked, "Who touched Me?" The apostles said, "Master, the multitude throng

Thee, and press Thee; and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?" But He replied, "It is because virtue hath gone out of me." (Luke viii. 45, 46.) Jesus Christ had caused that healing virtue to flow, through me, by means of His Word; but when that virtue met not with a correspondence in the subject, I felt it suspended in its source, which gave me some pain. I should be, as it were, displeased with those persons, but when there was no resistance, but a full acquiescence, this divine virtue had its full effect. One cannot conceive the delicacy of this healing virtue. Although it has so much power over things inanimate, yet the least thing in man either restrains it, or stops it entirely.

There was a good nun much afflicted, and under a violent temptation. She went to declare her case to a sister whom she thought very spiritual, and in a condition capable of assisting her. But far from finding succor here, she was very much discouraged and cast down. The other despised and repulsed her, and treating her with contempt and rigor, said, "Don't come near me, since you are that way." This poor girl, in a fright of distress came to me, thinking herself undone, on account of what the sister had said to her. I consoled her, and our Lord relieved her immediately; but I could not then forbear telling her that assuredly the other would be punished, and would fall into a state worse than hers. The sister who had used her in such a manner came also to me, highly pleased with herself in what she had done, saying she abhorred such tempted creatures; that as for herself, she was proof against such sorts of temptations, and that she never had a bad thought. I said to her, "My sister, from the friendship I have for you I wish you the pain of

her who spoke to you, and even one still more violent." She answered me haughtily, "If you were to ask it from God for me, and I ask of Him the contrary, I believe I shall be heard at least as soon as you." I answered her with great firmness, "If it be only my own interests which I ask, I shall not be heard; but if it be those of God only, and yours too, I shall be heard sooner than you are aware." That very night she fell into so violent a temptation that one equal to it has seldom been known, and she continued in it a fortnight. It was then she had ample occasion to acknowledge her own weakness, and what she would be without grace. She conceived at first a violent hatred for me, saying that I was the cause of her pain. But it served her as the clay did to enlighten him who had been born blind. She soon saw very well what had brought on her so terrible a state.

I fell sick, even to extremity. This sickness proved a means to cover the great mysteries which it pleased God to operate in me. Scarce ever was a disorder more extraordinary, or of longer continuance in its excess. Several times during its continuance, I saw in dreams Father La Mothe raising persecutions against me. Our Lord let me know that this would be the case, and that Father La Combe would forsake me in the time of persecution. This I wrote to him, and it disquieted him greatly, because he thought his heart was united to the will of God, and too desirous of serving me, to admit such desertion; and yet it has since been found quite true, though not with his will, but from necessity, having been himself persecuted the first. He was now to preach during Lent, and was so much followed, that people came five leagues, to pass several days there for

the benefit of his ministry. I heard he was so sick that he was thought likely to die, and prayed to the Lord to restore his health, and enable him to preach to the people, who were longing to hear him. My prayer was heard, and he soon recovered, and resumed his pious labors.

In this long malady, which continued more than six months, the love of God and of Him alone, made up my whole occupation, I seemed so entirely lost in Him, as to have no sight of myself at all. It seemed as if my heart never came out of that divine ocean, having been drawn into it through deep humiliations. Oh happy loss, which is the consummation of bliss, though operated through crosses and through deaths!

Jesus was then living in me; and I lived no more. These words were imprinted in me, as a real state into which I must enter, (Matt. viii. 20). "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." This I have since experienced in all its extent, having no sure abode, no refuge among my friends, who were ashamed of me, and openly renounced me; nor among my relations, most of whom declared themselves my adversaries, and were my greatest persecutors; while others looked on me with contempt and indignation. I might as David say, "For Thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face; I am become a stranger to my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children; a reproach to men, and despised of the people."

He showed me all the world in a rage against me, without any one daring to appear for me; and assured me in the ineffable silence of His eternal Word, that He would give me vast numbers of children, which I should

bring forth by the cross. I left it to Him, to do with me whatever He pleased, esteeming my whole and sole interest to be placed entirely in His divine Will. He gave me to see how the devil was going to stir up an outrageous persecution against prayer, yet it should prove the means which God would make use of to establish it. He gave me to see farther how He would guide me into the wilderness, where He would cause me to be nourished for a time. The wings, which were to bear me thither, were the resignation of my whole self to His holy will, and the love of the same will. I think I am at present in that wilderness, separated from the whole world in my imprisonment; and I see already accomplished in part what was then shown me. Can I ever express the mercies which my God has bestowed on me? No; they must ever remain in Himself, being of a nature not to be described, by reason of their purity and immensity.

In this sickness I was often to all appearances at the point of death. I fell into convulsions from violent pains which lasted a long time with violence. Father La Combe administered the sacrament to me, the Prioress of the Ursulines having desired him to do it. I was well satisfied to die, and Father La Combe, who was on his knees at my bed-side, remarking the change of my countenance, and how my eyes faded, seemed ready to give me up, when God inspired him to lift up his hands, and with a strong voice, which was heard by all who were in my chamber, at that time almost full, commanded death to relinquish its hold. Instantly it seemed to be stopped; and thus God was pleased wonderfully to raise me up again, yet for a long time I continued extremely weak, during all which our Lord

still gave me new testimonials of His love. How many times was He pleased to make use of His servant to restore me to life, when I was almost on the very point of expiring! As they saw that my sickness and pain did not entirely end, they judged that the air of the lake on which the convent was situated, was very prejudicial to my constitution, and concluded that it would be necessary for me to remove.

During my indisposition, our Lord put it into the heart of Father La Combe to establish an hospital in this place for the poor people seized with maladies, and to institute also a committee or congregation of ladies, to furnish such as could not leave their families, to go to the hospital, with the means of subsistence, during their illness, after the manner of France, there not having been yet any institution of this kind in that country. Willingly did I enter into it, and without any other fund than Providence, and some useless rooms which a gentleman of the town gave us, we began it. We dedicated it to the holy Child Jesus, and He was pleased to give the first beds to it from the earnestness of my pension, which belong to Him. He gave such a blessing thereto, that several other persons joined us in this charity. In a short time there were nearly twelve beds in it, and three persons of great piety gave themselves to this hospital to serve it, who, without any salary, consecrated themselves to the service of the poor patients. I supplied them with ointments and medicines, which were freely given to such of the poor people of the town as had need of them. These good ladies were so hearty in the cause, that, through their charity, and the care of the young women, this hospital was very well maintained and served.

All these little things, which cost but little, and which owed all their success to the blessing which God gave them, drew upon us new persecutions. The Bishop of Geneva was offended with me more than ever, especially in seeing that these small matters rendered me beloved. He said I won over everybody, and openly declared that he could not bear me in his diocese, though I had done therein nothing but good, or rather God by me.

I then went off from the Ursulines, and they sought for a house for me at a distance from the lake. There was but one to be found empty, which had the look of the greatest poverty. It had no chimney but in the kitchen, through which one was obliged to pass to go to the chamber. I took my daughter with me, and gave up the largest chamber for her, and the maid who was to take care of her. I was lodged in a little hole, on straw, to which I went up by a ladder. As we had no other furniture but our beds, which were quite plain and homely, I bought some straw chairs and some Dutch earthen and wooden ware. Never did I enjoy a greater content than in this little hole, which appeared so very conformable to the state of Jesus Christ. I laid in all my provisions, hoping to stay there a long time, but the devil did not leave me long in such sweet peace. It would be difficult for me to tell the persecutions which were stirred up against me. They threw stones in at my windows, which fell at my feet. I had put my little garden in order, but they came in the night, tore it all up, broke down the arbor, and overturned everything in it, as if it had been ravaged by soldiers. They came to abuse me at the door all night long, making such a racket as if they were

going to break it open. These persons have since told who the person was that put them on such work.

Though from time to time I continued my charities at Gex, I was not the less persecuted for it. They offered one person a warrant to compel Father La Combe to stay at Thonon, thinking he would otherwise be a support to me in the persecution, but we prevented it. I knew not then the designs of God, and that He would soon draw me from that poor solitary place, in which I enjoyed a sweet and solid satisfaction, notwithstanding the abuses from without. I thought myself happier here than any sovereign on earth. It was for me like a nest and a place of repose, and Christ was willing that I should be like Him. The devil, as I have said, irritated my persecutors. They sent to desire me to go out of the diocese. All the good which the Lord had caused me to do in it was condemned, more than the greatest crimes. Crimes they tolerated, but me they could not endure. All this while I never had any uneasiness or repentance for my having left all; not that I was assured of having done the will of God therein. Such an assurance would have been too much for me. But I could neither see nor regard anything, receiving everything alike from the hand of God, who directed and disposed of these crosses for me either in justice or in mercy.

The Marchioness of Prunai had sent an express from Turin, in the time of my illness, to invite me to come to reside with her; and to let me know that, being so persecuted as I was in this diocese, I should find an asylum with her until things might grow better. I was not at that time in a condition to execute what she desired of me, and she wrote to me about it no more.

This lady is one of extraordinary piety, who had quitted the splendor and noise of the Court, for the more silent satisfaction of a retired life, and to give herself up to God. With an eminent share of natural advantages, she has continued a widow twenty-two years, and has refused every offer of marriage, to consecrate herself to our Lord entirely and without any reserve. When she knew that I had been obliged to leave the Ursulines, yet without knowing anything of the manner in which I had been treated, she procured a letter to oblige Father La Combe to go to pass some weeks at Turin, for her own benefit, and to bring me with him thither, where I should find a refuge. All this she did unknown to us, and, as she has told us since, a superior force moved her to do it, without knowing the cause thereof. If she had deliberately reflected on it, being such a prudent lady, she probably would not have done it, because the persecutions, which the Bishop of Geneva procured us in that place, cost her more than a little of humiliations. Our Lord permitted him to pursue me, after a surprising manner, into all the places I have been in, without giving me any relaxation, though I never did him any harm, but on the contrary, would have laid down my life for the good of his diocese.

As this fell out without any design on our part, we, without hesitation, believed it was the will of God, thought it might be the means of His appointment to draw us out of the reproach and persecution we labored under, seeing myself chased on the one side, and desired on the other. It was therefore concluded that Father La Combe should conduct me to Turin, and that he should go from thence to Verceil.

Beside him, I took with me a religious man of merit, who had taught theology for fourteen years past, to take away from our enemies all cause for slander; also a boy whom I had brought out of France. They took horses, and I hired a carriage for my daughter, my chambermaid and myself. But all precautions are useless, when it pleases God to permit them to be frustrated. Our adversaries immediately wrote to Paris. A hundred ridiculous stories were circulated about this journey; comedies were acted on it, things invented at pleasure, and as false as anything in the world could be. It was my brother, Father de la Mothe, who was so active in uttering all this stuff. Had he believed it to be true, he ought out of charity to have concealed it; and much more, being so very false. They said I was gone all alone with Father La Combe, strolling about the country, from province to province, with many such fables, as weak and wicked as they were incoherent and badly put together. We suffered all with patience, without vindicating ourselves, or making any complaint.

Scarcely were we arrived at Turin, but the Bishop of Geneva wrote against us. As he could pursue us no other way, he did it by his letters. Father La Combe repaired to Verceil, and I stayed at Turin, with the Marchioness of Prunai. But what crosses was I assaulted with in my own family, from the Bishop of Geneva, from the Barnabites, and from a vast number of persons besides! My eldest son came to find me out, on the death of my mother-in-law, which was an augmentation of my troubles; but after we had heard all his accounts of things, and how they had made sales, chosen guardians, and settled every article, without

consulting me at all, I seemed to be there entirely useless.

The Marchioness of Prunai, who had been so warmly desirous of my company, seeing my great crosses and reproaches, looked coldly upon me. My childlike simplicity, which was the state wherein God at that time kept me, passed with her for stupidity, though in that condition He inspired me to utter oracles. For when the question was to help anyone, or about anything which God required of me, He gave me, with the weakness of a child, the evident tokens of divine strength. Her heart was quite shut up to me all the time I was there. Our Lord, however, made me foretell events which should happen, and which since that time have actually been fulfilled, as well to herself as to her daughter, and to the virtuous ecclesiastic who lived at her house. She did not fail, at last, to conceive more friendship for me, seeing then that Christ was in me. It was the force of self-love and fear of reproach, which had closed up her heart. Moreover, she thought her state more advanced than in reality it was, by reason of her being without tests; but she soon saw by experience that I had told her the truth. She was obliged for family reasons to leave Turin, and solicited me to go with her, but the education of my daughter did not permit of my compliance. To stay at Turin without her seemed improper, because, having lived very retired in this place, I made no acquaintance in it. I knew not which way to turn. The Bishop of Verceil, where Father La Combe was, most obligingly wrote to me, earnestly entreating me to come thither, promising me his protection, and assuring me of his esteem, adding that he should look upon me as his own sister; that

he wished extremely to have me there. It was his own sister, one of my particular friends, who had written to him about me, as had also a French gentleman, an acquaintance of his. But a point of honor kept me from it. I would not have it said that I had gone after Father La Combe, and that I had come to Turin only for the purpose of going to Verceil. He had also his reputation to preserve, which was the cause that he could not agree to my going thither, however importunate the Bishop was for it. Had we believed it to be the will of God, we would both of us have passed over these considerations. God kept us both in so great a dependence on His orders, that He did not let us foreknow them, but the divine moment of His providence determined everything. This proved of very great service to Father La Combe, who had long walked in assurances, to die to them and to himself, for God by an effect of His goodness, that he might thus die without any reserve, took them all from him.

During the whole time of my residence at Turin, our Lord conferred on me very great favors. I found myself every day more transformed into Him, and had continually more knowledge of the state of souls, without ever being mistaken or deceived therein, though some were willing to persuade me to think the contrary. I had used my utmost endeavors to give myself other thoughts, which has caused me not a little pain. When I told, or wrote to Father La Combe about the state of some souls, which appeared to him more perfect and advanced than the knowledge given to me of them, he attributed it to pride. He was very angry with me, and prejudiced against my state. I

had no uneasiness on account of his esteeming me the less, for I was not in a condition to reflect whether he esteemed me or not. He could not reconcile my willing obedience in most things, with so extraordinary a firmness, which in certain cases he looked upon as criminal. He admitted a distrust of my grace, for he was not yet sufficiently confirmed in his way, nor did he duly comprehend, that it did not in any wise depend on me to be one way or another; and that if I had any such power, I should have suited myself to what he said, to spare myself the crosses which my firmness caused me; or, at least, would have artfully dissembled my real sentiments. But I could do neither. Were all to perish by it, I was in such a manner constrained, that I could not forbear telling him the things, just as our Lord directed me to tell them to him. In this He has given me an inviolable fidelity to the very last. No crosses or pains have ever made me fail a moment therein. These things then, which appeared to him to be the strong prejudice of a conceited opinion, set him at variance against me. And though he did not openly show it, but on the contrary, tried to conceal it from me, yet how far distant soever he were from me, I could not be ignorant of it; my spirit felt it, and that more or less, as the opposition was stronger or weaker; and as soon as it abated or ended, my pain, occasioned thereby, ceased. He also, on his side, experienced the like. He has told me and written to me many times over, "When I stand well with God, I find I am well with you. When I am otherwise with Him, I then find myself to be so with you also."

While he was at Turin, a widow who was a good servant of God, all in the brightness of sensibility,

came to him to confess. She uttered wonderful things of her state. I was then at the other side of the confessional. He told me he had met with a soul given up to God; that it was she who was present; that he was very much edified by her and that he was far from finding the like in me; that I operated nothing but death upon his soul. At first I rejoiced at his having met with such a holy soul, as it ever gives me the highest joy to see my God glorified. As I was returning, the Lord showed me clearly the state of that soul, as only a beginning of devotion mixed with affection and a little silence, filled with a new sensation. This and more, as it was set before me, I was obliged to write to him upon it. On his first reading of my letter, he discovered the stamp of truth in it, but soon after, letting in again his old reflections, viewed all I wrote in the light of pride, for he still had in his mind the ordinary rules of humanity conceived and comprised after our manner. As to me, I let myself be led as a child, who says and does, without distinction, whatever it is made to say and do. I left myself to be led wheresoever my heavenly Father pleased, high or low; all was alike good to me.

Some time after he sufficiently discovered, by that person's manner of acting, that she was very far from what he had thought of her.

XXI. THE MINISTRATIONS OF THE SPIRIT.

ONE night in a dream our Lord showed me, that He would also purify the maid whom He had given me, and make her truly enter into death to herself. I then freely resolved to suffer for her, as I did for Father La Combe. As she resisted God much more than he, and was much more under the power of self-love, she had more to be purified from. What I could not tolerate in her was her regard for herself. I saw clearly that the devil cannot hurt us, but so far as we retain some fondness for this corrupt self. The sight was from God, who gave me the discerning of spirits, which would ever accept what was from Him, or reject what was not; and that not from any common methods of judging, not from any outward information, but by an inward principle which is His gift alone.

That this point be not mistaken, it is needful to mention here that souls which are yet in themselves, whatever degree of light and ardor they have attained, are unqualified for it. They often think they have this discernment, when it is nothing else but sympathy or antipathy of nature. Our Lord had destroyed in me every sort of natural antipathy. The soul must be very pure, and depending on God alone, that all these things may be experienced in Him. In proportion as this maid became inwardly purified, my pain abated, till the Lord let me know her state was going to be changed, which soon happily ensued. In comparison of inward pain for souls, outward persecutions, though ever so violent, scarce gave me any.

The Bishop of Geneva wrote to different kinds of persons. He wrote in my favor to such as he thought would show me his letters, and quite the contrary in the letters which he thought I would never see. It was so ordered that these persons, having showed each other their letters received from him, were struck with indignation to see in him so shameful a duplicity. They sent me those letters that I might take proper precautions. I kept them two years, and then burnt them, not to hurt the prelate by them. The strongest battery he raised against me was what he did with the Secretary of State, who held that post in conjunction with the Marchioness of Prunai's brother. He used all imaginable endeavors to render me odious, and to cry me down. He employed certain abbots for that purpose, insomuch that, though I appeared very little abroad, I was well known by the descriptions this bishop had given of me. This did not make so much impression as it would have done, if he had appeared in a better light at Court. Some letters of his, which her royal highness found after the prince's death, which he had written to him against her, had that effect on the princess, that, instead of taking any notice what he now wrote against me, she showed me great respect, and sent her request to me to come to see her. Accordingly I waited on her. She assured me of her protection, and that she was glad of my being in her dominions.

It pleased God here to make use of me to the conversion of two or three ecclesiastics. But I had much to suffer from their repugnances and many infidelities, one of whom had villified me greatly, and even after his conversion turned aside into his old ways; but God at length graciously restored him.

As I was undetermined whether I should place my daughter at the Visitation of Turin, or take some other course, I was exceedingly surprised, at a time I least expected it, to see Father La Combe arrive from Verceil, and tell me I must return to Paris without any delay. It was in the evening, and he said I must set off next morning. I confess this sudden news startled me. It was for me a double sacrifice to return to a place where they had cried me down so much. Behold me then disposed to go off, without offering a single word in reply, with my daughter and my chambermaid, without anybody to guide and attend us; for Father La Combe was resolved not to accompany me, not so much as in passing the mountains, because the Bishop of Geneva had written on all sides that I had gone to Turin after him. But the Father Provincial, who was a man of quality, and well acquainted with the virtue of Father La Combe, told him that it was improper and unsafe to venture on these mountains, without some person of my acquaintance and the more as I had my little daughter with me; and that he therefore ordered him to accompany me. Father La Combe confessed to me that he had some reluctance to do it, and that only obedience, and the danger to which I should have been exposed, made him surmount it. He was only to accompany me to Grenoble, and from thence to return to Turin. I went off then, designing for Paris, there to suffer whatever crosses and trials it should please God to inflict.

What made me pass by Grenoble was the desire I had to spend two or three days with a lady, an eminent servant of God, and one of my friends. When I was there Father La Combe and that lady spoke to me not

to go any farther; that God would glorify Himself in me and by me in that place. He returned to Verceil, and I left myself to be conducted as a child by Providence. This lady took me to the house of a good widow, there not being accommodations at the inn, and as I was ordered to stop at Grenoble, at her house I resided. I placed my daughter in a convent, and resolved to employ all this time in resigning myself to be possessed in solitude by Him who is the absolute Sovereign of my soul. I made not any visit in this place, but I was greatly surprised when, a few days after my arrival, there came to see me several persons who made profession of a singular devotion to God. I perceived immediately a gift which He had given me, of administering to each that which suited their states. I felt myself invested, all on a sudden, with the apostolic state, and discerned the conditions of the souls of such persons as spoke to me, and that with so much facility, that they were surprised at it, and said one to another that I gave every one of them the very thing they had stood in need of. It was Thou, O my God, who didst all these things. Some of them sent others to me. It came to such an excess, that, generally from six in the morning till eight in the evening, I was taken up in speaking of the Lord. People flocked on all sides, far and near, friars, priests, men of the world, maids, wives, widows, all came one after another; and the Lord supplied me with what was pertinent and satisfactory to them all, after a wonderful manner, without any share of my study or meditation therein. Nothing was hid from me of their interior state, and of what passed within them. Here, O my God, Thou madest an infinite number of conquests

known to Thyself only. They were instantly furnished with a wonderful facility for prayer. God conferred on them His grace plentifully, and wrought marvellous changes in them. The most advanced of these souls found, when with me, in silence, a grace communicated to them which they could neither comprehend, nor cease to admire. The others found an unction in my words, and that they operated in them what I said to them. They said they had never experienced anything like it.

One thing was surprising, which was, that I had not a syllable to say to such as came only to watch my words, and to criticize them. Even when I thought to try to speak to them, I felt that I could not, and that God would not have me do it. Some of them in return said, "The people are fools to go to see that lady. She cannot speak." Others of them treated me as if I were only a stupid simpleton. After they left me there came one and said, "I could not get hither soon enough to apprise you not to speak to those persons; they come from such and such, to try what they could catch from you to your disadvantage." I answered them, "Our Lord has prevented your charity; for I was not able to say one word to them."

I felt that what I spoke flowed from the fountain, and that I was only the instrument of Him who made me speak. Amidst this general applause, our Lord made me comprehend what the apostolic state was, with which He had honored me; that to give one's self up to the help of souls, in the purity of His Spirit, was to expose one's self to the most cruel persecutions. These very words were imprinted on my heart: "To resign ourselves to serve our neighbor is to sacrifice ourselves to a gibbet." Such as now proclaim, 'Blessed

is He who cometh in the name of the Lord,' will soon cry out, 'Away with Him, crucify Him.' " One of my friends speaking of the general esteem the people had for me, I said to her, "Observe what I now tell you, that you will hear curses out of the same mouths which at present pronounce blessings." Our Lord made me comprehend that I must be conformable to Him in all His states, and that, if He had continued in a private life with His parents, He never had been crucified; that, when He would resign any of His servants to crucifixion, He employed such in the ministry and service of their neighbors. It is certain that all the souls employed herein by apostolic destination from God, and who are truly in the apostolic state, are to suffer extremely. I speak not of those who put themselves into it, who, not being called of God in a singular manner, and having nothing of the grace of the apostleship, have none of its crosses; but only those who surrender themselves to God without any reserve, and who are willing with their whole hearts to be exposed, for His sake, to sufferings without any mitigation.

Among so great a number of good souls, on whom our Lord wrought much by me, some were given me only as plants to cultivate. I knew their state, but had not that near connection with, or authority over them, which I had over others. It was then that I comprehended the true maternity beyond what I had done before; for those of the latter kind were given me as children, of whom some were faithful. I knew they would be so, and they were closely united to me in pure charity. Others were unfaithful; I knew that of these some would never turn from their infidelity, and they were taken from me; some, after slipping

aside, were recovered. Both of them cost me much distress and inward pain, when, for want of courage to die to themselves, they gave up the fight, and revolted from the good beginning they had been favored with.

Among the friars who came to see me, there was one order which discovered the good effects of grace more than any other. Some of that very order had before this, in a little town where Father La Combe was in the exercise of his mission, been actuated with a false zeal and were violent in persecuting all the good souls which had sincerely dedicated themselves to God, plaguing them after such a manner as can scarce be conceived, burning all their books which treated of silent and inward prayer, refusing absolution to such as were in the practice of it, driving into consternation, and almost into despair, such as had formerly led wicked lives, but were now reformed, and preserved in grace by means of prayer, becoming spotless and blameless in their conduct. These friars had proceeded to such an excess of wild zeal as to raise a sedition in that town, in which a father of the oratory, a person of distinction and merit, received strokes with a stick in the open street, because he prayed extempore in the evenings, and on Sundays made a short, fervent prayer, which insensibly habituated these good souls to the use and practice of the like..

I never in all my life had so much consolation as to see in this little town so many pious souls who with a heavenly emulation gave up their whole hearts to God. There were girls of twelve or thirteen years of age, who industriously followed their work almost all the day long, in silence, and in their employments enjoyed a communion with God, having acquired a fixed habit

herein. As these girls were poor, they placed themselves two and two together, and such as could do it read to the others who could not. One saw there the innocence of the primitive Christian revived. There was in that town a poor laundress who had five children and a paralytic husband, lame in the right arm, and yet worse distempered in mind than in body. He had little strength left for anything else than to beat her. Yet this poor woman bore it all with the meekness and patience of an angel, while she by her labor supported him and his five children. She had a wonderful gift of prayer, and amidst her great suffering and extreme poverty, preserved the presence of God, and tranquility of mind.

These friars sent for this woman and threatened her much if she did not leave off prayer, telling her it was only for churchmen to pray, and that she was very bold to practice it. She replied that Christ had commanded all to pray, and that He had said, "What I say unto you I say unto all." (Mark xiii, 33, 37), without specifying either priests or friars; that without prayer she could not support her crosses and poverty; that formerly she had lived without it, and then was very wicked; that since she had been in the exercise of it, she had loved God with all her soul; so that to leave off prayer was to renounce her salvation, which she could not do. She added that they might take twenty persons who had never practiced prayer, and twenty of those who were in the practice of it; then, said she, "Inform yourselves of the lives of both sorts, and ye will see if ye have any reason to cry out against prayer." Such words as these, from such a woman one would think might have fully convinced them, but

instead of that, it only irritated them the more. They assured her she should have no absolution till she promised them to desist from prayer. She said it depended not on her, and that Christ is Master of what He communicates to His creatures, and of doing with it what He pleases. They refused her absolution; and after railing at a good tailor, who served God with his whole heart, they ordered all the books without exception, which treated on prayer to be brought to them, and they burned them with their own hands in the public square. They were very much elated with their performance, but all the town present arose in an uproar, on account of the late insolent and intolerable abuse of the father of oratory. The principal men went to the Bishop of Geneva and complained to him of the scandals of these new missionaries, so different from the others. Speaking of Father La Combe, who had been there before them on his mission, they said these seemed as if they were sent to destroy all the good he had done. The bishop was forced to come himself to that town, and there to mount the pulpit, protesting that he had no share in it, and that these fathers had pushed their zeal too far. The friars, on the other side declared, they had done all they did, pursuant to the orders given them.

It was the friars of this very order whom our Lord made use of to establish prayer in I know not how many places. And, into the places where they went, they carried a hundred times more books of prayer than those which their brethren had burned. The hand of God appeared to me wonderfully in these things.

One day when I was sick, a brother who had skill in curing diseases, came for a charitable collection, but hearing I was ill, came in to see me. We entered into a conversation which revived in him the love he had for God, which he acknowledged had been too much stifled by his occupation. I made him comprehend that there was no employment which should hinder him from loving God, and from being occupied within himself. He readily believed me, as he already had a good share of piety, and of an interior disposition. Our Lord conferred on him many favors and gave him to be one of my true children.

This physician was disposed to lay open his heart to me like a child. Our Lord gave him through me all that was necessary for him; for though disposed to the spiritual life, yet for want of courage and fidelity he had not duly advanced in it.

He had occasion to bring to me some of his companions who were friars, and the Lord took hold of them all. It was at the very same time, that the others of the same order were making all the ravages I have mentioned, and opposing with all their might the Holy Spirit of the Lord. I could not but admire to see how the Lord was pleased to make amends for former damages, by the pouring out His Spirit in abundance on these men, while the others were laboring vehemently against it, doing all they could to destroy its dominion and efficacy in their fellow-mortals. But these good souls instead of being staggered by persecutions grew the stronger by it. The Superior, and the master of the novices of the house in which the doctor was, declared against me, without knowing me; and were grievously chagrined that a

woman, as they said, should be so much flocked to, and so much sought after. Looking at these things as they were in themselves, and not as they were in the Lord, who does whatever pleases Him, they had contempt for the gift which was lodged in so mean an instrument, instead of esteeming the Lord and His grace. Yet this good brother at length got the superior to come to see me, and thank me for the good which he said I had done them. Our Lord so ordered, that he found something in my conversation which reached and took hold of him. At length he was completely brought over. And he it was, who some time after, being visitor, dispersed such a number of those books, bought at their own charge, which the others had tried utterly to destroy. Oh, how wonderful, art Thou, my God! In all Thy ways how wise, in all Thy conduct how full of love! How well Thou canst frustrate all the false wisdom of men, and triumph over their vain pretensions!

Many others were gained to God whom I looked on to be my true children. He gave me three famous friars of an order by which I have been, and still am, very much persecuted. He made me also of service to a great number of nuns, of virtuous young women, and even men of the world; among the rest a young man of quality, who had quitted the order of the Knights of Malta to take that of the priesthood. He was the relation of a bishop near him, who had other designs of preferment for him. He had been much favored of the Lord, and is constant in prayer. I could not describe the great number of souls which were then given me, maids as well as wives, priests and friars. But there were three curates, one canon, and one grand-vicar,

who were more particularly given me. There was one priest very intimately given me, for whom I suffered much, through his not being willing to die to himself, and loving himself too much. With a sad regret I saw him decaying, falling away till he was quite snatched from me. As for the others there are some of them who have continued steadfast and immovable, and some of whom the tempest had shaken a little, but not torn away. Though these start aside, yet they still return; but those who are snatched quite away return no more.

A sister of another monastery had been for eight years in a deep melancholy, unrelieved by anyone. Her director increased it, by practicing remedies contrary to her disorder. I had never been in that monastery, for I did not go into such places unless I was sent for, as I did not think it right to intrude, but left myself to be conducted of Providence. I was very much surprised that at eight o'clock at night one came for me from the prioress. It was in the long days of summer, and being near it, I went. I met with a sister who told me her case. She had gone to such excess, that seeing no remedy for it, she had taken a knife to kill herself, but the knife fell out of her hand; and a person coming to see her had advised her to speak to me. Our Lord made me know at first what the matter was; and that He required her to resign herself to Him, instead of resisting Him as they had made her do for eight years. I was instrumental to draw her into such a resignation, that she entered at once into a peace of paradise; all her pains and troubles were instantly banished and never returned again. She has the greatest capacity of any in the house. She was pres-

ently so changed as to be the admiration of the whole community. Our Lord gave her a very great gift of prayer and His continual presence, with a faculty and readiness for everything. A domestic, also, who had troubled her for twenty-two years past, was delivered from her troubles, and is become a very religious woman. That produced a close tie of friendship between the prioress and me, as the wonderful change and the peace of this sister surprised her, she having so often seen her in her terrible sorrow. I also contracted other such ties in this monastery, where there are souls under the Lord's special regard, whom He drew to Himself by the means He had pleased to make choice of.

I was especially moved to read the Holy Scriptures. When I began I was impelled to write the passage, and instantly its explication was given me, which I also wrote, going on with inconceivable expedition, light being poured in upon me in such a manner, that I found I had in myself latent treasures of wisdom and knowledge which I had not yet known of. Before I wrote I knew not what I was going to write. And after I had written, I remembered nothing of what I had penned; nor could I make use of any part of it for the help of souls, but the Lord gave me, at the time I spoke to them, without any study or reflection of mine, all that was necessary for them. Thus the Lord made me go on with an explanation of the holy internal sense of the Scriptures. I had no other book but the Bible, nor ever made use of any but that, and without even seeking for any. When, in writing on the Old Testament, I made use of passages of the New, to support what I had said, it was without seeking them,

they were given me along with the explication, and in writing on the New Testament, and therein making use of passages of the Old, they were given me in like manner without my seeking anything. I had scarce any time for writing but in the night, allowing only one or two hours to sleep. The Lord made me write with so much purity, that I was obliged to leave off or begin again, as He was pleased to order. He proved me everyway herein. When I wrote by day, often suddenly interrupted, I left the word unfinished, and He afterwards gave me what He pleased. If I gave way to reflection I was punished for it, and could not proceed. And yet sometimes I was not duly attentive to the divine Spirit, thinking I did well to continue when I had time, even without feeling His immediate impulse or enlightening influence, from whence it is easy to see some places clear and consistent, and others which have neither taste nor unction; such is the difference of the Spirit of God from the human and natural spirit, although they are left just as I wrote them, yet I am ready, if ordered, to adjust them according to my present light. Didst Thou not, O my God, turn me a hundred ways, to prove whether I was without any reserve, through every kind of trial, or whether I had not yet some little interest for myself? My soul became hereby readily pliable to every discovery of the divine will, and whatever kind of humiliations attended me to counterbalance my Lord's favors, till everything, high or low, was rendered alike to me.

I still continued writing with a prodigious swiftness; for the hand could scarcely follow fast enough the Spirit which dictated, and through the whole progress of so long a work I never altered my manner

nor made use of any other book than the Bible itself. The transcriber, whatever diligence he used, could not copy in five days what I wrote in one night. Whatever is good in it comes from God only. Whatever is otherwise from myself; I mean from the mixture which I have made, without duly attending to it, of my own impurity with His pure and chaste doctrine. In the day I had scarcely time to eat, by reason of the vast numbers of people which came thronging to me. I wrote the Canticles in a day and a half, and received several visits besides.

Here I may add to what I have said about my writings, that a considerable part of the book of Judges happened by some means to be lost. Being desired to render that book complete, I wrote over again the places lost. Afterwards when the people were about leaving the house, they were found. My former and latter explications, on comparison, were found to be perfectly conformable to each other, which greatly surprised persons of knowledge and merit, who attested the truth of it.

There came to me a Counsellor of the parliament, a servant of God, who finding on my table a tract on prayer, which I had written long before, desired me to lend it. Having read it and liked it much, he lent it to some friends, to whom he thought it might be of service. Everyone wanted copies of it. He resolved therefore to have it printed. The impression was begun, and proper approbations given to it. They requested me to write a preface, which I did, and thus was that little book printed, which has since made so much noise, and been the pretence for the several persecutions. The counsellor was one of my intimate

friends, and a pattern of piety. The book has already passed through five or six editions, and our Lord has given a very great benediction to it. Those good friars took fifteen hundred of them. The devil became so enraged against me on account of the conquest which God made by me, that I was assured he was going to stir up against me a violent persecution. All that gave me no trouble. Let him stir up against me ever so strange persecutions; I know they will all serve to the glory of my God.

XXII. PERILS ON LAND AND SEA.

A POOR girl of very great simplicity, who earned her livelihood by her labor, and was inwardly favored of the Lord, came all sorrowful to me and said, "Oh, my mother, what strange things have I seen!" I asked what they were. "Alas," said she, "I have seen you like a lamb in the midst of a vast troop of furious wolves. I have seen a frightful multitude of people of all ranks and robes, of all ages, sexes and conditions, priests, friars, married men, maids and wives, with pikes, halberts and drawn swords, all eager for your instant destruction. You let them alone without stirring, or being surprised and without offering any way to defend yourself. I looked on all sides to see whether anyone would come to assist and defend you; but I saw not one." Some days after, those, who through envy, were raising private batteries against me, broke forth. Libels began to spread. Envious people wrote against me, without knowing me. They said I was a sorceress, that it was by a magic power I attracted souls, that everything in me was diabolical; that if I did some charities, it was because I coined, and put off false money, with many other gross accusations, equally false, groundless and absurd.

As the tempest increased every day, some of my friends advised me to withdraw, but before I mention my leaving Grenoble, I must say something farther of my state while here.

It seemed to me that all our Lord made me do for souls, would be in union with Jesus Christ. In this

divine union my words had wonderful effect, even the formation of Jesus Christ in the souls of others. I was in no wise able of myself to say the things I said. He who conducted me made me say what He pleased, and as long as He pleased. To some I was not permitted to speak a word; and to others there flowed forth as it were a deluge of grace, and yet this pure love admitted not of any superfluity, or a means of empty amusement. When questions were asked to which an answer were useless, it was not given me. It was the same in regard to such as our Lord was pleased to conduct through death to themselves, and who came to seek for human consolation. I had nothing for them but what was purely necessary, and could proceed no farther. I could at least only speak of indifferent things, in such liberty as God allows, in order to suit everyone, and not to be unsociable or disagreeable to any; but for His own word, He Himself is the dispenser of it. Oh, if preachers were duly careful to speak only in that spirit, what fruits would they bring forth in the lives of their hearers.

All that I experienced was shown me in the Holy Scripture; and I saw with admiration that there passed nothing within my soul which was not in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Scriptures. I must pass over very many things in silence, because they cannot be expressed; and if they were expressed could not be understood or comprehended.

I often felt much for Father La Combe, who was not yet fixed in his state of interior death, but often rose and fell into alternatives. I was made sensible that he was a vessel of election, whom God had chosen to carry His name among the Gentiles, and that he would show

him how much he must suffer for that name. For myself I may say I had a continual dependence on God in every state; my soul was ever willing to obey every motion of His Spirit. I thought there could not be anything in the world which He could require from me, to which I would not give myself up readily and with pleasure. I had no interest at all for myself. When God requires anything from this wretched nothing, I find no resistance left in me to do His will, how rigorous soever it may appear, O my Love, if there is a heart in the world of which Thou art the sole and absolute Master, mine seems to be one of that sort. Thy will, however rigorous, is its life and its pleasure; for it no more subsists but in Thee alone.

To resume the thread of my story, the Bishop of Grenoble's Almoner persuaded me to go for some time to Marseilles, to let the storm pass over, telling me that I would be well received there, it being his native soil, and that many people of merit were there. I wrote to Father La Combe for his consent thereto. He readily gave it. I might have gone to Verceil, for the Bishop of Verceil had written me very obliging letters, earnestly pressed me to come thither, but a human respect, and fear of affording a handle to my enemies, gave me an extreme aversion thereto.

Beside the above, the Marchioness of Prunai, who, since my departure from her, had been more enlightened by her own experience, having met with a part of the things which I thought would befall her, had conceived for me a very strong friendship and intimate union of spirit, in such a manner that no two sisters could be more united than we were. She was extremely desirous that I would return to her, as I had for-

merly promised her. But I could not resolve upon this, lest it should be thought that I had gone after Father La Combe. But, O my God, how was this relic of self-love overturned by the secret ways of Thy adorable Providence! I had yet that exterior support of having in my power to say, that I have never gone after him. There had been no room given to anybody to accuse me of any indirect attachment to him; for when it depended on myself not to continue with him, I did not do it. The Bishop of Geneva had not failed to write against me to Grenoble, as he had done to other places. His nephew had gone from house to house to cry me down. All this was indifferent to me, and I did not cease to do to his diocese all the good in my power. I even wrote to him in a respectful manner; but his heart was too much closed to yield to anything.

Before I left Grenoble, that good girl I have spoken of came to me weeping, and told me I was going, and that I hid it from her, because I would have nobody know it, but that the devil would be before me in all the places I should go to; that I was going to a town, where I would scarce be arrived, before he would stir up the whole town against me, and would do me all the harm he possibly could. What had obliged me to conceal my departure, was my fear of being loaded with visits and testimonies of friendship from a number of good persons, who had a very great affection for me.

I embarked then upon the Rhone, with my chamber-maid and a young woman of Grenoble, whom the Lord had highly favored through my means. The Bishop of Grenoble's Almoner also accompanied me,

with another very worthy ecclesiastic. We met with many alarming accidents and wonderful preservations; but those instant dangers, which affrighted others, far from alarming me, augmented my peace. The Bishop of Grenoble's Almoner was much astonished. He was in a desperate fright, when the boat struck against a rock, and opened at the stroke; and in his emotion, looking attentively at me, he observed that I did not change my countenance, or move my eye-brows, retaining all my tranquillity. I did not so much as feel the first emotions of surprise, which are natural to everybody on those occasions, as they depend not on ourselves. What caused my peace in such dangers as terrify others, was my resignation to God, and because death is much more agreeable to me than life, if such were His will, to which I desire to be ever patiently submissive.

In the short time of my stay at Marseilles, I was instrumental in supporting some good souls, and among others an ecclesiastic, who till then was unacquainted with me. After having finished his thanksgiving in the Church, seeing me go out, he followed me into the house in which I lodged. Then he told me the Lord had inspired him to address me, and to open his inward state to me. He did it with as much simplicity as humility, and the Lord gave him through me all that was necessary for him, from whence he was filled with joy, and thankful acknowledgments to God. Although there were many spiritual persons there, and even of his intimate friends, he never had been moved to open his mind to any of them. He was a servant of God, and favored by Him with a singular gift of prayer. During the eight days I was at Marseilles, I saw many

good souls there; for, through all my persecutions, our Lord always struck some good stroke of His own right hand, and that good ecclesiastic was delivered from an anxiety of mind, which had afflicted him for some years past.

After I had left Grenoble, those who hated me without knowing me, spread libels against me. A woman for whom I had a great love, and whom I had even extricated from an engagement which she had continued in for several years, and contributed to her discarding the person to whom she had been attached, suffered her mind to resume its fondness for that pernicious engagement, and became violently enraged against me for having broken it off. Although I had freely been at some expense to procure her freedom from it, still she went to the Bishop of Grenoble to tell him that I had counselled her to do an act of injustice. She then went from confessor to confessor, repeating the same story, to animate them against me. As they were too susceptible of the prejudices infused, the fire was soon kindled in all quarters. There were none but those who knew me, and who loved God, that took my part. They became more closely united to me in sympathy through my persecution. It would have been very easy for me to destroy the calumny, as well with the Bishop of Grenoble as in town. I needed only to tell who the person was, and show the fruits of her disorder, but as I could not declare the guilty person, without making known at the same time the other who had been her accomplice, who now, being touched of God, was very penitent, I thought it best for me to suffer and be silent. There was a very pious man who knew all her history, from the beginning to the end of

it, who wrote to her, that if she did not retract her lies, he would publish the account of her wicked life, to make known both her gross iniquity and my innocence. She continued some time in her malice, writing that I was a sorceress, with many other falsehoods. Nevertheless, some time after, she had such a cruel remorse of conscience on this account, that she wrote both to the bishop and others to retract what she had said. She induced one to write to me, to inform me that she was in despair for what she had done; that God had punished her in such a manner, that she had never felt anything like it. After these recantations the outcry abated, the bishop was disabused, and since that time he has testified a great regard for me. This creature had, among other things, said that I caused myself to be worshipped; and other unparalleled follies. As she had formerly been insane, I think in what she did to me there was more of weakness than of malice.

From Marseilles I knew not how or whither I should turn next. I saw no likelihood either of staying or of returning to Grenoble, where I had left my daughter in a convent. On the other side, Father La Combe had written to me that he did not think I ought to go to Paris. I even felt a strong repugnance to the idea of going thither, which made me think it was not yet the time for it. One morning I felt myself inwardly pressed to go somewhere. I took a litter to go to see the Marchioness of Prunai, which was, I thought, the most honorable refuge for me in my present condition. I thought I might pass through Nice on my way to her habitation, as some had assured me I might. But when I arrived at Nice I was greatly surprised to learn that the litter could not pass the mountain to go

thither. I knew not what to do, nor which way to turn, being here alone, forsaken of everybody, and not knowing what God required of me. My confusion and crosses seemed daily to increase. I saw myself, without refuge or retreat, wandering as a vagabond. All the tradesmen whom I saw in their shops appeared to me happy in having a dwelling place of their own to retire to. Nothing in the world seemed harder than this wandering life to me, who naturally loved propriety and decorum. As I was in this uncertainty, not knowing what course to take, one came to tell me that next day a sloop would set off, which used to go in one day to Genoa, and that if I chose it, they would land me at Savona, from whence I might get myself carried to the Marchioness of Prunai's house. To that I consented, as I could not be supplied with any other way of getting thither.

I had some joy at embarking on the sea. I said in myself, "If I am the dregs of the earth, the scorn and offscouring of nature, I am now going to embark on the element which above all others is the most treacherous; If it be the Lord's pleasure to plunge me in the waves, it shall be mine to perish in them." There came a tempest in a place pretty dangerous for a small boat, and the mariners were some of the wickedest. The irritation of the waves gave a satisfaction to my mind. I pleased myself in thinking that these mutinous billows might probably supply me with a grave. Perhaps I carried the point too far in the pleasure I took, at seeing myself beaten and bandied by the swelling waters. Those who were with me, took notice of my intrepidity, but knew not the cause of it. I asked of Thee, my Love, some little hole of a rock to be placed

in, here to live separate from all creatures. I figured to myself, that some uninhabited island would have terminated all my disgraces, and put me in a condition of infallibly doing Thy will. But, O my divine Love, Thou designedst me a prison far different from that of the rock, and quite another banishment than that of the uninhabited island. Thou reservest me to be battered by the billows, more irritated than those of the sea. Calumnies proved to be the unrelenting waves, to which I was to be exposed, in order to be lashed and tossed by them without mercy. By the tempest swelling against us we were kept back, and instead of a short day's passage to Genoa, we were eleven days in making it. How peaceable was my heart in so violent an agitation! The swelling of the sea, and the fury of its waves were as I thought, only a figure of that swelling fury which all the creatures had against me. I said to Thee, O my Love, "Arm them all to avenge Thyself on me for my infidelities, and for those of all the creatures." I saw Thy right hand armed against me; and I loved more than my life the strokes it gave me. We could not land at Savona. We were obliged to go on to Genoa. We arrived there in the beginning of the week before Easter.

While I was there I was obliged to bear the insults of the inhabitants, caused by the resentment they had against the French, for the havoc of a late bombardment. The Doge was newly gone out of the city, and had carried off with him all the litters. Wherefore I could not get one, and was obliged to stay several days at excessive expenses, for the people there demanded of us exorbitant sums, and as much for every single person as they would have asked for a company at the

best eating-house in Paris. I had little money left, but my store in Providence could not be exhausted. I begged with the greatest earnestness for a litter at any price, to pass the feast of Easter at the Marchioness of Prunai's house. It was then within three days of Easter, and I could scarce any way get myself to be understood. By the force of entreaty, they brought me at length a sorry litter with lame mules, and told me that they would take me readily to Verceil, which was only two days' journey, but demanded an enormous sum for it; they would not engage to take me to the Marchioness of Prunai's house, as they knew not where her estate lay. This was to me a strong mortification, for I was very unwilling to go to Verceil; nevertheless the proximity of Easter, and want of money, in a country where they used every kind of extortion and tyranny, left me no choice, I was under an absolute necessity of submitting to be thus conveyed to Verceil.

Thus Providence led me whither I would not. Our muleteer was one of the most brutal men to be met with, and for an increase of my affliction, I had sent away to Verceil the ecclesiastic who accompanied us, to prevent their surprise at seeing me there, after I had protested against going thither. That ecclesiastic was very coarsely treated on the road, through the hatred they bore to the French; and they made him go part of the way on foot, so that, though he set off the day before me, he arrived there only a few hours sooner than I did. And as for the fellow who conducted us, seeing he had only women under his care, he used us in the most insolent and boorish manner.

We passed through a wood infested with robbers. The muleteer was afraid, and told us that if we met

any of them on the road we should be murdered, for they spared nobody. Scarcely had he uttered these words, when there appeared four men well armed. They immediately stopped the litter. The man was exceedingly frightened. I made a light bow of my head with a smile, for I had no fear, and was so entirely resigned to Providence that it was all one to die this way or any other; in the sea, or by the hands of robbers. But, O my God, how wonderful at this, as at many other times, was Thy protection over me! How many perils have I passed through upon mountains, and on the very edges of tremendous steep rocks! How often hast Thou checked the foot of the mule already slipping over the precipice! How often have I been like to be thrown headlong from those frightful heights, into hideous torrents which, though rolling in chasms far below our shrinking sight, forced us to hear them by their horrible noise. When the dangers were most manifest, then was my faith the strongest, as well as my intrepidity, being unable to wish for anything else than what should fall out, whether to be dashed against the rocks, drowned, or killed in any other way; everything in the will of God being equal to me. The people who used to convey or attend me said they had never seen a courage like mine for the most alarming dangers, and the time when death appeared the most certain, were those which seemed to please me the most. Was it not Thy pleasure, O my God, which guarded me in every imminent danger, and held me back from rolling down the precipice, on the instant of sliding over its dizzy brow? The more easy I was about life, which I bore only because Thou wast pleased to bear it, the more care Thou tookest to preserve it.

There seemed a mutual emulation between us, on my part to resign it, and on Thine to maintain it. The robbers then advanced to the litter, but I had no sooner saluted them than God made them change their design. Having pushed off one another, as it were, to hinder each of them from doing any harm, they respectfully saluted me, and, with an air of compassion unusual to such sort of persons, retired. I was immediately struck to the heart, O my Love, with a full and clear conviction that it was a stroke of Thy right hand, who had other designs over me than to suffer me to die by the hand of robbers. It is Thy sovereign power which takes away their all from Thy devoted lovers; and destroys their lives with all that is of self without pity or sparing anything.

The muleteer, seeing me attended only with two young women, thought he might treat me as he would, perhaps expecting to draw money from me. Instead of taking me to the inn, he brought me to a mill, in which there was not one woman. There was but one single chamber with several beds in it, in which the millers and muleteers lay together. In that chamber they forced me to stay. I told the muleteer I was not a person to lie in such a place as he had brought me to and wanted to oblige him to take me to the inn, but nothing of it would he do. I was constrained to go out on foot at ten o'clock at night, carrying a part of my clothes, and to go a good way more than a quarter of a league in the dark, in a strange place, not knowing the way, crossing one end of the wood infested with robbers, to endeavor to get to the inn. That fellow, seeing us go off from the place where he had wanted to make me lodge, with a bad design, hooted

after us in a very abusive manner. I bore my humiliation cheerfully, but not without feeling it. But the will of God and my resignation to it rendered everything easy to me. We were well received at the inn, and the good people there did the best in their power for our recovery from the fatigue we had undergone. They assured us the place we had left was very dangerous. Next morning we were obliged to return on foot to the litter, for that man would not bring it to us. On the contrary he fell on us with a shower of fresh insults. And to consummate his base behavior, he sold me to the post, whereby I was forced to go the rest of the way in a post-chaise instead of a litter.

In this equipage I arrived at Alexandria, a frontier town, subject to Spain, on the side of the Milanese. Our driver took us, according to their custom, to the post-house. I was exceedingly astonished when I saw the landlady coming out not to receive him, but to oppose his entrance. She had heard there were women in the chaise, and taking us for a different sort of women from what we were, she protested against our coming in. On the other hand, the driver was determined to force his entrance in spite of her. Their dispute rose to such a height, that a great number of the officers of the garrison, with a vast mob, gathered at the noise, who were surprised at the odd humor of the woman in refusing to lodge us. With earnestness I entreated the post to take us to some other house, but he would not, so obstinately was he bent on carrying his point. He assured the landlady we were persons of honor and piety, too, the marks whereof he had seen. At last, by force of pressing entreaties, he obliged her to come to see us. As soon as she had looked at

us, she acted as the robbers had done; she relented at once and admitted us.

No sooner had I alighted from the chaise than she said to us, "Go shut yourselves up in that chamber hard by, and do not stir, that my son may not know you are here; for as soon as he knows it he will kill you." She said it with so much force, as did also the servant maid, that, if death had not so many charms for me, I should have been ready to die with fear. The two poor girls with me were under frightful apprehensions. When any stirred or came to open the door, they thought they were coming to kill them. In short, they continued in a dreadful suspense between life and death till next day, when we learned that the young man had sworn to kill any woman who lodged at the house, because a few days before, an event had fallen out, which had like to have ruined him; a woman of a bad life, having there privately murdered a man in some esteem, that had cost the house a heavy fine, and he was afraid of any more such persons coming, and not without reason.

XXIII. BURSTING OF THE STORM.

AFTER such adventures and others, I arrived at Verceil. I went to the inn, where I was very badly received. I sent for Father La Combe, who I thought had been already apprised of my coming thither by the ecclesiastic whom I had sent before, and who would be of so much service to me. This ecclesiastic was only a little while arrived. How much better on the road should I have fared if I had had him with me! For in that country they look upon ladies, accompanied with ecclesiastics, with veneration, as persons of honor and piety. Father La Combe came in a strange fret at my arrival, God so permitting it. He could not hide it from me. He said that every one would think I was come after him, and that would injure his reputation, which I found in that country was very high. I had no less pain to go thither. It was necessity only which had obliged me to submit to such a disagreeable task. The father received me with coolness, and in such a manner as let me sufficiently see his sentiments, and indeed redoubled my pain. I asked him if he required me to return, adding that if he did, I would go off that moment, however oppressed and spent, both with fatigues and fastings. He replied he did not know how the Bishop of Verceil would take my arrival, after he had given over all his expectations of it, and after I had so long and so obstinately refused the obliging offers he had made me, since which he no longer expressed any desire to see me.

It seemed to me then as if I were rejected from the face of the earth, without being able to find any refuge

in it, and as if all creatures were combined to crush me. I passed that night without sleep, not knowing what course I should be obliged to take, being persecuted by my enemies, and a subject of disgrace to my friends.

When it was known at the inn, that I was one of Father La Combe's acquaintances, they treated me with the greatest respect and kindness, for they esteemed him as a saint. The father knew not how to tell the bishop of my arrival, and I felt his pain more than my own. As soon as that Prelate knew that I was arrived, he sent his niece, who took me in her coach, and carried me to her house; but those things were only done out of ceremony, and the bishop, not having seen me yet, knew not what to think of a journey so very unexpected, after I had thrice refused, though he sent expresses on purpose to bring me to him. He was out of humor with me. Nevertheless, as he was informed that my design was not to stay at Verceil, but to go to the Marchioness of Prunai's house, he gave orders for me to be well treated. He could not see me till Easter Sunday was over, for he officiated all the eve and all that day. After it was all over he came in a chaise to his niece's house to see me, and though he understood French hardly any better than I did Italian, he was very well satisfied with the conversation he had with me. He appeared to have as much favor for me as he had of indifference before. The second visit gained him entirely.

He conceived as strong a friendship for me as if I had been his sister, and his only pleasure, amidst his continual occupations, was to come and pass half an hour with me in speaking of God. He now seemed to think alone of finding out means to detain me in his

diocese. He would not hear of my going to see the Marchioness of Prunai. On the contrary, he wrote to her to come and settle with me in his diocese. He sent Father La Combe to her, on purpose to exhort her to come, assuring her that he would unite us all to make a congregation. The Marchioness entered into it readily, and so did her daughter. They would have come with Father La Combe but that the Marchioness was sick. The bishop was active and earnest in collecting and establishing a society for us, and found several pious persons and some very devout young ladies, who were all ready to come to join us. But it was not the will of God to fix me thus, but to crucify me yet more.

The fatigue of travelling made me fall sick. The girl also whom I brought from Grenoble fell sick. Her relations, who were a covetous set of people, took it in their heads that, if she should die in my service, I would get her to make a will in my favor. They were much mistaken for, far from desiring the property of others, I had given up my own. Her brother, full of this apprehension, came with all speed, and the first thing he spoke to her about, although he found her recovered, was to make a will. That made a great noise in Verceil, for he wanted her to return with him, but she refused. I advised her to do what her brother desired her. He contracted a friendship with some of the officers of the garrison, whom he told that I wanted to use his sister badly. He pretended she was a person of quality, while she was only of a low birth. They gave out what I was still afraid of, viz., that I was come after Father La Combe. They even persecuted him on my account. The bishop was much troubled at it, but could not remedy it. The friendship he had

for me increased every day, because as he loved God, so he did all those whom he thought desired to love Him. As he saw me so much indisposed, he came to see me with assiduity and charity, when at leisure from his occupations. He made me little presents of fruit and other things of that nature. His relations were jealous of it, saying I was come to ruin him, and to carry off his money into France, which was a thing the farthest from my thoughts. The bishop patiently bore these affronts, hoping still to keep me in his diocese, when I should be recovered. In that place everything was mixed with crosses, but souls were gained to God. The Rector of the Jesuits took his time, when Father La Combe was gone out of town, to prove me, as he said. He had studied theological matters, which I did not understand. He propounded to me several questions. The Lord inspired me to answer him in such a manner that he went away both surprised and satisfied. He could not forbear speaking of it.

The Barnabites of Paris, or rather Father de la Mothe, took it in head to try to draw Father La Combe from thence to go and preach at Paris. He wrote to the Father-general about it, saying they had no one at Paris to support their house, that their Church was deserted; that it was a pity to have such a man as Father La Combe in a place where he only corrupted his language; that it was necessary to make his fine talents appear at Paris, where he himself could not bear the burden of the house, if they did not give him an assistant of such qualifications and experience. Who would not have thought all this to be sincere? The Bishop of Verceil, who was very much a friend to the Father-general, having advice thereof, opposed it,

and answered him that it would be doing him the greatest injury to take from him a man who was so exceedingly useful to him, and at a time when he had the greatest need of him.

The Father-general of the Barnabites would not agree to the request of Father de la Mothe, for fear of offending the Bishop of Verceil. As to me, my indisposition increased. The air, which is there extremely bad, caused me a continual cough, with frequent returns of fever. I grew so much worse that it was thought I could not get over it. The Bishop was much afflicted to see it, but having consulted the physicians, they assured him that the air of the place was mortal to me, whereupon he said to me with many tears, "I had rather have you live, though distant from me, than see you die here." He gave up his design of establishing his congregation, for my friend would not settle there without me, and the Genoese lady could not easily leave her own city, where she was respected. When the Bishop had first proposed this affair, however agreeable it appeared, I had a presentiment that it would not succeed, and that it was not what our Lord required of me, though I submissively yielded to the good proposal, were it only to acknowledge the many special favors of this prelate, being assured that the Lord would know well how to prevent what He should now require of me.

Here it was that I wrote upon the Apocalypse, and that there was given me a greater certainty of all the persecutions of the most faithful servants of God, according to what I wrote thereof, in respect to future times.

The Bishop of Vercueil's friend, the Father-general of the Barnabites, departed this life. As soon as he was dead, Father La Mothe wrote to the Vicar-general who now held his place till another should be elected, renewing his request to have Father La Combe as an assistant. The father, hearing that I was obliged on account of my indisposition to return into France, sent an order to Father La Combe to return to Paris, and to accompany me in my journey thither, as his doing that would exempt their house at Paris, already poor, from the expenses of so long a journey. On the receipt hereof, Father La Combe, who did not penetrate the poison under this fair outside, consented thereto, knowing it was my custom to have some ecclesiastic with me in travelling. Father La Combe went off twelve days before me, in order to transact some business, and to wait for me at the passage over the mountains, as the place where I had most need of an escort. I set off in Lent, the weather then being very fine. It was a sorrowful parting to the Bishop. I pitied him; he was so much affected at losing both Father La Combe and me. He caused me to be attended, at his own expense, as far as Turin, giving me a gentleman and one of his ecclesiastics to accompany me.

As soon as the resolution was taken that Father La Combe should accompany me, Father La Mothe reported everywhere that he had been obliged to do it, to make him return into France. He expatiated on the attachment I had for Father La Combe, pretending to pity me for it. Upon this everyone said that I ought to put myself under the direction of Father La Mothe. In the meantime he deceitfully palliated the malignity of his heart, writing letters full of esteem to

Father La Combe, and some to me of tenderness, desiring him to bring his dear sister, and to serve her in her infirmities, and in the hardships of so long a journey; that he should be sensibly obliged to him for his care, with many other things of like nature.

I could not resolve to depart without going to see my good friend, the Marchioness of Prunai, notwithstanding the difficulty of the roads. I caused myself to be carried thither, it being scarcely possible to go otherwise on account of the mountains. She was extremely joyful at seeing me arrive, and acknowledged that all I had told her had come to pass; and a good ecclesiastic, who lives with her, told me the same.

As soon as it was determined that I should come into France, the Lord made known to me that it was to have greater crosses than I ever yet had. Father La Combe had the like sense. He encouraged me to resign myself to the divine will, and to become a victim offered freely to new sacrifices. He also wrote to me, "Will it not be a thing very glorious to God, if He should make us serve in that great city, for a spectacle to angels and to men?" I set off then with a spirit of sacrifice to offer myself up to new kinds of punishments, if pleasing to my dear Lord. All along the road something within me repeated the very words of St. Paul. "I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things which should befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy." (Acts xx. 22, 23, 24. I could not forbear to testify it to my most intimate friends, who tried hard to prevail on me

to stop, and not to proceed any further. They were all willing to contribute a share of what they had, for my settlement there, and to prevent my coming to Paris. But I found it my duty to hold on my way, and to sacrifice myself for Him who first sacrificed Himself for me.

At Chamberry we saw Father La Mothe, who was going to the election of a Father-general. Though he affected an appearance of friendship, it was not difficult to discover that his thoughts were different from his words, and that he had conceived dark designs against us. I speak not of his intentions, but to obey the command given me to omit nothing. I shall necessarily be obliged often to speak of him. I could wish with all my heart it were in my power to suppress what I have to say of him. If what he has done respected only myself, I would willingly bury all; but I think I owe it to truth, and to the innocence of Father La Combe, so cruelly oppressed, and grievously crushed so long, by wicked calumnies, by an imprisonment of several years, which in all probability will last as long as life. Though Father La Mothe may appear heavily charged in what I say of him, I protest solemnly, and in the presence of God, that I pass over in silence many of his bad actions.

Scarcely had I arrived in Paris when I readily discovered the black designs entertained against both Father La Combe and me. Father La Mothe, who conducted the whole tragedy, artfully dissembled, according to his custom; flattering me to my face, while he was aiming the keenest wounds behind my back. He and his confederates wanted, for their own interest, to persuade me to go to Montargis (my native

place), hoping, thereby, to get the guardianship of my children, and to dispose of both my person and effects. All the persecutions from Father La Mothe and my family have been attended on their part with views of interest; and those against Father La Combe have sprung from rage and revenge, because he, as my director, did not oblige me to do what they wanted, as well as out of jealousy. They threatened to deprive me of what little I had reserved to myself. To this I only replied that I would not go to law, that if they were resolved to take from me the little I had left (little indeed in comparison of what I had given up) I would surrender it entirely to them; being quite free and willing not only to be poor, but to be even in the very extremity of want in imitation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I arrived at Paris on Magdalene's eve, 1686, exactly five years after my departure from that city. After Father La Combe arrived, he was soon followed and much applauded. I perceived some jealousy in Father La Mothe hereupon, but did not think that matters would be carried so far as they have been. The greater part of the Barnabites of Paris, and its neighborhood joined against Father La Combe, induced thereto from several causes that particularly related to their order. But all their calumnies and evil attempts were overthrown by the unaffected piety he manifested, and the good which multitudes reaped from his labors.

A very wicked man who was employed for that purpose, wrote defamatory libels, declaring that the propositions of Molinos, which had been current for two years past in France, were the sentiments of Father

La Combe. These libels were spread about in the community. Father La Mothe and the provincial, acting as persons well affected to the Church, carried them to the official, or judge of the ecclesiastical Court, who joined in the dark design. They showed them to the Archbishop saying it was out of their zeal and that they were exceedingly sorry that one of their fraternity was an heretic, and as such execrable. They also brought me in, but more moderately, saying Father La Combe was almost always at my house, which was very false, for I could scarcely see him at all except at the confessional, and then for a very short time. Several other things equally false they liberally gave out concerning both of us.

They bethought themselves of one thing further likely to favor their scheme. They knew I had been at Marseilles, and thought they had a good foundation for a fresh calumny. They counterfeited a letter from a person at Marseilles (I heard it was from the Bishop) addressed to the Archbishop of Paris, or to his official, in which they wrote the most abominable scandal. Father La Mothe came to try to draw me into his snare, and to make me say, in the presence of the people whom he had brought, that I had been at Marseilles with Father La Combe. "There are," said he, "shocking accounts against you, sent by the Bishop of Marseilles. You have there fallen into great scandal with Father La Combe. There are good witnesses of it." I replied with a smile, "The calumny is well devised; but it would have been proper to know first whether Father La Combe had been at Marseilles, for I do not believe he was ever there in his life. While I was there, Father La Combe was laboring at Verceil." He

was confounded and went off, saying, "There are witnesses of its being true." He went immediately to ask Father La Combe if he had not been at Marseilles. He assured him he had never been there. They were struck with disappointment. They then gave out that it was not Marseilles but Seisel. Now this Seisel is a place I have never been at, and there is no bishop there.

Every imaginable device was used to terrify me by threats, forged letters, and by memorials drawn up against me, accusing me of teaching erroneous doctrines, and of living a bad life and urging me to flee the country to escape the consequences of exposure; but failing in all these, at length La Mothe took off the mask and said to me in the church, before La Combe, "It is now, my sister that you must think of fleeing, you are charged with crimes of a deep dye." I was not moved in the least, but replied with my usual tranquillity. "If I am guilty of such crimes, I cannot be too severely punished; whereupon I will not flee or go out of the way. I have made an open profession of dedicating myself to God entirely, and if I have done things offensive to Him, whom I would wish both to love, and to cause to be loved by the whole world, even at the expense of my life, I ought by my punishment to be made an example to the whole world; but if I am innocent, for me to flee is not the way for my innocence to be believed."

Similar attempts were made to ruin Father La Combe. He was grossly misrepresented to the king, and an order presented for his arrest and imprisonment in the Bastile.

Although on his trial he appeared quite innocent, and they could not find anything whereupon to ground

a condemnation, yet they made the king believe he was a dangerous man in the article of religion. He was then shut up in a certain fortress of the Bastile for life; but as his enemies heard that the captain in that fortress esteemed him, and treated him kindly, they had him removed into a much worse place. God, who beholds everything, will reward every man according to his works. I know by an interior communication that he is very well content, and fully resigned to God.

La Mothe now endeavored more than ever to induce me to flee, assuring me that if I went to Montargis, I should be out of all trouble, but that if I did not, I should pay for it. He insisted on my taking himself for my director, which I could not agree to. He decried me wherever he went, and wrote to his brethren to do the same. They sent me very abusive letters, assuring me that if I did not put myself under his direction, I was undone. I have the letters by me still. One father desired me in this case to make a virtue of necessity. Nay, some advised me to pretend to put myself under his direction, and to deceive him, whereas I abhorred the thought of deceit. I bore everything with the greatest tranquillity, without taking any care to justify or defend myself, leaving it entirely to God to order as He should please about me. Herein He was graciously pleased to increase the peace of my soul, while everyone seemed to cry against me, and to look on me as an infamous creature, except those few who know me well by a near union of spirit. At Church I heard people behind me exclaim against me, and even some priests say it was necessary to cast me out of the Church. I left myself to God without reserve,

being quite ready to endure the most rigorous pains and tortures, if such were His will.

I never made any solicitation, either for Father La Combe or myself, though charged with that among other things. Willing to owe everything to God, I have no dependence on any creature. I would not have it said that any but God had made Abraham rich, Gen. xiv. 23. To lose all for Him is my best gain; and to gain all without Him would be my worst loss. Although at this time so general an outcry was raised against me, God did not fail to make use of me to gain many souls to Himself. The more persecution raged against me the more children were given me, on whom the Lord conferred great favors through His handmaid.

One must not judge of the servants of God by what their enemies say of them, nor by their being oppressed under calumnies without any resource. Jesus Christ expired under pangs. God uses the like conduct toward His dearest servants, to render them conformable to His Son, in whom He is always well pleased. But few place that conformity where it ought to be. It is not in voluntary pains or austerities, but in those which are suffered in a submission ever equal to the will of God, in a renunciation of our whole selves, to the end that God may be our all in all, conducting us according to His views, and not our own, which are generally opposite to his. In fine, all perfection consists in this entire conformity with Jesus Christ, not in things which men esteem. It will only be seen in eternity who are the true friends of God. Nothing pleases Him but Jesus Christ, and that which bears His mark or character.

They were continually pressing me to flee, though the Archbishop had spoken to me, and bidden me not to leave Paris. But they wanted to give the appearance of criminality both to me and to Father La Combe by my flight. They knew not how to make me fall into the hands of the official. If they accused me of crimes, it must be before other judges, and any other judge would have seen my innocence; and the false witnesses would have run the risk of suffering for it. They continually spread stories of horrible crimes; but the official assured me that he had heard no mention of any, for he was afraid lest I should retire out of his jurisdiction. They then made the king believe that I was an heretic; that I carried on a literary correspondence with Molinos (I, who never knew there was a Molinos in the world, till the Gazette had told me of it) that I had written a dangerous book; and that on those accounts it would be necessary to issue an order to put me in a convent, that they might examine me; that as I was a dangerous person it would be proper for me to be locked up, to be allowed no commerce with any one; since I continually held assemblies, which was very false. To support this calumny my hand-writing was counterfeited, and a letter was forged as from me, importing that I had great designs, but feared that they would prove abortive, through the imprisonment of Father La Combe, for which reason I had left off holding assemblies at my house, being too closely watched, but that I would hold them at the houses of other persons. This forged letter they showed the king, and upon it an order was given for my imprisonment.

This order would have been put in execution two months sooner than it was, had I not fallen very sick. I had inconceivable pains and a fever. Some thought that I had a gathering in my head. The pain I suffered for five weeks made me delirious. I had also a pain in my breast and a violent cough. Twice I received the holy sacrament, as I was thought to be expiring. One of my friends had acquainted Father La Mothe (not knowing him to have had any hand in F. La Combe's imprisonment) that she had sent me a certificate from the inquisition in Father La Combe's favor, having heard that his own was lost. This answered a very good purpose, for they had made the king believe that he had run away from the inquisition; but this showed the **contrary**.

Father La Mothe then came to me, when I was in excessive pain, counterfeiting all the affection and tenderness in his power, and telling me that the affair of Father La Combe was going on very well, that he was just ready to come out of prison with honor, that he was very glad of it; that if he had only this certificate, he would soon be delivered. "Give me it then," said he, "and he will be immediately released." At first I made a difficulty of doing it. "What!" said he, "will you be the cause of ruining poor Father La Combe, having it in your power to save him, and cause us that affliction, for want of what you have in your hands." I yielded, ordering it to be brought and given him. But he suppressed it, and gave out that it was lost. It never could be got from him again. The Ambassador from the Court of Turin sent a messenger to me for this certificate, designing the proper use of it to serve Father La Combe. I referred him to Father La Mothe.

The messenger went to him and asked him for it. He denied I had given it to him, saying, "Her brain is disordered which makes her imagine it." The man came back to me and told me his answer. The persons in my chamber bore witness that I had given it to him. Yet all signified nothing; it could not be got out of his hands, but on the contrary, he insulted me, and caused others also to do it, though I was so weak that I seemed to be at the very gates of death.

They told me they only waited for my recovery to cast me into prison. He made his brethren believe that I had treated him ill. They wrote to me that it was for my crimes that I suffered, and that I should put myself under the conduct of Father La Mothe, otherwise I should repent it; that I was mad and ought to be bound and was a monster of pride, since I would not suffer myself to be conducted by Father La Mothe. Such was my daily feast in the extremity of my pain; deserted of my friends, and oppressed by my enemies; the former being ashamed of me, through the calumnies which were forged and industriously spread; the latter let loose to persecute me; under all which I kept silence, leaving myself to the Lord.

There was not any kind of infamy, error, sorcery, or sacrilege, of which they did not accuse me. As soon as I was able to be carried to the Church in a chair, I was told I must speak to the prebend. (It was a snare concerted between Father La Mothe and the Canon at whose house I lodged.) I spoke to him with much simplicity and he approved of what I said. Yet, two days after they gave out that I had uttered many things, and accused many persons; and from hence they procured the banishment of sundry persons with

whom they were displeased, persons whom I had never seen or heard of. They were men of honor. One of them was banished, because he said my little book was a good one. It is remarkable that they say nothing to those who prefixed their approbations, and that, far from condemning the book, it has been reprinted since I have been in prison, and advertisements of it have been posted up at the Archbishop's palace, and all over Paris. In regard to others, when they find faults in their books, they condemn the books and leave the person at liberty; but as for me, my book is approved, sold and spread, while I am kept a prisoner for it.

The same day that those gentlemen were banished, I received a *lettre de cachet*, or sealed order to repair to the Convent of the Visitation of St. Mary's, in a suburb of St. Antoine. I received it with a tranquillity which surprised the bearer exceedingly. He could not forbear expressing it, having seen the extreme sorrow of those who were only banished. He was so touched with it as to shed tears. And although his order was to carry me off directly, he was not afraid to trust me, but left me all the day, desiring me to repair to St. Mary's in the evening. On that day many of my friends came to see me, and found me very cheerful, which surprised such of them as knew my case. I could not stand, I was so weak, having the fever every night, it being only a fortnight since I was thought to be expiring. I imagined they would leave me my daughter and maid to serve me. My daughter was most at my heart, having cost me much care in her education. I had endeavored, with divine assistance, to root out her faults, and to dispose her to have no will of her own, which is the best disposition for a child. She was not yet twelve years of age.

XXIV. BONDS AND IMPRISONMENT.

ON the twenty-ninth of January, 1688, I went to St. Mary's. There they let me know I must neither have my daughter nor a maid to serve me, but must be locked up alone in a chamber. Indeed it touched me to my heart when my daughter was taken from me. They would neither allow her to be in that house, nor anybody to bring me any news of her. I was then obliged to sacrifice my daughter as if she were mine no longer. The people of the house were prepossessed with so frightful an account of me, that they looked at me with horror. For my jailer they singled out a nun, who, they thought, would treat me with the greatest rigor, and they were not mistaken therein.

They asked me who was now my confessor. I named him, but he was seized with such a fright that he denied it; though I could have procured many persons who had seen me at his confessional. So then they said they had caught me in a lie and I was not to be trusted. My acquaintance then said they knew me not, and others were at liberty to invent stories, and say all manner of evil of me. The woman, appointed for my keeper, was gained over by my enemies, to torment me as an heretic, an enthusiast, one crackbrained and an hypocrite. God alone knows what she made me suffer. As she thought to surprise me in my words, I watched them, to be more exact in them, but I fared the worse for it. I made more slips and gave her more advantages over me thereby, beside the trouble in my own mind for it. I then left myself

as I was, and resolved, though this woman would bring me to the scaffold, by the false reports she was continually carrying to the prioress, that I would simply resign myself to my lot; so I re-entered into my former condition.

Monsieur Charon the Official, and a Doctor of Sorbonne, came four times to examine me. Our Lord did me the favor which he promised to his apostles, viz., to make me answer much better than if I had studied. Luke xxi. 14, 15. They said to me, if I had explained myself, as I now did, in the book entitled, "Short and Easy Method of Prayer," I would not now have been here. My last examination was about a counterfeit letter, which they read and let me see. I told them the hand was no way like mine. They said it was only a copy; they had the original at home. I desired a sight of it, but could not obtain it. I told them I never wrote it, nor did I know the person to whom it was addressed; but they took scarcely any notice of what I said.

After this letter was read, the official turned to me and said, "You see, madam, that after such a letter there was foundation enough for imprisoning you." "Yes, sir," said I, "if I had written it." I showed them its falsehoods and inconsistencies, but all in vain. I was left two months, and treated worse and worse, before either of them came again to see me. Till then I had always some hope that, seeing my innocence, they would do me justice; but now I saw that they did not want to find me innocent, but to make me appear guilty.

The official alone came the next time, and told me, I must speak no more of the false letter; that it was

nothing. "How nothing," said I, "to counterfeit a person's writing, and to make one appear an enemy to the State!" He replied, "We will seek out the author of it." "The author," said I, "is no other than the Scrivener Gautier." He then demanded where the papers were which I wrote on the Scriptures. I told him I would give them up when I should be out of prison; but was not willing to tell with whom I had lodged them.

About three or four days before Easter he came again, with the doctor, and a verbal process was drawn up against me for rebelling, in not giving up my papers. Copies of my writings were then put into their hands, for I had not the originals. I know not where those who got them from me have put them, but I am firm in the faith that they will all be preserved, in spite of the storm. The prioress asked the official how my affair went. He said, very well, and that I should soon be discharged; this became the common talk, but I had a presentiment of the contrary.

I had an inexpressible satisfaction and joy in suffering, and being a prisoner. The confinement of my body made me better relish the freedom of my mind. St. Joseph's day was to me a memorable day, for then my state had more of heaven than of earth beyond what any expression can reach. This was followed, as it were, with a suspension of every favor then enjoyed, a dispensation of new sufferings. I was obliged to sacrifice myself anew, and to drink the very dregs of the bitter draught.

I never had any resentment against my persecutors, though I well knew them, their spirit and their actions. Jesus Christ and the saints saw their persecutors, and

at the same time saw that they could have no power except it were given them from above. John xix. 11.

Loving the strokes which God gives, one cannot hate the hand which He makes use of to strike with.

A few days after, the official came and told me he gave me the liberty of the cloister, that is, to go and come in the house. They were now very industrious in urging my daughter to consent to a marriage, which, had it taken place, would have been her ruin. To succeed herein, they had placed her with a relation of the gentleman whom they wanted her to marry. All my confidence was in God, that He would not permit it to be accomplished, as the man had no tincture of Christianity, being abandoned both in his principles and morals.

To induce me to give up my daughter they promised me an immediate release from prison and from every charge under which I labored. But if I refused, they threatened me with imprisonment for life and with death on the scaffold. In spite of all their promises and threatenings, I persistently refused.

Soon after, the official and doctor came to tell the prioress I must be closely locked up. She represented to them that the chamber I was in, was small, having an opening to the light or air, only on one side, through which the sun shone all the day long, and being the month of July, it must soon cause my death. They paid no regard thereto. She asked why I must be thus closely locked up. They said I had committed horrible things in her house, even within the last month, and had scandalized the nuns. She protested the contrary, and assured them the whole community had received great edification from me, and could not but

admire my patience and moderation. But it was all in vain. The poor woman could not refrain from tears at a statement so remote from the truth.

They then sent for me and told me I had done base things in the last month. I asked what things? They would not tell me. I said then that I would suffer as long and as much as it should please God; that this affair was begun on forgeries against me, and so continued, but that God was witness of everything. The doctor told me that to take God for a witness in such a thing was a crime. I replied, "Nothing in the world could hinder me from having recourse to God." I was then shut up more closely than at first, until I was absolutely at the point of death, being thrown into a violent fever, and almost stifled with the closeness of the place, and was not permitted to have any assistance.

Although I have been obliged to describe the procedure of those who persecute me, I have not done it out of resentment, since I love them at my heart, and pray for them. leaving to God the care of defending me, and delivering me out of their hands, without making any movement of my own for it. I have apprehended and believed that God would have me write everything sincerely, that His name may be glorified; that the things done in secret against His servants should one day be published on the house-tops; for the more they strive to conceal them from the eyes of men, the more will God in His own time make them all manifest.

August 22d, 1688, it was thought I was about coming out of prison, and everything seemed to tend toward it. But the Lord gave me a sense that, far from

being willing to deliver me, they were only laying new snares to ruin me more effectually, and to make Father La Mothe known to the king, and esteemed by him. On the day mentioned, which was my birthday, being forty years of age, I awaked under an impression of Jesus Christ in an agony, seeing the counsel of the Jews against Him. I knew that none but God could deliver me out of prison, and I was satisfied that He would do it one day by His own right hand, though ignorant of the manner, and leaving it wholly to Himself.

In the order of Divine providence my case was laid before Madame de Maintenon, who became deeply interested in the account given her of my sufferings, and at length procured my release, and a few days afterward I had my first interview with the Abbe Fenelon.

Coming out of St. Mary's I retired into the community of Mad. Miramion, where I kept my bed of a fever three months, and had an imposthume in my eye. Yet at this time I was accused of going continually out, holding suspected assemblies, together with other groundless falsehoods. In this house my daughter was married to Mons. L. Nicholas Fouquet, Count de Vaux. I removed to my daughter's house, and on account of her extreme youth, lived with her two years and a half, but even there my enemies were ever forging one thing after another against me. I then wanted to retire quite secretly, to the house of the Benedictines at Montargis (my native place), but it was discovered, and both friends and enemies jointly prevented it.

The family in which my daughter was married being of the number of Abbe Fenelon's friends, I had the opportunity of often seeing him at our house. We had

some conversations on the subject of a spiritual life, in which he made several objections to my experiences therein. I answered them with my usual simplicity, which, as I found, gained upon him. As the affair of Molinos at that time made a great noise, the plainest things were distrusted, and the terms used by mystic writers exploded. But I so clearly expounded everything to him, and so fully solved all his objections, that no one more fully imbibed my sentiments than he; which has since laid the foundation of that persecution he has suffered.

I now took a little private house, to follow the inclination I had for retirement, where I sometimes had the pleasure of seeing my family, and a few particular friends. Certain young ladies of St. Cyr, having informed Mad. Maintenon, that they found in my conversation something which attracted them to God, she encouraged me to continue my instructions to them; and by the fine change in some of them with whom before she had not been well pleased, she found she had no reason to repent of it. She then treated me with much respect, and for three years after, while this lasted, I received from her every mark of esteem and confidence. But that very thing afterward drew on me the most severe persecution. The free entrance I had into the house, and the confidence which some young ladies of the Court, distinguished for their rank and piety, placed in me, gave no small uneasiness to the people who had persecuted me. The directors took umbrage at it, and under pretext of the troubles I had had some years before, they engaged the Bishop of Chartres, Superior of St. Cyr, to present to Mad. Maintenon that, by my particular conduct, I troubled

the order of the house; and that the young women in it were so attached to me, and to what I said to them, that they no longer hearkened to their superiors. I then went no more to St. Cyr. I answered the young ladies who wrote to me, only by letters unsealed, which passed through the hands of Mad. Maintenon.

Soon after I fell sick. The physicians, after trying in vain the usual method of cure, ordered me to repair to the waters of Bourbon. My servant had been induced to give me some poison. After taking it, I suffered such exquisite pains that, without speedy succor, I should have died in a few hours. The man immediately ran away, and I have never seen him since. When I was at Bourbon, the waters which I threw up burned like spirits of wine. I had no thought of being poisoned, till the physicians of Bourbon assured me of it. The waters had but little effect. I suffered from the effect of this poisoning for above seven years.

God kept me in such a disposition of sacrifice, that I was quite resigned to suffer everything, and to receive from His hand all that might befall me, since for me to offer in any way to vindicate myself would be only beating the air. When the Lord is willing to make any one suffer He permits even the most virtuous people to be readily blinded toward them; and I may confess that the persecution of the wicked is but little, when compared with that of the servants of the Church, deceived and animated with a zeal which they think right. Since, therefore, I must, O my Lord, be conformable to Thee, to please Thee, I set more value on my humiliation, and on seeing myself condemned of everybody, than if I saw myself on the summit of honor in the world. How often have I said, even in

the bitterness of my heart, that I should be more afraid of one reproach of my conscience, than of the outcry and condemnation of all men!

At this time I had my first acquaintance with the Bishop of Meaux, to whom I was introduced by an intimate friend, the Duke of Chevreuse. I gave him the foregoing history of my life, and he confessed, that he had found therein such an unction as he had rarely done in other books, and that he had spent three days in reading it, with an impression of the presence of God on his mind all that time.

I proposed to the bishop to examine all my writings, which he took four or five months to do, and then advanced all his objections, to which I gave answers, but from his unacquaintance with the interior paths, I could not clear up all the difficulties which he found in them.

He admitted that looking into the ecclesiastical histories for ages past, we may see that God has sometimes made use of laymen, and of women to instruct, edify, and help souls in their progress to perfection; and I think one of the reasons of God's acting thus, is that glory may not be ascribed to any, but to Himself alone. For this purpose, He has chosen the weak things of this world, to confound such as are mighty. 1 Cor. i. 27.

Jealous of the attributes which men pay to other men, which are due only to Himself, He has made a paradox of such persons, that He alone may have the glory of His own works. I pray God with my whole heart sooner to crush me utterly, with the most dreadful destruction, than to suffer me to take the least honor to myself, of anything which He has been pleased

to do by me for the good of others. I am only a poor nothing. God is all-powerful. He delights to operate, and exercise His power by mere nothings.

The first time that I wrote a history of myself, it was very short. In it I had particularized my faults and sins, and said little of the favors of God. I was ordered to burn it, to write another, and in it to omit nothing anyway remarkable that had befallen me. I did it. It is a crime to publish the secrets of the king; but it is a good thing to declare the favors of the Lord our God, and to magnify His mercies.

As the outcry against me became more violent, and Madame Maintenon was moved to declare against me, I sent to her through the Duke of Beauvilliers, requesting the appointment of proper persons to examine my life and doctrines, offering to retire into any prison until fully exculpated. But my proposal was rejected.

Referring to the Countess of G. and the Duchess of M., I wrote, "When these ladies and others were in the vanities of the world, when they patched and painted, and some of them were in the way to ruin their families by gaming and profusion of expense in dress, nobody arose to say anything against it; they were quietly suffered to do it. But when they have broken off from all this, then they cry out against me, as if I had ruined them. Had I drawn them from piety into luxury, they would not make such an outcry. The Duchess of M. at her giving herself up to God, thought herself obliged to quit the Court, which was to her like a dangerous rock, in order to bestow her time on the education of her children and the care of her family, which till then she had neglected. I beseech you, therefore, to gather all the memorials you

can against me; and if I am found guilty of the things they accuse me of, I ought to be punished more than any other, since God has brought me to know Him and love Him, and I am well assured that there is no communion between Christ and Belial."

I sent them at the same time two of my little printed books, with my commentaries on the Holy Scriptures. I also, by their order, wrote a work to facilitate their examination, and to spare them as much time and trouble as I could, which was to collect a great number of passages out of approved writers, which showed the conformity of my writings with those used by the holy penmen. I caused them to be transcribed by the quire, as I had written them, in order to send them to the three commissioners. I also, as occasion presented, cleared up the dubious and obscure places; for, as I had written them at a time when the affairs of Molinos had not broken out, I used the less precaution in expressing my thoughts, not imagining that they would ever be turned into an evil sense. This work was entitled, "The Justifications." It was composed in fifty days, and appeared to be very sufficient to clear up the matter. But the Bishop of Meaux would never suffer it to be read.

After all the examinations, and making nothing out against me, who would not have thought but they would have left me to rest in peace? But quite otherwise, the more my innocence appeared, the more did they, who had undertaken to render me criminal, put every spring in motion to effect it. I offered the Bishop of Meaux to go to spend some time in any community within his diocese, that he might be better acquainted with me. He proposed to me that of St.

Mary de Meaux, which I accepted; but in going thither in the depth of winter I had like to have perished in the snow, being stopped four hours, the coach having entered into it, and being almost buried in it, in a deep hollow. I was drawn out at the coach-door with one maid. We sat upon the snow, resigned to the mercy of God, and expected nothing but death. I never had more tranquillity of mind, though chilled and soaked with the snow, which melted on us. Occasions like these are such as show whether we are perfectly resigned to God or not. This poor girl and I were easy in our minds, in a state of entire resignation, though sure of dying if we passed the night there, and seeing no likelihood of anyone coming to our succor. At length some wagoners came up, who with difficulty drew us through the snow.

The bishop, when he heard of it, was astonished, and had no little self-complacency to think that I had thus risked my life to obey him so punctually, and yet afterwards he denounced it as artifice and hypocrisy.

There were times indeed when I found nature overcharged; but the love of God and His grace rendered sweet to me the very worst of bitters. His invisible hand supported me; else I had sunk under so many probations. Sometimes I said to myself, "All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me." *Psal. xlii. 7.* "Thou hast bent Thy bow and set me as a mark for the arrow; Thou hast caused all the arrows of Thy quiver to enter into my reins." *Lam. iii. 12, 13.* It seemed to me as if everyone thought he was in the right to treat me ill, and rendered service to God in doing it. I then comprehended that it was the very manner in which Jesus Christ suffered. He was num-

bered with the transgressors. Mark xv. 28. He was condemned by the sovereign pontiff, chief priests, doctors of the law, and judges deputed by the Romans, who valued themselves on doing justice. Happy they who by suffering for the will of God under all the like circumstances, have so near a relation to the sufferings of Jesus Christ!

For six weeks after my arrival at Meaux, I was in a continual fever, nor had I recovered from my indisposition, when I was waited on by the bishop, who would fain have compelled me to give it under my hand, that I did not believe the Word incarnate (or Christ manifest in the flesh). I answered him that through the grace of God, I knew how to suffer, even to death, but not how to sign such a falsehood. Several of the nuns who overheard this conversation, and perceiving the sentiments of the bishop, joined with the Prioress, in giving a testimonial, not only of my good conduct, but of their belief in the soundness of my faith.

The bishop some days after, brought me a confession of faith, and a request to submit my books to the Church, that I may sign it, promising to give me a certificate, which he had prepared; but on my delivering him my submission signed, he, notwithstanding his promise, refused to give the certificate. Some time after, he endeavored to make me sign his pastoral letter, and acknowledge that I had fallen into those errors, which he there lays to my charge, and made many demands of me of the like absurd and unreasonable nature, threatening me with those persecutions I afterwards endured, in case of non-compliance. However, I continued resolute in refusing to put my name to false-

hoods. At length, after I had remained about six months at Meaux, he gave me the certificate; but finding Mad. Maintenon disapproved of the certificate he had granted, he wanted to give me another in place of it. My refusal to deliver up the first certificate enraged him, and as I understood they intended to push matters with the utmost violence, I thought that although I were resigned to whatever might fall out, yet I ought to take prudent measures to avoid the threatening storm. Many places of retreat were offered me; but I was not free in my mind to accept of any, nor to embarrass anybody, nor involve in trouble my friends and my family, to whom they might attribute my escape. I took the resolution of continuing in Paris, of living there in some private place with my maids, who were trusty and sure, and to hide myself from the view of the world. I continued thus for five or six months. I passed the day all alone in reading, in praying to God, and in working. But the 27th of December, 1695, I was arrested, though exceedingly indisposed at that time, and conducted to Vincennes. I was three days in the custody of Mons. des Grez, who had arrested me, because the king would not consent to my being put into prison, saying several times over, that a convent was sufficient. They deceived him by still stronger calumnies. They painted me in his eyes, in colors so black, that they made him scruple his goodness and equity. He then consented to my being taken to Vincennes.

I shall not speak of that long persecution, which has made so much noise, for a series of ten years imprisonments, in all sorts of prisons, and of a banishment almost as long, and not yet ended, through

crosses, calumnies, and all imaginable sorts of sufferings. There are facts too odious on the part of divers persons, which charity induces me to cover.

I have borne long and sore languishings, and oppressive and painful maladies without relief. I have been also inwardly under great desolations for several months, in such sort that I could only say these words, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" All creatures seemed to be against me. I then put myself on the side of God, against myself.

Perhaps some will be surprised at my refusing to give the details of the greatest and strongest crosses of my life, after I have related those which were less. I thought it proper to tell something of the crosses of my youth, to show the crucifying conduct which God held over me. I thought myself also obliged to relate certain facts, to manifest their falsehood, the conduct of those by whom they had passed, and the authors of those persecutions of which I have been only the accidental object, as I was only persecuted, in order to involve therein persons of great merit, whom, being out of their reach by themselves, they therefore could not personally attack, but by confounding their affairs with mine. I thought I owed this to religion, piety, my friends, my family, and myself.

While I was a prisoner at Vincennes, and Monsieur De La Reine examined me, I passed my time in great peace, content to pass the rest of my life there, if such were the will of God. I sang songs of joy, which the maid who served me learned by heart, as fast as I made them; and we together sang Thy praises, O my God! The stones of my prison looked in my eyes like rubies; I esteemed them more than all the gaudy brilliancies

of a vain world. My heart was full of that joy which Thou givest to them who love Thee, in the midst of their greatest crosses.

When things were carried to the greatest extremities, being then in the Bastile, I said to Thee, "O, my God, if Thou art pleased to render me a new spectacle to men and angels, Thy holy will be done!"

December, 1709.

Note.—The narrative of Madam Guyon's life ends here. Her second imprisonment was in the castle of Vincennes, and later she spent four years in solitary confinement in the Bastile (1698-1702). Her faithful maid-servant was imprisoned in the Bastile at about the same time, because of her fidelity to her mistress, and also to prevent her from creating public opinion in her favor. She was so deeply imbued with the principles of her mistress that they were incarcerated together at Vincennes, but separated later.

Of Madam Guyon's imprisonment in the Bastile, little is known. Every prisoner who entered those walls was compelled to take an oath by which he bound himself to maintain secrecy regarding what he had seen or heard. If on her release she had made known her sufferings there, she would have subjected herself to a repetition of them.

She was released in 1702 at the age of fifty-four, and allowed to visit her daughter, the Countess of Vaux, at Paris, but because of her religious influence was not permitted to remain there. She was banished to Blois, one hundred miles southwest of Paris, for life. The sufferings and deprivations endured in the Bastile had completely broken her constitution, which

had already been greatly enfeebled. She was now unable to minister as she had previously done, but spent the time in private prayer and correspondence. Religious people, some of rank, came to see her from different countries, during her banishment, to receive the benefit of her conversation and instruction, which was always along religious lines.

“In the beginning of the month of March, 1717, she had a very severe attack of sickness, from which she never recovered. She had no doubt that her labors were drawing to a close. God’s hour, that hour to which she had looked with interest, had arrived. Already those with whom, either as friends or as enemies, she had been associated in the earlier part of her life, Harlai, La Combe, Fenelon, Beauvilliers, Bossuet, the powerful monarch of France, all had been called home. At last the summons came to her also. She went down to the grave, as her life would lead us to anticipate, in perfect resignation and peace. She had given her soul to God. No clouds rested upon her vision; no doubts perplexed the fulness of her hope and joy. At half past eleven o’clock on the night of the 9th of June, 1717, she died; aged sixty-nine years. Such a departure preceded by such a life might be called a transition rather than death. She went home.”

XXV. SPIRITUAL NUGGETS.

Culled from Madam Guyon's Writings.

ACCUSTOM yourself to seek God in your heart
and you will there find Him.

* * *

We do not perish but for want of trusting Him.

* * *

The heinousness of sins is not to be measured singly
by their nature, but also by the state of the person
who commits them.

* * *

My heart had a language which was carried on with-
out the sound of words, understood of its Well-beloved,
as He understands the language of the Word ever
eloquent, which speaks incessantly in the innermost
recesses of the soul. Oh, sacred language! which expe-
rience only gives the comprehension of! Let not any
think it a barren language, an effect of the mere
imagination. Far different—it is the silent expression
of the Word in the soul. As He never ceases to speak,
so He never ceases to operate.

* * *

It is Thou alone, O crucified Savior, who canst make
the cross truly effectual for the death of self. Let
others bless themselves in their ease and gaiety, gran-
deur or pleasures; poor, temporary heavens; as for
me, my desires were all turned another way, even to
the silent path of suffering for Christ, and to be united
to Him through the mortification of all that was of
nature in me, that my senses, appetites and will, being
dead to these, might wholly live to Him.

Oh adorable conduct of my God. There must be no guide for the person whom Thou art leading into the regions of darkness and death; no conductor for the man whom Thou art determined to cause to die totally to himself.

* * *

Under the strokes and daily troubles which befell me, my will was so subservient to Thine, O my God, that it appeared absolutely united to it. There seemed, indeed, to be no will left in me but Thine only. My own disappeared, and no desires, tendencies or inclinations were left, but to the one sole object of whatever was most pleasing to Thee, be it what it would. If I had a will it was in union with Thine, as two well-tuned lutes in concert,—that which is not touched renders the same sound as that which is touched; it is but one and the same sound, one pure harmony.

* * *

In losing all the gifts with all their supports, I found the Giver. In losing the sense and perception of Thee in myself, I found Thee, O my God, to lose Thee no more in Thyself, in Thy own immutability. Oh poor creatures, who pass all their time in feeding upon the gifts of God, and think therein to be the most favored and happy! How I pity them if they stop there, short of the true rest, and cease to go forward to God Himself, through the loss of those cherished gifts which they now delight in. How many pass all their lives in this way, and think highly of themselves therein! They never enjoy God in His fulness, which is a loss that cannot be perfectly known in this life.

If souls had courage enough to resign themselves to the work of purification without having any weak and foolish pity on themselves, what a noble, rapid and happy progress would they make! But few are willing to lose the earth. If they advance some steps, as soon as the sea is ruffled they are dejected; they cast anchor, and often desist from the prosecution of the voyage. Such disorders occasion selfish interest and self-love.

* * *

All souls have more or less of strong and ardent desires, except those whose will is lost in the will of God. Some have good desires, so as to suffer martyrdom for God; others thirst for the salvation of their neighbor, and some pant to see God in glory. All this is excellent, but he who rests in the divine will, although he may be exempt from all these desires, is infinitely more content, and glorifies God more.

* * *

There are consolations which pass away; but you will not find true and abiding consolation except in entire abandonment, and in that love which loves the *cross*. He who does not welcome the cross, does not welcome God.

* * *

We must learn to seek God in distinction from His gifts, and God is in *His will*.

* * *

God will give us opportunities to try our test, whether it be a true one or not. No man can be wholly the Lord's unless he is wholly consecrated to the Lord; and no man can know whether he is thus wholly consecrated, except by *tribulation*. That is the test. To

rejoice in God's will, when that will imparts nothing but happiness, is easy even for the natural man. But none but the renovated man, none but the religious man can rejoice in the Divine will when it crosses his path, disappoints his expectations, and overwhelms him with sorrow. Trial, therefore, instead of being shunned, should be welcomed as the test, and only true test of a pure state.

* * *

A little child on perceiving a monster, does not wait to fight with it, and will scarcely turn its eyes toward it, but quickly shrinks into the bosom of its mother, in entire confidence of safety; so likewise should the soul turn from the dangers of temptation to her God. "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved: God shall help her and that right early." If in our weakness we attempt to attack our enemies, we shall frequently be wounded if not totally defeated; but by casting ourselves in the simple presence of God, in the exercise of faith, we shall find instant supplies of strength for our support.

* * *

The Divine will never varies and never can vary from the line of perfect rectitude on the one hand, and of perfect love on the other. This is the law of its movement, unchangeable as the Divine existence. There can be no true moral union between God and man until the human will is brought into harmony with the Divine.

* * *

Everywhere I found my proper center, because everywhere I found God. My heart could then desire nothing but what it had; for this disposition extin-

guished all its desires, and I sometimes said to myself, "What wantest thou? What fearest thou?" And I was surprised to find upon trial that I had nothing to fear. Every place I was in was my proper place.

* * *

If the soul were faithful to leave itself in the hand of God, sustaining all His operations, whether gratifying or mortifying, suffering itself to be conducted, from moment to moment, by His hand, and annihilated by the strokes of His providence, without complaining or desiring anything but what it has, it would soon arrive at the experience of the eternal truth, though it might not at once know the ways and methods by which God conducted it thereto.

* * *

How very straight is the gate which leads to a life in God; how little one must be to pass through it, it being nothing else than death to self! But when we have passed through it, what enlargement do we find!

PRISONS DO NOT EXCLUDE GOD.

Strong are the walls around me,
That hold me all the day;
But they who thus have bound me,
Cannot keep God away:
My very dungeon walls are dear,
Because the God I love is here.

They know who thus oppress me,
'Tis hard to be alone;
But know not one can bless me,
Who comes through bars and stone:
He makes my dungeon's darkness bright,
And fills my bosom with delight.

Thy love, O God restores me
From sighs and tears to praise;
And deep my soul adores Thee,
Nor thinks of time or place:
I ask no more in good or ill,
But union with Thy holy will.

'Tis that which makes my treasure,
'Tis that which brings my gain;
Converting woe to pleasure,
And reaping joy from pain.
Oh, 'tis enough, whate'er befall,
To know that God is All in All.



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