

STORIES FROM
THE CATECHIST

*“But they that are learned shall shine as the
brightness of the firmament: and they that instruct
many to justice, as stars for all eternity.”*

—Daniel 12:3



Illustration: Giuseppe Conti

Young St. Louis IX, King of France, and his mother, Queen Blanche of Castile. The devout Queen often told her son that although she loved him tenderly, she would prefer that he fall dead at her feet than that he ever commit a mortal sin. St. Louis never forgot his mother's words, and scarcely a day passed without his calling them to mind in order to strengthen himself against temptation.

STORIES FROM
THE CATECHIST

907 Traditional Catholic Stories
Illustrating The Truths
Of The Catholic Catechism

Compiled by
Very Rev. Canon G. E. Howe

Complete and Unabridged

Contains all the stories found in the Appendix
of the large two-volume work entitled *The Catechist*

An essential teaching tool for all
Catholic parents and catechists

*“And he taught them many things in
parables . . .”*

—Mark 4:2

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To
ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM,
who taught the Catechism
with so much zeal and great success,
these pages,
as an aid to others to do in like manner,
are humbly and reverently offered.

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STORIES FROM THE CATECHIST

(As the author has stated in his Preface to the original edition of *The Catechist*, it is not presumed that these examples are to be *read* to those who are being instructed—though in most cases they may be—but preferably they are to be retold to the students by the instructor. For this reason the author has greatly abbreviated them, with the understanding that the instructor, as the occasion may require, will adapt the stories to the level of the students.)

INTRODUCTION

Faith

1. THE NOBLEMAN AND THE CATECHISM.—A distinguished nobleman had gone to a religious house to make a retreat, and felt no little surprise at being presented with a Catechism to read. “What!” he said, “a Catechism! are you setting me down again to my A B C?” But on the Superior proposing him some simple questions on religion, the nobleman was quite unable to give satisfactory answers. “Know then,” said the Superior, “that among persons in the world, there are very few really instructed in their religion. This little book, which you seem to undervalue, is an abridgment of theology: even those who have learned it when young, should read it, in advanced years, that they may not forget what it contains.” He ever afterwards carried a Catechism with him.—*Noël*.

2. THE CAPTAIN’S IGNORANCE.—A priest, having just finished mass at a famous shrine of Our Lady, was accosted by a ship captain who had arrived too late for the mass, and asked by him to say another, as he was most anxious to hear one. “But,” replied the priest, “I cannot say two masses on the same day.” Thinking the Father refused because he was tired or exhausted, the captain said: “Pray, do me the honour to come and breakfast with me: then you will be better able to say mass: I’m in no hurry so long as I get it!” The priest had some difficulty in making the ignorant captain understand that a priest cannot say masses as he likes, and must always be fasting to do so.—*Catholic Anecdotes*.

3. CARDINAL CHEVERUS.—Mgr. Cheverus preached every Sunday at the parochial mass in his Cathedral, his instructions being nothing else than an explanation of the Catechism. They were so interesting, that persons of every rank and class thronged to hear him. Seeing he had gained the attention of his audience, he at length revealed his innocent secret. "If," he said, "I had declared at first that I would every Sunday explain the Catechism to you, you would have deemed it beneath you to assist at it. Yet for months this is all I have done, and you have been deeply interested in it. Know then that the Catechism is the book of the old as well as of the young, of the learned as well as of the ignorant : every one there finds something to learn : to undervalue the Catechism proceeds only from prejudice."—*Hamon.*

4. WORDS OF TROPLONG.—Troplong died in 1869, and during his last sickness he said to the priest who attended him : "After reading and studying a great deal, and living a long life, when death approaches, I recognize that the only thing of worth is the Catechism."

5. NAPOLEON AS CATECHIST.—For more than two years, Napoleon the Great, at S. Helena, taught the Catechism every day to the daughter of Gen. Bertrand, his faithful companion in captivity ; and when she was old enough to make her first Communion, he procured a priest from France to continue the instructions and prepare her for that great act.—*Catholic Anecdotes.*

6. WORDS OF DIDEROT.—One of the greatest enemies of religion last century was Diderot ; yet he taught his daughter the Catechism. When one of his impious friends saw this, and laughed at him for doing it, he said : "I make Marie learn the Catechism and the Gospel. Is there anything better I could teach her, to make her a good girl, a devoted wife, a kind and affectionate mother ?"—*Filassier.*

7. A SAYING OF NAPOLEON.—Entrusting his son to the care of Mme. de Montesquieu, Napoleon said to her : "Madame, to you I confide my son, on whom rests the destiny of France, and perhaps of the whole of Europe : make him a good Christian." Someone laughed at this, but Napoleon, in anger, apostrophized him, saying : "Yes, sir, I know what I am saying : my son must be a good Christian, or he will not be a good ruler."—*Michaud.*

8. S. DOMNINA AND HER FATHER IN HEAVEN.—While yet a mere child, S. Domnina was often seen weeping tears of joy. When asked why she wept so much, and especially at pages in her book that had the name of God on them, she said: "How can it be otherwise? I never read His name in a book without my heart filling with love for Him: He made me, and I am His child: this thought makes me feel so happy that tears of joy fall from my eyes."

9. THE EMPEROR'S STAG.—A Roman Emperor once had a favourite stag which became much attached to him. It used to roam at large, returning to the palace for its food. Fearing lest it should go astray and be lost, the Emperor placed round its neck a collar bearing the inscription: "Touch me not: I belong to Cæsar." No one, he thought, would dare to steal or injure it, being thus marked as his own.—Almighty God has acted in like manner: He has stamped His image on our souls: we come from God and belong to Him. Hence when the devil comes to attack us, let us repel him and say: "Touch me not: I belong to God."—*Gibson*.

10. THE DYING MONARCH.—There was once a King who lived as though he were never to leave this world, and thought little of God or of the end for which he was made. But death came at last, and he cried out: "Must I then leave my kingdom and go to a country where I know no one?" This was because he never thought of God or his last end: and he died in despair.—*Chisholm*.

11. THE BOY IN THE SNOW.—One very cold Sunday in winter, three children were going along the road to Catechism. They were trembling with the cold, for they were but thinly clad and their shoes greatly worn. One of the three, a mere child of eight or nine, was weeping: when his sister, a little older, urged him to return home and get warm, saying God would not be displeased on such a day, he said: "No, let me go with you: my feet are very cold, but I want to go to Catechism and learn something more of God." So he went along with them.—*Chisholm*.

12. THE MISSIONER'S LETTER.—Fr. Gaume wrote from the wilds of America: "There are two little boys in my mission who give me great consolation: the hut they live in is miles away, and yet they have come every day for six months to hear me explain the Catechism."—*Chisholm*.

13. THE LORD MAYOR AT CATECHISM.—In former times, there lived a gentleman who practised his religion, and belonged to one of the first families in London : he had more than once been chosen to fill the position of Lord Mayor. Every Sunday he took his children to Catechism, and listened with rapt attention to the instructions. He used to say : “ There is no instruction pleases me so much as the Catechism : I always hear something I did not know before, or I am reminded of something I had forgotten : what surprises me is that so few come to hear God’s holy Word.”—*Chisholm.*

14. THE HERMIT AND HIS BASKETS.—“ What is the use of my going to hear sermons ?” said a hermit to his Superior : “ I can never recall what has been said !” The Superior, to show him he always gained some benefit from what he heard, told him to take one of his two baskets and bring him water in it from the river ! The hermit was surprised, but obeyed ; thrice this was done ; the Superior then asked him what difference he found now between that basket and the one he had left untouched. “ None,” he said, “ unless perhaps the one that has been in the water looks cleaner than the other.” “ Just so,” replied the Superior : “ as the basket could not retain the water, yet became cleaner each time it was put into the river, so your soul, though perhaps unable to retain all the instruction, yet derives much benefit from every sermon : continue therefore to frequent them.”—*Lives of the Fathers.*

15. WORD OF THE CURÉ OF ARS.—“ I think that one who does not properly hear the Word of God will not save his soul : he will not know what to do for that. An ignorant person is like a dying man, lying unconscious : he knows neither the malice of sin, nor the beauty of grace, nor the value of his soul : he goes from sin to sin, like a rag dragged in the mire.”

16. TRUE OBEDIENCE.—A young boy, whose family all neglected the laws of the Church, came at length to prepare for his first Communion : during the instructions he was reminded of the sinfulness of eating meat on Fridays, as had been his custom, which he resolved now to mend. His resolution was put to the test a day or two later, for nothing was served up for Friday’s dinner but meat. The boy this time refused to take it, explaining the reason of his refusal. The father in anger took him from the table, and putting him in a solitary room, ordered him to receive no food till the

morrow. The mother, though as negligent in her duty as her husband, could not help feeling for her child, and later in the day took him something to eat. To her surprise, he would not take it, saying that as now he could obey his father without sin, he would rather not eat what she had been good enough to bring. The father, hearing this, was led to think over his past life, and his conversion was the result, along with the conversion of his wife.—*A nec. Chrét.*

17. THE POOR INDIAN.—Two missionaries in India were passing through a wood, and felt a secret impulse to penetrate it in the hope of finding something to do for God's glory. They had not gone far when they came across a hut in which they found an Indian dying. On being asked if he had heard of God, the latter replied affirmatively, and said he had every day prayed that God would make Himself known to him and teach him to love Him. The priests explained how that God had now sent them to him : after some instruction and examination of conscience, they baptized him with water found in the hollow of a large leaf in the forest. The poor Indian wept tears of joy and gratitude, and soon after died in the arms of the missionaries.—*Chisholm.*

18. "GOD SAYS I MUST NOT!"—A mother was reading to her children a story about a boy guilty of stealing, and after finishing asked them why they should never steal. The eldest replied : "Because we must not do to others what we should not wish them to do to us."—The second said : "Because you would punish us for it."—But Mary, the third, replied : "Because God says I must not." "Right, my child," exclaimed the mother : "that is the true and best reason : let that always be your answer and always your motive."—*Ill. Cath. American.*

19. "SHALL WE GO TO VESPERS?"—Such was the question someone asked in a gathering of young people, as the bell was tolling for service. Some went to Church, while others ridiculed the idea, and went instead to the river ; one of them plunged in for a bathe, and in a few minutes was drowned ; this nearly happened to two others who tried to save their companion. The bells tolled again, this time to ring the funeral service of the deceased, and invite the Faithful to pray for him !—*Daily Rewards.*

20. SATAN'S ANSWER.—Cesarius tells of a holy priest to whom, as to S. Martin, the devil appeared as he lay dying. The priest

commanded him to say what it was that chiefly kept souls from falling into his hands. After some delay, the devil replied : " There is nothing in the Church keeps so many souls out of our power as frequent confession."

21. THE LITTLE BOY PAUL.—This child, after an instruction on sin, resolved never to go to sleep in the state of mortal sin. One day Paul did something which he considered a grievous sin ; in the evening he went to Church and confessed his sin. The next morning he was found dead in his bed.—*De Ségur.*

22. THE ARTIST'S CONFIDENCE.—A distinguished artist, who had led a bad life, returned to God, and resolved to atone for the past by going to Communion every Sunday. This resolution he kept, and said in all confidence : " I go often to Communion with the best dispositions in my power, and when death comes I hope to be not unprepared."—*De Ségur.*

23. S. CHARLES' GAME OF CHESS.—When others were saying what they would at once begin to do, if they knew they were to die within an hour, S. Charles said he would go on with the game of chess he was playing : for he had begun it for God, and he desired nothing better than to be called away in the midst of an action done for the glory of God.—*Faber.*

24. JOSAPHAT AND THE LEPER.—Prince Josaphat had lost his way in a wood while hunting. Suddenly he heard a voice singing sweetly, and going on, was surprised to find it was the voice of a poor leper almost dying. The latter, seeing the astonishment of his visitor, said : " For forty years has my soul been confined in this body, which is its prison ; the walls of this prison are now falling away, as you see : and my soul will soon be able to take its flight hence, to enjoy God and His Kingdom for ever : and I sing with delight at the very thought."—*Mrs. Herbert.*

25. DANIEL IN CAPTIVITY.—The Prophet, in captivity at Babylon, used every day to open the window of his house which looked towards the city of Jerusalem. It was far away indeed, but it was the chief city of his native country, and the home he loved : but the very thought of that city was a comfort to him in his exile. *Dan. vi. 10.*—The heavenly Jerusalem above is our home : we are made for it, and the earth is our land of exile ; but the very thought of Heaven and its happiness should rejoice us here on earth.

26. THE STATUE OF THEODOSIUS.—When the Emperor Theodosius found himself obliged to impose a new tax on his subjects, the populace of Antioch mutinied, and discharged their rage on the Emperor's statue, which they dragged with ropes through the streets, and then broke to pieces. When their fury was over, and they began to reflect on their extravagances, they were filled with fear. The indignation of the Emperor was very great, and he was preparing to take signal revenge for the insults heaped on his statue, when Flavian, Bishop of Antioch, interceded on behalf of the guilty, and obtained their pardon.—*Butler, Jan. 27.*

27. SCIPIO'S MEDAL.—A certain nobleman had a son, named Scipio, who, according to the custom of the time, wore round his neck a medal on which were stamped the portraits of his ancestors, the sight of which might prevent him from doing anything that would dishonour their name. He did not, however, imitate their virtues, but by his bad conduct disgraced them, so that the magistrates of the city ordered the medal to be taken from him, and commanded him to be punished.—*Chisholm.*

28. S. LEONIDAS AND HIS SON.—S. Leonidas had a feeling of great reverence for his little son, Origen, and oftentimes at night, while the child was sleeping in his bed, he would uncover his breast and kiss it. Surprised once by someone and asked why he did so, he answered: "This child is the living temple of the Holy Ghost! His body is dignified by the presence of God's grace in the soul! I love to honour the place where God dwells!"

29. THE EMPTY BOTTLE.—"My soul! and what is a soul? I have never seen one; as for me, I only believe in what I have seen!" Such were the words of an impious schoolmaster, arguing with a friend on religion. The latter at once taking a glass bottle, handed it to the schoolmaster and asked him what it contained. "Nothing," he replied. His friend taking the bottle, plunged it into a pitcher of water, when immediately there came forth from it large bubbles of air, which burst as they reached the surface of the water. "Thus," he said, "there exist in the world many things we cannot see; so may the soul exist without our seeing it." The schoolmaster, confused and ashamed, took up his hat and walked away.—*Noël.*

30. A MISSIONER'S EXPERIENCE.—A priest, in Asia, writes the following, which came under his own notice: An old man of seventy

had got into his head that when he died his soul would pass into the body of a horse destined to carry the despatches of the Emperor of China. At times he fancied himself a horse already, and would go down on all fours, jump and prance about, to the great amusement of his neighbours. And so he continued, till he heard of the Christian Religion, which appeared to him so rational that he sought and obtained Baptism, and after some time died in sentiments of great piety.—*Noël*.

31. THE LANDGRAVE OF THURINGIA.—Louis of Thuringia was a man entirely given up to pleasure and sin, and, to stifle his conscience, always used this false argument : “ Either I shall be saved or not. If I am predestined, whatever I may do, I shall be saved ; but if I am to be condemned, no matter what good I may do, I shall be lost : hence I need not trouble about the future.” This was his invariable argument with all who tried to lead him back to God, and assuredly he would have died in this state, but for the interposition of Divine Providence. The Prince fell dangerously ill and sent for his physician—a man of virtue and capacity. After making an examination, he said : “ Prince, it is useless to try any remedy, for either you are to die of this disease or you are not. If you are to die, it is useless applying the remedies of art ; if you are not to die, why again apply them ?” “ But,” said the patient, “ I am dangerously ill, therefore it is prudent to neglect nothing that may benefit me.” “ Ah,” said the doctor, “ if my reasoning appear to you defective, when it is a question of saving the body, why use it in regard to your soul ? The uncertainty of eternity should induce you to take all precautions to secure your salvation.” These words had the desired effect : the Prince was converted, and resolved to amend.—*Guillois*.

32. THE MAN AND HIS HORSE.—A preacher seeing one day a man grooming his horse, accosted him, and asked him how much time he spent over his horse. “ About two hours a day,” he replied. “ And how much, may I ask, do you give each day to your soul, to purify it and make it better ?” “ Not much, I fear ; I say my prayers in the morning, and on Sundays generally go to Mass.” “ Then, my poor man,” remarked the preacher, “ if I belonged to you, I would rather be your horse than your soul.”—*Noël*.

33. “ SAVE YOUR SOUL !”—Otto, Emperor of Germany, on his way to Rome, had to pass near the dwelling-place of a hermit,

named Nilus, known throughout the country for his holiness of life. The Emperor called on him as he was passing, and before leaving said : " Ask me what you wish, and I will give it you with joy." " All I ask, Emperor," said the Saint, " is that you save your soul ; take care of your soul ; for though you are Emperor, like other men you must die, and like them be judged, therefore save your soul." Otto withdrew, but never forgot this advice. In the end he died a holy death, because he had taken most care of his soul.—*Life of S. Nilus.*

34. S. IGNATIUS AND S. FRANCIS.—S. Ignatius became acquainted with S. Francis Xavier in Paris. Ignatius, seeing in him many good qualities, resolved on gaining him to God. He contented himself with repeating occasionally the words of our Lord : " What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul ?" Francis at first merely listened with contempt, but began gradually to attend to the words he so often heard. Applying them to his own case, he began to ask what, indeed, it would profit him to obtain his ambitious desires if in the end he lost his soul ! The reflection made such an impression that, under the impulse of grace, he became a great Saint, and illustrious Apostle of the Indies.—*Butler.*

35. S. JOHN AND THE ROBBER.—S. John, the Apostle, fell in with a young man of good dispositions, and thinking him likely to make good progress in virtue, entrusted him to the care of the Bishop with whom he was then staying. The latter carried out the injunctions of the Apostle, but after a few years the young man fell from his first fervour, and even at length placed himself at the head of a gang of robbers who infested the neighbourhood. The Apostle on his return made enquiries about the young man, and on learning his sinful life, rent his garments in sign of sorrow, then : " Quick," he cried, " find me a horse and a guide," and immediately he set off to the fastnesses of the mountains in pursuit of his straying sheep, nor did he cease his zeal, till by prayers and entreaties he had at length the happiness to bring him back to God, and establish him firmly in the path of virtue.—*Scaramelli.*

36. THE SAINT AFRAID TO DIE.—A holy anchorite had the good habit of offering every day to God all his actions in Faith, Hope, and Charity ; this practice obtained him a special reward. When death drew near, he was filled with fear at the thought of the

Judgment, and was almost cast into despair at the thought of his past sins, when suddenly his Angel guardian appeared to him and said : " Do not fear : you are now going to see that God in whom you have so firmly believed : to possess that God in whom you have trusted : and to be united to that God whom you have always loved." These words consoled the dying anchorite, and he passed away in peace.—*Lives of the Fathers.*

37. S. LOUIS AND THE MIRACULOUS HOST.—In the palace of S. Louis, King of France, mass was being said, when at the words of consecration, Our Lord appeared visibly present on the altar, under the form of a beautiful child whom all were enraptured to contemplate. Immediately word was sent to the King to come and witness the miracle God was working, to prove the real presence in the Blessed Sacrament. But Louis stirred not. " I firmly believe already," he said, " that Christ is truly present in the Holy Eucharist : He has said it, and that is sufficient : I do not wish to lose the merit of my faith, by going to see this miracle." And he did not go.—*From His Life.*

38. S. JANE AND THE HERETIC.—A Calvinist went to stay with the parents of S. Jane of Chantal, and one day she heard him say he did not believe in the Real Presence. The child looked up and said : " So you don't believe that Jesus is present in the Blessed Sacrament !" " No, child, I do not," he replied. " Yet, Christ has declared that He *is*, and the Church teaches He *is*," continued Jane. " So you mean to say that Our Lord is a liar ! Well, if you said that of the King in my father's house, he perhaps would kill you. And will God not punish you for calling His Son a liar, and not believing what He tells you ?" The Calvinist was confounded, and to pacify the child gave her some presents. But she threw them into the fire, and said : " So will they burn in hell who refuse to believe Jesus Christ and His Church."—*Her Life.*

39. EXAMPLE THE BEST SERMON.—Fr. Fernandez was preaching in the Indies, and had much to endure and suffer at the hands of the natives. He was one day preaching in a square of a big town, when a man from the crowd went up and spat in his face. The holy priest, quite unmoved, simply took out his handkerchief, wiped his face, and continued his sermon as before. At first the people laughed, then they admired. Amongst them was a learned doctor, who began to say to himself : " A law which teaches its followers

such virtue, and gives them courage to practise it, must come from God." In time he became a fervent Christian, and his example was followed by others.—*Lives of the Companions of S. Francis.*

40. THE PRINCESS' DREAM.—There was once a princess who, taught in her childhood the truths of Faith, like many others, in after years, began to neglect her religion, and gradually to lose her faith. One night she had a dream: even dreams, under God's Providence, may inspire good thoughts. She seemed to be walking alone in a forest, when suddenly she came upon a blind man seated at the door of his cottage. "Have you always been blind?" she asked. "Yes," he replied, "from my birth." "Then you have never seen the beautiful sun and its light." "No," he answered, "and I have not the faintest idea what it is like, but I firmly believe that it must be very beautiful." Then, becoming very serious, he added: "You say you will not believe, unless you see and understand: learn from my example, that many things are beautiful and beyond comprehension, which are just as true as those things you do see and understand." The princess awoke and learnt the profitable lesson which her dream had taught.—*Migne.*

41. THE FIREMAN'S DAUGHTER.—A number of children were one day in school together, when an alarm of fire was raised. Immediately the children ran here and there in the greatest terror, seeking to escape the danger. It was remarked in the midst of all the excitement, one little girl never attempted to escape, and though very pale with fear, never left the form where she was seated. When the alarm was found to be false and order was restored, the mistress asked this child how it was she had remained so quiet. "Please, ma'am," she answered, "my father is a fireman, and has often told me, if ever there was an alarm of fire, always to sit quite still."—*Newspaper.*

THE APOSTLES' CREED

42. S. AMBROSE AND THE CREED.—S. Ambrose had a sister, who like himself was leading a holy life. Once she asked him how to overcome temptations against faith, and he wrote: "Every morning and night say with fervour the Apostles' Creed, and when such temptations come, say it again, and you will easily overcome them." She did this and found the value and truth of the advice.—*Répert. du Catéchiste.*

43. ASCLEPIADES AND THE CHILD-MARTYR.—A young boy was denounced to a wicked governor, named Asclepiades. This man tries to make the child renounce his faith, but the latter replies: "I am a Christian, as you shall see: 'I believe in God,'" etc. Asclepiades in a rage sends for the child's mother, and has him scourged before her; during his torture, he again repeats the Creed, and turning to his mother, says: "I am thirsty." "Have courage, my child," she replied, "have patience and you shall reach the Fountain of Life." The bystanders were greatly moved, the tyrant alone was hardened. Ashamed of seeing himself thus conquered by a child, he at once had him beheaded.—*Prudentius.*

44. S. PETER, THE MARTYR OF THE CREED.—S. Peter of Verona had always shown great zeal in learning, professing and preaching the Creed. The Manicheans whom he had tried to convert swore to compass his ruin. Lying in wait for him along a road, the assassin fell upon him and struck him on the head with his axe. S. Peter, who was not killed at once, began his favourite prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and dipping his finger in the blood flowing from his wound, found strength to write on the ground the word *Credo*, I believe. The assassin then stabbed him, and he gave up his soul to God, A.D. 1252.—*Godescard.*

45. THE BENIGHTED TRAVELLER.—A traveller arrived at nightfall at the entrance of a vast forest, where he met a shepherd, of whom he asked the way, and learnt it was not easy to find, there being so many paths crossing each other in every direction, and all, with one exception, leading to an abyss. "To what abyss?" anxiously asked the traveller. "To the abyss surrounding this forest," answered the shepherd, "which moreover is filled with robbers and wild beasts, and infested by an enormous serpent, so

that scarcely a day passes but many travellers fall victims to them. Hence, out of compassion, I have placed myself here at the entrance of the forest to assist travellers who have to pass through it ; my sons are also stationed at intervals to assist in the same good work, and our services are at your disposal." The traveller gladly accepted, and they set out on their journey. Feeling his strength fail, the traveller began to lean on the arm of the shepherd. Shortly, they saw the glimmer of a light at a distance, and reaching at length a small cabin, the door opened at the well-known voice of the shepherd. Here a fresh supply of oil was obtained for the night, a seat and some food were offered to the traveller, who, thus refreshed, set out again, accompanied by the shepherd's son. At the dawn of day, he reached the boundary of the forest, and then perceived the greatness of the service that had been rendered to him. A frightful precipice lay before him, at the bottom of which he could hear the roar of an angry torrent, of which he was informed no one could tell the depth. " I cannot but feel grieved," said the guide, " when I think of the thousands daily swallowed up in it ! In vain do my father and my brothers offer help to travellers : though some accept our offer, most despise us and leave us. Thus they are soon lost, or murdered by the robbers, devoured by the serpent, or cast into the abyss : for there is but one little bridge known to us alone whereby to cross it. Pass over with confidence : on the other side is your true country." The traveller deeply thanked his guide, and crossing the bridge, soon found himself in his own country, and in the bosom of his own family. The good shepherd is Our Lord ; his sons the pastors of the Church, succeeding one another, to guide pilgrims safely through life. The only safe path is the Catholic Church, which alone leads to Heaven. The others lead to the abyss. The pilgrim is yourself : the lamp, the light of faith : the oil, God's grace ; the food and refreshments, the Sacraments. The great serpent is the devil ; the robbers and wild beasts, wicked company and our passions ; the forest is the world ; the bridge, death ; the abyss, Hell ; and the pilgrim's true country, Heaven.—*Gaume.*

THE FIRST ARTICLE OF THE CREED

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth."

46. THE ARAB'S REPLY.—An Arab in the desert was once asked how he knew there was a God. " In the same way," he said, " as I know by the footprints on the sand that a man or animal has passed

this way." Who, indeed, seeing the traces of wisdom and power in the world, could fail to exclaim: "So many wonders must be the work of a God!"—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

47. THE CHILD'S ARGUMENT.—A widower had an only daughter, whose education he himself undertook. Teaching her history, geography, etc., he resolved to try a most dangerous experiment, viz.: he avoided absolutely ever pronouncing the name of God before his child, to see whether the knowledge of God's existence would develop naturally, and this he continued for a long time. He at length began to notice that every morning she left her room and went into the garden to pray to the sun. He soon saw what it meant, and taking his daughter apart one day, he questioned her about it. The child replied innocently that she recognized nature must have an author, and had concluded the sun must be that author, because of his gentle heat and salutary influence on the world. The father hastened to withdraw his child from her error, making known to her the real author of all things—God, and was glad to find that the idea of God is given us almost at our birth.—*Gérard.*

48. THE ASTRONOMER'S GLOBE.—A famous German astronomer, wishing to convince a friend who doubted the existence of God, had a magnificent new globe placed in the room where he soon expected his friend. The latter arrived, and, admiring the globe, asked whose it was and whence it came. "Oh!" replied the astronomer, "it belongs to no one, and it came there quite by chance." "You are jesting," said the visitor; but the other insisted he was serious. When he found his friend was somewhat annoyed, he took occasion to address him thus: "You will not believe that this globe exists of itself, and came there by chance, and you really think the Heavens and the stars are the results of pure caprice!" This simple argument convinced him of his folly.—*Schmid.*

49. THE HEN AND THE EGG.—A little girl, who had learnt her Catechism well, met in a fashionable drawing-room in Paris a man who was saying he did not believe in God, and was trying to lead her to do likewise. "If there be no God," she said, "please tell me whence comes an egg?" These words were said so loud that the company all heard, and gathered round the two. "From a hen," said our young man. "And whence comes the hen?"—"You know as well as I do, the hen comes from the egg." "Then

which existed first, the hen or the egg?"—"Well, I hardly know, but I think the hen." "So you must have a hen which did not come from an egg!"—"Oh, well, perhaps the egg existed first." "So now we have an egg which did not come from a hen! Is it not so?"—"Well . . . but . . . you see . . ." "What I see is that you don't know; try again, and tell me whence came the first hen, or the first egg?"—"Oh, you and your hens! You'll take me next for a farmer's wife!" "Not at all, but I should like to teach you that He who created the first hen, or the first egg, as you choose, is He who created Heaven and earth, and all things. What! You can't without God explain the existence of a hen or an egg, and you pretend without Him to explain the existence of the universe!" The young man was glad to sneak out of the room, and get away as best he could.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

50. GOD IN THE FIELDS.—A boy who had been most diligent in attending religious instructions was working in the fields with a man very ignorant of his religion, who said to the boy: "How do you know there is a God?"—"You must, indeed, be blind," replied he, "if you require special proof of His existence, for everything around us speaks of Him. See the corn drying up and the fruit dropping off the trees for want of rain this season. In the designs of God, rain is necessary to maturity and perfection. The farmers, with all their grumbling, cannot create a drop of rain. God alone can make the rain to fall, for He is the Creator of all things."—*Chisholm.*

51. NAPOLEON AND HIS VICTORIES.—One of Napoleon's officers once asked him in a jesting way how he could believe there was a God, never having seen Him. "Listen," said Napoleon, "I will tell you. You say I have a talent for war: when any important movement was to be made in battle, you were the first to ask 'where is the Emperor?' and why? because you trusted my talent, yet you had never seen it. Did you then doubt its existence? No, because you saw its effects. But which of my victories can be compared to any of the wonders of creation? And what military movement can bear any comparison to the movements of the heavenly bodies? My victories make you believe in me; the universe makes me believe in God."—*Gibson.*

52. THE GOD OF SOCRATES.—Among the ancient Greeks there lived Socrates, who was convinced, by studying the wonders of

nature and the admirable order of the universe, that there existed an Almighty Being, endowed with boundless intelligence, Creator and Preserver of all things. This he endeavoured to teach also to his followers. His enemies, incited no doubt by the devil, accused him of slighting the gods of the country, and at length he was condemned to death : he was poisoned with a cup of hemlock, 403 B.C.

—*Schmid.*

53. MISSIONARIES IN GREENLAND.—In 1721 the Danes sent missionaries to preach to the pagan inhabitants of Greenland, many of whom were converted and baptized. One of them, however, said to the missionaries : “ Before you came, I often said to myself : ‘ A boat does not make itself : it requires a skilful workman. A bird requires more skill than a boat, no one can make a bird. As for man, he is above all : who made him ? And how do the sun and the stars exist, and the earth, and the sea ? Whoever made them must be endowed with great intelligence, and power, and goodness.’ It was thus we reasoned as to the existence of God, even before you came to teach us.”—*History of Greenland.*

54. BESSUS MURDERING HIS FATHER.—Bessus had slain his father, and though the murder remained unknown, the most frightful thoughts held sway in the murderer’s mind, giving him no rest, night or day. While he was taking a quiet walk with some friends, suddenly some crows began croaking in the air, and Bessus, forgetting he was not alone, cried out in terror : “ Why do you torment me, miserable birds, and keep reproaching me with the death of my father ?” Thus was the crime discovered through the voice of conscience.—*Plutarch.*

55. THEODORIC AND SYMMACHUS.—Theodoric had beheaded Symmachus, and soon both the image of his victim and the terrors of eternity gave him no peace or rest. One night as a large fish was served up at supper, he thought he saw in it a phantom ready to seize him, and fled in horror from the table, saying : “ There’s the head of Symmachus ; see his eyes staring at me, and his teeth ready to tear me to pieces : off with you, begone !” he added. After this a burning fever seized the unhappy monarch, and three days later he died.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

56. THE ANIMAL-ATHEIST !—A dashing young man once called on a Jesuit Father, wishing to have a discussion on religious matters : the Father, however, received him coldly, saying he did not usually speak on such matters with strangers ; whereupon our young fop

declared himself an atheist. At this, the Jesuit took an eye-glass, and deliberately examined the dandy from head to foot. "What have you got to look at, that you examine me so attentively?" asked the young scoffer. "Oh," said the Jesuit, "I have never before seen the animal they call atheist, and I want to see how he is made!" On hearing this, our strong-minded man beat a retreat as fast as he could.—*Filassier*.

57. THE INN ON FIRE.—An innkeeper who had been very irreligious, came at length to say he did not believe there was a God. Two worthy men came in for supper, and for several hours he never ceased to bother them with his senseless talk, they meanwhile endeavouring to refute their host, and trying to convince him of the existence of God. They failed, however, and at length returned to their homes. An hour or two later they were roused with the cries of "fire," proceeding from the street, and on getting up they found it was the inn that was burning, the flames bursting from the roof. The owner was no sooner awakened than, seeing what was taking place, he exclaimed: "O God, my God! save me, help me!" "Ah," said the others, "you denied God all last night, and now you call on Him to help you. Confess then that there is a God whom we must serve and adore!"—*Schmid*.

58. A WITTY REPLY.—A man had been talking a great deal of his atheism to a lady, trying to convert her to his way of thinking. Annoyed at his want of success, he said: "I wouldn't have believed that in a gathering like this, I should have been the only one not to believe in God." "Oh, you're not the only one," replied the hostess. "My horses, and my dog and cat share the honour with you: only these poor animals have more sense than to boast of it! To say there is no God means, I am wicked and I fear there may be some One above to punish me!"—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

59. S. ANTHONY STUDYING THE HEAVENS.—The numbers of those who visited S. Anthony in the desert were astonished at his wisdom and sense, and they asked him where he had discovered such science and wisdom. The Saint, pointing one hand to Heaven, and the other to earth, said: "There is my book, I have no other: all should study it: in considering the works of God, they will be filled with admiration and love of Him who has created all things."—*His Life*.

60. S. MARY OF PAZZI AND THE FLOWER.—S. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, gathering some flowers in the convent garden, and in-

haling their fragrance, suddenly exclaimed : " O goodness of God, who, from eternity, didst destine these flowers to give pleasure to a sinner like me."—*Her Life*.

61. S. PAUL OF THE CROSS AND THE FLOWERS.—S. Paul of the Cross used to picture to himself all creatures as having a voice to speak to man and say : " Love Him who created thee ! " Often when out in the country, admiring the works of God, he would touch the flowers at his feet with his stick and say : " Hold your tongues, be quiet." He often told his religious that the flowers were a constant reminder of the love and adoration they owed to their Creator."—*His Life*.

62. KING CANUTE'S REBUKE.—The flatterers of King Canute, eager to gain the royal favour, styled him not only King of England, but also Lord of the sea : " the very elements," they said, " were subject to him." Wishing to teach them a lesson, Canute ordered his chair of state to be placed at the edge of the water, by the sea-shore, and there he took his seat. The tide was coming up, and the King, in a tone of majesty, ordered it to retire, that it might not wet its lord and master. The waves, however, advanced rapidly and soon flowed over the King's ankles. Then rising and turning towards his confused nobles, Canute said to them : " Confess how vain and empty is the power of an earthly king, compared with His, who alone can say to the waves, ' thus far shall ye go and no farther.' " Then, taking the crown off his head, he went and laid it on the great crucifix, in the Cathedral of Winchester, nor did he ever wear it again.—*History of England*.

63. THE CONQUEROR AND THE INDIAN CHIEF.—A poor Indian Chief was one day brought before the Viceroy of the Spanish Indies, accused of plotting against him. The poor man tried to prove his innocence, but everything seemed to go against him, and he was condemned to death. Seeing there was no longer any hope, he fell on his knees, and reverently put his hand on the hilt of the sword the Viceroy had at his side. " Noble conqueror," he then exclaimed, " how could I be guilty of such a crime, seeing this sword always at your side ! How could I dare to attempt the crime I am accused of, knowing that with one blow you could strike me dead ! " These words of the Chief seemed to prove his fear of the Viceroy's power, they seemed to prove his innocence, and obtained his release.—This is but a feeble image of our nothingness

and misery before God, who could in a moment take our lives and cast us into hell for a single grievous sin against Him.—*Chisholm.*

64. MOTHER AND CHILD.—"What?" replied a mother to her young child, who was saying she had never received anything from God: "you have never received anything from God? Who made the grass to grow and the corn to ripen? Who made the trees to blossom and then produce fruit? Who made the flowers to bloom? Who is it that makes the rains to fall on the earth, and the sun to shine and ripen everything? Is it not God who has done this, and all for us? What a proof of His goodness to you and to everyone! Oh! we can never thank Him sufficiently for them!"—*Power.*

65. "WHO MADE THE DEVIL?" "Who created the angels?" was the question one day asked of some children. The answer was easy: God. But who made the devil? There was the difficulty! They thought, reflected, and thought again, when suddenly one exclaimed: "God created him an angel, and he made himself a devil."—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

66. THE DEMON OF ALEXANDRIA.—A solitary was transported in spirit into a monastery where there dwelt over three hundred monks. He saw an immense number of devils following the religious everywhere—to the garden, refectory, and especially the Church—seeming to push and pull them about and distract them in every way, to lead them into sin. The anchorite was then transported to Alexandria, but found there only one devil seated by the city gate apparently with nothing to do. In his doubts as to the meaning of this, an angel gave him to understand that the devils are numerous and busy in monasteries, because there they find resistance: whereas, in the city, one was sufficient, people in the world being naturally prone to evil, and too careless to resist.—*Rodriguez.*

67. THE DEVIL AND THE CURÉ OF ARS.—For thirty years or more the holy Curé of Ars was tormented by the evil spirits, not merely in the way of temptation, like other men, but by physical ill-treatment, like Job. Often at night-time he was disturbed by their giving loud knocks at his room door, and by horrible noises on the staircase. They would enter his room, seize the bed-curtains, fit to tear them to pieces, and sometimes throw him out of bed, and once they set it on fire.—*His Life.*

68. THE DEVIL AT DEATH.—Chrysoarius led a life of most sinful excesses, which at length wearied the Divine Justice; he was seized with some illness and reduced to the last extremity. Before dying, however, his eyes were opened, and he perceived around him a crowd of evil spirits, ready to drag his soul down to hell. Terrified at the sight, he trembled in every limb, and called his son to come and protect him. His whole family was soon beside him, yet he alone saw devils on every side, turn where he would. At length, weary and exhausted, he exclaimed: "A truce till to-morrow," and with these words on his lips, the sinner expired.—*S. Gregory.*

69. INTENDED REVENGE.—The following narrative is given by one who was the subject of it: Having resolved with another to avenge an insult, we agreed to attack the enemy's house next night. All was ready, when suddenly there stood before me a young man of comely appearance, who said: "What are you doing, and what mean these instruments of death?" As I said nothing, he continued severely: "Think you I know not your design? You complain of some insult received, and think not of that you offer daily to God by your sins! For a trifle, you meditate taking the life of another, while God, full of mercy and compassion, spares you yours, when He might change it into eternal death! But there is time yet. God seeks not the death of the sinner: therefore be converted and live." He urged me to make a general confession. Meantime my companion came to remind me it was now time to carry out the evil design we had planned together: I went and told him I had changed my mind, and on returning to my room, I found the young man had disappeared, and I have never been able to think it was anyone else than my angel guardian.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

70. S. FRANCES AND HER ANGEL.—S. Frances was often permitted to see her angel guardian, and to him she had recourse in all her trials. When Satan came to tempt her, the angel looked on her with affection and strengthened her against him. Did she fall into any fault, a sadness overspread his countenance; but when she repented, he reappeared full of joy and gladness: thus he was to her a source of spiritual force.—*Her Life.*

71. S. AGNES NOT AFRAID.—When S. Agnes refused to offer sacrifice to the idols, the judge threatened to have her taken to a house of sin. She only smiled and said: "If you knew the power

of the God I serve, you would never threaten me thus : He has given me an angel to protect me !” When the judge’s son went up to insult her, her angel struck him dead at her feet.—*Her Life*.

72. NEVER ANGRY.—Asked how it was he was never angry, but always bright and gay, a hermit replied : “ I always remember the presence of my good angel, who whispers to me what to say and do, and notes down the manner in which I do all things : this thought fills me with respect for him, and thus I am enabled to avoid whatever may displease him.”—*Lives of the Fathers*.

73. S. WENCESLAUS AND THE ANGEL.—Prince Ladislas having rebelled against King Wenceslaus, and being on the point of piercing him through with his sword, saw by the side of his king, an angel, who said : “ Strike not.” Full of fear, the prince fell upon his knees, begging pardon from the Saint.—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

74. “ HOLY ANGEL, PRAY FOR HER !”—In a small village in the Tyrol, a joiner was piling up some wood to a considerable height, when suddenly the whole mass of timber topples over, burying under its ruins his little daughter, some three years of age. The parents’ first words were : “ Holy angel of our child, pray for her !” They hastened to remove the wood, with every precaution, fully expecting to find their child bruised to death, but imagine their joy and gratitude, on finding their little girl had not even received a scratch.—*Catholic Anecdotes*.

75. S. FRANCIS AND THE PRECIPICE.—S. Francis Regis having passed several nights with scarcely any sleep, at the close of a mission, was going to another village to begin another mission. On his way he was overcome with sleep, and was walking direct towards a precipice, without noticing it. Another moment and he would have fallen over the cliff, but he suddenly felt himself held by an invisible hand, and waking up, he saw the abyss at his very feet. He at once fell on his knees, to thank God for sending an angel to protect him.—*His Life*.

76. FREDERIC OF PRUSSIA AND THE SPARROWS.—This royal philosopher complained of the devastation caused annually in his States by the sparrows, and issued a proclamation, offering a reward for every sparrow’s head that should be brought to him ; and the war was waged with such vigour that in less than a year, there was nothing rarer than a sparrow to be seen in Prussia. The nation

looked forward to magnificent crops, and the king rejoiced to have given a lesson of wisdom to Providence! But what happened? Immense numbers of caterpillars and insects, freed from their enemies, devoured the harvest; and such was the desolation that Frederic, humbled and confounded, was obliged to repeal his law, and forbid under penalties that anyone should kill a single sparrow within his dominions.—*Gaume*.

77. S. FRANCIS OF ASSISI, ON THE LARK.—This matchless figure of the simplicity and sanctity of the children of God had regained a portion of that dominion over nature which was lost to us by sin. He had a special love for larks: obedient to his voice, these little musicians used to gather round him for their concerts. At his death, a multitude of them were seen fluttering over the roof of the house in which his body lay, and celebrating, in songs of more than ordinary joy, the everlasting happiness of their friend.—*Gaume*.

78. S. JOHN IN WANT OF A MEAL.—S. John of the Cross had unbounded confidence in God's Providence. The cook in the monastery having informed him there was no food for the morrow, he consoled him with these words: "Leave to God the care of providing food: to-morrow is far enough off: He is well able to take care of us." The morrow came and there was no bread in the place, when a man of means came to the door, inquiring whether the religious might not be in want, adding that he had dreamt so the night before. On the case being made known to him, he provided everything that was needed.—*His Life*.

79. PROVIDENCE JUSTIFIED.—A famous preacher had just concluded a sermon on Providence, when a man came and said: "I have heard your sermon: but I am a living proof of the contrary of what you said: for me there is no Providence! I have a wife and family, and work hard to support them: I've done no harm to anyone, and for twenty years I have tried to love God as a good Christian: but all in vain; I feel ready to drown myself, for I have bills due the end of the month, and am quite unable to meet them: I am lost, and would rather die than live!" "Well, my good man, you yourself shall become proof of the Providence of God! How much do you owe?"—"Nearly 3,000 francs." "Then here are 2,500: this sum was given me some days ago to dispose of for the relief of the unfortunate: go, pay your bills, and ever remember there is a Providence!"—*Noël*.

80. S. FRANCIS AND THE LOST BOAT.—S. Francis of Sales was wanting to cross over to Venice : he therefore took a place on a vessel about to sail, and sat awaiting the hour of departure. Meanwhile a person came up and claimed the place, as having paid for the same some time ago. S. Francis begged to be allowed to remain, as he was anxious to reach Venice : but he had to leave the boat, which set sail without him. Before long a storm arose, the vessel foundered, and all on board were lost. S. Francis then saw reason to bless God and thank Him for his preservation.

81. LANFRANC AND THE ROBBERS.—The famous Lanfranc, all given to profane learning, had neglected his salvation. Passing one day through a forest, he was attacked by robbers, who took all he had, and blindfolded him, tying his hands behind his back, and left him alone, away from the highroad. In this extremity he fell into despondency : wished to pray, but could not, never having learnt what prayer was. Yet thinking of God in his heart, he now resolved, that, if delivered from present danger, he would consecrate the rest of his life to the Divine service. Shortly after, some passers-by released him, and he made his way to the famous monastery of Bec, where he spent some years, and finally became Archbishop of Canterbury.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

82. THE BIRD AND THE SANDS.—Imagine you saw a little bird come every day to the seashore and take away one grain of sand each time ; how many years must pass before it could carry away all the sand on the beach ? But if, instead of this, it came only once in a thousand years and did in like manner,—count, if you can, the years that must pass before all would be gone. Yet a time would come when every grain would have disappeared, and God would be as far from the end of His eternity as when the bird took away the first grain. O eternity of God !

83. ZEUXIS' REPLY.—Zeuxis once was asked why he devoted so much time to his pictures : “ Because,” he replied, “ I am working for eternity.” With how much more reason and confidence can the just exclaim : “ We work for eternity, for a Master who can and will give an eternal reward.”—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

84. S. TERESA'S EXPLANATION.—When S. Teresa was quite young even, she delighted in being alone, to think of God and long to be with Him. When she heard the clock strike, she would exclaim with joy : “ Behold me one hour nearer to my country and eternal reward.”—*Her Life.*

85. WHERE GOD IS AND IS NOT.—A priest catechizing some children, among other things asked a little boy the question : “Where is God? Tell me where God is and I will give you an orange!” The child replied: “I will give you two oranges, if you will tell me where God is not!”—*Noël.*

86. S. ANTHONY IN TEMPTATION.—When S. Anthony retired from the world to the desert, he was subject to many temptations and assaults on the part of the devil. On one occasion he was so distressed that he exclaimed: “O my good Jesus! where wast Thou all this while?” Who replied and said: “I was here beside you: I saw your conflict and struggle: by My permission you were tempted; but fear not, fight bravely, for I am always near to help you!” These words filled his soul with peace.—*His Life.*

87. THE EMPEROR AND HIS SON.—The Greek Emperor Basil gave his son Leo this good advice: “Never, my son, will you regret a single action if, whenever you do anything, you only bear in mind that God sees and observes you: in this manner, neither in public nor in private, will you dare to do any guilty act. If you can escape the eyes of man, you cannot fly from the sight of God, who penetrates into the very depths of the heart.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

88. THE TRANSPARENT HEAD.—A young man complained to a priest that he could not rid himself of impure thoughts. The priest replied: “Imagine your head is made of glass, and that everyone can read your thoughts!” “Oh,” sighed the young man, “I should die for very shame, could men but read my thoughts.” “Well,” continued the priest, “God sees more clearly what passes within us than man ever could through the brightest crystal: remember this, and you will easily overcome your temptations.” The young man followed this advice and soon triumphed over his enemy.—*Kranzel.*

89. DIDEROT'S ADVICE.—Even Diderot used to say: “We do not insist sufficiently upon the presence of God. If I had a child to bring up, I should make him look on the Divine Being in such a manner as to make it an effort to forget Him. Instead of quoting the example of a man—perhaps worse than himself—I should say plainly, ‘God hears you, and you dare to lie!’ Young folks require to be taken by the senses. If a gathering took place, I would set apart a place for God; if we were both together I would teach my child to say, ‘We were three; God, my father, and myself.’”

90. S. THOMAS' REPLY.—When S. Thomas of Aquin was at the point of death, one of the brothers begged of him a rule of conduct, and the Saint replied : “ Whoever walks always in the presence of God will never lose His friendship by consenting to sin.”

91. THE PORTRAIT.—A pagan woman was going to commit some crime, when she noticed before her the portrait of a man of virtue. Filled with shame and confusion, she went away, feeling as though this mortal being were looking at her with threatening aspect. How much more terrible is the eye of Him who sees the most secret thoughts of man !—*Lohner*.

92. THE EYE ON THE SCEPTRE.—The Egyptians considered God the great eye of the world, seeing and penetrating all things ! Hence they made a sceptre of gold, at the summit of which was an eye wide open. By the sceptre they wished to show forth the sovereignty and power of God. By the eye, His boundless knowledge of all things. Placing the eye at the top of the sceptre, they indicated the heights where God dwells, from which He contemplates all things that exist.—*S. Cyril*.

93. S. THAIS AND PAPHNUTIUS.—S. Thais, in her youth, led a wicked and abandoned life. Holy Abbot Paphnutius was inspired of God to try and undertake her conversion. He, therefore, went to visit her in disguise, and asked to speak to her. She showed him a room where there would be no interruption, but Paphnutius asked for a more retired apartment. When shown another, he was still dissatisfied ; but Thais said : “ No one can possibly see or hear us.” “ And what of God ?” said Paphnutius. “ Is there no place where we can escape His all-seeing eye ?”—“ Alas, no,” replied Thais, casting herself at the feet of Paphnutius, whom she now perceived to be a man of God. He spoke to her so forcibly of the Divine presence that she abandoned her wicked life for a life of penance in the desert.—*Lives of the Fathers*.

94. S. LIDWINA'S CONSOLATION.—S. Lidwina was the daughter of poor parents, and during life was afflicted with terrible sufferings. Her body was covered with ulcers, and on a bed of rough boards she lay for eight-and-thirty years—subject to constant pain, the object also of reproaches from those around her. Yet she complained not, but was ever patient and resigned. She used to say “ God's eye is on me ; He sees and knows all : that is sufficient !” When the end of her sorrows came, she died in peace, and went to her home above.—*Her Life*.

95. DEATH OF ARIUS.—The frightful death of Arius is a terrible example of the just anger of God against the teachers of false doctrine. Arius lived in the fourth century, and blasphemously asserted that Our Lord was not truly God. He had many followers and powerful support, and even secured that he should be solemnly received again into the Church. On the day appointed, a great procession was formed in Constantinople, and, with songs of triumph, Arius was led forth towards the Church, boasting of the victory he had gained over the Bishops. But suddenly he was seized with frightful spasms, which compelled him to retire, till he should be able to resume his journey. Time passed away and he did not reappear; his followers became alarmed, and at length went to his room. There a fearful sight awaited them: Arius lay stretched on the ground, his face pale and livid, his body stiff in death, and the floor covered with his blood and intestines. His body had burst asunder, like that of Judas.—*Theodoret.*

96. S. AUGUSTINE AND THE CHILD BY THE SEA.—While engaged in writing on the subject of the Blessed Trinity, S. Augustine was one day wandering by the seashore, meditating on the mystery. While thus engaged, he saw before him a child, amusing itself in carrying the water of the sea into a hole it had prepared in the sand. S. Augustine asked him what he was doing. "I am trying," he replied, "to empty the sea into this little hole." "Then you are trying to do an impossible thing." "Not more impossible," replied the child, "than for you to understand or explain the mystery of the Blessed Trinity," and with these words he disappeared.

97. S. JOHN OF MATHA AND THE ORDER OF THE TRINITY.—When S. John of Matha was saying his first mass, there appeared before him an angel clothed in white, with a blue and red cross on his breast, with his hands crossed and resting on the heads of two captives, one a Christian, the other a Moor, as though wishing to make an exchange. The Bishop and others who assisted at this first mass also saw the vision, and consulting together as to what it could mean, resolved to send the young priest to Rome, with full details of the occurrence. On his way thither, he fell in with S. Felix of Valois, and the two were kindly received by the Pontiff, Innocent III. The Pope, celebrating the holy Sacrifice to know God's will, became witness of the same vision. He could no longer doubt his two visitors were inspired of God to work for the redemp-

tion of captives, and he gave them a habit like that seen in the vision: the white colour of their robe represents the Father, as white is the principle of all the colours, and receives its perfection from none; the blue of the cross, being a livid colour, represents the Son, all covered with wounds, in His Passion; while the red, the colour of fire, recalls the Holy Ghost, who inflames the hearts of men with love. Hence Pope Innocent called the new Order by the name of the Trinity for the Redemption of Captives.—*His Life*.

98. "O SANCTISSIMA TRINITAS."—Nothing more famous than this constant expression of S. Francis Xavier. For more than ten years the echoes of the East resounded with this mysterious exclamation, which was the war-cry of the S. Paul of modern times. To excite himself to the gigantic war he had undertaken against the paganism of India, Francis considered the august image of the Holy Trinity disfigured in so many souls of men, and he cried out, "O most holy Trinity." Neither hunger nor cold, neither difficulty nor danger, could stay his zeal in repairing, by instruction and Baptism, the spoiled image of the three august persons: "O sanctissima Trinitas."—*Gaume*.

99. THE MARTYR OF THE TRINITY.—S. Barbara's father was a pagan, and because she would not abjure the Christian Faith, he had her shut up in a high tower as yet unfinished, and set out on a distant journey. She remarked there were but two windows in the room allotted to her, but after many entreaties she prevailed on the workmen to put in a third, as she intended to consecrate them to the three Divine persons. When her father returned and found his plans had been altered, and moreover that Barbara was the cause of it, he was filled with rage and finding her still immovable in her Faith, he fell on her, and with his own hand pierced her through with his sword, A.D. 306.—*S. John Damascene*.

100. ARCHIMEDES AND HIS REFLECTOR.—About two centuries before Christ, the Romans laid siege to Syracuse, in Sicily. Their fleet surrounded the place on the side of the sea, cutting off all communication with other countries. But in Syracuse there lived a learned scientist, named Archimedes, who, among other things, to harass the Romans, introduced a species of burning mirrors, which concentrated so well the rays of the sun on to the ships as to set fire to them at a distance of five hundred yards. Though related by the historians of antiquity, these facts were afterwards denied

as impossible, till Buffon, in the eighteenth century, proved them again by his own experiments.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

101. LACORDAIRE AND THE OMELET.—Lacordaire was once dining with a number of guests, among whom was a young traveller, evidently full of confidence in himself. Among other things, the conversation fell at last on matters of religion, and our traveller observed that he believed nothing he could not understand. An omelet was being served at the moment, and after taking the best bit for himself, he handed the rest to the Dominican Father, who until then had spoken but little. On receiving the dish, he said to this traveller: "Can you tell me, sir, how it is that fire which melts iron and lead hardens these eggs?"—"I really couldn't say," replied he, rather taken aback by such a question. "Nor I either," added Lacordaire, "but I find that doesn't prevent your believing in omelets!"—*De Ségur.*

102. THE FINGER AND THE EAR.—Young Anthony, travelling in a bus, raised his cap as he passed before a Church, whereupon another passenger said: "I see you go to Church: what do you learn there?"—"I've learnt the chief mysteries of religion."—"Mysteries! don't you know, my boy, that we must never believe unless we understand? That's my principle, at any rate." "Then," said Anthony, "tell me why your little finger moves when you make it?"—"It moves because I will it, and because the life that is in me makes it move!"—"But why does it move?"—"Because I will it!"—"Yet your ears won't move, when you will it: how is that?" This ended the conversation, for the passenger saw that young Anthony was getting the best of it, both in argument and applause.—*Gridel.*

103. THE BLIND MAN AND THE PICTURE.—Take a man born blind: make him pass his hand over the smooth surface of a picture, which to you presents all the effects of light and shade. Tell the blind man that on the smooth surface he feels, you see any amount of hills and dales and uneven lands. How can he conceive that what is smooth to his touch should be so uneven to the eye? It would be to him an absurdity, a real mystery. He is wanting a sense to enable him to understand, the sense of sight, the loss of which prevents him knowing the effects of light and perspective.—Well, we are this blind man in regard to the mysteries of Faith: we are wanting, at present, a certain degree of intellect to understand

them. The blind man, on the testimony of other men, should reasonably believe the marvels of vision, without understanding them ; and we, on the word of God, should accept the mysteries of religion, without being able to sound them.—*Frayssinous*.

THE SECOND ARTICLE OF THE CREED

“And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord.”

104. S. BERNARDINE AND THE HOLY NAME.—S. Bernardine, devoting himself to the ministry of preaching, particularly endeavoured to inspire men with a great love for Jesus Christ and His holy Name. Often at the close of his sermons he would show the people this sacred name, written in letters of gold on a small tablet, and would invite his audience to kneel and unite with him in adoring and praising the Redeemer of men.—*His Life*.

105. JULIAN AND THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM.—Julian, the Apostate, attempted, in the fourth century, to falsify Our Lord’s prediction concerning the Temple : that there should not remain of it a stone upon a stone. He announced to the Jews that he was going to rebuild it ; they flocked, therefore, to Jerusalem from every quarter, rejoicing in the hope that the Kingdom of Israel was soon to be re-established. They set to work and easily removed what remained of the Old Temple, thus fulfilling to the letter Our Lord’s prediction. But as soon as the first stones came to be relaid, an earthquake cast them forth to a great distance, and a whirlwind carried away the sand and lime and other materials. But what was more supernatural, great globes of fire issued from the earth in all directions, killing the workmen, and destroying their tools. This terrible phenomenon was renewed several times, at each fresh attempt to continue the work, so that finally they were obliged to desist from their impious design, and this prodigy has been recorded by several historical writers.

106. THE MARTYRS OF TYPASUS.—An heretical Bishop had been forced into the See of Typasus in Algeria, and the Catholics refused to recognize him because of his Arian heresy. The African king, Hunneric, furious at such opposition, had three hundred of them seized, and commanded them to say, “Jesus Christ is not God,” under pain of having their tongues cut out in the public square of

Typasus. Not one consented to such impiety, but all preferred the punishment instead. But see the power of God : when their tongues were cut out, they continued to speak as before, repeating for a long time, " Jesus Christ is truly God."—*Victor de Vite*.

107. S. AMPHILOCHIUS AND THEODOSIUS.—S. Amphilochius begged the Emperor Theodosius to forbid assemblies of the Arians, so hostile to the Divinity of Jesus Christ : but the latter thought such a measure inopportune. In a further audience obtained on this subject, Amphilochius saluted the Emperor, and gave him all the marks of respect due to his exalted position, but paid no attention to the young prince, seated beside him, but rather seemed to deliberately treat him with coldness and indifference, even when his attention had been drawn to the child's presence. The Emperor, displeased at this, ordered the Bishop to leave the palace. " Sire," then said Amphilochius, " you are displeased because I show no respect to your son : doubt not that God in like manner abhors those who refuse to offer to His Son the honour they pretend to pay to Himself." The Emperor understood the stratagem of the Bishop and at once made the decree, forbidding the assemblies of Arian heretics.—*Sozomenus*.

108. THE PHILOSOPHER STRUCK DUMB.—Some Arians one day opened a discussion with a holy Bishop named Alexander, who, though he had not spent much time, like his enemies, in preparing for the meeting, ventured to face them, full of confidence in God. Their spokesman, forgetful of the reserve and decorum due on such occasion, began a proud and arrogant harangue, as though he had already won the day, when the holy Bishop addressed him and said : " In the name of Jesus Christ, whom I serve, be silent !" That moment the philosopher was struck dumb, and could thus convince himself that religion consists not in fine words or self-sufficient airs.—*Sozomenus*.

109. THE " ANGELUS."—To lead the Faithful to praise and thank God for the benefits and mercies of the Incarnation, and at the same time recommend themselves to Mary who had so great a share in that mystery, Pope Urban II., in 1095, decided that the bell should toll morning, noon, and evening, and that at each time the " Angelus " prayer should be said.

110. THE HOLY HOUSE OF LORETTO.—A few miles south of Ancona, in Italy, there is a stately church rising among the houses

of the little city of Loretto. On entering in, the traveller observes a singular rectangular edifice of no great height, constructed apparently of white marble, and richly adorned with statues and sculpture. This is the famous *Santa Casa*, which tradition asserts to be the very same building in which Mary received the visit of the Archangel, and where the Holy Family dwelt for many years. Externally, the original walls cannot be seen ; but within the coarse stonework of the original masonry is exposed to view. It measures about 31×13 ft. The legend of the Holy House is, that when the Christian power was expelled from Palestine, at the end of the thirteenth century, that the building might not be left to the mercy of infidels, angels lifted it from its foundations and carried it through the air, first to Illyria, and then to its present position at Loretto. From that day to this it has been the scene of numerous miracles and tokens of Heavenly favour. It has a world-wide reputation, and has been visited by Saints, Pontiffs, Kings, and crowds of pilgrims from all parts. In the Missal and Breviary, a proper Mass and Office commemorate this miraculous translation.—*Northcote.*

111. THE YOUNG MAN'S IRREVERENCE.—It is related that a certain young man, who once was present at Mass, neglected to genuflect at the words *Homo factus est* in the Creed, whereupon the devil appeared to him in terrible form, and thus addressed him : “Ungrateful wretch, dost thou not thank and adore the God, who was made man for thee ? Had He done for us what He has done for thee, we should be ever prostrate before Him in adoration and love : and thou dost not even make a sign of thankfulness.” So saying, he struck him with his club and left him, like Heliodorus of old, half dead with pain and fear.—*S. Liguori.*

112. THE DEATH OF S. MICHAEL.—A prince of the Saracens had the happiness of becoming a Christian. Severus, patriarch of Antioch, and follower of Eutyches, who held there was but the Divine nature in Our Lord, endeavoured to gain him over to his sect, and sent two prelates to indoctrinate him. The prince arranged for a second interview, during which an officer, to whom he had previously given the word, came and whispered something in his ear. Suddenly the prince became sad, and his eyes seemed moist with tears. “Alas,” he said, “I have evil tidings : just think, S. Michael has just died, and the court of Heaven is in great tribulation !” The two prelates with a smile hastened to reassure him,

and told him the angels are immortal and can neither suffer nor die. "And you would have me believe that Jesus Christ has only the one Divine nature! Yet He suffered and died! Can God die, then?" At this rebuff, so little expected, the two heretics lost no time in taking leave of a prince who showed so much sense.—*Catholic Anecdotes.*

113. THE BAR OF GOLD AND IRON.—A Eutychian, holding but one nature in Christ, was trying to convince a Catholic boy of the same. To prove his point, he placed two pieces of iron in the fire, and when melted he joined them together so as to make but one: "Behold how God and man unite, to make but one nature in Christ!" "But," said the boy, "supposing you take a piece of gold and a piece of iron, will they not unite and make a single bar, but of two metals quite distinct? So in the Son of God, the two natures, Divine and human, remain distinct, though united in the one person of God the Son."—*Anec. Chrét.*

114. THE CHILD IN THE WOOD.—A monk was passing through a forest one Christmas eve, meditating on the goodness of God in sending His Divine Son into the world to redeem us. He thought he heard the cries of a child somewhere near him, and turning aside a little, he saw lying on the snow a beautiful babe, crying and trembling in the cold. Filled with compassion, he said, as though speaking to it: "How are you thus left alone? Who has had the cruelty to leave you here?" To his surprise, the child answered him: "Alas, how can I help crying, when I am abandoned by every one, even on this night of my love, when no one receives me or has pity on me!" and with these words he disappeared, for it was the Divine Child Himself. The monk then understood how great was the ingratitude of men towards Our Lord's mercy in the Incarnation.—*S. Liguori.*

115. "HOW UNGRATEFUL!"—When the first missionaries to Japan told the natives of the greatness, power, and perfections of God, a feeling of awe came over them, which increased as they learned that this God was always near them, even in their very souls. Their astonishment knew no bounds when they heard of the sin of our first parents. But when told of the suffering and death of Our Lord, they cried: "How good, how loving must the God of the Christians be!" The fathers then explained that God has commanded us to love Him under pain of terrible punishment: "Surely

that was not necessary," they answered. "Surely the Christians must always love so good a God, and be ever inflamed with thanksgiving and gratitude!" When told this was not so, but that many spend their lives in offending God, the indignation of the savages knew no bounds: "Who ever heard of such ingratitude! O hard-hearted barbarians!" they exclaimed; "they ought all to be destroyed off the face of the earth!"—*Cat. pratique.*

116. "AM I LIKE JESUS?"—A pious boy once received a beautiful picture of the holy Child Jesus. Every day he looked at it, and tried to resemble that Divine Child. "Have I been like the holy Child this day?" he used to ask himself each night. "Was I obedient, like Him? Did I love God and my neighbour as He did? Have I tried to advance in wisdom and grace as He did?" Thus the boy grew up into manhood, trying to resemble the Divine Child in all things. At length he became a model of virtue, and a great Saint. Can we not do the same?—*Chisholm.*

117. THE TONGUE OF S. PAUL.—S. Paul, as we may learn from his epistles, had the name of Jesus deeply engraved in his heart. History says that when he was beheaded, his tongue still pronounced thrice the holy name of Jesus. No doubt it was the sweetness of this name that changed into milk the blood that should naturally have come forth, when his head was struck off.

118. THE HEART OF S. IGNATIUS., M.—S. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, had the Divine name so deeply impressed on his heart, that when they opened it after his death, they found the name of Jesus written there in letters of gold.—*Bollandists.*

119. S. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA.—The great devotion of this Saint towards the holy name led him to give to the religious order he founded the name of Society of Jesus. One of the members of this order, S. Francis Regis, was accustomed to salute those he met with the words: "Praised be Jesus Christ," which for many generations became a common form of greeting in Catholic countries.

120. THE MIRACLE OF BOLSENA.—In the little town of Bolsena, in Italy, a priest was saying mass, but, after the words of consecration, had doubts as to the Real Presence. Our Lord, to lead him to better dispositions, allowed the sacred Host to pour forth blood in such quantity, that the corporal and altar-cloths were all saturated.

The Pope had this corporal taken to him, on hearing of the miracle, and received it with great splendour and ceremony. For many years it was solemnly carried in procession, on the feast of Corpus Christi.—*Giry*.

121. MIRACLE OF THE SANCTUARY LAMP OIL.—In 1638 a young man was taken to the hospital of Saragossa, his leg so seriously injured that it was found necessary to amputate it. For two years after this he was seen constantly at the Church door, begging the alms of the Faithful; every day he entered the Church, and with oil from the lamp in the sanctuary he used to anoint the stump of his leg. One morning, in 1640, after sleeping more soundly than usual, he found, to his intense amazement, as may be supposed, he had two legs, perfect as before the accident. On hearing this the ecclesiastical authorities set on foot a strict enquiry. The surgeon and those who had assisted at the amputation, and many who had seen and known the young man after the operation, gave their testimony on solemn oath. After a very long and exact examination of the various witnesses, the Archbishop solemnly declared the fact miraculous, and writers of weight have confirmed this sentence.—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

122. S. ANTHONY AND THE MULE.—S. Anthony of Padua was preaching at Toulouse, where great numbers of men denied the Real Presence. He was speaking with great force, when suddenly one of them exclaimed: "All well and good: you can prove anything, if you have a good flow of language; but come to plain facts: can you prove your doctrine by a miracle?"—"However unworthy I may be, I think God will grant me this for your conversion. What miracle do you ask for?"—"Well, I have a mule, and if it falls on its knees in the presence of what you call the Blessed Sacrament, I will believe, like you, that the consecrated Host contains its Creator and mine." The proposal was peculiar, but S. Anthony accepted it, knowing how God had more than once worked miracles by means of animals. Accompanied by large numbers of people, he went in solemn procession to the public square, where the heretic awaited them with his mule. The Saint then apostrophized it and said: "Creature of God, in the name of thy Creator, whom I hold in my hands, I command thee to fall down and adore!" and immediately the poor animal was on its knees, and there remained while the crowd passed to and fro to see it. At the Saint's command it arose and went to its food. The owner was the first to cry out: "I renounce my errors for ever; I believe now in the Real Presence.

I am a Catholic." Many others followed his example, and entered the true Church.—*Postel*.

123. S. THARCISIUS, FIRST MARTYR OF THE EUCHARIST.—A child was the first to have the honour of martyrdom for the cause of the Real Presence. One day some pagan soldiers met him carrying the Blessed Sacrament to his home, as was not unusual in the early days of persecution. They seized him and threatened to ill-treat him, unless he made known what it was he was carrying, but he would never betray the secret species. So they struck him with sticks and stoned him to death. They searched his body and his garments, but God permitted that they should find nothing, and they fled away in terror.—*His Life*.

124. A CONVERSION AT MARSEILLES.—An English Protestant was visiting a Church in Marseilles : through curiosity, or perhaps in the hope of surprising some Catholic contradicting in his acts his profession of faith in the Real Presence, he hid behind one of the columns to see, without being seen, what went on in the Church. The masses were over, and he was alone ; as he expected, the Sacristan came shortly to do up the sanctuary. This was a man of real piety and lively faith, and evidently thinking himself to be alone in the Church, whenever he passed before the tabernacle, he made a most profound and prolonged genuflection. At this sight the Protestant felt his heart soften within him ; he laid aside his prejudice, studied the Catholic religion for himself, and was not long in embracing it.—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

125. S. JULIANA'S LAST COMMUNION.—S. Juliana, thirteenth century, was distinguished for her great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. In her last sickness, she earnestly desired to receive Holy Viaticum, but from the nature of her illness it was found impossible to comply with her request. Her confessor, however, brought the Blessed Sacrament and laid it on her breast. No sooner had he done so than she expired, and, wonderful to relate, the Sacred Host was no longer to be seen ; in response to the ardent love, it had passed into her heart, leaving upon her breast the impression of the consecrated particle.—*Her Life*.

126. GOD'S SENTRY.—In 1847, the pastor of a Church in Orleans began to notice that nearly every day, from one to three, there came and remained in Church a soldier of noble bearing and pious demeanour ; there he remained straight as a pillar and

motionless before the grating of the Sanctuary. A captain came one day to visit the Church, and the priest explains this to him, and in a short time in comes the soldier as usual. The captain recognizes him as his confidential servant. Going then all to the sacristy, the captain enquires what he is doing there. "Captain," he replied, "I am keeping two hours' sentry before the good God. There are sentries everywhere: in Paris, the President has four; here, my General has two; the Prefect has a sentry, the Bishop, and so on. Now the good God is greater than all these, and yet he has no sentry, so I go on duty for Him when I am free, and I assure you the time is not long, for I love Him, as you do yourself, captain." This captain was a religious man, and encouraged his soldier to continue his good work for God.—*Catholic Anecdotes*.

THE THIRD ARTICLE OF THE CREED

"Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

127. THE ROLLING ROCK.—A pagan priest came to ask S. Gregory Thaumaturgus to instruct him in the Christian religion. This he was willing to do, and naturally commenced with the principal mysteries. Having explained that of the Holy Trinity, he came to that of the Incarnation, when he said that the Son, the Second Divine Person, had compassion on the world, lost by the sin of Adam; that He came down on earth, and took a body and soul like to ours, to the end that He might be able to suffer and die for us. "Impossible!" cried the pagan priest, "impossible! I cannot understand that!" "But, my friend," replied the Saint, "I do not understand it myself, for it is a mystery; I believe it, nevertheless, because such truths as these are not demonstrated by reasoning, but by the miracles of God's omnipotence." "Well, since that is the case, I will believe you, if you can, by a word, make this rock, which is here beside us, go and place itself yonder on the opposite side of the stream." S. Gregory raises his eyes to Heaven, addresses to God a short but fervent prayer, and cries: "*Betake thyself thither!*" Instantly the huge stone rolled of itself to the spot indicated. This ended the dispute; the incredulous sacrificer found nothing difficult to believe after that, in the sublime mysteries of religion, and became sincerely converted.—*Life of S. Gregory*.

128. CONFIDENCE OF S. TERESA.—This Saint had great devotion to S. Joseph, and in all her wants applied to him. This is what she writes: "I took for my advocate and master the glorious S. Joseph, and I recommend myself much to him. I cannot remember having asked him for anything which he did not obtain. It seems that to other Saints Our Lord has given power to succour us in only one kind of necessity; but this glorious Saint, I know by my own experience, assists us in all kinds of necessities. Hence Our Lord, it appears, wishes us to understand that, as He was obedient to him when on earth, for he was called His father, so now in Heaven He grants him whatever he asks. Would that I could persuade all men to be devout to this glorious Saint. I have never known anyone who was truly devoted to him, and who performed particular devotions in his honour, that did not advance more in virtue, for he assists in a special manner those souls who recommend themselves to him."—*Her Life* : Oct. 15.

129. THE STABLE OF BETHLEHEM.—The grotto of Bethlehem still exists, and is enclosed in the large Church of the Nativity. You go down to it by a flight of sixteen steps. It is a natural cave which has been built over and then covered throughout with marble, by the piety of the Faithful, even to the floor, in the centre of which is a silver star, placed there in 1717, on which are engraved in Latin the words :

"HERE JESUS CHRIST WAS BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY."—Kings, Emperors, Saints, and thousands of pilgrims have read them and have dwelt on this spot, to adore Him who was born there. Many have left behind them the marks of their faith and piety, for thirty-two lamps are constantly kept burning on the very place where the true Light of the world was born.—*Mislin*.

130. OUR LORD'S CRIB.—The crib in which Our Lord was laid was taken from the Holy Land to Rome, in 642. It consists of five small planks of wood, about two and a half feet long, by five inches wide. They are placed together and held by ribbons, duly sealed, covered with leaves of silver, and kept in a magnificent reliquary, in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel of S. Mary Major's, in Rome, and is one of the chief objects which pilgrims visiting the eternal city are always anxious to venerate.

131. INCIDENTS OF THE FLIGHT TO EGYPT.—The Gospels give no details of the journey to Egypt, but tradition hands down many, *e.g.* :

As the Holy Family passed by the chief towns and cities, the idols of the pagans fell and were shattered to pieces.—*Orsini*.

Until some years ago, a well was shown to travellers wherein Our Lady was said to have washed the Divine Child ; it was held in great veneration, not only by Christians, on account of its associations, but also by the Saracens of the country, on account of its extraordinary power of making the land fruitful.—*Giry*.

S. Anselm says the Holy Family settled in Heliopolis, now Cairo, where they lived for seven years in poverty and want, unknown and uncared for. Another tradition tells how one night they rested in a robbers' cave, received with rough, but kind, hospitality by the captain's wife, whose child was white with leprosy. Mary asked for water wherein to wash her Divine Child. The captain's wife thought she perceived something remarkable about her guests, and with a kind of faith, she washed her own child in the same water, and at once his flesh became as rosy and beautiful as ever mother's eye could wish to see ! Years passed away, and this Dimas, for such was his name, was led into Jerusalem, a captive, and condemned to death. He was one of the two malefactors crucified beside Our Lord, the one who received pardon for his sins as he died, paradise for his cave's hospitality in the past !—See Faber's *Foot of the Cross*, 2nd dol.

132. THE VIRGIN'S TREE.—As they were making their journey in obedience to this decree, the Blessed Virgin, bearing the Divine Child in her arms, feeling herself fatigued, sat down to rest under a turpentine tree, midway between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Beside her was S. Joseph, holding in his hands two white doves, which were to be offered to the Lord in the temple. Whilst they sat at that place, the tree bent its branches, and spread them so as to protect the Holy Family and do homage to the Child Jesus. The miraculous tree existed for many long ages, and every pilgrim who passed that way kissed it respectfully, taking away with them some of its leaves or branches. It was unhappily destroyed in 1645 ; a Mahometan Arab cut it down in order to prevent the pious pilgrims from passing over his field. The Pacha of Jerusalem being apprised of this by the Fathers of the Holy Land, gave orders that young shoots should be engrafted on the roots of the old tree ; but it was useless. The monks sold the wood in small pieces and made of it crosses and beads, which were distributed amongst travellers. They likewise caused a cairn, or heap of stones, to be erected on the spot where the Virgin's tree had stood.—*Mistin*.

133. S. VINCENT IN CHAINS.—One day when S. Vincent of Paul was at Marseilles, he went to visit the poor galley-slaves who were sent to that city to fill up the time of their punishment. There was amongst them one man who seemed sadder than the others. “Tell me, my good man,” said the Saint, “what is it that makes you so sad?” The man replied: “I have a wife and little family who live far, far away from this place; my heart yearns to speak to them again, but whilst I am here I can never enjoy that happiness. This is what makes me so sad.” S. Vincent went to the overseer, who did not know who the Saint was, and asked permission to take the poor man’s place, that he might have the happiness of seeing his friends again. This strange request was granted; the chains were taken off the poor man and put on S. Vincent, and he was made to work in the place of the criminal, till in a short time, it being discovered who he was, he was instantly set free. S. Vincent was not obliged to take the place of the galley-slave; it was his love for him that made him do so.—Jesus Christ did more for us; out of love for us He came down from Heaven that He might, in His own Divine Person, make reparation for our sins.—*His Life.*

134. THE LION AND THE LAMB.—In ancient history we read that a merchant went to the palace of a certain king, and sold him false stones as real jewels. After some time the deception was discovered, and, in punishment of it, the merchant was condemned to be devoured by lions. On the day fixed for his death, a great multitude had assembled to witness it. The king himself was there, surrounded by his court. At length the hour fixed for the execution came, and the king gave the signal: the gate of the arena was thrown open, and behold, instead of an angry lion, a little lamb came frisking in and ran towards the man, who thought his last hour had come. A sudden enthusiasm seized upon the multitude when they saw this, for they knew that the king had shown the poor man mercy, and they cried out with one voice, “Long live the king.”—Our Heavenly Father has treated us in the same way, sending His own beloved Son—“the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world”—to redeem us.—*Chisholm.*

135. S. ANTHONY’S SURPRISE.—One day S. Anthony had a vision, in which he saw the whole world covered with snares and nets which Satan had spread out to catch the souls of men. This sight filled him with great surprise and sadness. “O my God,” he

exclaimed, "who can ever hope to escape all these snares, for they are everywhere?" He heard a voice which answered him: "The man who is humble."

136. SATAN HATES HUMILITY.—S. Macarius was once going to his cell with some palm leaves, with which he was accustomed to make mats. Satan appeared to him carrying a scythe, with which he tried to strike him. But he could not touch him. "O Macarius," he said to him in a tone of great anger, "how grieved I am that I cannot strike you. I can do the works you do better even than you. You indeed sometimes fast, but I am always fasting; you sometimes watch when others sleep, I never sleep. But there is one thing that makes you stronger than I am, and that is your humility.—*Chisholm*.

137. DEVOTION TO THE HOLY FAMILY.—S. Vincent Ferrer relates that a pious merchant was accustomed to give dinner every Christmas-day to three poor persons—a man, a woman, and a child—intending to honour thereby the Holy Family. As the merchant lay on his death-bed, Jesus appeared to him, along with Mary and Joseph, and said to him in his sleep: "Since you so often gave us to eat on Christmas-day, you shall now be our guest in Heaven." The merchant awoke much refreshed, and inundated with spiritual joy; he fell asleep in the Lord shortly after, dying the death of the Just.—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

THE FOURTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

"Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried."

138. EARTH FROM THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.—The piety of the pilgrims, who, for more than eighteen hundred years, have visited the scenes of Our Lord's mortal life, goes often so far as to carry away some earth, or to break off fragments of wood or stone in those sacred places. S. Augustine himself relates a splendid miracle wrought in his time by a little of this dust taken from the tomb of Jesus Christ, and, consequently, from the place where He came forth glorious by His resurrection. A man of quality, named Hesperius, had the great affliction of seeing his house become a den of devils; things sufficient to make the hair of one's head stand on end were of ordinary occurrence there, through the malice of Satan. One of his friends, who had made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem,

gave him a little earth taken from the Holy Sepulchre ; Hesperius placed it in one of his apartments, had mass celebrated in it, and failed not to experience the efficacy of his prayers. This miracle was much talked of in the neighbourhood ; S. Augustine heard of it, and wished to see, with his own eyes, this bewitched house, as it was called. Hesperius begged the holy bishop to permit him to build a chapel in the place, which was granted. Scarcely was the edifice completed, when a paralytic young man, being brought thither, was immediately cured. This new miracle proved that God was well pleased with what had been done.—*Lasance*.

139. TEXT OF OUR LORD'S CONDEMNATION.—A document, purporting to be the original of the sentence of Our Lord's condemnation, made its appearance at Naples in 1280. It is curious, but can hardly be regarded as genuine. It runs as follows :

The year 17 of the reign of Tiberias Cæsar, the 25th day of March, in the Holy City of Jerusalem, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests of the people of God, Pontius Pilate, governor of Galilee, seated in the presidential chair of the pretorium, condemns Jesus of Nazareth to die on the cross between two thieves, the witnesses of the people saying : 1st, Jesus is a seducer : 2nd, He is seditious : 3rd, an enemy of the Law : 4th, He falsely calls Himself the Son of God and King of Israel : 5th, He entered the Temple, followed by crowds holding palms in their hands. He orders the first centurion, Cornelius, to lead Him to the place of execution, and forbids all persons, rich or poor, to prevent the death of Jesus. Witnesses signing the sentence : Daniel Robani, pharisee, Joannas Zorobatel : Raphæl Robani : Capet : Jesus shall leave the city of Jerusalem by the Ikuenean gate.—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

140. THE CROWN OF THORNS, IN PARIS.—Baldwin the Second, Emperor of Constantinople, having come to France to solicit the king's aid against the Greeks, who were besieging that imperial city, thought he would gain the heart of King Louis by making him a present of the Holy Crown of Thorns. He was not mistaken : the king assisted with money and troops, and the precious relic was withdrawn from the hands of the Venetians, and was brought to France. S. Louis went to receive it, five leagues from Sens, followed by his whole court and all his clergy ; he accompanied it to Paris, with sentiments of compunction and humility, whereof his whole exterior presented sensible marks. He himself bore the Holy Crown from the Church of S. Antoine-des-Champs, in one of the

suburbs of Paris, to that of Notre Dame ; it was afterwards deposited in the Chapel of S. Nicholas, attached to his palace. Having also received a fragment of the true cross, which the Venetians had obtained from the King of Jerusalem, he caused the Chapel of S. Nicholas to be taken down, and built in the same place as the Holy Chapel (*la Sainte Chapelle*). He there placed the pious relics of our Redeemer's Passion, enshrined in gold and precious stones. Every year, on Good Friday, he went thither, clad in his royal robes, the crown on his head, and exposed with his own hands the True Cross to the veneration of the people.—*Baillet*.

141. S. CATHERINE AND THE TWO CROWNS.—S. Catherine of Siena was favoured with a vision in which Our Lord presented to her a crown of gold and a crown of thorns, asking her to choose that which pleased her more. "Lord," she replied, "I wish so to live as to reproduce Thy Passion in myself, and to find my joy and delight in suffering and sorrow!" Taking then the crown of thorns, she pressed it on her head, and ever after lived in humiliations and suffering.—*Her Life : April 30*.

142. GODFREY OF BOUILLON IN JERUSALEM.—Godfrey showed the greatest respect for the Crown of Thorns. When proclaimed first king of Jerusalem by the army of Christians, he refused the title, and would not allow a royal crown to be placed on his head. He thought it unbecoming to be crowned with gold and precious stones in the very place where the Son of God, King of kings, had borne a Crown of Thorns.—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

143. A NATURALIST'S CONVERSION.—At the death of Christ, the rocks were rent asunder. That split is still to be seen, and the sight of it alone has sufficed to convert unbelievers. Addison, travelling in Palestine, with a mind full of prejudice, made a jest of everything he saw, and laughed immoderately at stories he heard of relics and miracles. He was told of the fissures in the rock of Calvary, and must needs see them, promising himself additional themes for the exercise of his wit and pleasantries. But when he had regarded for some moments those enormous fissures, when he saw that instead of following the natural division of soils, as is usual in other convulsions of the earth, they followed, on the contrary, the most oblique directions: when he had considered all that, he was staggered, he began to believe in Religion, and even cried aloud in his conviction, "*I begin to be a Christian ! I have made a profound*

study of mathematics and physics, and I am satisfied that the rents I now see were not produced by an ordinary or natural earthquake. I see, on the contrary, that they are the pure effect of a miracle, and I thank my God for having brought me hither to contemplate this monument of His power, which proves in so striking a manner the Divinity of Jesus Christ."—*Mislin*.

144. THE PRIEST'S MIRROR.—A priest of Florence, in Italy, had a fine *Ecce Homo* painted, and magnificently framed to place in his chamber. Every day he went to contemplate it during his meditation, and always found in it numerous subjects for reflection. Opposite his window, on the other side of the street, dwelt a lady who, unhappily, lived but for the world, and spent whole hours decorating herself before a mirror. Having several times remarked the pious ecclesiastic before his *Ecce Homo*, she took it into her head that that picture was a very large glass, in which he used to admire himself. She went to pay him a visit, and spoke of his handsome mirror. He left her to believe that it really was a glass; he much extolled its beauty, and told her it even enjoyed a property which all mirrors have not. "You know, madam, ordinary mirrors reflect our faces just as they are, but mine has the curious property of effacing by degrees the spots, defects, and imperfections which one may have, provided they contemplate it every day." The lady, more and more bewildered, asked to see this extraordinary mirror. He continued the conversation a little longer, then conducted her to the famous mirror. Imagine the astonishment of that worldly lady. The good priest then made her so sensible that all he had said was true (not for the face, which the slightest accident may disfigure, but for the soul) that she changed her sentiments, led a most Christian life, and died a holy and a happy death.—*Schmid*.

145. THE DEVIL'S PICTURE.—A young man bargained to sell his soul to the devil, if the latter would obtain him a large fortune. The agreement was duly made, and the young man sealed and signed it with blood drawn from his own arm. But he also asked the devil to draw him an exact picture of the Crucifixion: this the devil did, and on receiving it, the young man was so struck with what he beheld, that his heart was moved with compassion at the sight of Our Lord reduced to such a state: he began to reflect and meditate, and at last he broke his contract with the evil one, and resolved to love God only in the future. The thought of Our Lord's sufferings and death, as thus represented to him, brought sorrow

and contrition to his heart, and thus the devil cheated himself of a victim for once. Copies of this picture may sometimes be seen.

146. THE RED CROSSES.—When Louis XII., of France, was consecrated at Rheims, he had a list prepared for him of all his enemies, especially those who had been opposed to him when he was only Duke of Orleans. In going through this list, he marked with a red cross a certain number of those names, and particularly of those lords of whom we have just spoken. Those who had had the misfortune of displeasing him were much alarmed on hearing that they had been thus marked in red ; they doubted not but that they were soon to perish, and endeavoured to escape from the court. The King, apprised of the motive of their retreat, could not help laughing, and called them all back. Their fears increased still more, but Louis XII. said to them : “ I am surprised, my lords, at your precipitate flight, and the reasons you assign for it. I never intended to do you harm ; the King of France has nought to do with the private quarrels of the Duke of Orleans. Furthermore, the red cross which I placed at each of your names, very far from exciting me to revenge, moves me, on the contrary, to clemency. Yes, I am bound to forgive you whatever wrongs you may have done me, as Christ on the cross asked pardon of His Father for those who had crucified Him.”—*Gabourd.*

147. S. JOHN GUALBERT AND HIS ENEMY.—John Gualbert, a young Italian gentleman, burned to avenge the death of his brother, who had been basely murdered. His father urged him on still more by frequent exhortations. In this frame of mind he chanced to meet the murderer. The lonely place, the narrow road, all favoured his design ; he raises his arm to strike the enemy. The unfortunate man, being wholly unarmed, falls on his knees, his arms crossed, without saying a single word—it was Good Friday. Reminded by that simple act of Our Saviour’s death, John Gualbert throws down his sword, raises his enemy, and mildly says : “ I cannot refuse you what you ask of me in the name of Jesus Christ ; I forgive you from my heart. Pray to God that He may forgive me my sin !” And he embraced him tenderly. After this victory obtained over his own heart, he entered a religious order, and became a Saint.—*His Life : July 12.*

148. THE YOUNG POSTULANT.—A young lady of distinguished birth desired to enter a very austere order. To try her vocation the Superior gave her a frightful picture of the rigours of the

cloister, and conducting her in spirit to every place in the community, she everywhere showed her objects repulsive to nature. The young postulant appeared shaken; it seemed as though her resolution was giving way. She remained silent. "Daughter," said the Superior, "you do not answer me." "Reverend Mother," replied the young lady, "I have but one question to propose to you: Are there any crucifixes in your house? Shall I find a crucifix in that narrow cell, with the hard bed of which you speak? in that refectory, where the food is so coarse and unpalatable? in that chapter where one is so harshly reprimanded?" "Oh! yes, daughter, there are crucifixes everywhere." "Well, Mother, I hope I shall find nothing difficult, since I shall have a crucifix near me wherever I am, and whatever I may have to suffer."—*Debussi*.

149. THE BOOK OF S. BONAVENTURE.—S. Thomas, on a visit to S. Bonaventure, asked him one day from what book he derived his great knowledge, and where he had been taught to speak with such holy unction? "*At the foot of my crucifix*," answered S. Bonaventure, pointing at the same time to the crucifix before him. "*This is my book*," said he; "*Jesus Christ is my Master*." He used to say, that from the wounds of Our Lord proceeded glorious darts, capable of softening the hardest hearts, and enkindling the coldest souls.—*His Life: July 14*.

150. THE THREE PICTURES.—Long ago a certain knight, called Hildebrand, had received a great insult from another nobleman, who had an ill-will towards him. Hildebrand felt the insult so keenly that he determined to be revenged. Accordingly a duel was arranged, and when the day came, Hildebrand rose early and prepared for the combat. As he was going towards the place appointed, he had to pass by a chapel, and as the hour of meeting had not yet come, he thought he might go into the chapel to wait. So he entered, and began to walk round; in doing so, he saw three pictures on the walls. One was the scourging at the pillar, and below it the words: "When He suffered, He threatened not." The second represented Our Lord clad in the fool's garment, with the words: "He rendereth not evil for evil." The third was the Crucifixion, with the prayer: "Father, forgive them." It was not by chance that Hildebrand had gone into the Church—God had led him in, and now His grace spoke to him by these pictures. He threw himself on his knees and began to pray for himself and the one who had injured him. The hour came for the contest. Hilde-

brand rose from his knees to go and meet his enemy, who was awaiting him. But what was the surprise of the latter to see the knight walk up to him, take him by the hand, and ask his forgiveness. "Jesus forgave His enemies, and prayed for them; let us do the same," he said. The other willingly acceded to his request, and from that day forward they were friends.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

151. S. ANDREW AND HIS CROSS.—Of S. Andrew it is related that when he was led out to be crucified, as soon as he perceived at a distance the cross on which he was to suffer, he cried out in a transport of love: "Hail, precious cross, that has been consecrated by the body of my Lord, and adorned with His limbs as with rich jewels. I come to thee exulting and glad; receive me with joy into thy arms, taking me from among men, and present me to my Master, that He, who redeemed me *on* thee, may receive me *by* thee." So saying, he gave up his body to the executioners, and finished his holy life by a glorious death.—*Butler.*

152. S. PETER'S CRUCIFIXION.—The little chapel of the "*Domine quo vadis*,—*Lord, where art Thou going?*" situated on one of the roads that lead out of the city of Rome, brings to the mind of the traveller a beautiful incident that took place on that very spot eighteen hundred years ago. It is related in the life of S. Peter that the Emperor Nero, having raised a cruel persecution against the Church, the Christians of Rome earnestly entreated S. Peter to withdraw from the city for a while, that he might preserve a life so valuable to the whole Church. The Apostle, though unwilling, yielded to their entreaties, and under the darkness of night made his escape, and turned his back on Rome. He had not proceeded far when he met Our Blessed Lord bearing His cross, and toiling painfully under the weight of it, on His road towards the city. S. Peter, thunderstruck at what he saw, exclaimed: "Lord, where art Thou going?" on which Our Saviour, casting upon him a look of gentle reproach, replied: "I am going to Rome to be crucified again." S. Peter at once understood that it was the will of God that he should return to Rome and there suffer; he accordingly re-passed the gate and re-entered the city. Soon after, he was apprehended, and being condemned to be crucified, and led to execution, he begged as a special favour that he might be crucified with his head downwards, saying that he did not think himself worthy to suffer in the same manner as his Divine Master. His request was granted, and thus he added to the glory of martyrdom the crown of humility.—*Butler.*

153. THE MARTYRS OF JAPAN.—During the cruel persecution raised by the Japanese Emperor Taicosama against the true religion, a glorious band of twenty-six Christians were condemned to suffer the barbarous punishment of crucifixion. Among this noble company of heroes were three young boys, the oldest of whom was not more than fifteen years of age. These generous youths showed no less courage than those who were more advanced in years ; and the youngest especially, a boy of ten, named Louis, was remarkable for the extreme eagerness and joy with which he welcomed his cruel martyrdom. The Japanese general, touched with pity at his youth, offered him not only his life, but a place in his own household, on condition that he would abandon his religion ; but Louis nobly answered : “ On such a worthless condition as you propose, I reject the offer of life. Would you have me barter eternal happiness for a few fleeting years of temporal existence ? ” The same generous child, on arriving at the place of execution, as soon as the cross prepared for him was pointed out, ran eagerly to it and stretched himself upon it, exclaiming : “ Paradise, Paradise ! ” The same cheerful readiness was displayed by the rest of this noble band, who esteemed themselves happy to die for Jesus, and to die on the Cross. At length the executioners approached, and pierced them through with their spears, sending their souls to the embrace of their crucified Saviour. They were canonized by Pius IX.—*Jesuit Martyrs of Japan.*

154. APOSTOLIC ORIGIN OF THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.—Nicephorus writes that S. John the Evangelist made upon himself the sign of the Cross, before dying—Hilduin says S. Paul used the same sign to restore sight to a blind man—Many even affirm that Our Lord Himself taught this sign to the Apostles, and that He used it to bless them on the day of His Ascension—The sign of the Cross, says S. Ignatius, disciple of S. John, is the trophy raised against the power of the prince of this world : when he sees it, he is afraid : when he even hears of it, he is filled with terror.—*Hautriève.*

155. S. BENEDICT AND THE POISONED CUP.—S. Benedict was asked to govern a monastery where discipline was but badly observed : for a long time he resisted the entreaties of the monks, but being at length persuaded to undertake the charge, he did his best to introduce into the monastery the strict observance of the rule, but only succeeded in exciting against himself the hatred of certain wicked monks, who formed a plot to take away his life. They

accordingly mixed poison with his drink, and brought it to him as he sat at the table with the rest of the community. S. Benedict, according to his custom, extended his hand to make over the glass the sign of the cross, and at the very moment when he formed the holy sign, the glass, which was held at a little distance, was shattered to pieces, as if it had received a sudden blow from a stone, and a serpent came forth from it.—*His Life : March 21.*

156. S. ANTHONY IN TEMPTATION.—Though retired into the remote parts of a desert, S. Anthony often experienced the fiercest attacks of the devils : they would appear to him under a thousand frightful forms. The Saint laughed at their impotence, and to put them to flight, simply contented himself with making the sign of the cross, saying to his disciples : “ Believe me, Satan fears prayer and humility and the love of Jesus Christ : the mere sign of the cross suffices to banish him.”—*His Life : Jan. 17.*

157. S. TIBURTIUS AND THE FIRE.—The martyr S. Tiburtius, condemned under the Emperor Diocletian to walk through a blazing fire, made the sign of the cross over it, and walked over the burning coals without experiencing any injury.—*His Life : Aug. 11.*

158. S. HILARION AND THE FLOOD.—After the death of the Emperor Julian the Apostate, there was a tremendous earthquake all over the East. The seas overflowed their bounds, as though they would have submerged the earth in another deluge. At the sight of these prodigies, the inhabitants of Epidaurus—a small city of Greece—ran to the cell of S. Hilarion, and with tears besought him to have pity on them, and come to their aid. They brought him to the seashore. There S. Hilarion knelt on the sand, prayed with fervour, and made the sign of the cross three times over the troubled waters. Immediately there was a dead calm. All the people of Epidaurus witnessed this miracle, and for long years after, they ceased not to remember it with gratitude.—*His Life : Oct. 21.*

159. S. MARTIN AND THE TREE.—S. Martin one day having overthrown, in Burgundy, a famous and very ancient temple, he wished likewise to cut down a large pine-tree that stood near it. But to this he found the pagans entirely opposed ; but they told him that since he had so much confidence in his God, they would cut down the tree themselves, provided he would stand under it when it fell. Martin accepted the condition, and allowed himself

to be tied on the side to which the tree was already inclining. A great crowd of people assembled to see the sight. The tree, half cut, began to fall upon him, when he simply made the sign of the cross; the pine, as if blown by a gust of wind, fell to the other side, on those of the spectators who thought themselves the safest. There arose a great cry, and a large number of idolaters embraced the faith of Christ.—*His Life : Nov. 11.*

160. THE PASSWORD.—General Smith, of the army of the South, was coming in with his men too late to know the password. Knowing that if he went forward he would receive the fire of his own side, he presented himself before his men, and asked if anyone would sacrifice his life to save the rest. A soldier stood out of the ranks: after explaining the certain danger he would have to face, the general gave him a piece of paper, on which were written these words: "Send me the password. Genl. Smith." He knew the soldier would be shot, and then searched, and thus the paper would be found, and read, and the sign made known. The soldier sets out, and reaches the outposts: "Who goes there?" "A friend." "The word or sign?" But the soldier advances without reply, and at once the rifles are all raised and pointed at him. He thereupon makes on himself the sign of the cross, and to his surprise the rifles are lowered. The act of the Catholic soldier, in commending himself to God, was the very sign the Catholic Commander had that very morning given to the army.—*Toulemont.*

161. THE CONSCRIPT.—One of the conscripts, in Dauphiny, before drawing his lot, made the sign of the cross. This was greeted with laughter by his companions, but the sub-prefect at once interposed, and said: "There is nothing to laugh at: on the contrary, it is right to have recourse to religious acts in important circumstances of one's life." On verifying the conscript's ticket, he saw that Providence also had blessed the faith of the young man, for he drew a lucky number, and was exempted from service.—*Maillot.*

162. "IN HOC SIGNO VINCES."—After the cruel persecution of the Christians by the Roman Emperors had lasted for nearly 300 years, Almighty God sent peace to His Church by the miraculous victory of Constantine over the pagan Emperor Maxentius. On the day before the battle there appeared in the sky, in sight of Constantine and the whole army, a brilliant cross of light, with this inscription: "In this thou shalt conquer." The following night

Our Blessed Lord appeared to Constantine in his sleep, with the same sign, and ordered him to make a copy of it, and use it as his standard in the coming battle. Constantine rose early, ordered the standard to be constructed, and caused the sacred sign of the cross to be engraved on his own helmet and the shields of his soldiers. He then marched out to battle, and gained a complete victory. On the same day he entered Rome in triumph, but instead of going to offer sacrifice to the false gods of his ancestors, he published everywhere the vision which he had beheld, and declared that his splendid victory was due only to the God of the Christians. In gratitude for this favour, he not only put a stop to the bloody persecution, which had been raging for many years, but ordered the worship of idols to be abolished, and the Christian religion to be followed throughout his dominions. His own conversion, which took place at the same time, was soon followed by that of the greater portion of his subjects.—*Butler*.

163. MAXIMIAN AND THE OMENS.—The Emperor Maximian, wishing to know the future, caused victims to be immolated, and searched in the entrails for some token of events to come. Some Christian soldiers happened to be present, and made on themselves the sign of the cross. Immediately the devils took to flight, and the sacrifice was deprived of its results. Fresh victims were offered, but without better success.—*Lactantius*.

164. JULIAN THE APOSTATE.—Julian the Apostate one day entered a pagan temple, in company with a noted idolater. The latter having invoked the demons, they at once made their appearance: Julian became alarmed; and forgetting, for a moment, that he had abjured the Christian religion, he made the sign of the cross, as he had been formerly accustomed to do when any danger was near. Immediately the infernal spirits disappeared—so powerful and efficacious was this sign, when made even by a Christian renegade! This miracle was the last effort of divine mercy to recall that wretched being to repentance; but the unhappy man's heart was hardened and insensible to every call of God.—*S. Gregory of Nazianzen*.

165. CURE OF A CANCER.—S. Augustine, whom no one will suspect of credulity or weakmindedness, tells of a woman of Carthage, afflicted with a cancer, which the physicians had declared incurable. Despairing of the efforts of men, she had recourse to God, who made known to her that she was to present herself on Easter Eve

before the newly baptized catechumens in the women's baptistery, and request one of them to make the sign of the cross over her cancer : this she did and was immediately cured, to the surprise and astonishment of her physician.

166. THE LADY AND OFFICER AT TABLE.—A lady of religious education and pious life one day found herself seated at a table next to a young officer. Her first care was to say grace, with the sign of the cross. " Ah, madam, what is that ?" said the officer, in a tone of irony. " Captain," she replied, " are you ashamed of your cross of honour ?" " Certainly not." " Then know that the sign of the cross is to me a sign of honour and glory." The company could not but approve of her words and acts, and the officer could only stumble out some lame apology and excuse.—*Fliche*.

167. FR. RAVIGNAN.—This celebrated preacher always made the sign of the cross with scrupulous care and devotion. A protestant minister went one day to hear him in Notre Dame, in Paris. Seeing the venerable Father make the sign of the cross with such holy and majestic gravity, he said to his companion : " He has already preached to us : the sermon is over, we can go."—*His Life*.

168. HERACLIUS AND THE RELIC OF THE CROSS.—The Emperor Heraclius having brought to Jerusalem the precious relic of the Cross (which had been discovered by S. Helen some years before), in order to thank God for his victories over the Persians, was desirous to carry it upon his own shoulders into the city with the greatest pomp. When entering the city he stopped suddenly, and found he was not able to go forward. The Patriarch Zachary, who walked by his side, suggested to him that his pomp seemed not agreeable to the humble appearance which Christ made, when He bore His cross through the streets of that city : " You," said he, " walk in your gaudy imperial robes ; He was meanly clad. You have on your head a rich diadem ; He was crowned with a wreath of thorns. You go with your shoes on ; He walked barefoot." Hereupon the Emperor laid aside his purple and his crown, put on mean clothes, went along barefoot with the procession, and devoutly placed the Cross where it stood before. It still continued in the silver case in which it had been carried away by Chosroes fifteen years before ; and the Patriarch and clergy, finding the seals whole, opened the case with the key, venerated it, and showed it to the people.—*Power*.

169. SIGN OF THE CROSS AMONG ORIENTALS.—The Greek schismatics do not make the sign of the cross in the same manner as it is formed by the members of the Catholic Church. The Jacobites—Eutychian heretics—form the sign with one finger, from the left to the right, thus signifying, as they say, their belief in the unity of Our Lord's nature, and in the translation of grace, passing from the left side, which is sin, to the right, signifying pardon. The Nestorians, on the other hand, form the sign of the cross with two fingers, from the right to the left, significant of both natures, which they admit in Jesus Christ, and of the manifestation of the faith proceeding from the right, or the good principle, victorious over the left, signifying the bad principle.—*Power.*

THE FIFTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

"He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead."

170. THE RETURN HOME.—When the terrible war broke out between France and Germany, a multitude of the French soldiers were taken prisoners and sent into Germany. For many months they suffered much from the hardships they were obliged to undergo in their captivity; but what gave them most sorrow was the separation from the dear ones far away in their own country. One morning a messenger came into their prison, and announced to them that they were free and could now return home. At that moment a cry of joy burst forth from the poor captives. The remembrance of what they had suffered was in a moment forgotten, and they could speak of nothing but of the happiness of seeing, so soon again, those whom they loved, and the homes of their childhood.—This is but a feeble image of the joy of the souls of the just in Limbo, when Jesus went to them to tell them they were soon to go with Him to their eternal home in Heaven.—*Chisholm.*

171. CITY OF REFUGE.—In the Old Law, the wilful murderer was put to death, and even the man who had accidentally killed another might be pursued by the next of kin. But justice was tempered with mercy, and certain cities were appointed: three by Moses, on the east of the Jordan, and three by Joshua, on the west, whither the involuntary manslayer might flee and remain until the death of the High Priest (*Num. xxxv.*). The case was investigated, and if it was judged that the act was committed accidentally, he was

permitted to live, but not to depart from the precincts of the city until the death of the officiating High Priest, otherwise the " avenger of blood " might slay him and be guiltless : thus might he be for many years an exile from his home.—*Cassell*.

172. A RIVAL OF CHRIST RISEN.—Reveillère endeavoured to introduce a new religion, after the French Revolution, but complained to Barras, a famous revolutionary, that his sectaries did not seem to increase in numbers, whereas the disciples of Jesus Christ were so faithful to their Master, who nevertheless, imposed upon them only privations. " Well ! as for me, I do not wonder," replied Barras, laughing, " and I can give you a piece of good advice on this head." " What is that, citizen ?" asked the High Priest. " Here it is ; have yourself killed on Friday, let them bury you on Saturday, try your best to rise on Sunday morning ; and, take my word for it, people will immediately believe in your new religion." La Reveillère did not choose to follow this advice, as you may well suppose, and now both himself and his sect are quite forgotten.—*Hebrard*.

173. BATTLE GAINED BY THE ALLELUIA.—Two holy bishops came from France to England, to combat heresies that were disturbing the peace of the Church. Whilst they were there, the inhabitants were attacked by the pagan Picts and Scots. The Britons had recourse to the two Saints, and besought them to accompany their army, in order that the combat might be favourable to them. It was Easter-time, and after the festival the little army of Christians set forward on its journey, having at its head S. Germain, who had once been a brave and skilful military leader. He recommended his soldiers, for the time being, to observe the best possible order, and as soon as they saw the hostile army arrive, to repeat with all their strength the word they should hear him say. No sooner were the Picts and Scots in sight than the holy bishop began to cry out *Alleluia*, and immediately his men repeated, as loud as they could shout, *Alleluia ! Alleluia !* The echoes of the mountains repeated the cry with a thundering sound. Nothing more was wanting to frighten the barbarians, who instantly fled in wild disorder. Thus did S. Germain gain the victory without the shedding of a drop of blood.—*Godescard*.

174. WATER CHANGED INTO OIL.—It was on the Feast of Easter that an extraordinary miracle once took place in Jerusalem.

All were absorbed in their holy occupations, when the deacons suddenly perceived that the lamps were going out; the worst of it was that there was no oil in the sacristy wherewith to replenish them: they were about to be plunged in darkness. Everyone was troubled and uneasy; the deacons, who had charge of the lamps, knew not what to do. It was only the patriarch, S. Narcissus, that took no heed of what was passing. When told of it, he contented himself with saying: "Bring me some water in a large basin." It was brought to him accordingly; he repeats some prayers, makes the sign of the Cross over it, and commands the deacons to pour some of it into the expiring lamps. Wonderful to relate, the water was changed into excellent oil. When daylight came, and the lamps were no longer needed, each one secured a little of this miraculous oil, some of which was still in preservation more than a hundred years after.—*Eusebius*.

THE SIXTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

"He ascended into Heaven; sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty."

175. OUR LORD'S FOOTPRINTS AND THE PILGRIM.—S. Bernardine tells that a pilgrim, who had visited in succession all the places consecrated by the presence of the Son of God upon earth, from Bethlehem to Calvary, on arriving at Mount Olivet, and beholding the last traces of his beloved Redeemer, was so overcome by the longing desire of being united to him in Heaven that, while he lay prostrate on the ground, kissing with the tenderest love the sacred footsteps, his soul burst asunder the ties of the body, and took its flight from Mount Olivet to the embraces of Him whom he had so faithfully loved, and so ardently desired.—*Butler*.

176. S. MARTIN IN DEATH.—Full of confidence in the consoling thought that Our Lord by His Ascension had gone to prepare a place for us, S. Martin, on his deathbed, kept his eyes fixed on Heaven, as in an ecstasy. One of his loving disciples suggested he should turn on his side to gain some relief, but the Saint replied: "Leave me to contemplate Heaven rather than the earth, and do not disturb me as I meditate on the path my Saviour took to Heaven, which path my soul will soon have to follow, to go and be united to God my Saviour."—*His Life: Nov. 11*.

177. THE COUNTESS WILSERSHEIM.—In 1824, this illustrious Countess quitted society, of which she was the ornament, and her family, and an immense fortune, to become a poor and humble religious in a convent. To those who disapproved of her action she gaily replied : “ Why are you surprised at me, when I am about to gain the awards promised a hundred fold to those who leave all things for God ? Would it be surprising if a poor man left his home for a time to go to a distant country for a rich inheritance awaiting him there ? ” She did not remain very long absent from her true home ; for in 1841 Our Lord came in search of His spouse, and led her to the eternal nuptials.—*Gaume*.

THE SEVENTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

“From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.”

178. FEAR OF S. JEROME.—S. Jerome, leading a most austere life, striking his breast even unto blood with a stone, had nevertheless the deepest fear of the judgments of God. “ Whenever I think of the last judgment,” he said, “ I tremble all over : whether I eat, or drink, or do anything else, I always seem to hear the sound of that terrible summons : ‘ Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment.’ ”—*His Life : Sept. 30.*

179. THE YEAR 1000.—Basing their fears on a false interpretation of a passage in the Apocalypse, many dreaded the end of the world coming in the year 1000. In the last year of the tenth century everything temporal was neglected, even the tillage of the land. When the fatal day seemed at hand, people filled the churches and chapels, approaching the sacraments, making restitution and awaiting anxiously the last hour of the year, which however passed by like the rest, and the end of the world, of which God alone has the secret, did not come. Yet many public calamities, famines, pestilence, and inundations marked the close of the tenth century and seemed to give to it a fatal character.—*Church History.*

180. S. CEDDA IN A THUNDERSTORM.—Ven. Bede tells us that whenever Cedda, Bishop of London, heard the thunders rolling in the Heavens, he used to throw himself upon the ground, and call on God to have mercy on him. Some people, who saw him on these occasions, thought within themselves that to act in this way was the mark of a fear which they did not expect to see in one who

was their pastor and father. They told him this one day. "O my children," he answered, "it is not the storm that makes me afraid, but every time I hear it burst forth I think of the terrible day of judgment. The howling of the tempest puts me in mind of the cries of despair of poor sinners on that day. When I see the lightning, I think of the anger of Jesus Christ against those who have offended Him, and when I hear the thunder, I think I hear the terrible voice of the Judge pronouncing the awful sentence of condemnation against them. If I tremble now, even at the thought of these things, how much more will I tremble when I really see them."

181. S. METHODIUS' PICTURE OF THE JUDGMENT.—One day Bogoris, king of the Bulgarians—who had as yet refused to be converted, although leaving his subjects at full liberty—requested S. Methodius to paint some pictures for him to ornament a palace which he had just constructed. He recommended to him, amongst other things, to choose a subject, the representation of which would freeze with terror all who beheld it. The Saint, in conformity with the king's directions, undertook to paint the Last Judgment. In his painting was seen Jesus Christ surrounded by angels, seated on a throne of dazzling glory, and clothed in the terrors of an angry judge. All men, without distinction of age or rank, were assembled before His tribunal, where they awaited, trembling, the sentence that was to decide their eternal fate. The work, being finished, was shown to the king, who was deeply moved by the sight of it; but his emotion increased much more when the painter explained to him each of the parts whereof the picture was composed. He could no longer remain obdurate, and corresponding thenceforward with the grace which spoke to him through a sensible object, he asked to be instructed in the mysteries of religion, and a short time after received baptism. Such was the effect of a mere painting of the Last Judgment; what shall it be, then, when we come to be present in reality at those formidable assizes!—*Butler*.

182. S. ELIZABETH'S PREPARATION FOR THE JUDGMENT.—Of all the works of charity which S. Elizabeth of Hungary used to perform, that of visiting the sick in the hospitals, and the poor in their homes, was the one she loved most. She would watch by their sick-bed, and give them their food, and perform for them the menial duties of a sick-nurse, with the same care and diligence as if she had been hired for that purpose. The ladies of her household, who did

not care for this kind of employment, used to try to persuade her that it was beneath the dignity of her position to perform such things. "It will be enough for you," they said, "to speak to them and give them words of consolation; let others attend to their wants." Elizabeth answered: "I am preparing for the day of judgment. On that day, Jesus will ask me for an account of the good works I have done for Him, and I desire to be able to say to Him: "Ycu see, O Lord, when You were hungry, I gave You to eat, when You were thirsty, I gave You to drink, because You said that in doing these things to the poor I did them to Yourself. I beseech You, be indulgent therefore to me in the sentence You are to pass upon me."—*Her Life*: Nov. 19.

183. THE HOUSE NOT BUILT.—There was a rich man who sent one of his servants into a distant country, to build a new house for him on a property which he had bought. He gave him the plans of the building, and also furnished him with the money that would be required to build it. "I cannot tell you," he said to him, "when you may expect me to go to take possession of my new house, but I will give you sufficient time to finish it, and when I think that you have completed it, you may expect to see me." The servant was pleased with the confidence his master had in him, and immediately departed. But instead of beginning the work at once, he delayed, and when begun it was only carelessly and slowly carried on, he wasting his time and money over his own amusement and pleasure. But one morning he received a letter from his master, to tell him that he might expect him in a few days. This news filled him with dismay. He saw that there was now an end to all his pleasures and the pastimes which had taken up so much of his attention. He foresaw also that the meeting with his master would be a very unpleasant one, for he knew that he had neglected his work, and he feared the consequences. The first words his master said to him on his arrival were, "I hope the house I sent you to build is now quite finished, for you have had sufficient time to do it in." The servant hung down his head, and tried to make various excuses. His master interrupted him, and said in an angry tone, "It was not for that purpose I sent you here, I sent you to build a house for me. What do all these things matter to me? You have neglected the only thing I wanted done, the only thing I sent you to attend to." The end of the matter was that the unfaithful servant was not only dismissed from his employment, but

severely punished for having misspent his master's time, and for having squandered the money he had received for his master's work.—*Noël*.

184. "WHAT THEN?"—A young man went one day to S. Philip Neri, and entered into long details about the study of law, which he had just commenced. He described the course which he meant to pursue, in order to obtain the degree of doctor. "And then—?" demanded the Saint. "Then," replied the young man, much encouraged, "I will plead causes, and I hope successfully." "And then—?" added the Saint again, "And then, people will begin to speak of me, and I shall enjoy a reputation." "And then—?" continued S. Philip Neri, smiling. "And then,"—answered the young man, a little embarrassed, "and then—oh! I shall live at my ease, and I shall be happy." "And what then—?" "Well! then,—I shall end by dying." "And then," resumed the Saint, raising his voice, "and then, what shall you do when your own trial comes, when you shall be yourself the accused, Satan the accuser, and the Almighty God your judge." The young man, who little expected such a conclusion, hung down his head, and began to consider within himself. A short time after, he renounced the study of law, and endeavoured, by consecrating his life to the service of God, to prepare seriously for that final, *what then?* that is to say, that awful judgment, which shall be followed by eternity. Let us do the same, and we shall never repent of it.—*Schmid*.

185. THE TERRIBLE DREAM.—S. Vincent Ferrer relates that a certain young man had a dream, in which he imagined that he was brought before the tribunal of God to be judged. So terrible was the scene he witnessed—the majesty of the Sovereign Judge, the different questions put to him, to which he could make no reply—that on his awakening in the morning, he found himself trembling with agitation, and covered with a cold sweat. His first thought was to thank Jesus Christ that it had not been a reality, but only a dream. But at the same time he said to himself: "What I have seen in my dream will one day be a reality; I cannot escape it; perhaps, too, it may be soon, even this very day." He at once asked God to forgive him the sins of his past life, and took the resolution to lead, from that hour, a life of penance, and rather to die than ever again to commit a sin. The effect of his dream extended even to his body, for his countenance ever afterwards was grave and sad, and his hair became white as snow.

186. "NO ONE CAN IMAGINE!"—There lived, long ago, in one of the monasteries belonging to the Cistercian Order, two holy monks who had a great affection for one another, and who seemed to lead unblemished lives. One of them died. Soon after his death he appeared to his friend whom he had left behind, while offering up his prayers for the repose of his soul. As soon as he saw him, and perceived that his face bore marks of suffering, he asked him how he came to be in that state. The deceased monk answered, saying three times these words: "No one can imagine—no one can imagine—no one can imagine——" "What do you mean," said the other, "by these strange words?" The dead religious answered, "No one can imagine how severe are the judgments of God, and how terrible His punishments." Saying this, he disappeared, leaving the religious full of fear.—*Chisholm.*

187. THE PICTURE.—Peter of Arezzo was one who feared neither God nor man. If anyone spoke to him of the punishments of sin, or of the last judgment, he only laughed at him. One day he went to see a great picture in a Church in Rome. It was a picture of the last judgment. He looked at it for a long time in silence, and then went away. People wondered where he was going to so silently, and they watched for him. They saw him kneel down to say his prayers. The sight of the picture had changed his heart. He said, "If I am so frightened by the sight of a picture of God's judgment, what will become of me when that judgment itself really comes?" And so he became good, and remained good as long as he lived.—*Chisholm.*

188. PHILIP II. AND HIS COURTIERS.—Philip II., king of Spain, during the time of the holy Sacrifice, noticed that two of his nobles, forgetting the sanctity of the place, were behaving in a very disrespectful manner in the presence of God. He said nothing to them at the time, but when Mass was over, and they had left the chapel, the king sent for them. When they came into his presence they saw at once by the severity of his countenance that he was very angry. "I observed to-day," said the king, "the unworthy manner in which you conducted yourselves in the chapel at Mass. For that sin I banish you both from my presence for ever. I cannot allow anyone to live with me who behaves so disrespectfully in the presence of God. Do not dare, as long as you live, to enter my palace again." These words, pronounced in a tone of severity, made such an impression on the two nobles that one was struck

with apoplexy and died on the spot, the other soon afterwards lost his reason, and remained insane during the rest of his life. If the words of a king in this world had such an effect on those who had offended, how terrible will be the effects of those words of the Eternal King of Heaven: "Depart from me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire."—*Gaume*.

189. THE ETERNAL FAREWELL!—S. Ephrem, who lived in the fourth century, was one day preaching to the people on the great and terrible day of judgment. The last words of his discourse were these: "When the Judge has pronounced the last sentence, the Heavens shall be opened and the just shall enter into the kingdom prepared for them. Then, too, at the same moment, shall the bottomless abyss be opened, and the wicked shall be cast into it for ever. Then shall the wicked, and proud, and wise ones of the world cry out, as they see the good entering their home above: 'Farewell for ever, ye saints and servants of God. Farewell, ye prophets, and apostles, and martyrs. Farewell, O holy Virgin Mother of God. We too could have been with you, but by our own fault we have lost the Heaven for which we also were made. Farewell, O paradise of delights, O eternal kingdom, O heavenly Jerusalem, farewell for ever! we are now to be plunged into an abyss of torments, that shall never end.'" Oh! ever keep in mind the terrible day of judgment, and you will certainly be found on that day among the elect of God.

190. THE DYING HERMIT.—A hermit, who had unfortunately for many years lived in carelessness and tepidity, fell dangerously ill. He was then carried in spirit before the tribunal of God, and for a whole hour seemed quite unconscious. On coming to himself, he was so struck with what he had seen that he gave himself up to the most austere penance. He had the door of his cell walled up, and therein remained many years, having his food given him through a small window, seeing no one, and living on bread and water. When at length he came to die, the Monks of the Monastery broke down the wall he had built, and begged of him to speak to them a few last words of advice. This he did, and said: "Excuse me, my brethren, if I say but one thing: In truth, if only men knew how terrible is the judgment of God, they could never bring themselves to offend Him." Then he died, leaving them full of terror and fear.—*Guillois*.

191. S. ARSENIUS IN HIS AGONY.—S. Arsenius, in his last agony, was seized with a great fear. He saw, in a vision, the judgment of God in all its majesty, and seemed as though he would die of the fear it caused him. On his disciples showing surprise, he said, “Yes, I tremble indeed, and not now for the first time : for forty years I have always feared the judgment of God. For, know, my brethren, the just man shall scarcely be saved : what then will become of the sinner !”—*His Life : July 19.*

192. CONDEMNATION AT A HUMAN TRIBUNAL.—Once when young, said a zealous missionary, I was present in court as sentence of death was about to be pronounced on a man accused of murder, and I shall never forget it. The prisoner was standing, but scarcely would his legs support him, and he was obliged to hold on to a bar before him. Perspiration streamed down his face, and he trembled all over. When the judge had pronounced the fatal sentence, the prisoner was seized with the most fearful convulsions, and shouted out he had not deserved death, and would not die.—Such a scene is indeed most fearful : but instead of human judges, picture to yourself the infinite God, who needs no witnesses, who will now show no mercy, about to pass sentence—sentence without appeal, sentence to take effect at once, and that, too, for ever. Imagine a hardened sinner before the eternal Judge ; it is not a short life he is going to forfeit, but an eternity of bliss ; it is not the scaffold he sees before him, but an abyss of hell.—*Noël.*

193. CONVERSION OF S. BRUNO.—An ancient tradition among the Carthusians says, that what led S. Bruno to the monastic life was the following fact which took place in Paris, on the death of a man named Raymund, who had always been considered a good Christian. As the dirge was being sung around the bier, at the fourth lesson, beginning with these words *Responde mihi*, Raymund raised his head and said : “I am accused by the just judgment of God.” The burial was delayed, and the next day at the same place in the office, Raymund spoke again and said : “I am judged by the just judgment of God.” And on the third day in presence of great numbers who had heard of the occurrence, he said : “I am damned by the just judgment of God.” Bruno was present, and with his own ears heard the terrible voice of this hypocrite, accused, judged, and condemned : but his heart was more struck than his ears. He renewed his good resolutions, and nothing could prevent him from putting them into execution.—*His Life : Oct. 6.*

THE EIGHTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

"I believe in the Holy Ghost."

194. ADVICE OF LAMORICIÈRE.—General Lamoricière, having entrusted important work to one of his officers, concluded in these words : " Good-bye ! if you are in difficulty, invoke the Holy Ghost : it seems to me we don't pray sufficiently to Him : but He is always my source of light and strength : He will be the same for you." Shortly after, indeed, the officer did find himself in an embarrassing position, which cast him into deepest sadness. He then followed the advice given by his general, and said the *Veni, Creator*, with great fervour, several times over, and experienced the truth of his words.—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

195. S. LUCY BEFORE HER JUDGE.—S. Lucy suffered martyrdom under the Emperor Diocletian. She belonged to a rich family, and possessed great wealth. A young pagan who desired to marry her, seeing that she refused to accept him, went to the Prefect and told him that she was a Christian. The Prefect sent for her, and endeavoured to gain her by threats and promises, but all in vain, so he ordered her to be scourged. Lucy, on hearing this, said : " You will only waste your time on me in torturing me, for the words I have uttered are not my own, but inspired by the Holy Ghost." " Is the Holy Ghost dwelling in you ?" asked the Prefect. Lucy answered : " The hearts of the chaste and holy are the temples of the Holy Ghost." " I will take from you that virtue of which you speak, and the Holy Ghost will then forsake you," said the Prefect, who then, in great fury, ordered her to be led to a den of wickedness ; but when they went to seize her, she stood immovable as a statue. The tyrant then ordered her to be covered with oil and resin, and to be burned to death ; but the flames would not touch her, and the Prefect, to put her to death, ordered her to be pierced by a sword. This was done ; and the virgin martyr went to receive the crown of immortality.—*Her Life : Dec. 13*.

196. SAINTS AND THE GIFT OF TONGUES.—S. Vincent Ferrer, the grand missionary of the fourteenth century, always preached in Spanish or Latin, and yet he was understood by the French, Greeks, Germans, and English, who flocked to hear him.—S. Dominic, having received many kindnesses from some Germans on his way to Paris, was desirous of speaking some kind words to them, and anxious to teach them the true religion, but was unable to do so because he

knew not their language. "Brother," he said, "let us beg of God a knowledge of German, so as to announce His truths to these good people." Their prayer was heard, and for four days they were instructing their benefactors.—S. Francis Xavier spoke with perfection the languages of the different people to whom he preached in India. And (the only example in ecclesiastical history) when learned men, of different nationalities, put difficulties before him, not only did they all understand him when he spoke but one language, but that one language solved—at the same time—the various doubts and difficulties laid before him, which added greatly to the veneration in which he was held.—S. Anthony, of Padua, had also the gift of languages, and was enabled by the light of the Holy Ghost to read the state of the souls of men.—*Lives of the Saints*.

197. NEGLECT OF NOVATUS.—A certain Novatus, received into the Church by Catholic missionaries, apostatized during the persecutions through fear of the torments to which the martyrs were subjected. The principal cause of his fall, according to historians of the time, was that he did not receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, though he had often had the opportunity of doing so.—*Eusebius*.

198. PENTECOST RENEWS THE GRACES OF THE HOLY GHOST.—Pentecost has this special mark about it, that while other feasts of the Church simply commemorate some great event, or thank God for some great grace, this feast renews year by year the graces of the first day of Pentecost in the hearts of the Faithful well disposed. The miraculous manifestations of the first Pentecost are not indeed renewed, yet the graces of the Holy Spirit truly descend into our hearts; the external gifts of languages and miracles are not bestowed, for these are no longer necessary to the Church, yet such aids and helps as we require may on this day be obtained by fervent petition and good dispositions.

THE NINTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

"The Holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints."

199. VICTORINUS OF ROME.—Victorinus professed to be a Catholic, but was never seen to enter the Church, not even on Sundays. An old man who knew him well spoke to him of the danger of dying a bad death to which he was thus exposing him-

self. Victorinus answered : " Be not afraid ; I am a good Catholic, and I hope to die a good death." " How can you be a good Catholic ?" said the old man. " By your conduct you deny your religion, since you do not perform the duties it requires of you. I never see you even within the walls of a Church. Do you not remember what Jesus Christ said : ' He that shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in Heaven ' ?" These words had a good result, for Victorinus from that day became a good and fervent Catholic, and died an edifying death.—The grace of being a member of God's true Church is the greatest gift God could bestow on you, because along with it He gives you all other blessings. Oh ! be careful never to lose it, and pray for those whom you love who may not possess it, that He may grant it to them as He has granted it to you.—*Chisholm*.

200. ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND THE HIGH PRIEST.—The famous Alexander the Great was a pagan, and thought of nothing but the conquest of the entire world. After having taken a great number of cities, he marched, at length, on Jerusalem. The High Priest Onias, in his great disquietude, turned his eyes to Heaven, and God admonished him in a dream to be of good heart, and told him to clothe himself in his pontifical robes, then to put himself at the head of his people, and appear before this renowned conqueror. He obeyed, and went to meet Alexander. Everyone expected that the haughty conqueror would destroy Jerusalem, and condemn the High Priest to die ignominiously. But, so soon as Alexander perceived that solemn procession, so soon as he distinguished the pontiff advancing majestically at the head of his people, he approached him, bowed down to the ground before the Hebrew name of GOD, engraved on the front of his diadem, and saluted him respectfully. All were seized with astonishment : and Parmenion, one of the favourite companions of the king, asked him why he had adored the High Priest of the Jews. " It was the God whose minister he is that I adored," answered Alexander. Onias then conducted to the temple of Solomon this King of Macedonia, who made an offering there, and retired full of respect for the worship and the priest of the God of Israel.—*Josephus*.

201. NAPOLEON'S ARMY.—Napoleon, who pretended to despise the excommunication that fell upon him, was visibly tormented by it ; sometimes his exasperation knew no bounds. In his rage he exclaimed : " Does the Pope imagine that his excommunication

will make the arms fall from the hands of my soldiers?" Now everyone knows that it was after his excommunication that the star of Napoleon grew dim, and that his life became one series of disasters. Moreover, all the historians of the Russian campaign of 1812, in relating the particulars of that catastrophe, say expressly that "the arms fell from the hands of the soldiers!"—*Gaume*.

202. IMAGE OF THE CHURCH.—Of the Catholic Church God is the Founder, Jesus Christ the Saviour, the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier, the Blessed Virgin the Queen, and the Angels the protectors—The Pope is the head, the Cardinals the counsellors, the Bishops the pastors, and the Priests the voice—The Martyrs are her witnesses, and the Doctors her light. The Confessors strengthen her, the Religious orders uphold her, the Virgins are her adornment, and the Faithful her children—Baptism is her cradle, Confirmation her strength, the Eucharist her food, Penance and Extreme Unction her remedies. Order is her jurisdiction, and Matrimony her nursery—Faith is the gate of the Church, Hope the road, Charity the object: grace is her wealth, chastity her flower—The just are her joy, sin her aversion, sinners the object of her commiseration—The Jews are her living witnesses, the conversion of men her prayer and desire—The Blessed Trinity is the object of her adoration, the Son of God her sacrifice, the liturgical ceremonies her attire. The earth is her place of exile, the cross her lot, Heaven her country—Scandals are her sorrow, repentance her joy, the pardon of sins her liberality—Jesus Christ is her spouse, and His presence her honour. The end of the world will be her coronation day. Her struggles are on the earth, her sufferings in Purgatory, and her triumph in Heaven.—*Hohenauer*.

203. A REVOLUTIONARY OF THE REIGN OF TERROR.—A famous revolutionary in the height of the Reign of Terror, seeing the Churches pillaged, the altars thrown down, and the priests slaughtered or exiled, cried out: "All's going well: if the Church revives after this, I'll become a Catholic myself." The Church did revive, as we all know, but he didn't live to see it, for he fell a victim to other revolutionaries.—Another of the same period said: "Take care of your Pope, for you will never have another!" And indeed when Pius VI. died, the French were in Italy, and the Peninsula disturbed throughout. But the ways of God are wonderful, and His promises endure: the English and the Russians, of all nations

so opposed to the Church, became in His hands instruments for the safety of the conclave, and Pius VII. is elected and proclaimed to the world.—*Mérault.*

204. A SAYING OF NAPOLEON.—One day Napoleon, from the rock of S. Helena, contemplated the heavens, the earth, and the sea; he was reviewing in his mind the empires of the world and their institutions, the great men of the past, and their works, and then exclaimed: "The nations of the earth pass away, and thrones fall to the ground, the Church alone remains."—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

205. EXPEDIENCY OF THE TEMPORAL POWER.—"If the Bishop of Rome were the subject of any Sovereign, or the citizen of a Republic, there would be reason to fear that he would not enjoy that liberty of action which is necessary to secure for his measures and decrees the respect and obedience of all the Faithful."—*Council of Baltimore.*

206. S. LEO AND ATTLA.—About the middle of the fifth century a horde of fierce barbarians, named Huns, led by the terrible Attila, surnamed the Scourge of God, swept over the Roman Empire, destroying everything before them. Flushed with victory, the savage conquerors at length advanced towards Rome, which the Roman Emperors, whose armies had been everywhere defeated, had left without garrison or means of defence. In the midst of the general consternation, the holy Pontiff Leo alone ventured to go to meet the conqueror. Having arrived at the camp of the Huns on the banks of the river Mincio, Leo was admitted into the presence of Attila, and spoke to him with such courage and firmness of the account which he must one day give to God of his actions, that the savage barbarian at once granted the holy Pope all that he asked, promising to withdraw his army and leave Rome unmolested. It is related that the followers of Attila, astonished at the respect which their terrible chieftain had paid to a Christian priest, asked him, after S. Leo's departure, what was the reason of his unusual conduct. "It was not," said he, "the person of my visitor alone which made such an impression upon me. I saw near the Pontiff a figure far more august, venerable by his white hair, and clad in priestly robes, who held a drawn sword in his hand, and seemed to threaten me, with looks and gestures of terrible meaning, if I did not undertake faithfully to execute all that had been demanded by his envoy."

207. WORDS OF NAPOLEON.—Napoleon, while yet only first consul, used to say : “ The institution for maintaining the unity of the faith, the Pope, is indeed an admirable one. Some look on him as a foreign Sovereign : he is so, and we must thank Heaven for it. The Pope is not in Paris, and it is well : he is not in Madrid, nor Vienna, hence we maintain and support his spiritual power. At Vienna and Madrid, they can say the same. Do you think that if he lived in Paris, the people of Vienna or Spain would receive his decisions ? He does not live with us, nor does he live with our rivals, but in the ancient city of Rome, in his own states. The ages gone by have done this, and done well : for the government of souls, it is the most perfect institution imaginable.”—*Thiers*.

208. PITT AND NAPOLEON.—Pitt sent Marseria as ambassador to Napoleon, urging him to destroy Catholicism in France, and so rid himself of the Pope’s authority. “ Remember well my words,” said Napoleon, “ and report them faithfully to him that sent you : I shall maintain the Catholic religion in France, because it is the true one, because it is the religion of France—that of my ancestors, my own ; and so far from destroying it, I shall do all I can to uphold it.” Marseria made answer : “ But, sire, in acting thus, you are forging invisible chains for yourself : so long as you recognize Rome, Rome will domineer over you and your liberty.” Napoleon, with impatience, replied : “ You are confounding two things quite distinct : here is a question of two authorities : for the things of time I have my sword, and it is enough ; for the things of Heaven, Rome has all power. Rome will decide without consulting me, and she will do well, for it is her right.” “ But permit me, sire, even from a temporal point of view, your authority will never be complete till you are head of the Church, creating a religion of your own.” “ Create a religion,” said Napoleon, with a smile, “ to create a religion one must climb up Calvary, and Calvary is not in my plans.”—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

209. DEFINING DOCTRINE.—The final object of infallibility may include : things of faith and morals ; things belonging to faith ; things necessary to salvation ; precepts in morals, binding the whole Church ; matters of religion ; matters of faith, speculative and practical ; controversies on religion ; things pertaining to doctrine, and to natural and Divine law ; matters regarding the spiritual health of souls and the salvation of the Faithful, and the good of the Church ; extermination of error.—*Manning*.

210. FÉNÉLON AND THE "MAXIMS."—Fénélon, Archbishop of Cambrai, published in the year 1697 a work entitled, *An Explanation of the Maxims of the Saints*, which some time after its publication was condemned by Pope Innocent XII. The account of the condemnation of the book arrived at Cambrai on the Feast of the Annunciation, 1699, at the very moment that the Archbishop was about to ascend the pulpit to preach on the feast of the day. Though affected at the account of a decision so contrary to what he expected, he repined not ; but so great was the hold religion had on his soul, that, recollecting himself for a few moments, he abandoned the subject on which he intended to speak, and in its place introduced the subject of perfect submission to the will of superiors. He spoke so feelingly on the matter that he drew copious tears from his auditory. Besides, to leave to his diocese a monument of his perfect submission and repentance, he got made for the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament a monstrance supported by two angels, one of whom was represented trampling under foot a variety of bad books, and on the cover of one was legibly written, *An Explanation of the Maxims of the Saints.*—*Power.*

211. BISHOP GIBBON ON INFALLIBILITY.—What, then, is the real doctrine of Infallibility ? It simply means that the Pope, as successor of St. Peter, by virtue of the promises of Christ is preserved from error of judgment when he promulgates to the Church a decision of faith or morals. The Pope, therefore, be it known, is not the maker of the Divine law ; he is only its expounder. He is not the author of revelation, but only its interpreter. All revelation came from God alone through His inspired ministers, and was complete in the beginning of the Church. The Holy Father has no more authority than you or I to break one iota or tittle of the Scripture ; and he is equally with us, a servant of the Divine law.

212. MGR. DE CHEVERUS.—Monseigneur de Cheverus, in his many sermons, often dwelt on the necessity of some teaching authority to render unwavering the faith of a learned as well as an ignorant man. To convince Protestants of this necessity, he often repeated, in the discourses which he addressed to them, these simple words, but words which always produced the desired effect : " Every day, my brethren, I read the Holy Scripture like yourselves. I read it with reflection and prayer, having previously invoked the Holy Spirit ; and yet at almost every page I find many things that I cannot understand, and I find the great necessity of some speaking

authority, which may point out to me the meaning of the text, and render my faith firm." And his hearers immediately made the application to themselves. "If Monseigneur de Cheverus," said they, "who is more learned than we, cannot comprehend the Sacred Scripture, how comes it that our ministers tell us that the Bible is to each of us a full and clear rule of faith, easily understood of itself, and requiring no aid in its elucidation?" Taking occasion from the admission that even the most learned cannot agree as to matters of faith, Monseigneur de Cheverus pointed out how wisely God came to aid human weakness in the discovery of truth, by appointing a living, speaking authority, which, drawing its origin from Christ and His Apostles, has descended down to us by an uninterrupted succession of Pastors, professing at all times, and in all places, and without the least variation, the same holy doctrine as was professed by the Apostles.—*Power*.

213. S. STEPHEN OF HUNGARY.—S. Stephen, King of Hungary, always gave his subjects the example of respect for ministers of the Church, being convinced that nothing so tends to the increase of religion. But he professed the most profound veneration for the Holy See and all its acts. Having sent a Bishop to Rome to negotiate with the Supreme Pontiff, he went forth to meet the ambassador on his return, and while the Pope's letters were being read, he listened to them standing, out of respect for the head of the Church. On feeling his last end approaching, he assembled his nobles around him, and recommended them the practice of the Christian virtues, also respect and obedience to the Holy See.—*His Life : Sept. 2*.

214. FÉNÉLON AND LORD PETERBOROUGH.—Fénélon, the great bishop of Cambrai, was so illustrious for his piety and great virtues that those who visited him were obliged to exclaim: "The Church to which that bishop belongs must indeed be the Church of God, for no other one could produce such a man." Lord Peterborough, hearing of his eminent merits, was desirous of seeing him. The bishop received his noble guest with great kindness, and invited him to stay with him. During the few days he spent there, he was an eye-witness of the virtuous life of that prelate. And so great an impression did it make on him that he was heard to say, when about to leave him: "I cannot stay here any longer, because if I did so, I should become a Catholic in spite of myself."—*Chisholm*.

215. THE MAP OF THE WORLD.—In a certain school a teacher had prepared for his pupils a large map of the world on which were

shown all the countries of the earth. He had marked with a red cross upon the map every country, and island, and place where the Catholic religion was established, and the pupils saw at a glance that it was everywhere, even in the lands of perpetual snow, and in the midst of pagan kingdoms. So that there was scarcely an islet rising out of the ocean but was marked with a red cross. "See, my children," he said, "these crosses on the map tell you where you will find the Catholic Church. Go to any of these places you choose, and you will find the same Church as you have at home, the same truths taught, the same Sacrifice offered up, the same Sacraments administered, and all obeying one head, our holy father the Pope. Ah! truly there is no blessing so great as that of being a member of the one true Church."—*Chisholm*.

216. PRIEST, JEW, AND PARSON.—There is but one only true Church; and that is so evident that one possessed of even ordinary good sense cannot anywise doubt it. A Catholic priest and a Protestant minister were one day walking together; they chanced to meet a Jewish rabbi. "Hold!" said the Protestant minister, laughing, "we three are of so many different religions; now, which of us has the true one?" "I will tell you that," said the rabbi; "if the Messiah is not yet come, it is I; if the Messiah be come, it is this Catholic priest; but as for you, whether the Messiah be come or not, you are not in the right way."—*Schmid*.

217. CHANGE OF RELIGION.—"I do not like those who change their religion," said a Protestant prince of Germany to the Count de Stolberg, recently converted to the Catholic faith. "Nor I either," answered the doctor, "for if my ancestors had not changed, I should not have been obliged to return to Catholicity." And that is very true; a Protestant who becomes a Catholic does not change his religion; he does but return to the way which his forefathers were wrong in quitting.—*Schmid*.

218. THE PROTESTANT REDUCED TO SILENCE.—"What is there in common between the Scripture and your fabulous Tradition?" said a Protestant one day to a priest. "Hand me a Bible," said the latter. The Protestant gave him the volume, which the priest opened and examined, and then laid down, saying with feigned indignation: "I asked you for a Bible, sir, the Holy Scriptures, not that book of fables you offer me." "The book I gave you," said the Protestant, apparently scandalized, "is the great Book of Books, containing the old and the new covenant of God with men."

“And how do you know that this book is the Divine work of which you speak, and not a book of fables invented somewhere or other in the olden days?” “How do I know it? Why, by the infallible testimony of our forefathers who from age to age have transmitted this book to us as the Word of God.” “Ah, you admit then an infallible tradition, you who protest against Tradition!”—*Guillois*.

219. LUTHER ON THE CHURCH.—In one of his treatises, Luther declares that the Catholic is the true Church—the pillar and ground of truth. In the same he says, “I confess that under the Papacy are many good things—nay, all that is good in Christianity: the true Scripture, true Baptism, the true Sacrament of the altar, true keys for the remission of sins, true office of Preaching. Nay, I say that in Popery is true Christianity, *even the very kernel of Christianity*.”

220. THE CURÉ OF ARS AND THE PROTESTANT.—The Curé of Ars once gave a medal to a Protestant who visited him, who exclaimed: “Dear sir, you have given a medal to one who is a heretic, at least I am a heretic from your point of view. But although we are not of the same religion, I hope we shall both one day be in Heaven.” The holy priest took the gentleman’s hand in his own, and giving him a look which seemed to reach his very soul, answered him, “Alas! my friend, we cannot be together in Heaven, unless we have begun to live so in this world. Death makes no change in that. As the tree falls so shall it lie. Jesus Christ has said, ‘He that does not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican.’ And He said again, ‘There shall be one fold and one shepherd,’ and He made S. Peter the chief shepherd of His flock.” Then, in a voice full of sweetness, he added, “My dear friend, there are not two ways of serving Jesus Christ; there is only one good way, and that is to serve Him as He Himself wishes to be served.” Saying this, the priest left him. But these words sank deeply into the good man’s heart, and led him to renounce the errors in which he had been brought up, and he became a fervent Catholic.—*Life of the Curé of Ars*.

221. THE SITUATION MISSED.—There was a Minister of State in Holland, who, though not a Catholic, had a great esteem for our religion, and looked down with contempt on those half-hearted Catholics who are ashamed of their faith. A young man once came to him to ask him for employment in the service of the government. “What religion do you belong to?” said the minister. “I am a Catholic,” replied the young man, “but I do not care much whether

I continue to be one or not." "Then I have no appointment for you," answered the statesman. "You were born and brought up in the grandest institution in the world, and you do not know how to esteem that privilege. I feel sure that a Catholic who does not love and esteem his faith as his greatest treasure is not fit for the king's service, because he does not know how to serve his God." The young man did not expect to receive this rebuke, and hung down his head through shame. He repented of his conduct, but it was too late, for the minister, after saying these words, abruptly left him, and he was obliged to retire.—"*Ave Maria.*"

222. A BRAVE SOLDIER'S ANSWER.—Some time ago, a Catholic entered the army of the Shah, and gained his esteem. One day the Shah entreated him to renounce the Christian religion and become a Mahometan. "If you will do this," he said, "I will raise you to the highest rank, and confer on you my choicest favours." The young man answered: "O king, my father died for you, and I am ready to do the same. But if you want me to renounce my religion, then take this sword and kill me, for I would rather die than be guilty of such a crime." The Shah was moved by these generous words. Instead of being angry, he praised the young Christian for his fidelity to his God, and as a mark of his esteem for him, raised him in a short time to the highest honours in the Persian army.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

223. THE VATICAN COUNCIL.—Towards the close of the year 1869, upon the Feast of our Lady's Immaculate Conception, there met together in the great Church of S. Peter, at Rome, a vast assembly of Catholic Bishops, gathered together from all parts of the world. These venerable Prelates, to the number of more than 600, had flocked to Rome at the voice of the Vicar of Christ, the saintly Pius IX., to rally round the chair of S. Peter in defence of Catholic Doctrine, and to expose and condemn the errors of an unbelieving age. This magnificent assembly of the Pastors of the Church will be known in history by the name of the Council of the Vatican, being the twentieth General Council that has met since the time of the Apostles. There came together, from the far East, holy Bishops who had nobly confessed the Faith and endured cruel tortures for the name of Jesus in the prisons of China, Tong-King, and the Corea. For the Church of Jesus Christ is ever the same, fruitful in Saints and Martyrs, and in good and devoted shepherds, who are ready, like their Divine Master, to sacrifice at any time their lives for their flocks. The Council of the Vatican is not yet

concluded, having been suspended in consequence of the unjust invasion and seizure of the States of the Church by Victor Emanuel, King of Sardinia and Piedmont. It has, however, accomplished a great portion of its labours, having condemned many prevailing errors, and passed a decree that will make it ever memorable in the history of the Church. This is no other than the definition of the Infallibility of the Pope. In other words, the assembled Bishops of the universal Church, presided over by the Sovereign Pontiff himself, have solemnly declared that it has ever been the belief and teaching of the Church of God, and that it is a truth of Faith revealed by God Himself, that the Bishop of Rome, the successor of S. Peter, cannot err when he defines a doctrine concerning Faith or Morals to be held by the whole Church.—*Gibson*.

224. A POOR MAN'S ANSWER.—A poor man, who could not read, but was brought up a good Catholic, was once met by some young men, who, although learned in the eyes of the world, were very ignorant of the things of God. They thought that they would be able to put questions to him about his religion which he would not be able to answer. So they asked him to explain to them some things which even learned theologians find difficult to explain. The poor man did not at first answer them, but when they urged him to do so, he said: "Gentlemen, you know that I have no learning and cannot even read, and I am sorry that I cannot give you the explanation you desire. But my heart will answer you better than my lips can. I am happy, and what makes me happy is the knowledge that I belong to that Church which cannot err in what she teaches, and that I put in practice as far as lies in my power the duties it imposes on me. Is there one among you who can say this?" The young men said no more, but quickly turned away. The poor man, without learning, showed himself superior to them who thought they knew so much.—*Chisholm*.

225. THE REPLY OF THE PRINCESS.—A certain princess, who belonged to the Lutheran Church, was about to marry a Catholic emperor, Charles of Austria. But before the day appointed for the marriage she went to ask the chiefs of her Church if it were possible for Catholics to enter Heaven. They answered: "Yes, if they lead good lives, they also may be saved." "Then I will immediately become a Catholic," she boldly said to them. "Prudence requires that I should choose the surest means of saving my soul. The Catholic Church teaches that those who know it to be the true

Church, and yet do not enter its fold, cannot reach Heaven ; and you tell me that if I become a Catholic I may be saved. Therefore, it is safer for me to join that Church than remain where I am." She became a fervent Catholic, and her good example was also followed by her father and many others among her friends.—*Chisholm*.

226. S. MONICA'S PRAYERS FOR HER SON.—S. Monica, mother of S. Augustine, the great doctor of the Church, was sorely afflicted at witnessing the impiety and dissolute morals of her son. Bitter were the tears she shed, day and night, over his wanderings, and incessant were her prayers for his conversion. As she was one day giving an account to a holy bishop of the sorrow and uneasiness given her by her son's wicked course of life, and added that she doubted of ever effecting his conversion, the holy man consoled her by these words : " It is impossible that a child of so many tears and prayers should perish." And so it came to pass ; for her prayers were heard, and her son, great sinner though he was, became a great Saint.—*Her Life : May 4*.

227. S. AUGUSTINE'S PRAYER FOR INNOCENT.—S. Augustine, accompanied by some of his priests, paid a visit to a person of distinction, named Innocent, on hearing that he was sick. No sooner had S. Augustine entered the sick man's room, than he heard from him that on the following day he was to undergo a very painful operation, and that he greatly feared the consequences. He entreated the Saint to be present during the operation, that in case he should sink under it, he might be assisted by his prayers and exhortations. S. Augustine promised to be in attendance, at the same time exhorting him to have recourse to God, to place confidence in His great mercy, to submit to His holy will, and to offer up his prayers in union with those which were now about to be offered up for him. S. Augustine and the attending priests then knelt down, and fervently prayed for the sick man, whose state touched them with pity. On the following day the surgeons were at the bedside of Innocent, and were about commencing the operation, when, on a close inspection of the part affected, they found that every trace of the disease had disappeared. God had attended to the prayers of His servants.—*Of the City of God*.

228. S. NICHOLAS, AN INTERCESSOR.—Three lords of Constantinople, falsely accused before the Emperor, were thrown into prison and condemned to death. The sentence was to be executed next day, and, you may suppose, the unhappy men had but little inclina-

tion to sleep. Seeing that there was no chance whatever of their innocence being established, they had recourse to prayer. They had often heard of Nicholas, bishop of Myra ; everyone said that he was a Saint ; they all three threw themselves on their knees and besought him to assist them. Scarcely had they commenced to pray, when God permitted that the Emperor, who was fast asleep in his palace, had a dream. He saw a venerable old man, robed as a bishop, who addressed him sternly and said : " Prince, art thou certain that the judgment pronounced on three of thy ministers is just ? Beware ! " and the vision disappeared. Next day the Emperor was careful not to have the prisoners executed ; he reviewed the process of their trial, and failed not to perceive that they had been condemned unjustly. He caused them to be immediately liberated, after relating to them the dream he had had. The poor officers speedily discovered that their prayers had been heard by S. Nicholas, and that it was he himself that had appeared to the Emperor.—*His Life : Dec. 6.*

229. S. ANTONINUS AND THE BREAD.—S. Antoninus was greatly admired for his patience and moderation towards sinners ; he one day had a piece of white bread publicly laid before him. Over this white bread he pronounced the words of Anathema, and immediately it became as a cinder before the eyes of all ! The witnesses of the miracle were dumb with fear ; the bishop then pronounced the words of absolution over the bread, which forthwith resumed its former appearance. " What you have seen here," said the prelate, " is an image of what takes place in the soul of one who is excommunicated. Understand then the patience and prudence the Church must show, even towards sinners, before using this terrible power ; pity them and pray for them : as members of the Communion of Saints, you are bound to this act of charity."—*His Life : May 10.*

230. S. GREGORY AND S. BASIL.—These two Saints were united in the bonds of sincere friendship. After serving God in holiness for many years, S. Basil died. S. Gregory was filled with grief at his loss ; but knowing how piously he had lived, he had the firm hope in his breast that his dear friend was in the bosom of God and praying for him. The Saints have many temptations to endure on earth before they can receive the crown of glory in Heaven. S. Gregory also had to endure many of these assaults of Satan. But when they came upon him he thought of S. Basil, and prayed

to him in these words : " O great friend of God, and my dearest friend, help me ; obtain for me the grace of being freed from these temptations, or at least the strength and courage to resist them."

231. PARIS SAVED BY S. GENEVIÈVE.—In the twelfth century there appeared in France, and especially in the capital, a strange disease which seemed to burn the bowels of its victims, as with a raging fire : medical science was unable to arrest its progress. Then Stephen, bishop of Paris, ordered prayers and fasts, to appease the anger of God, but the plague still continued. At length they had a solemn procession of the relics of S. Geneviève, patroness of Paris, borne through the streets, to seek her aid in their trial. No sooner had the relics left the Church than the sick recovered at once, with the exception of two or three whom God wished perhaps to sanctify by greater trials. This intervention of the Saint in their behalf is commemorated by Parisians on November 26.—*Her Life : Jan. 3.*

232. THE PROTESTANT CONVERT.—A certain young man, a Protestant, residing in Scotland, had a brother whom he tenderly loved, but who was cut off by a premature death. He was deeply affected at so severe a loss, and refused all consolation. What grieved him particularly were the fears for his brother's salvation which perpetually haunted his mind. He could not bear to think that his brother was eternally lost, and yet, when he considered the holiness of God, and the perfect purity required for admission into Heaven, he was filled with the deepest anxiety. To divert his mind he undertook, at the advice of his friends and physician, a journey to the Continent. Providence had so arranged that a Catholic priest sailed with him in the same vessel, and, on landing, lodged at the same hotel. The priest and the young Scotchman were frequently thrown together, and conversed on various subjects, till at last the young man revealed to his new friend the cause of his secret uneasiness. The priest endeavoured to console him, and spoke to him of the doctrine of Purgatory, and the Catholic practice of praying for the dead. " Oh !" exclaimed the youth, " if I were only able to pray for my brother, I should feel my heart relieved ; never would I pass a day without offering up my petitions to God for one whom I loved so tenderly upon earth." This conversation made a deep impression upon the young man, and led him to inquire into the other doctrines of the Church. These inquiries soon removed his early prejudices, and a short time after he became a Catholic.—*Gaume.*

233.—CONVERSION OF A COUNTESS.—The Countess of Strafford, before her conversion to the Catholic religion, had frequent interviews with Monseigneur de la Mothe, Bishop of Amiens, whose discourses made a very lasting impression on her mind. But that which most affected her was a sermon preached by him to the Ursulines of Amiens, on the feast of S. John the Baptist. When the sermon had concluded, she felt an ardent desire of professing the same belief as the preacher, who had edified her so much. She had, however, some doubts about the Mass and Purgatory. These doubts she laid before the bishop. Without entering into any argument on the subject of her doubts, or directly attacking her prejudices, he thus answered her: "My lady, you know the Bishop of London, and, I am sure, you repose the fullest confidence in him. Very well. Now, I entreat you to send him word of what I am going to say, which is this: 'The Bishop of Amiens has said one thing which surprises me, and it is this, that if you are able to disprove that S. Augustine said Mass, and prayed for the dead, and particularly his mother, he himself will at once become a Protestant.'" This advice was followed: the Bishop of London sent no reply to the letter, but merely said to the bearer of it, that Lady Strafford was inhaling infectious air, and that his writing to her would produce very little effect. The silence of one in whom she confided so much completely opened the eyes of the Countess, and not long after she abjured her errors before the Bishop of Amiens.—*Life of M. de la Mothe.*

234. PRACTICE OF S. CATHERINE OF BOLOGNA.—When S. Catherine of Bologna stood in need of any grace, she had recourse to the souls in Purgatory, and her prayers were immediately heard. She declared that through these holy souls many favours were granted to her, which she had sought through the intercession of the Saints, and had not obtained.—*Her Life: Mar. 9.*

235. BROTHER ANTHONY CORSO.—Soon after Brother Anthony Corso died, he appeared to one of the brothers of his monastery, asking him to pray for him that he might be freed from his sufferings. The brother asked him what was the greatest suffering he had to endure. "It is my not being able to see God: that is the greatest suffering of Purgatory: I do not know how I can bear any longer the pain of being deprived of the sight of my God. As long as I am in this state, I shall be the most unhappy of creatures."—*Chisholm.*

236. VISION OF S. PERPETUA.—Dinocrates was born at Carthage, in Africa, about the year 195. He died at the age of seven years, of a horrible cancer which he had in his cheek. His sister, named Perpetua, was older than he; being a virtuous young person, she was arrested in a great persecution, and thrown into prison to force her to worship idols. It was then that she prayed to God for the soul of her little brother, without knowing whether he had need of her prayers or not. All at once this holy martyr, who was to be delivered to the wild beasts some days later, had a vision. She seemed to see Dinocrates, with many other persons, in a dark and filthy place. His face was pale and squalid, his eyes inflamed, and his cheek still covered with the ulcer of which he died. She saw that he suffered much, and that he was tormented by a burning thirst; there was, indeed, beside him a large basin full of water, but the edges were too high for him to reach. S. Perpetua, touched by sufferings which were undoubtedly the representation of those he endured in Purgatory, prayed for him with renewed fervour. Some days after, having changed her prison, she had another vision, in which she saw her young brother, his body all clean, his garments white, his face radiant with the freshness of health; she then understood that her prayers had been heard, and that Dinocrates was delivered from Purgatory. It is she herself who relates these visions, read in the Acts of her Martyrdom, which occurred about the year 203.

237. CONSOLATIONS OF PURGATORY.—Oh, how solemn and subduing is the thought of that holy kingdom, that realm of pain. There is no cry, no murmur; all is silent, silent as Jesus before His enemies. We shall never know how we really love Mary, till we look up to her out of those deeps, those vales of dread mysterious fire. O beautiful region of the Church of God! O lovely troop of the flock of Mary! What a scene is presented to our eyes when we gaze upon that consecrated empire of sinlessness, and yet of keenest suffering! There is the beauty of those immaculate souls, and then the loveliness, yea, the worshipfulness of their patience, the majesty of their gifts, the dignity of their solemn and chaste sufferings, the eloquence of their silence; and above all, that unseen face of Jesus, which is so well remembered that it seems to be almost seen!—*Power.*

238. THIRTY YEARS!—A certain religious, when about to leave this world, begged of a priest to say Mass for the repose of his soul immediately after his death. As soon as the holy man expired, the

priest said Mass for him with great fervour and devotion. But scarcely had he finished Mass, when he saw before him the soul of the deceased religious. "O my friend," he said to him, "why did you neglect to fulfil your promise? Why did you leave me in the torments of Purgatory for thirty years?" "What," exclaimed the priest, "thirty years? It is not yet an hour since you died!" "Learn from this," said the holy soul, "how terrible are the pains of Purgatory, since one hour's suffering there appears as long as thirty years!"—*Chisholm*.

239. S. CATHERINE'S VISION.—A holy nun received word of her father's death, and for a time offered prayers and good works for the repose of his soul. At last she ceased praying for him, because she thought he must be in Heaven, and that it was useless for her to pray for him any longer. But how great was her astonishment when Our Lord one day showed her, in Purgatory, the soul of her beloved father, suffering the most excruciating torments, and imploring her help. "Oh, my daughter, pray for me, and do not forget your father who loved you so tenderly." At the sight of the sad state of his soul she burst into tears, and casting herself at the feet of Jesus, she besought Him through His most precious blood to free her father from his sufferings; or if it was necessary for someone to bear the punishment, she offered herself to suffer in his stead. Our Lord was pleased to accept the offering she made. Her father's soul was immediately set free from Purgatory, but heavy indeed were the crosses and sufferings she had to bear from that day till the end of her life.—*Chisholm*.

240. PURGATORY IN PAINTING.—Certain canons having had to repair their Church, added to it a chapel dedicated to the souls in Purgatory. The sculptor who was charged with the decorations represented the poor souls in the midst of the flames; but he was so malicious as to place in the very midst of his figures the portrait of a neighbouring abbot. The likeness was so perfect that no one could mistake it; the Superior himself recognized it. He immediately complained to the canons, who summoned the sculptor, and laughingly besought him to deliver that poor soul from his Purgatory. The artist excused himself under the pretence that he could not touch his work without spoiling it. The complaint was carried before the Archbishop. The Prelate inquired of the sculptor if the likeness were accidental. "No, my lord," said he, "I did it on purpose." "Then you must destroy that figure, for it is an outrage

on the original." "I shall do no such thing, my lord, and your lordship will not ask me to do it, I am sure, when you hear my reasons. Last year, this reverend Superior proved in one of his sermons that those who die without having made satisfaction are detained in the flames of Purgatory till they have paid their debts. Now, his procurator has owed me a hundred crowns these two years past, and I am not yet paid. So that is just the reason why I thought myself authorized to place the abbot in my Purgatory. I assure you, my lord, I will leave him there for ever, unless you have the goodness to see me paid." The Prelate, and all who were present, could not help laughing at this singular justification. The complainant himself could not object to the demand thus made; he acquitted himself with good grace, and ordered his procurator to pay the hundred crowns. The sculptor, on his side, modified the figure in Purgatory, represented it ascending to Heaven, like a soul which has fully satisfied the justice of God.—*Filassier*.

241. BURIAL OF A DOG.—A worthy peasant, noted for his faith and piety, came to lose a dog which had rendered him great service, and to which he was much attached. Instead of throwing the body of the poor animal into a ditch, or on the skirt of a wood, fearing that he might be devoured by wolves, he made a grave in his own ground, and there buried him. He was engaged in covering him up when a Protestant minister—passing by—began to laugh at him, saying: "Now, Mathurin, you are burying your dog without saying anything; you ought, at least, to sing a *De Profundis* over him." "Alas, I can't," said the peasant, with great composure. "And why so?" "Ah, my dog was a Protestant, and I am forced to bury him like the Protestants, who pretend that prayers for the dead are of no use." The minister went off ashamed and confused; but, if he had been in good faith, he must needs have confessed that Mathurin's reasoning was both just and true.—*Catholic Anecdotes*.

242. ANGELA TOLOMEI.—This holy virgin, having died after a long sickness, was restored to life through the prayers of her brother. Penance and atonement for sin were then her only thought. Fasting and watchings, hair-shirts and disciplines, seemed to her as nothing compared with what she had already known of Purgatory. In this way she continued to live till God, seeing her soul purified as gold in the fire, took her again to Himself. How this example should make us tremble, and teach us to do penance for sin here in this life.—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

243. THE POOR SERVANT.—The following occurred in Paris in 1821 :—A poor servant had the custom of having a Mass said every month for the souls in Purgatory. But during a long and painful illness she was unable to do this, and meantime lost her situation. When able again to go about she had but a solitary franc in her possession, as she went looking for another place. Passing by a Church, she entered, and was reminded of the pious custom of former days. But how could she spare her last franc for a Mass for the suffering souls? Yet full of confidence in God, she sacrificed it, and had a Mass arranged for the morrow. Then, leaving the Church, she was suddenly accosted by a young man, who told her to apply for a situation, at a certain number in a certain street which he named, and then disappeared among the crowd. Following the directions given, she enquired at the house in question. The lady was very much puzzled how her applicant could know of the vacancy, she herself having named it to no one. So the servant explained what had occurred, and looking about the room, she suddenly exclaimed: "Madam, that is the very figure of the young man who spoke to me," and she pointed to a picture hanging on the wall. "Ah," cried out the lady, "then you will not be my servant, you shall be my daughter. This is my son that you saw, who probably owes to you his deliverance from Purgatory: may God reward you. Let us pray for the suffering souls!"—*Postel*.

244. S. MALACHY AND HIS SISTER.—S. Malachy, Bishop of Armagh, was remarkable for his special compassion for the poor souls in Purgatory. Now it happened that he had a sister who was given to a worldly life and was fond of pleasure, vanity, and dress. Often had her saintly brother reproved her for her folly, exhorting her to think seriously of her soul, but all his efforts were to no purpose. At length she died, and for some days S. Malachy offered the Holy Sacrifice and earnest prayers for her repose, until at length the distraction of so many important duties banished all remembrance of her from his mind. Thus a month passed by, at the end of which S. Malachy heard in his sleep a voice saying: "Behold, your sister is waiting in great grief within the Churchyard, and has been thirty days without spiritual refreshment!" The Archbishop, awakening, pondered on the meaning of these words, and remembering that it was now thirty days since he had given up praying for his sister, immediately offered the Holy Mass for her repose, continuing the same for many days. A short time after, he beheld her, in his sleep, standing at the door of the Church:

she was clothed in black garments, and was unable to obtain an entrance. S. Malachy redoubled his prayers, and a few days after, he saw her clad in half-mourning and admitted within the doors of the Church, though as yet unable to approach the altar. Finally, after many and fervent prayers he beheld her clad in white garments, in the midst of a glorious company habited like herself, and admitted into the very sanctuary. Thereby he knew that the holy sacrifices and prayers which he had offered for her had been accepted by God, and that her soul had found relief.—*Rohrbacher*.

245. VISION OF S. ANTONINUS.—S. Antoninus once had a vision of one who had been dead some time, and though many Masses had been offered for his soul, he said: "My brother, all the Masses and all the prayers that have been offered up for me have done me no good. I am in Purgatory, and shall have to remain there till I have satisfied the justice of God; I have hitherto received no relief from all that has been done for me, because when I was alive I neglected to pray for the holy souls in Purgatory. All the benefit of the prayers and Masses said for me is given to those souls for whom I ought, in a special manner, to have prayed, and did not do it. They are relieved instead of me, and I have to suffer. O pray for me," he continued, "that God may forgive me my neglect: and go and preach everywhere to people, to pray for the souls of the faithful departed, lest when they die God may treat them as He has treated me." After these words the vision disappeared.—*Life of S. Antoninus: Oct. 13.*

THE TENTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

"The forgiveness of sins."

246. S. FRANCIS AND THE SINNER.—S. Francis of Sales was hearing confessions in his Church at Annecy. Among other penitents who went to him was a woman who had led a very bad life, but who, touched by God's grace, made a good and sincere confession of all the evil she had done. S. Francis blessed God for her conversion, and felt his soul full of happiness in giving her absolution. When she had received it she said to him: "My father, what do you think of me now since you have heard of all the crimes I have been guilty of?" "My child," he answered, "I now look upon you as a Saint; let people say and think what they like; they

may judge you as the Pharisee judged Mary Magdalen after her conversion, but you know what Jesus Christ thought of her and how He judged her. Your past life has now no longer any existence. I weep tears of joy because of your resurrection from the grave of sin to a life of grace." The penitent was not only consoled by these words of S. Francis, but when the devil came to try to make her fall into despair by thinking of her past iniquities, they enabled her to drive the temptation away.—*His Life : Jan. 29.*

247. BODY OF A DAMNED SOUL.—A young man named Pelagius, led in his father's house a life so exemplary that everyone regarded him as a Saint. He lived so for several years. After the death of his parents, he sold all his goods, distributed the proceeds amongst the poor, and retired to a desert, where he led a most edifying life. But one day he had the misfortune to consent to a bad thought. He had not the courage to confess it, for fear of losing the good opinion of his confessor, and fell into a deep melancholy. Meanwhile his angel guardian appeared to him visibly under the figure of a pilgrim, and said to him : " Go, Pelagius, confess thy sin, and God will forgive thee, and thou shalt recover the peace of thy soul." Thus warned, Pelagius took the resolution of doing penance, flattering himself that God would perhaps forgive him his sin, without his confessing it. In that hope he entered a monastery, where he led a most austere life, in fasting and continual penance. Finding himself at the hour of death, he confessed for the last time, still without daring to confess his hidden sin. Everyone thought him a Saint, and he was buried with honour. But what was the result ? Three days in succession his body was found outside the grave, without anyone knowing how it came there. The last time it happened, the Superior went thither with all his monks, and addressing the dead body, he said aloud : " Pelagius, thou didst obey me when alive ; obey me now when thou art dead. Tell me, in God's name, whether it be His will that thou art buried in some other place ?" " Alas !" cried the dead man, " I am damned for having concealed in confession a bad thought on which I had dwelt with pleasure. Behold the state in which my body is !" At the same moment his body appeared all on fire like red-hot iron. The sight terrified everyone present, and the Superior caused Pelagius to be buried outside the cemetery of the monastery. See what a dreadful thing it is to die without taking the proper means to obtain the pardon of one's sins.—*Favre.*

248. REPENTANCE OF S. THAIS.—S. Thais was a miserable sinner of Egypt, who lived in the fourth century, and employed for the ruin of souls the graces and talents she had received from nature. God inspired a holy abbot, named Paphnutius, with the desire of labouring for her conversion. He went in search of her, and spoke to her at first on different subjects. How great was his surprise to find her passably well instructed in her religion! “Now,” said he, “you know, then, that there is a God?” “Not only do I know that there is a God, but I also know that He is present everywhere, and He sees all we do, and will one day judge us; the good shall go to the everlasting kingdom, and the wicked to a hell that will never end.” “What! Thais, you know all that, and yet do evil! you destroy your own soul and the souls of others!” “Father, I see that you are a man of God,” said the poor woman, melting into tears; “impose on me whatever penance you please; I hope that God in His mercy will have pity on me. I only ask three hours to myself, and I return all yours.” She left him immediately, went to collect her dresses, her jewels, and all her finery, with what money she possessed, made a heap of them in the midst of the market-place, and set fire to them with her own hands. She returned then to S. Paphnutius, who shut her up in a little cell close by a convent of nuns. He built up the door, and left her only a small window, through which some bread and water was every day given to her. Thais then asked him what prayer she should say to God. “To God! you are unworthy even to pronounce His holy name. You will merely say to Him, without daring to raise your eyes to Heaven: ‘O Thou who createdst me, have mercy on me!’” At the end of three years, God made known to S. Paphnutius that this heroic penitent had found favour in His sight. They opened her voluntary prison, although she begged with tears to be permitted to end her days in it. “Not so, my daughter,” said her spiritual father, “God has forgiven you your sins.” But that soul, sanctified by penance, was ripe for Heaven; she died a fortnight after, and merited to be honoured as a Saint.—*Her Life*: Oct. 8.

249. THE HERMIT AND THE ROBBER.—A certain hermit, who had lived for many years in great reputation for sanctity, began at length to entertain dangerous thoughts of self-complacency. Filled with these temptations, he was setting out one morning to visit a neighbouring Church, when he beheld, seated on the banks of the river which flowed past his little cell, a poor man, who appeared

to be weeping bitterly. On approaching him, he perceived that the afflicted man was a notorious robber, the terror of the surrounding country. The hermit was about to retrace his steps, when the man advanced to meet him, threw himself at his feet, confessed his crimes, and begged to know if he might ever hope for pardon. The hermit, astonished and shocked at hearing the recital of so many enormous sins, and comparing them with his own innocent and blameless life, began to swell with pride, and, in tones of indignation, exclaimed: "Dost *thou* hope for pardon, thou wicked sinner? Sooner shall roses bloom upon this dry staff than a just God grant forgivenesses to such sins as thine!" So saying, he turned away, leaving the poor sinner on the brink of despair. The hermit had not proceeded far when the staff which he carried in his hand became rooted in the ground. He endeavoured to pull it out, but it resisted all his efforts, and became every moment more firmly seated in the soil. Then he beheld bud, and leaf, and flower sprouting forth, until at last the dry stick was laden with beautiful roses; and at the same time he heard a voice whispering: "Sooner shall roses bloom on the barren staff than a good God refuse mercy to the repenting sinner, or grant it to the proud one." Filled with shame and contrition, the hermit fell on his knees, and, with many tears, begged pardon for his sin; then, rising, he once more endeavoured to release his staff. This time it yielded to his grasp, and, bearing it in his hand, he returned in haste to the spot where he had left the robber. "See, brother," said he, showing him the staff all covered with roses, "the wonder which God has worked to convince *me* of my fault, and *you* of His tender mercy. Fear not, then, God should refuse to pardon you. In the Church He has left an abundant fountain of grace, His Precious Blood, in which he who sincerely repents may wash away the blackest crimes. Come, then, with me to my cell, that together we may avail ourselves of this means of grace, and bewail our sins for the rest of our lives." Much comforted, the robber dried his tears, and followed the hermit to his cell. Here they planted the staff before the door, and it grew into a beautiful tree, the sight of which served as a continual encouragement to persevere in a spirit of humility, and firm hope in the Divine Mercy.—*The Little Flower Garden.*

250. THE RING IN THE RIVER.—S. Arnoul, a celebrated minister of France, in the reign of Clotaire II., and who afterwards became Bishop of Metz, was one day much occupied with the desire of knowing whether God had forgiven him the sins of his youth,

and completely effaced them from the book of His justice. His uncertainty on this point long tormented him, and filled his heart with the liveliest anxiety. Plunged in these despairing doubts, he went one day to the bridge over the Moselle, at Metz, stopped suddenly, and took the pastoral ring off his finger, and threw it into the river, saying: "If I find that ring again, I will believe that my sins are forgiven me." Although Arnoul be a Saint, one cannot help blaming him here, for he gave no great proof of his confidence in the Divine Mercy, or the efficacy of penance. We should do wrong, therefore, to imitate him. A long interval passed without Arnoul having any reason to suppose that his prayer was heard; nevertheless his ring was found one day in the belly of a fish that was served on his table. This event was noised abroad, and the miraculous ring was placed in a Church. It was exhibited every year to pilgrims and the curious.—*Warnefrid*.

251. THE THEBAN LEGION.—What an example of obedience and of love of justice is given to all by the Theban Legion! "We are your soldiers, sire," they said to Maximinian, who wished to make them persecute the Christians; "but we are also the servants of God: to you we owe military service, to God our innocence. We cannot obey your orders if opposed to His; so long as nothing is asked of us that can offend Him, we shall continue to obey you as hitherto; otherwise we must obey Him rather than you." And, indeed, they allowed themselves to be put to death rather than execute the unjust commands of the Emperor.—*History of the Church*.

252. ZEAL OF S. PHILIP NERI.—S. Philip used to say, "Oh! if I could only keep people from offending God, how happy would I be!" He was especially anxious about children and young people, for he knew that they were in more danger of falling into sin, on account of the devil's temptations; and his greatest study was to find out ways and means of keeping them from sin. So he would often gather together all the boys of the neighbourhood, and make them join in games near his house, and he himself often took part in them. People were surprised to see him—a man already advanced in years, and one who was considered so holy—spend so much of his time playing with children. One day a multitude of boys were amusing themselves in front of the room where S. Philip was reading. They were making so great a noise that some people in the house went to the Saint and complained to him about it.

S. Philip answered, "Let the good boys alone; let them play and amuse themselves as much as they like. There is only one thing I desire, and that is that they keep away from sin."—*His Life: May 26.*

253. THE PEARL IN THE MIRE.—There was once a rich man who possessed a pearl of great beauty, which he valued above all his other possessions. One day, as he was showing it to a friend, it fell from his hands into a pool of mud at his feet. No sooner had it fallen than he put forth his hand and took it up. But oh! how changed it now was! Its beauty had disappeared under the thick mud which covered it. He carried it into the house, and, putting some water into a dish, began to wash it. In a few minutes all the mud was washed away, and the pearl shone with the same brightness as before.—My child, when you were born, your soul was soiled by Original Sin. But when you were brought to the Church, and the waters of Baptism were poured on your forehead, the mire of Original Sin was washed away, and your soul became beautiful in the eyes of God.—*Chisholm.*

254. PELAGIUS.—Pelagius, the heresiarch, was born at the close of the fourth century, in Wales. He entered the Monastery of Bangor, in North Wales, and became a professed monk. Though possessed of no great learning, he was not deficient in genius. He quitted his cloister and travelled to Rome, where he remained for some years, and grew to some repute. The character he bore of a learned and virtuous monk opened to him an epistolary correspondence with S. Austin and S. Jerome. From his letters these holy men soon discovered his real character; under the mask of piety they discovered a depth of hypocrisy; and, under an imposing language, frightful errors of doctrine, against which they judged it necessary to caution the Faithful. The errors of Pelagius, in doctrinal points, were congenial with the inbred pride of his heart. He denied the existence of Original Sin in the soul of man, and rejected the necessity of Divine grace for the merit of good works; contending that Adam, by sinning, only hurt himself, and that his descendants are now born in the very same state they would always have been had he never sinned, and, as a necessary consequence, that infants, dying without Baptism, enjoy eternal life. Two Councils, one held in Carthage and the other at Milevis, defined that the sin of Adam has descended to his posterity. This decision has been confirmed by Pope Innocent, who condemned the errors

of Pelagius and his adherents, and declared them separated from the Communion of the Catholic Church.—*Power.*

255. THE WOODCUTTER AND HIS WIFE.—A certain king, who had lost his way in hunting, was endeavouring to regain the path, when he heard voices at a little distance. On approaching, he found that it was a poor woodcutter and his wife, who were talking together at their work. "It must be owned," said the woman, "that mother Eve was very greedy to eat the apple. If she had only done as God told her, we should have no need to work and slave as we do now." "If Eve was greedy," replied the man, "Adam was a fool to do as she bade him. If I had been in his place, and you had come to me with the apple, I would have given you a box on the ear and sent you about your business." Scarcely had he spoken these words, when the king came up. "Good people," said he, "you seem to work very hard." "Yes, sir," answered they, "for they did not know that it was the king; we work like slaves from morning till night, and yet can hardly gain a living." "If you will come and live with me," said the king, "I will support you both without working." At the same moment the attendants of the king came up, and the poor woodcutters were greatly surprised and no less rejoiced at their unexpected adventure. The king, as he had promised, took them to his palace, where he gave them splendid apartments, rich dresses, a carriage, horses, and servants in livery. During the first month the time passed very happily. Every day they had twelve dishes at table, and on the last day they had twenty. In the middle of the table was a large dish with a cover upon it. The woman, being very curious, put out her hand to uncover it, but one of the king's servants checked her, and told her that the king had given strict orders that that dish should on no account be touched. As soon as the servants left the room, the woodcutter, perceiving that his wife was very melancholy and ate nothing, asked her what ailed her. She replied that she would not give a pin for all the fine things on the table, but she longed for a bit out of the covered dish. "Foolish woman," said her husband, "did you not hear that the king has forbidden us to touch it?" "The king is very unreasonable," said the woman. "If he would not have us see what is in the dish, he should not have ordered it to be put on the table." At the same time she began to cry, saying that her husband did not love her, and that she would kill herself if he would not uncover the dish. The woodcutter felt moved when he saw his wife cry, and told her that he would do

anything to please her, if she would not make herself unhappy. So saying, he lifted up the cover from the dish, when out jumped a little white mouse, which scampered away in an instant. They both ran after it, but before they could catch it, the king came in, and gravely asked them what had become of the mouse. "Please, your majesty," said the man, who, as you may suppose, looked very foolish, "my wife teased me so long to see what was in the dish, that I could not help uncovering it, and the mouse has got away." "Oh, oh!" replied the king, "you said some time ago, if you had been Adam, you would have given Eve a box on the ear for being curious and greedy; you should have remembered your resolution. And you, silly woman, you had everything here you could wish for, but that was not enough: you must needs, like Eve, taste the forbidden fruit.—Go, foolish people: return to your labour, and never again blame Adam and Eve for the hardships you endure, since you have been guilty of the same folly."—*Mrs. Herbert.*

256. THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL.—In the month of September, 1830, a novice of the Sisters of Charity was praying in the Church before the altar, when she suddenly beheld, suspended in the air, a picture of the Blessed Virgin. On gazing into it, she saw that Our Lady was clothed in a robe of pure white, with a mantle of silvery blue; her hands were stretched open towards the earth, but appeared covered with diamonds, from which rays of extraordinary brightness shone in all directions. At the same time she heard a voice saying, "These rays are the symbols of the graces which Mary obtains for man." Around the picture the following words were written in letters of gold: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us, who have recourse to thee." In a few moments the picture was reversed, and on the other side she saw the letter "M" surmounted by a cross; and underneath, the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Presently the voice again spoke, commanding that a medal should be struck according to the pattern shown her, and declaring that whoever should wear that medal, indulged, should enjoy the special protection of the Mother of God. The novice, on the following day, related the vision to her confessor, who, fearing lest it should be the effect of her imagination, told her to dismiss it from her thoughts, and take no notice of what had happened. The humble novice obeyed, but in a few months the vision was repeated. This time, also, the confessor told her to pay no attention to it. A third time, however, the same vision appeared to her, and on this occasion the voice added that the Blessed Virgin was displeased

that the medal had not been struck. The confessor, being now at a loss how to act, related the whole affair to the Archbishop of Paris, who immediately gave the necessary permission ; adding, that a practice so likely to promote devotion to the Blessed Virgin could hardly come from an evil source.—*Graces of Mary.*

257. THE BOY AND THE ROSEBUSH.—There was once a little boy who was very fond of roses. One day he asked his mother to let him choose one of the rosebushes in the garden which he might attend to himself. His mother willingly consented, and he chose one which was the prettiest of them all. Every day he went to see it and to count the flowers that were growing on it, and when the bush was covered with them, he seemed to be the happiest boy in the world. But one morning, when he went as usual to see his rosebush, he perceived that something was wrong. The leaves were hanging loosely, and the flowers, which the day before were so beautiful, seemed to have now lost their brightness, and it was evident the bush was dead. He looked everywhere to see what had killed his beloved plant, but could see nothing ; it was as firmly rooted to the ground as ever. With tears in his eyes he went to his uncle, and told him what had happened. “ My child,” replied his uncle, “ I think I can tell you what has killed the bush ; come with me and I will show you.” When they reached the place, his uncle pulled it out of the ground and examined the roots. “ Ah ! here it is,” he said. “ Do you see that worm which has eaten its way into the very centre of the stem ? It is that worm that has killed your tree.” “ My dear uncle,” said the boy, “ who could have imagined that one worm should have destroyed all the beautiful roses and leaves that made my bush so lovely, for it was the prettiest one in the whole garden.” “ Ah, my child,” said the old man, “ one worm is sufficient to destroy the finest plant that ever grew. Just in the same way one mortal sin kills the soul and destroys its beauty and all the merits of the good works of a lifetime. Learn then from what has happened to your rosebush to hate sin, which can do so much harm to your soul.”—*Chisholm.*

258. THE PICTURE CUT TO PIECES.—A gentleman had a beautiful picture, a wonder in the world, above all price. People came from all parts to see it. It happened one day that an evil-minded man came to see the famous picture. Being alone in the room, he took a knife out of his pocket, and maliciously cut the picture to pieces. Great was the anger of the owner of the picture. He would

rather have lost his whole fortune than lose that picture. The destruction of the famous picture was soon known over the whole world ; every newspaper in Europe gave an account of it, and said that the destruction of the picture was a most shameful thing. They said that the man must be mad.—That picture was but the work of the hand of man. You, O sinner, had in your soul a picture done by the hand of God ; it was a picture of God Himself, the image and likeness of God was in your soul. The angels wondered to see in your soul a picture of God so perfect and so beautiful. Then came the sad day, the day of mortal sin. You, like a madman, by your mortal sin, broke in pieces the image and likeness of God in your soul, and it was seen there no more, but, in place of it, the horrible image and likeness of the devil. Weep, then, O sinner, weep for your loss.—*Furniss.*

259. THE CHILD DYING OF FRIGHT.—There was a little child which had never seen a dead body in its life. It happened that someone died in the house where the child was living. In the evening the child was taken upstairs to the room where the dead body was laid on a bed. By the pale light of a candle this child, for the first time, saw a dead body ! The poor child trembled when it saw the strange paleness of the dead face—the eyes fixed, the lips which breathed no more, the hands which moved not, and the wonderful stillness and quiet of that dead body. The people said to the child : “ You shall stop here all night, in the dark, without any light, alone by yourself, with the dead body.” Then they all went out, leaving the child alone with the dead body. They remained standing outside, wishing to see if the child would be frightened. A few moments passed and they heard a fearful scream, and immediately afterwards the sound, as it were, of something falling heavily on the floor. They opened the door, and saw that the child was lying on the floor. They went to lift it up, and found that it was dead ! The fright of being left alone in the dark with the dead body had killed the poor child.—O sinner, in the darkness of the night you are alone, not with a dead body, but with a dead soul ! and you are not afraid ; but if God opened your eyes to see that frightful, hideous monster of a dead soul which is in you, you would never rise again from your bed. The sight of that fearful, terrible dead soul in you, would take away your breath, and your sense, and your life.—*Furniss.*

260. ALBERT THE GREAT'S MECHANISM.—Albert the Great spent thirty years in making a wonderful piece of work. It was a human

figure, which, by means of certain contrivances, was made to speak and act, as if it were alive. The pious Albert had spent all his leisure time at this work, during these thirty years, and, as it was all done in secret, no one knew about it. At length it was finished. It happened that at that very time one of his friends from a distance, whom he had not seen for a long time, came to visit him. He thought he would give him an agreeable surprise by showing him this wonderful figure which he had just completed. So he told him to go to a certain part of the house. "You will see something there," he said, "which I am sure will astonish you." In the meantime he went to the place where the figure was, and set it in motion, then hid himself, that he might enjoy unseen the surprise of his friend. When the man went into the room and saw the figure moving so naturally, and uttering sounds so like the human voice, he began to think that there must be some evil spirit about it. So he suddenly seized a great piece of wood which was lying near, and dealt a blow at the figure, which, in an instant, broke into a thousand pieces. "Stop! Stop!" cried out Albert, rushing from his hiding-place. But it was too late; the beautiful work was destroyed. The man now saw what he had done, and was filled with regret at his hasty act. Albert said to him, with a sadness in his voice: "My friend, for thirty years I have laboured to bring that work to perfection, and in one instant you have utterly destroyed it. The loss can never be repaired." And the two friends separated.—*His Life.*

261. THE MADMAN.—A man broke in pieces his chairs and tables. He set his house on fire, and burnt it down. He threw all his money into the river. The people cried out that he had lost his senses; he was mad. They came and seized hold of him, and tied him, and carried him away and shut him up in a mad-house.—You, O sinner! did you not wilfully commit that mortal sin? Did you not know that by mortal sin you threw away Heaven and all its treasures? Then you are the madman and the fool. Your end will be to be shut up in hell, the great mad-house of the fools who wilfully throw away Heaven and its treasures, bought for them by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Your past good works are lost.—*Furniss.*

262. THE WITHERED HAND.—There was a man whose hand got withered. It became hard, and stiff, and dry. He could not bend his fingers, or open and shut his hand any more. His hand was like

an old dry stick. He could not work any more (*Matt. xii. 10*).—When you committed a mortal sin, your soul withered up and was worse than an old dry stick. So your soul cannot do works good for Heaven any more. But although the good works you do in a state of mortal sin will not be rewarded in Heaven, still it is good to do them. They will, perhaps, move God to give you the grace of repentance.—*Furniss*.

263. THE SOUL IN THE STATE OF GRACE.—S. Catherine, of Siena, was permitted by God to see the beauty of a soul in the state of grace. It was so beautiful that she could not look on it; the brightness of that soul dazzled her. The blessed Raymond, her confessor, asked her to describe to him, as far as she was able, the beauty of the soul she had seen. S. Catherine thought of the sweet light of the morning, and of the beautiful colours of the rainbow, but that soul was far more beautiful. She remembered the dazzling beams of the noonday sun, but the light which beamed from that soul was far brighter. She thought of the pure whiteness of the lily and of the fresh snow, but that is only an earthly whiteness. The soul she had seen was bright with the whiteness of Heaven, such as there is not to be found on earth. “My father,” she answered, “I cannot find anything in this world that can give you the smallest idea of what I have seen. Oh! if you could but see the beauty of a soul in the state of grace, you would sacrifice your life a thousand times for its salvation. I asked the angel who was with me what had made that soul so beautiful, and he answered me, ‘It is the image and likeness of God in that soul, and the Divine Grace which made it so beautiful.’”—*Her Life : Apr. 30*.

264. THE FRIGHTFUL DEATH.—There was a certain man condemned to die an extraordinary death. It happened long since. It was in the times of the Pagans, before the Christian religion was on the earth. There was a dead body, black, as if it had died of the black cholera. This black body was fastened to the body of the bad man. It was so fastened that it was impossible for him to get away from it. The wretched man trembled and shook with fright when he saw the terrible load coming which he was to carry. When he felt the weight of it pressing upon him, the feeling of death pierced his very bones. This dreadful load was always pressing upon him. In the light of the day he saw with his eyes the frightful load of black death which he carried. In the darkness of the night the dead body was his only companion. The smell of that horrible

dead body was most fearful. From this load of death worms began to come. The people who saw this man at a distance shrieked with fright and ran away. The unfortunate man himself howled with terror and pain, and his howling could be heard all through the country. He bit his tongue and dashed himself against the stones. At last he lost his senses. He fell down dead under the terrible load which he carried!—Unhappy sinner! You go about, day by day, tied up with death—not the black cholera death, or the death of flesh or blood—but the real death, the death of the spirit, that death which came out of hell.—*Furniss.*

265. THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES.—A certain prince called Damocles, who was very ambitious, thought that there was no one so happy as a king. “Oh, I wish I were a king,” he was often heard to say; “I would then be rich, and have no cares nor sorrows, and I would live in perfect happiness.” Dionysius the king heard this, and to teach him a lesson, he one day said to him, “Since you think my dignity to be so full of happiness, I will permit you for a time to rule in my place.” So Damocles was placed on a throne of gold, and clad in robes of the finest texture. Servants attended to all his wants, and everything that his heart desired was given to him, and he thought his happiness complete. But one day, as he was at the table, he happened to raise his eyes, and saw suspended over his head a sharp sword. It hung by a single thread, and he saw that if that thread broke he would most certainly be hurt, and perhaps even killed. As soon as he perceived it, he became pale; he was afraid to move lest he might in doing so break the slender thread, and he sat on his rich throne as immovable as a statue, crying out to someone to come and take away the sword. By the king’s order this was not immediately done, and Damocles was almost dead from fear.—Those who are in Mortal Sin are in even greater danger; they are hanging over the abyss of hell; all that keeps them from falling into it is the slender thread of life. Oh, my child, keep out of Mortal Sin.

266. QUEEN BLANCHE TO HER SON.—Louis IX., King of France, was scarcely twelve years old when his father died. He was brought up under the care of his mother, Blanche of Castile, who, as Regent, governed the kingdom of France. This virtuous queen had imbued the mind of her son from his very infancy with the liveliest sentiments of piety. In his tender years, she often repeated to him these words, so worthy of a Christian mother: “You know, my son, how

tenderly I love you, yet, great and tender though my love for you be, I would feel less at seeing you fall dead at my feet, than to find you ever committed a single mortal sin." These words made such an impression on his mind, that he often declared that he had never forgotten them, and that he scarcely passed a day without recalling them to his remembrance, in order to strengthen himself against temptation.—*Butler*.

267. KING LOUIS AND JOINVILLE.—S. Louis, King of France, asked one of his nobles, named Joinville, what he would do if he were asked to choose between committing a mortal sin and being struck with leprosy. Joinville, without any hesitation, answered the King, "I would sooner commit ten mortal sins than be infected even once with that terrible plague." The King looked sadly on his friend, and said, "Ah! my dear sir, it is evident you do not know what an evil it is to commit a mortal sin. There is no evil so terrible as sin is: for no matter how much we detest our sins we can never be sure, so long as we live, whether or not God has forgiven us, or that we have sufficiently repented of them."—*Life of S. Louis: Aug. 25.*

268. FALL OF THE ANGELS.—Many thousand years ago, before God created Adam and Eve, and placed them in the garden of paradise, he created millions of pure spirits, who are called Angels. These noble beings were made of surpassing beauty, gifted with great power, and had knowledge and intelligence bestowed on them at their creation far beyond what man can hope to attain to. Before bestowing upon them, however, the eternal possession of his favours, Almighty God put them to a trial. He laid upon them a command; we do not exactly know the nature of it, but it is commonly thought that it was to adore His Divine Son made man for our salvation. The greater portion of the Angels gladly embraced this opportunity of showing their love and fidelity to that good God who had lavished so many favours upon them; and in reward for their obedience, God confirmed them in the possession of all the graces He had given them, and bestowed upon them an eternity of happiness. But very many of them, unhappily, led by the proud spirit Lucifer, one of the brightest and most glorious of the heavenly host, refused to obey the command of God. So far from adoring the God who made them, clothed in our human nature, they sought themselves to become as gods, and raised aloft the standard of revolt. In an instant the vengeance of the Almighty fell heavily upon their guilty

heads. At the command of God, the good Angels, headed by the Archangel S. Michael, hurled down Lucifer, with all his followers, from their bright thrones in Heaven into the bottomless pit of Hell, which God created for their eternal punishment. Our Blessed Lord, in warning His Apostles not to be proud and presumptuous, reminds them of this dreadful fall, when He says, "I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven."—*Luke x. 18.*

269. TWO SOLDIERS AT A SERMON.—Two soldiers were one day passing through a place where a mission was being given. They had but little religion, and were living wicked lives. One of the soldiers said to his comrade, "Let us go in and hear the sermon." So they went into the Church. The missionary was preaching on Hell. When the sermon was ended, they rose up and left the Church together. "Do you believe all the priest said?" asked the less wicked of the two, when they reached the street. "Oh, no," replied the other, "I believe it is all nonsense invented to frighten people." "Well, for my part," said the first one who spoke, "I believe it; and to prove to you that I believe it, I shall give up the army and go into a monastery." "Go where you please," said the other soldier, "I will continue my journey." But while he was on his journey he fell ill and died. His companion, who had just entered the monastery, heard of his death, and a terrible fear came upon him. "O my God," he prayed, "show me in what state is my comrade who has just died." God was pleased to grant his request, for his companion appeared to him. He at once recognized him, and said: "Tell me, where are you now?" "I am in Hell," he answered. "I am lost." "O wretched man! do you now believe what the missionary said about Hell?" "Yes, I believe it. The missionary was wrong in one thing: he did not tell us a hundredth part of what is suffered here." With these words he disappeared, leaving the penitent soldier thanking God for the grace he had received.—*Chisholm.*

270. "I CANNOT BEAR THIS."—S. Bernard one day went to see a man who was very ill, and who had during his lifetime been negligent in his religious duties, and now when he was so near the end of his life, he would not hear of returning to God by a sincere repentance. S. Bernard asked God very earnestly to show mercy to this poor sinner. So when he went to see him he sat down at his bedside and began to speak to him about his sickness. "Yes, sir," said the man, as he tossed about in his bed from the greatness

of the pain, "I am indeed suffering awful torments. I cannot bear this much longer; it *must* come to an end soon!" S. Bernard looked with eyes full of pity on the poor sufferer, as he lay there in anguish, and very soon the tears began to fall from his eyes. The sick man saw him weeping. "Ah! dear sir," he said, "I see you feel for me! I see you are moved at the sight of what I am suffering. Is not my condition one to be pitied?" "Yes, my poor man, your condition is indeed one to be pitied, and I weep when I think of it. But those tears flow from my eyes, not so much on account of the state of your body, but because of the state of your soul at this moment. I am thinking that in a very short time, perhaps in a few hours after this, your poor soul must leave the body, and then be cast into Hell for ever and ever, because you have not served God on earth. And I imagine I hear it saying there, the same words you said a little while ago, 'I cannot bear this much longer,' and yet shall have to bear, for ever and ever and ever, torments infinitely greater than those you are now suffering. Poor unfortunate man!" The Saint could say no more, his emotion was so great. He hid his head in his hands and prayed and wept for the poor sinner's conversion. When he looked up he saw moisture on the poor man's cheeks; he too was weeping. "Father," he said, "help me to be reconciled to God before I die, and pray for me that I may escape those endless torments." S. Bernard returned thanks to God for His mercy to this poor sinner, and had the happiness of seeing him die a true penitent.—*Chisholm*.

271. MARIE THÉRÈSE AND VENIAL SIN.—Marie Thérèse, consort of Louis XIV., had a very tender conscience. Bitterly bewailing one day a fault of which she had been guilty, she was told by her attendants that she need not weep so much, for it was only a venial transgression. "No matter," said she, still crying, "God has been offended, and that is a deadly stroke to my heart."

272. A TERRIBLE VISION.—Father Alphonsus Ratisbon tells us that there was once a great servant of God who was anxious to have a true knowledge of himself, and prayed to God to show him his soul, just as it then appeared to the eyes of His Divine Majesty. God was pleased to hear his prayer, and showed him in a vision his soul, in which there were a few little venial sins. The sight of these sins filled him with such fear that he cried out, "O my God, take away this terrible vision; if Thou keepest it any longer before my eyes I shall die of fright." If you, my child, had been in Jeru-

salem during our Blessed Saviour's Passion, you would be better able to know what a terrible evil sin is, because it caused Him to suffer so much.—*Chisholm.*

273. S. MACARIUS AND THE FIGS.—When S. Macarius was a little boy he was playing along with some other children in a garden. At a little distance stood a fig-tree, laden with ripe fruit. The boys said, "What beautiful figs! let us take some." So they plucked a few, and began to eat them. While Macarius was eating, his conscience seemed to be always saying to him, "You have done wrong! you have done wrong!" And he found no pleasure in eating the one he had taken. Afterwards, when he grew up to manhood, his disciples would often see him weeping. "I am weeping," he said, "for the sin I committed when I was a child, by stealing a fig. It was an offence against God, and deserved His punishments."—*Fathers of the Desert.*

274. DRAWN BY THE HAIR.—There was once a girl who worked in a factory. The day's work was nearly done, and it was time to go home. She saw on her dress some white lint, and she stooped down to brush it off. As she bent forward, the quickly revolving machinery caught her loose hair and drew her by it. She could not get away, and in a moment her head and body were drawn in among the wheels, and she was crushed to pieces. It was by a few hairs only that she was at first caught. You would have thought it would have been easy to have broken them and so escape. But no: while each hair is so very small of itself, they all together are stronger than a rope. So it is with venial sins.—*Chisholm.*

275. THE TWO TRAVELLERS.—Two friends were walking together by the side of the Rhone. One took care to keep the middle of the road, while his companion delighted in walking by the very edge of the water. The former, terrified at his friend's temerity, represented to him the danger he ran of falling into the water, who, however, heeded not the advice thus offered, fearing neither wind, nor giddiness, nor slips, nor anything else, and he continued his way close to the water's edge. Suddenly hearing some gunshots on the other side of the river, he turned quickly round in surprise; the sudden movement made him lose his balance, he fell in the water, and in spite of all efforts, was carried away and drowned.—Let us imitate the prudent traveller: keep from even the appear-

ance of grievous sin. Fall we shall, no doubt, into lesser sins, but in all things let us be most watchful, as the line dividing mortal sin from venial is not always easy to be determined.—*F. Bonaventure.*

276. HISTORY OF JUDAS.—Among the Apostles called by Our Lord to be the first Bishops and pillars of his infant Church was the traitor Judas. This unhappy man was entrusted with the care of the purse, in which was placed the money intended to supply the necessary wants of Jesus Christ and His Apostles. Judas, unhappily, had a besetting sin, a bad passion, which he kept carefully concealed within his own breast. He strove to hide it from Our Lord Himself, but He well knew all that passed in the heart of that wretched man, and would have taught him how to fight against and overcome the temptation, had he been willing to own it; the fatal passion which led him by degrees to his ruin was an ardent love for money. He kept the purse, and, like a miser, he gloated over the money that was in it, and began at first to hoard it, as if it were his own. He next commenced to pilfer from it little sums to add to his own private store; by and by these sums became larger, and at last he became a confirmed thief. When the penitent Magdalen poured the precious ointment over the feet of our Blessed Redeemer, Judas took offence, and hypocritically said, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?" But "he said this," the holy Scripture adds, "not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and having the purse, carried the things that were put therein." *John xii. 5, etc.* Blinded by his passion for money, the wretched man next agreed to betray his Master, his Saviour and his God, into the hands of his blood-thirsty enemies, for the miserable bribe of thirty pieces of silver. Leading a band of ruffians into the Garden of Olives, where our Blessed Redeemer was weeping for the sins of men at the silent hour of night, Judas, with barefaced effrontery, went up to Our Lord and saluted Him with a kiss; having previously warned the Jews, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He, hold Him fast." *Matt. xxvi. 48.* Wounded to the heart by this base ingratitude, on the part of one whom He had so highly favoured, Jesus tenderly reproached him in these touching words, "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" *Luke xxii. 48.* After his innocent victim had been condemned to death, the unhappy Judas, stung with remorse, and yielding to despair, put an end to his wicked life by hanging himself with a halter.—*Gibson.*

277. S. TERESA'S DANGER. S. Teresa was a great Saint. When she was a little child, she loved God with a perfect love ; but when she began to grow up she fell away by degrees from the state of fervour. She used to read books which described the pleasures of the world, and she found so much delight in reading them that she began to forget her prayers, and to become proud, and vain, and fond of dress. God in His mercy was pleased to check her before she fell into any grievous sin. He showed her in a vision the place where the wicked are punished for ever because of their sins, and He pointed out to her the spot she would one day occupy there, if she did not at once cease to offend Him by venial sins, because they would soon lead her to commit mortal ones. This vision had the desired effect. S. Teresa at once renounced the world with all its vanities, and again began to serve God as she had done before.—*Chisholm.*

THE ELEVENTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

"The resurrection of the body."

278. S. PAULINUS, KING EDWIN, AND THE THANE.—When the Faith was brought to Northumbria by S. Paulinus, King Edwin doubted for a long time whether he should receive it or not. In his perplexity, he assembled his nobles and asked them to say what should be done. Amongst them a certain Thane arose and said : "Often, O king, in the winter time, while you are feasting with your Thanes in the hall, you have seen a bird, pelted by the storm, enter at one door and go out by another. During its flight it was visible, but whence it came or whither it went you knew not. Such to me seems the life of man ; he walks the earth for awhile, but what precedes his birth or what follows his death we cannot say. If the new religion can unfold these important secrets, it must be worthy of our attention." These words of the prudent Thane were received with general applause, and were greatly approved by the king. S. Paulinus was accordingly introduced, and invited to explain the doctrines of Christianity. Finally, it was resolved unanimously that a religion which was able to unfold so clearly the secrets of a future life must come from God, and was worthy of general adoption.—*English History.*

279. DEATH AN ELOQUENT PREACHER.—Death is an eloquent preacher, who gives us continual lessons on the nothingness of

earthly things. The very sight of a grave or a corpse has sometimes sufficed to make Saints. Here is a striking example of the kind. S. Francis Borgia, before quitting the world, was one of the most illustrious grandees of Spain. The Empress Isabella died in 1539, and when the body was about to be lowered into the royal vault, Francis Borgia had to open the coffin, in order to swear upon it that those were really the mortal remains of his sovereign, the Empress Isabella. What was his horror and disgust on beholding, instead of a beautiful princess, a foul and disgusting corpse ! "What," cried he, "is this all that remains of my gracious sovereign ? Where, then, is her smooth white brow, her fair cheeks, her smiling lips, and her radiant eyes ?" This thought and these reflections acted so promptly on his mind and heart that he resolved to consecrate himself wholly to God. Accordingly, having accomplished his mission, arranged his temporal affairs, and provided suitably for his children, he entered the company of Jesus, and became a great Saint.—*Life of S. Francis : Oct. 10.*

280. THE UNFINISHED TOMB.—The Greek emperors of Constantinople had a somewhat singular custom, but one very useful and salutary for their personal conduct. The day that one of them was crowned, it was forbidden to speak to him on any business whatsoever, but there appeared before him sculptors and marble-cutters, who brought with them five or six beautiful specimens of marble, of divers colours, and said to him : "Prince, which of these marbles will it please your majesty to select for your tomb, that we may set about preparing it ?" The object of this strange custom was to make the new emperor understand that, being mortal like other men, he ought to employ the few years he had to live, in the care of his soul and the good government of his people. S. John the Almoner, patriarch of Alexandria, found this custom so conformable to the sentiments which ought to animate Christians, that he himself would profit by it. He had a tomb made for himself, but never entirely finished ; only he commanded that every year, on some grand festival day, someone should come and say to him aloud, before everyone present : "My lord, your tomb is not yet finished ; order them to finish it, *because* as Jesus Christ says, *you know not the day or the hour.*" These words, spoken at such a time, were worth a good meditation."—*Leontius.*

281. MAXIMILIAN'S COFFIN.—In the last years of his life, the emperor Maximilian had a coffin made, lined with iron, which made

it very heavy. Wherever he went he took it with him, and as no one knew what it contained, and its weight led people to suppose there was great treasure within, he said, with a smile: "I carry this about with me so as to preserve a thing that has great value in my eyes," meaning thereby his soul. When gazing at that coffin, he was heard to say: "Why glory and boast, O Maximilian? Why ambition greater things? How hast thou not room enough amid so many provinces, when this narrow dwelling-place will contain all thou art!"—*Catechisme en Exemples.*

282. TERRORS OF THE LAST DAY.—Terror will follow upon terror, curse upon curse, "till men will faint away with fear." The sun being not quite extinguished, a dismal gloom will be spread over all things, like a veil over the face of the dead: terrific signs are seen in the Heavens, and all things announce that time is at an end. S. John says that before God pronounces the final word there is silence in Heaven: and voices are heard in the air, on the water and on the earth. At length the skies open, and He pours out the first vial of His anger. And the end is come. God speaks the command, and all nature trembles as if in agony. The seas swell and boil; the lightnings flash, and the moaning tempests sweep over the furious deep, piling up ocean upon ocean on the trembling globe. A mighty conflagration bursts from the melting earth, rages like a hurricane round about, devouring all things in its storm and flood of fire, consuming the crumbling wreck of the condemned world. The Heavens become terrible as the kindling earth, and seas show their overwhelming flashes on the crimson skies. The sun muffled, the moon black, the stars fallen, floating masses like clouds of blood sweep the skies in circling fury. With what elegant terror does the Saviour paint this scene in His own words: "Men fainting away with fear, running in wild distraction, calling on the ground to open and swallow them, and the rocks to fall on them and hide them from the face of the Lord." The earth on fire, the skies faded, the sun and stars darkened or extinguished: mankind burning, dying: the angry voice of God coming to judge the world, and Jesus Christ describing the scene, are realities which the history of God has never seen before, and which never again will be repeated during the endless round of eternity.—*Cahill.*

283. S. EULALIA'S LAST WORDS.—S. Eulalia was only twelve years old when she was seized as a Christian and condemned to die. It was towards the beginning of the fourth century. Calpurnian,

an officer of the emperor, commanded her to be cruelly beaten with rods, but the holy virgin remained firm. When her body was all one wound, she turned towards the officer, and with a firmness with which the Holy Ghost inspired the martyrs, she cried out: "O Calpurnian, open your eyes and look at me. Take care to observe well my countenance, that you may know me again on the terrible day of judgment. You and I shall on that day have to appear before Jesus Christ: I to receive the reward of my sufferings, you to receive the chastisement due for your cruelty." After these words the faithful martyr was put to death. Her pure soul went to Paradise, and her body was laid in the grave to await the day of its glorious resurrection.—*Chisholm.*

THE TWELFTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED

"Life everlasting."

284. S. PIONIUS, M.—When the pagans were leading S. Pionius to the place of martyrdom, they were surprised to see the joy that lighted up his countenance, and how eagerly he ran towards the place of his death. "What makes you so happy?" they asked him, "and why do you run forward with so much eagerness to death?" "You are mistaken," answered the martyr, "I am not going to die; I am about to begin a life that will never end." This is how the Saints spoke of what the world calls death.—*His Life: Feb. 1.*

285. THE GREATER FOOL!—Many years ago there was a certain lord who kept a fool in his house, as many great men did in those days for their amusement. Now this lord had given the fool a staff, and charged him to keep it till he met with one that was a greater fool than himself, bidding him, if he met with such a one, to deliver the staff to him. Not many years after, the lord fell sick, and, indeed, was sick unto death. His fool came to see him, and the sick lord told him that he must shortly leave him. "And where art thou going?" said the fool. "Into another world," said the lord. "And when wilt thou return; in a month?" "No," said the lord. "In a year?" "No." "When, then?" "Never never!" "And what provision hast thou made," said the fool, "for thy entertainment in the place where thou art going?" "Alas! none at all." "What!" said the fool, "none at all? Here take

my staff. Art thou going to dwell there for ever, and hast made no orders for thy entertainment in a place from which thou wilt never return? Take my staff, for I am not guilty of any such folly as this."—*Catholic Weekly Instructor*.

286. DEATH WHILE SPEAKING OF HEAVEN.—The Abbé Boursoul, who, for forty years, exercised the holy ministry at Rennes, was one of the holiest priests and best preachers of the eighteenth century. He was often heard to say, in the fervour of his zeal: "Oh, if I could die arms in hand! If God would only give me the grace of dying either in the pulpit or in the confessional." Notwithstanding his age and his infirmities, he had preached the Lent in the city of Rennes. On Easter Monday, 1774, he ascended the pulpit to continue his Lenten Sermons. That day he preached on Heaven. He spoke with all the vigour and ardour of youth; his voice had an extraordinary strength and clearness, his movements were so rapid, his gestures so vehement, that he indicated beforehand what he was going to say. Towards the end of the first point, after having given the liveliest and most touching description of the beauties of Paradise, he made a new effort and exclaimed: "No, never shall it be given to the weak eyes of man to behold here below the splendour of the Divine Majesty." Then, lowering his voice: "It will be in Heaven that we shall see it face to face, and without a veil." These words were pronounced in a deep and penetrating voice; he repeated them in Latin: *Videbimus eum sicuti est*. Finishing these last words, he bowed his head on the edge of the pulpit and expired. The consternation of the people was beyond description; they wept, they cried aloud, they threw themselves on their knees, and some even fainted away. Everyone cried aloud: "A Saint! a Saint! he died speaking of the happiness of Heaven."—*Carron*.

287. S. TERESA AND HER BROTHER.—When S. Teresa was a little girl, not more than seven years old, she used to spend much of her time with her little brother Roderick in reading the lives of the Saints, and conversing about holy things. The thought of eternity made a deep impression upon their young hearts, and they were never tired of repeating these words: "For ever, for ever, for ever! What! shall the blessed see and enjoy God for ever?" When they read the history of the monks and hermits, they wished, like them, to abandon all for God, and tried to build themselves little hermitages in their father's garden, but, being only small and weak, they were not able to finish them. It was the history of the

martyrs, however, which filled them with the greatest delight. It seemed to them that the martyrs had purchased Heaven very cheaply, since by short sufferings they had secured eternal joys. They wished that they could do the same, and one day set out privately from home and left the city, intending to make their way to the country of the Moors, when they hoped to be martyred for the faith. As they went along, praying with great fervour, they were met by one of their uncles, and brought back to their mother, who was in a state of the greatest distress at their unexpected absence. Teresa did not escape without a scolding, for Roderick laid all the blame on his little sister; but Almighty God was, no doubt, pleased with her innocent fervour. Though prevented from aspiring to the crown of martyrdom, she continued to devote herself with more zeal than ever to the service of God, animating herself with these words, *eternity, eternity!*—*Her Life : Oct. 15.*

288. CONVERSION OF S. ADRIAN.—S. Adrian, as yet a soldier of twenty-eight, seeing the invincible courage of the martyrs amid their terrible sufferings, asked them what goods they expected to receive after them. To whom they replied: “We expect goods that surpass all comprehension: that is the thought that encourages us and makes us bear with joy the most cruel sufferings; the evils of the present last but awhile, but the happiness we await is without end, and beyond all conception.” The young soldier was so moved at this reply, that he soon asked for baptism, and was not long in laying down his life for God.—*Acts of the Martyrs.*

289. THE YOUNG NIVARD.—When S. Bernard and his three brothers were about to quit the world in order to serve God in the monastery of Citeaux, they first repaired to the Castle of Fontaines, to bid adieu to their aged father, and implore his blessing. As they came out of the gates of the castle, which is situated on the summit of a hill, they saw their little brother Nivard playing with other children of his age: “Good-bye, Nivard!” said Guy, the eldest of the brothers; “you will now be your father’s heir, and one day master of all you see around. We leave to you all our possessions.” “What!” said the child, with a wisdom beyond his years; “you take Heaven for yourselves and leave me earth! This division is not equal, and I shall very soon follow you.” And so indeed he did, when he grew older, for he also quitted the world, and entering the Abbey of Citeaux, put himself under the direction of his brother Bernard.—*Life of S. Bernard : Aug. 20.*

290. ECSTASY OF S. CATHERINE.—God once allowed S. Catherine of Siena to see in ecstasy a ray of heavenly glory. When she came to herself, she cried out: "I have seen marvels, most wonderful marvels!" Her confessor bade her explain more clearly what she had seen, but she replied: "I should be guilty of sin, if I pretended to describe it, for human words cannot express the value and magnificence of the heavenly treasures."—*Her Life: Apr. 30.*

291 COUNT OTHO'S DAUGHTER.—There was once a rich Count called Otho, who had a daughter whom he loved with great affection, and whom he brought up in the fear of God. One day the child was amusing herself with some beads of glass, with which she seemed to be much pleased. Her father was sitting by the fire watching her. "My child," he said, "these are pretty beads you are playing with." "Yes, papa, they are very beautiful, and I am delighted with them." "Well, then," said the father, "take them up and throw them all into the fire." The child looked up into her father's face to see if he was in earnest. One glance told her he was. Tears at once came into her eyes, and for a moment she hesitated to obey. "Well, dear child, you may do as you choose, but you know that when I ask you to do something, it is always because I, who love you so tenderly, see that it will be best for you." The girl at these words gathered together all the beautiful beads she had esteemed so much, and threw them into the fire, where in a few moments they were destroyed by the flames. Her father said nothing, till she had done what he had asked of her. But when the beads began to crackle in the flames, he took her into his arms, and kissing away the tears that trickled down her cheeks, said to her: "Now, my child, you will soon see how your father can reward you for that heroic sacrifice you made to please him." He then drew forth from a drawer a little casket, and when he had opened it the child saw a beautiful necklace, made of glittering diamonds and rare and costly stones set in gold. "This, my child, is for you. I wanted to see if you loved me more than yourself. You have proved to me that you do, because, rather than displease me, you have sacrificed for my sake what gave you great pleasure. Take this, then, my dearest little one, and when you wear it, it will remind you that your Father in Heaven will reward you with a reward surpassing all understanding, in the world to come, if you obey Him in this life, and sacrifice everything rather than displease Him by breaking His commandments."—*Chisholm.*

292. "HIGHER THAN THE STARS."—Amongst the astronomers who have made France illustrious in the nineteenth century, few have been so much spoken of as M. Leverrier. At the end of November, 1847, the Prefect of the Department of La Manche had Benediction in his Chapel at St. Lo, and invited on the occasion a large number of distinguished persons. Among them was M. Leverrier, to whom everyone hastened to pay their respects. Mgr. Robiou, Bishop of Coutances, addressed to him this charming compliment: "Sir, it cannot be said of you what is said of many others, that you have raised yourself to the clouds; of you it may be said that you have raised yourself to the stars." "My lord, that is not sufficient. I mean to ascend still higher; I meditate an enterprise much more important." All present listened with great attention; they were anxious to know what new discovery the illustrious astronomer had in contemplation. "Yes, my lord," resumed M. Leverrier, "I mean to rise higher than the stars. I mean to ascend to Heaven itself, and I hope your lordship will assist me by your pious prayers." Could anyone give a more Christian, and, at the same time, a more graceful answer?—*Catholic Anecdotes*.

293. "O PARADISE!"—Father Picolomini was dying. The other fathers were kneeling around his bed praying. He also from time to time joined his voice to theirs in fervent aspirations. But they, thinking that speaking so much would hasten the moment of his death, asked him to remain quiet, and not say so many ejaculations lest he might die sooner. "Oh, my brethren," he said, "what does it matter if I die a few hours sooner, when there is question of gaining merit for eternity? Every moment is most precious to me, and I do not wish to lose even one. Let me, therefore, pray as long as I am able to speak." The pain which this good father suffered was intense. To encourage himself to bear it patiently, he ordered the window of his room to be opened, that he might look up to Heaven. "Oh, how easy it is to suffer these terrible pains, when I keep my eyes fixed on Heaven! O Paradise! O Paradise! Soon, yes, very soon, I hope to be there, to be there for ever!"—*Chisholm*.

294. ANSWER OF BLESSED THOMAS MORE.—When Blessed Thomas More, the learned and pious Chancellor of England, had been condemned to death by King Henry VIII. for refusing to acknowledge the king's supremacy, he was visited before his execution by his wife Louisa, who, with prayers and tears, besought him

to yield, assuring him that the king would, in that case, consent to spare his life. "Tell me, Louisa," said the noble confessor of the Faith, "how many years could I, who am an old man, expect to live?" "You might live," she answered, "for as many as twenty years." "Oh, foolish woman," replied her husband, "and do you want me for twenty years of this miserable life on earth to forfeit an eternity of happiness, and condemn myself to an eternity of torments?" —*His Life*.

295. CONVERSION OF S. EUDOXIA.—However imperfect may be our descriptions of hell, they are still capable of affecting those who seriously reflect upon them. In the second century there lived in Sicily a young person named Eudoxia, who was leading a scandalous life. A priest, passing through the village, put up for the night at her parents' house, because they were good Christians. At midnight he rose to say office and private prayers. It so happened that the office that day contained the description of the torments of hell and the lost souls. The priest recited it aloud, and Eudoxia, whose room was next to his, heard the greater part of it. The silence of the night, the darkness, the calm and quiet of nature throughout, and especially the grace of God, wrought within her a sudden change as she listened to the description of the torments of hell. She began to reflect on her wickedness, and on the eternal punishments that would overtake her. Next morning she consulted the priest, who instructed her what to do, speaking words of encouragement and hope. Eudoxia followed his advice, repented of her crimes, and finally laid down her life for the Faith, **A.D. 114.**—*Bollandists : Mar. 1.*

296. PRACTICE OF S. FRANCIS BORGIA.—S. Francis Borgia, who had renounced the world, to give himself entirely to God, used to meditate on the torments of hell, as one of the most efficacious means for conquering the evil desires of the senses, and for leading the heart to compunction. He was sometimes so overcome by the effects of such meditation as to tremble all over, and a heavy perspiration would roll down his face and members.—*Sturmlern*.

296a. VICTORINE'S RESOLUTION.—There was in the South of France a little girl whose father was a blacksmith. In her father's forge there always burned a great fire, which sometimes gave forth so much heat that she could not go near it. One day her father had some work to do that required a greater and more intense fire

than ever she saw before. The whole forge seemed to be one mass of fire. Victorine stood at a great distance and gazed on it with terror. "O my God," she exclaimed, "if this fire which my father has kindled is so terrible to look at, how terrible must be the fire of hell, kindled for the punishment of sin! O my God, from this moment I take the resolution never to commit sin. The thought of hell will always check me when I am tempted to do evil, and make me accept with resignation every evil that can befall me in this world, rather than break Thy commandments."—*Chisholm.*

HOPE

297. S. FRANCIS AND THE WIDOW.—One day a pious woman went to S. Francis of Sales, and told him she had suffered so much that she was almost losing courage and was very miserable. "I was once rich," she said, "but I lost all that I possessed. Moreover, I am suffering much from a severe illness, and I have no one to feel pity for me, or to say a kind word to me." The Saint answered, "Your condition, my child, is one not to be pitied, but rather to be envied. You are in this world the spouse of Jesus Crucified, and you know that those who are honoured in this way on earth, are chosen to be the eternal spouses of Jesus Glorified in Heaven." "O my father," she replied, "your words console me. When shall that happy day come? When shall I hear His beloved voice calling me to enter His kingdom above?" The desire of Heaven, and the remembrance of the reward to be given us there, make the few short hours of pain in this world pass quickly—*Catéch. Histor.*

298. SHIP SAVED BY A CHILD.—A vessel was sailing on the Baltic Sea. A frightful tempest had beaten it to and fro till the mast was broken and the sails tattered. Everyone was in a state of consternation. The captain himself cried out in a despairing tone: "It is all over! we are lost! the good God seems to be dead!" "No, captain," exclaimed the little Adolphus, "He is not dead, He is asleep, and He will wake up when it is time." Scarcely had he said these words when a gust of wind more violent than any that had preceded it covered the vessel with yet other fragments and a deluge of water. "We are lost," again cried the captain, "prepare

all for death ; we are going to be buried in the waves." " You are mistaken," said once more the sweet voice of the child, " we are not going to perish : Jesus is still with us in the vessel." At that moment, the ship was again lifted up by the waves, and seemed on the point of being engulfed for ever in the depths of the sea. But Jesus *was* there ; and the trust of the child sufficed to save the life of all on board. In fact, the storm soon abated, and the vessel arrived in safety in the harbour of Tœnningen. Let us never give way to despair, my dear children ; let us say with Job : " Lord, even when Thou didst crush me, I hoped in Thee still."—*Schmid*.

299. GIVE ME BACK MY SON.—In the city of Carthage there lived a young nobleman named Fulgentius, who took the resolution to throw at his feet all the honours and riches which he possessed, and go to some place where he would not be known, that he might, for the rest of his life, think only of " the one thing necessary." So one morning he quietly left his house, and went to the monastery, of which the great Faustus was superior. " I have come," said Fulgentius, " to ask you to admit me into your monastery, for now I want to live for the salvation of my soul, and to obtain a happy eternity." Faustus, who knew him, answered : " Sir, the life we lead in this house is too severe for one who has been accustomed to the comforts of life as you have been." But Fulgentius was not to be repulsed ; he asked the superior to give him a short trial, saying : " God will give me the help I stand in need of, to overcome my natural weakness." Faustus was touched by this beautiful answer, and admitted him on trial. When the mother of Fulgentius heard of what her son had done, she ran to the monastery. " Give me back my son !" she cried out in tears—" give me back my son !" Faustus tried to calm her, but in vain. For three days did that sorrowful mother stand at the gate of the monastery, weeping and calling on her son to return to her. Fulgentius heard her, and who can tell the conflict he had to sustain during these three days ? Was ever a trial equal to his ? But, raising his eyes and hands to Heaven, he prayed for help. " O my God, help me to persevere." God heard his prayer, and after the three days were ended, a sweet peace filled his soul. His mother, seeing that her cries and prayers were unheeded, returned to her home, and Fulgentius remained faithful. He afterwards became Bishop of Carthage, and was one of the greatest lights in the Church of God in the sixth century.—*His Life : Jan. 1.*

300. THE WIDOW'S CHILD.—Some years ago, there was a poor widow who had an only son, who, when he grew up, began to go with wicked companions, and soon became the scandal of the neighbourhood. He even struck sometimes his mother, and threatened to kill her; but the day of vengeance came at last; he was arrested and cast into prison. One day a stranger knocked at the prison door. The jailer came to see who it was, and learned to his surprise that it was the mother of this wicked young man. "Ah!" said she, weeping, "I wish to see my son." "What!" said the jailer in astonishment, "do you wish to see that wretch? Have you forgotten all that he has done to you?" "Ah! I know it well," replied the widow, "but he is my son." "Why!" cried the jailer, "he has robbed you of every penny you had." "I know it," she replied, "but he is still my son." "But," cried the jailer, "he has not only abused you and robbed you, but he has even shamefully abandoned you; such an unnatural son is not fit to live." "Ah! but he is my child, and I am his mother." And the poor widow sobbed and wept, till at last the jailer was touched, and permitted her to enter the prison; and the fond mother threw her arms round the neck of that unnatural, ungrateful son, and pressed him again and again to her breaking heart.—God loves us poor sinners even more than a mother loves her child. With what confidence then ought you to hope for pardon when you are sorry for offending Him!—*Müller.*

301. RIPE FOR HEAVEN.—There was once a man whom God visited with many and great trials. Scarcely had one trial passed before another one came upon him. But he was a good Christian, and knew that these sufferings were the gift his heavenly Father sent him, that he might gain a crown of glory hereafter. He had a wife and one child, a bright and beautiful boy, and in his quiet home, in their company, he found some little consolation when the burden was heaviest. It happened that a war broke out, and his wife and child were put to death by the enemy. This was for him the severest of all the trials that he had yet suffered, and his usual confidence in God seemed for a moment to forsake him in his great grief. "O my God," he cried out, "why hast Thou taken away from me the only things I prized in this world, my wife and my child? Why did the balls of the enemy spare me, when so many of my comrades were struck down by my side? Oh! why hast Thou preserved me to heap on me so great an affliction?" God consoled him in his grief. He seemed in his sleep to see a most

beautiful angel coming near him, having in his hand three grains of seed. These he sowed in a field. Two of them grew up, and produced flowers of magnificence and beauty far exceeding what he had ever seen before. But the third grain of seed did not spring up. So he asked the angel, "Why is it that two of the seeds you sowed have produced such beautiful flowers, and the third one has not sprung up?" The angel answered, "Because it is not yet ripe; have patience, it will also appear." Soon afterwards he saw it also coming forth from the ground, and the flowers it produced were still more beautiful. When he awoke, he began to reflect on what he had seen. "O my God," he said, "it was wrong in me to murmur against Thy holy will as I have done. Pardon me, O my God; Thou hast taken to Thyself those whom I loved, because Thou sawest that they were already ripe for Heaven, and Thou hast left me still a little time on earth to purify me, and prepare me for a still greater degree of glory in paradise." From that moment he complained no more.—*Rép. du Cat.*

302. THE DYING FATHER.—A poor man, the father of a large family, was struck down by a dangerous illness. He felt the hand of death upon him, yet he was calm and happy. His children were standing near his bed weeping, and praying to God that their dear father might not be taken away from them. "My dear children," he said, "it is the will of God that I should leave you. With my dying lips I ask you to love and serve Him till He comes to take you to Himself." These words, spoken at intervals and in a low voice, told the children plainly that the end was indeed near. This made them weep still more. But the good man seemed to smile rather than weep, and to be full of joy rather than of sorrow. Margaret, his oldest daughter, observed this, and said to him, "Ah! dearest father, how can you be so joyful while we are so sad? You have lived a hard and laborious life, and had many sorrows and trials, and now even when death is at hand, and you are enduring so much pain, you seem not to feel it." "My dear child," he answered, "long, long ago, when I was a little boy, my mother used to tell me, what I have often told you: 'Trust in the Lord, and fear His holy name.' These few words gave me courage in my trials, and were my defence in the moment of danger, and now they are my greatest consolation. And if you do as I have done, you also at the hour of your death shall be filled with the same blessed hope."—*Schmid.*

303. ERON, THE SOLITARY.—Eron was born of a noble family, and was also blessed with great natural talents. But God inspired him even from his youth with the desire of leading a more perfect life. Eron at once obeyed the call of God, and left all things to follow Him. There were at that time in the desert many holy men who had gone there to serve God in silence and prayer, but there was not one of them so fervent as Eron. But as time went on he allowed vain thoughts to enter his mind. From one fault he fell into another, till in the end he left the desert altogether, and went back to the world which he had long ago forsaken at the call of God. For a long time he lived in this wretched state, till at last God had compassion on him, and let him see how far he had fallen, because he had trusted so much to himself. He was struck down by an illness which lasted for six months. He thought he was going to die, and his soul was filled with great fear when he remembered the bad life he had led, and the judgment he would soon have to undergo. "O my God, make me better again," he prayed; "I will return to the desert and live as I did before, and do penance for my sins." God heard his prayer, and Eron kept his promise. He returned to the desert, and humbly asked pardon for the scandal he had given. He did not live long after his return, but in a short time died a holy and happy death, surrounded by his brethren.—*Lives of the Saints.*

304. TOUCHED BY GRACE.—S. Louis Bertrand was one day walking with some of his companions on a country road in the neighbourhood of his monastery. Their conversation was on pious subjects; for having their minds and hearts in Heaven, their words also were about the things of Heaven. It happened that a young man was walking a little distance behind them. Under his cloak he carried a sword, and his whole appearance spoke of a man under the influence of some great passion. The religious, without taking any heed of the young man's presence, continued to speak aloud as before. The man was sufficiently near them to hear all they said. In a short time he went up to them, and, throwing away the weapon he had concealed under his clothing, cast himself on his knees before S. Louis. "Ah, father," he cried out, "may God reward you in Heaven for what you have done for me to-day." The good father looked at the kneeling form before him, and asked him what had happened to him. "I was on my way to take revenge on an enemy who had injured me; but the words I have just now heard from your lips have so changed my heart, that I am now

on my knees to ask the pardon of God." "Do you forgive him who has injured you?" "Yes, father, from my inmost soul." "Then God will also forgive you." The poor sinner became reconciled to God, and to the end of his days persevered in the new life of grace so wonderfully given him.—*His Life : Oct. 9.*

305. THE HEROIC CHILD.—During one of the persecutions in Japan, raised against the Christians, a husband and wife were sitting together in their humble house, speaking of the terrible death they would have to endure if they were found out to be Christians, and of the joys God would give them in Heaven as the reward. The thought of their child's fate alone cast a shadow of gloom over their otherwise calm souls. In the meantime, the boy, a beautiful child of ten years, was playing with his toys in the corner of the house. He had overheard the words of his mother, and without saying what he was going to do, he went towards the fire, and put into it a piece of iron which was lying near. When it had become red-hot, the child took it into his hands, and holding it up by the part that was glowing, turned towards his mother, without uttering even a sigh. When the mother saw the hot iron burning her child's hand, she screamed, and running towards him, took it out of his hand. "My mother," said the boy, "I wanted to show you that I also can suffer for the love of God. Oh! I will suffer whatever torment they inflict upon me, as easily as I endured this one, that I may go to heaven with you." It was indeed the grace of God that had given that child such strength and courage.—*History of the Persecutions.*

306. S. FRANCIS AND THE SPANIARD.—In the days of S. Francis Borgia, there lived in Spain a gentleman who gave himself up to very great sins. Suddenly, in the midst of his evil ways, a terrible illness came upon him. He had near him some friends who had remained faithful to God. When they saw that his sickness was dangerous, they spoke to him of the necessity of being reconciled to God, lest death should come and take him away unprepared. But he laughed at them and said, "There is plenty of time. Besides, I am not so ill as you imagine." His friends continued to speak to him of the necessity of going to confession, saying to him that the doctors had declared his case hopeless. As soon as the young man heard that word *confession*, he burst forth into angry words, and said that he would never go to confession, even although he was sure that death was at hand. S. Francis Borgia was told about the man's obstinacy, and seeing the danger he was in of losing his soul,

knelt down before a crucifix, and besought our dear Lord with tears in his eyes not to allow that soul to perish. As he was thus praying for the poor sinner, a voice seemed to come forth from the crucifix, saying, "Go, Francis, and visit him and exhort him to repent." S. Francis went immediately with great joy, thinking that, as God Himself had sent him, he was sure of obtaining his salvation. But although he spoke to him for a long time, the sinner would not hear of making his confession. The Saint left the room and returned to the Church. He knelt down as before and prayed with still greater fervour for his conversion. The same voice again spoke to him, "Go back once more to the dying man; take your crucifix with you; he certainly must have taken a firm resolution to lose his poor soul, if his heart is not melted at the sight of the sufferings I underwent for him." S. Francis returned to the sick man's room, who still refused to listen to him. Francis then taking the crucifix he had brought with him, placed it before the dying man's eyes. At that moment, by a miracle of God's mercy, the figure on the cross appeared as if covered with wounds and blood, as Jesus Himself was when dying on the cross. "Ah! my child," said the Saint, "look how Jesus loves you although you have so grievously sinned against Him! Oh! do not refuse this special grace." But all his exhortations were in vain. The man refused to accept this great grace, and S. Francis saw him die in his sins, a victim to his obstinacy in refusing to make use of what God had, in such a special manner, sent him for his salvation.—*His Life* : Oct. 10.

307. EXAMPLES OF CO-OPERATION.—The Ninevites accepted the grace which God offered them when, Jonas preaching in their midst, they proclaimed a fast, and did penance for their sins, and so escaped the punishments of God. *Jonas iii.*—S. Peter co-operated with grace when, remembering the warning Our Lord gave him, he, on hearing the cock crow, went forth and wept bitterly. *Matt. xxvi. 75.*—In like manner, S. Paul: when struck down miraculously on the road to Damascus, he recognized the grace of God and exclaimed: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" He then obeyed the voice he heard. *Acts ix. 6.*

PRAYER

308. S. IGNATIUS AND THE CARRIER.—It is related in the life of S. Ignatius that, being at one time on a journey with some of his pious companions, they hired a peasant to carry their baggage, for they were travelling on foot. Their carrier proved to be a very ignorant and also a very impatient and passionate man ; and, when first the good priests hired him, he was much addicted to cursing and swearing, so that they had frequently occasion to reprove him. Whenever these holy men arrived at an inn, the first thing they did, after hiring a room for themselves and the carrier, was to retire into a corner to pray. In the meantime, the carrier generally slept on a bench by the fire. After some time, however, observing the heavenly countenances of these holy men while thus employed, and beginning to think that it might be because they prayed so devoutly that they were so good to everyone, and so happy in the midst of difficulties and privations, he determined to do as they did, and, kneeling down at a distance from them, remained in that posture till they rose up to pursue their journey. Having continued this practice for some time, the carrier seemed to everyone to be changed into another man, for he became sober, civil, patient, and obliging. The good religious with reason attributed this happy change to the help which he must have obtained from God since he applied himself to prayer ; but, wishing to satisfy themselves further, they one day asked him what prayers he said. “ You know that I cannot read,” replied the carrier, “ neither have I been taught how to pray ; but this is what I say to God when I see you praying : ‘ Lord, I am a poor ignorant man, and I know not how to serve you ; but what these holy men are doing, I at least desire to do.’ ” The good missionaries were much edified by the reply of the peasant, and returned thanks to God, to whom a hearty goodwill is more acceptable than the finest language.—*Diurnal of the Soul.*

309. THE POOR MAN AT PRAYER.—In the parish of Ars, in the time of its saintly curé or parish priest, John Baptist Vianney, lived a simple peasant, poor in the goods of this world and ignorant of its learning, but rich in piety and virtue. He was particularly remarkable for his ardent devotion to Our Blessed Lord in the most holy Sacrament. Whether going to his work or returning from it, never did that good man pass the Church door without entering it to adore his Lord. He would leave his tools at the door, and

remain for hours together sitting or kneeling before the tabernacle. The holy curé, who watched him with great delight, could never perceive the slightest movement of the lips. Being surprised at this circumstance, he said to him one day, "My good man, what do you say to Our Lord in those long visits you pay Him every day?" "I say nothing to Him," was the reply; "I look at Him and He looks at me."—*Life of the Curé of Ars.*

310. THE BLIND MAN AT THE TOMB.—Long ago, when the light of the true faith was shining brightly in our land, a poor blind man was seen making a pilgrimage to the tomb of S. Thomas of Canterbury. He went there to ask, through the prayers of the Saint, the recovery of his sight. His prayer was granted, and he returned home cured. When the first transports of joy were over, he remembered that in his prayer to the Saint he had omitted to add these words: "If it should be the will of God." So he returned to the Saint's tomb, and said, "O great S. Thomas, I thank thee for the favour thou hast obtained for me from God. But if the use of my eyes should prove hurtful to me, or should endanger my eternal salvation, I humbly ask of thee to make me blind again." At the same moment he once more lost the use of his eyes and became blind as before. He spent the rest of his days in preparing for a happy death, and when that day came, it found him ready—*Schmid.*

311. S. BERNARD'S VISION.—S. Bernard once saw how an angel wrote down in a book the divine praises of each of his brethren when reciting the divine office. Some were written in letters of gold, to express the fervour with which they were said. Others in letters of silver, on account of the pure intention with which they were performed. Others again in ink, denoting the sloth which accompanied them. And others with water, denoting great lukewarmness and absence of all piety. Others were not written down at all, but instead, these words: "This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me:" to signify that God was most displeased with such prayer.—*Müller.*

312. THE WIDOW'S CHILD.—A poor widow one morning said to her little ones: "My children, I have nothing to give you to-day for your breakfast; there is no bread, nor flour, nor even an egg in the house. Go and ask God to come to your assistance, for He has promised to help His children in their need." One of the children, aged only ten, went out of the house, and seeing the door of a Church open, entered and fell on his knees before the altar. He

looked around him to see if there was anyone near, but he saw no person; the Church seemed to be empty. Thinking himself alone, he spoke out aloud. "O good Father who art in Heaven, we poor children have nothing to eat to-day. O my God, give us something to eat, that we may not die of hunger." When he had said this prayer he rose up, and hungry though he was, went to school for his morning lessons. On his return home, he was surprised to see on the table a great loaf of bread, a dish full of flour, and a basket full of eggs. "Oh, mamma," he cried out with great joy, "God has heard my prayer. Was it an angel who brought in all these nice things by the window?" "No," said the mother, "but God heard your prayer, and has answered it in His own way. When you were kneeling at the foot of the altar, and when you thought you were alone, there happened to be a pious lady near you whom you did not see. She heard your prayer, and it is she who brought us all these good things. She was the angel whom God sent to help us. Let us kneel down and thank Him for His goodness to us."—*Gaume*.

313. THE NEGRO'S PRAYER.—There was once a young negro who had been stolen by some sailors from his father's home, and taken by them into a distant country. In the country to which he had been brought there were some Catholic missionaries, who had gone to preach the Gospel to the poor savages who dwelt there. Among others who received the gift of the faith was our little negro. At his Baptism he received the name of Thomas. One day, as one of the priests was passing near the house where the negro boy dwelt, he heard him saying the following words: "O my dear Jesus, I thank Thee with my whole heart for having brought me into this place, where I have been able to know and love Thee. And now, dear Jesus, I have another great favour to ask of Thee. Oh! be pleased to send another great ship into my country, with more bad men in it, that they may bring my father and mother here, so that they also may learn to know and love Thee." For about two years did that little boy continue his prayer, for he knew that God had promised to hear the prayers of those who pray to Him with confidence and perseverance. One day the priest saw the boy running towards him, singing joyfully, and his face all radiant with smiles. "Well, Thomas," said the priest to him, "what makes you so happy to-day?" "O my dear father, Jesus has heard my prayer at last! My father and mother have come; they are in the big ship that has just come to land. Oh, how kind it was of Jesus to hear my prayer, and send them to me."—*Chisholm*.

314. JEWISH TRADITION.—There was a beautiful tradition among the Jews to this effect: when God had created the world, He asked the angels what they thought of His work. One of them replied that it was so vast and perfect, that only one thing was wanting to it, that there should be created a clear, mighty, and harmonious voice, which should fill all the quarters of the world incessantly with its sweet sound, thus day and night to offer thanksgiving to its Maker for His incomparable blessings!—*Faber*.

315. KING ALPHONSUS AND THE BEGGAR.—King Alphonsus saw that most of the young princes who dwelt in his palace were very worldly, and seldom if ever thought of prayer, or of thanking God for the benefits they were daily receiving from Him. One day he thought he would give them a lesson. He prepared a great banquet and invited them all to come to it. As soon as they were assembled, he gave the sign to begin the meal. Not one of them thought of making the sign of the cross, or of asking a blessing before they began. In the midst of the feast the door of the hall suddenly opened, and a beggar came in. He was covered with rags, and his whole appearance showed him to belong to the lowest class of society. Without saying one word, or even asking permission, he sat down amongst the nobles not far from the king, and began to eat and drink as if he had as much right there as the others had. All the young nobles were full of indignation at such conduct, and sat there in silence. When the beggar had eaten and drunk as much as he could, he rose up, and without as much as looking at the king, or thanking him for the food he had received, turned towards the door and disappeared. As soon as he had gone out, a murmur of disgust broke forth among the guests. “What impertinence!” they cried out, “a miserable man like him to dare to come in here, and to eat and drink at the king’s table, and to go away without saying even one word of thanks.” At length the king rose up and said: “My friends, you are wondering among yourselves why I permitted that poor man to remain in the room, and you are indignant at his conduct. It was by my orders he came here. I wanted to give you a lesson. Do you not daily receive from your Father in Heaven marks of His bounty and love for you, and do you ever think of giving Him thanks? Let this be for you then a lesson. For the time to come be grateful to Him, and never let a single day pass without thanking Him for the blessings He has bestowed upon you.” They bore the king’s rebuke in silence, for they

saw it was well deserved, and they profited by the lesson they received.—*Chisholm*.

316. A MOTHER'S RASH PRAYER.—There was once a mother who had an only child, a boy, for whom she had the greatest affection. It happened that the child became very ill. When the priest of the town was informed, he went to speak some words of consolation to the afflicted mother. Seeing that all he could say to her had no effect, he knelt down by the bedside of the dying boy, and began to pray. "O my God," he said, "spare the life of this child, for the sake of the mother, if it be Thy most holy will." When the mother heard him say these words she became very angry. "Do not say 'if it be His will,' but tell Him that He must make my boy better. Tell Him that He must not let my boy die." God was pleased to listen to the rash prayer of the mother, and the child, contrary to all expectations, got well again. God wished to give us from this example a lesson, that it is best to submit ourselves to His holy will when we ask Him for anything. As he began to grow up and mix with other companions, he began also to learn evil. Time went on, and the boy became worse and worse. His mother was at length compelled to open her eyes, but it was too late. She now saw how much better it would have been, both for him and herself, had God taken him to Heaven in his baptismal innocence. She tried over and over again to correct him, but it was now of no use, and at the last, the unfortunate mother had the grief to see him die a criminal on the scaffold, on account of a murder which he had committed.—*Raineri*.

317. S. ALOYSIUS AND DISTRACTIONS.—S. Aloysius, questioned by his director as to distractions at prayer, replied, after a moment's reflection: "If I were to sum up all the distractions I have had during the past six months, there wouldn't be enough to fill the time of saying a *Hail Mary*."—*His Life : June 21*.

318. THE HORSE AND SADDLE.—S. Bernard was one day travelling with a poor, simple countryman, who, noticing that the holy man kept his eyes modestly cast down on the ground during the journey, asked him why he did not look around at the country. The Saint answered, that it was to avoid distractions in time of prayer. "Well," said the countryman, "when I pray I pray, and when I walk I look about." "Have you then no distractions at your prayers?" said S. Bernard. "None at all," answered the

countryman. "I do not believe it," said S. Bernard. "Now let me make a bargain with you, if you can succeed in saying an *Our Father* without a distraction, I will give you this mule on which I am riding; but if you do not succeed, you will come to Clairvaux and become a monk." The agreement was made, and the countryman began to recite the *Our Father*, but after a few words, he interrupted it and said: "Pray, father, will you give me the saddle and the bridle too?" "Yes, I should have given you mule, saddle, and bridle," said S. Bernard, "but because you have been distracted, you have lost all, and you must come with me to Clairvaux and become a monk."—*Noël*.

319.—S. SEVERINUS AND DISTRACTIONS.—S. Severinus one day, soon after his death, appeared in a vision to a priest. He seemed to be in great suffering, and marks of sadness were upon his face. The priest said to him, "My father, how is it that you are so sad, and in a state of suffering? You were so holy, that I was sure you had entered the happiness of Heaven as soon as you had left this world." "It is true," replied the Saint, "God in His infinite goodness has given me the great grace of dying well, and I am to reign with Him eternally in Heaven. But, alas," he continued, "I am not there yet; I am suffering in the purifying flames of Purgatory, because when I was alive, I sometimes said my prayers hurriedly and with distractions. I was so much taken up with the duties the emperor required of me, that I would sometimes put off my prayers, or say them without devotion. It was my own fault, and God is now punishing me for it." He asked the priest to intercede for him, and then suddenly disappeared, leaving him filled with a great fear of God's judgment.—*S. Peter Damian*.

320. S. FRANCIS OF ASSISI.—S. Francis found a sure means of keeping his mind during prayer free from all external preoccupation. Whenever he entered into a Church, he said: "Worldly and frivolous thoughts, stay you at the door till I return again." Then he prayed as though he were alone on the earth; his devotion was so great that he seemed not to know what distraction was.—*His Life: Oct. 4*.

321. S. DOMINIC AND THE STONE.—S. Dominic prayed with such recollection and composure that a stone, having become loose in the roof of the Church, fell and just grazed his ear, without his being in the least disturbed or distracted by it.

THE OUR FATHER

322. SÉJOUR'S SEVEN PATERS.—A soldier named Beau Séjour had the pious custom of reciting every day seven *Our Fathers* and seven *Hail Marys*, in honour of the seven joys and seven sorrows of the Blessed Virgin. He was so faithful to this practice that he never once missed it. One battle day, Beau Séjour was in the front rank, in presence of the enemy, awaiting the signal for attack. Remembering then that he had not said his accustomed prayer, he began to do so, after blessing himself as usual. The other soldiers who were beside him, seeing Beau Séjour at his prayers, began to make merry at his expense; they went so far as to call him a coward, a poltroon, and such like. The word flew from mouth to mouth—"Beau Séjour is afraid,"—"Beau Séjour is a dévotee!" He heard all this going on, but nevertheless continued his prayer, quite unconcerned. But what happened some moments after? The enemy made their first charge, and, wonderful to relate, of his whole rank, Beau Séjour alone remained standing; he saw lying dead at his feet all those who, but a moment before, were ridiculing him for his piety! All the rest of the battle, and even during the whole campaign, he received no wound. After the war he obtained his discharge, and returned home safe and sound, fully resolved never to leave off a practice he had found so beneficial.—*Debussi.*

323. THE SWEARER AND THE OUR FATHER.—A man had the bad habit of swearing often and on the most trifling account. He was cured of it in a very singular way by a little girl five or six years of age. The child, unable to bear without indignation the sacrilegious words vomited forth by this man, one day asked her mother if she thought Mr. So-and-so said the Lord's Prayer every day. The mother answered that she did not know. The little girl was determined to make herself sure, and watching him closely, she one day perceived him really saying the Lord's Prayer. Soon after, when an opportunity offered, the most revolting blasphemies were heard again. The little girl went up to him and said with a serious air: "Mr. So-and-so, you said the Lord's Prayer this morning, and gave God the name of Father?"—"Well, yes! but why do you ask the question?"—"Why, how could you call Him your Father, when you swear all day long and grievously offend Him?" The culprit, not expecting any such question, especially from a

little child, felt the blush rising to his forehead ; and what is better, he was never after heard to curse or swear.—*Schmid*.

324. S. HUGUES OF GRENOBLE.—S. Hugues, Bishop of Grenoble, having fallen ill, did nothing one night but repeat the Lord's Prayer. "That must tire you," said the attendant who waited on him. "Oh, no!" said the dying prelate: "on the contrary, saying so beautiful a prayer does me the greatest possible good."—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

325. THE PIOUS SHEPHERD.—A priest was one day travelling among the mountains of Auvergne, when he perceived a boy at a little distance who was feeding his sheep on the hillside. Being struck with his devout and recollected appearance, he turned aside to speak to him. "My child," said he, "you must feel very lonely all day here by yourself." "Oh, no, father," said the boy, "I am not at all lonely, for I have always something to do." "And what do you do?" rejoined the priest. "I have a beautiful prayer that I say," replied the child. "Is it a very long one," said the priest, "that you are busy all day saying it?" "No, father," replied the boy, "it is a very short one, and yet I can never get to the end of it." "How is that?" asked the priest;—"but first tell me what is the prayer you say." "It is the *Our Father*," said the shepherd, "but when I first say the words, *Our Father who art in Heaven*, I come to a stop and can get no further. Because I cannot help crying when I think of those words. Is it possible, I say to myself, that I can have God for my Father—God, who made that beautiful sky, that bright sun, those lofty mountains, and all the universe? And yet I know that it is true, and that He allows me, a poor shepherd boy, to call Him by the name of Father. Then, when I think of all this, I begin to weep, and cannot get on with my prayer. See, father," continued the boy, pointing with his finger over the valley, "see, *there is* the little village where I live. It is very small, and has only a few poor cottages. My family is the poorest of all, and yet I can call God my Father as truly, and be as much loved by Him as if I were the greatest gentleman in the city. This it is which makes me weep, and hinders me from finishing my prayer." The good father went on his way, praising Almighty God, who has hidden the mysteries of His goodness from the proud and worldly wise and has revealed them to His chosen little ones.—*Catholic Anecdotes*.

326. THE ANGEL ON THE TOMBSTONE.—A poor child was one day in a cemetery, where he was crying bitterly; it was there that

the ashes of his beloved parents reposed. Now this child was doubly an orphan ; he had lost his mother several years before, and his father had also been taken from his love. How hard and cruel this desertion appeared to him ! " Alas ! " said he, " I have no longer a father ! The hand that toiled to support me is cold in death, mouldering in the grave. There is no one now to love me as that good father did ! Ah ! but it is hard, hard to have neither father nor mother ! " Thus the poor orphan lamented, whilst his tears fell fast on his father's grave. All at once his tearful eyes fell on a cross. On it was portrayed an angel, who pointed with one hand to Heaven, whilst the other held that beautiful prayer : *Our Father who art in Heaven*. These words, like a celestial ray, descended suddenly into the poor orphan's soul, and dispelled the darkness that had gathered over it. Wiping away his tears, he clasped his little hands and began to pray anew : " Can it be, great God of Heaven, that I have so soon forgotten Thee ? Thou art still my Father ; then, Father, who art in Heaven, do not you abandon me, for I am a poor helpless orphan, all alone on earth ! " Thus the orphan prayed ; he was consoled, and the Heavenly Father took care of him. He did not, indeed, become a rich man ; but, what is infinitely better, he lived happy and contented, and that happiness he found in the simple repetition of the first words of the Lord's Prayer.—*Schmid*.

327. S. FRANCIS DISINHERITED.—Disinherited for having, against his father's wish, embraced the religious state and given his patrimony to the poor, S. Francis of Assisi, anything but cast down or disquieted, said, with his usual serenity : " Hitherto I have called you father on earth ; now I can say with more confidence : " Our Father who art in Heaven. "—*His Life : Oct. 4.*

328. PRINCESS GALITZIN.—The princess Galitzin was one day passing over a bridge in S. Petersburg, when she saw an old man sitting there asking alms from those who were going by. She gave him some money, and then continued on her way. The poor old man, who was also lame, no sooner received the money, than he ran as fast as his feeble limbs could carry him to a blind man who sat a short distance off, and gave him the half of what she had given him. The princess, who saw this act of charity, was very much moved. She sent for the lame man to whom she had given the alms, and said to him, " Who is that poor old man with whom you have shared the alms ? Is he your father or your brother ? " "

"He is not related to me by blood," the old man replied, "but he is my brother in Jesus Christ. He is indeed more to be pitied than I am, because he cannot see; is it not therefore just that I should help him, and beg for him as well as for myself?" The princess was moved to tears at the poor man's generous conduct, and gave him a gold piece, promising at the same time not to forget him. She afterwards told one of her friends that she had never in all her life experienced so much pleasure as when she gave that alms.—*Chisholm*.

329. S. IGNATIUS AND FR. LAYNEZ.—S. Ignatius one day addressing Fr. Laynez said: "If God gave you the choice of now going to Heaven, or of remaining on earth with the prospect of doing something for His glory, which would you prefer?" "I would prefer to go to Heaven," was the reply. "As for me," continued the Saint, "I would prefer to remain on earth, to do the will of God and render Him some service. With regard to my salvation, I doubt not that God would take care of me, and would not suffer one to perish, who, for love of Him, had willingly delayed his entrance into Heaven."—*Gaume*.

330. THE POOR MAN CHURCH-BUILDING.—There was in one of the missions in China an old man, poor in the eyes of the world, but rich in grace before God. One day he went to the priest and said: "Father, will you build a Church in our village, for our chapel is only a poor hut, and is not good enough for the worship of God?" The Father answered: "It has long been my most earnest desire to do so; but as I have no money, I am obliged to be content with the humble Church which we built long ago." "But, father, I will build you a Church." The priest, who had known him for many years, and knew that he was a poor man, said: "I know your great piety and zeal, and when it is possible for me to begin this great work, I am sure you will contribute a little out of your poverty." "But, father," he continued, "I want to pay for the whole myself, and I would not have come here to trouble you if I had not already the necessary sum in hand. Here it is." And he laid down the money on the table before the priest. The surprise of the good father was indeed great when he saw the poor man count out the money. The missionary accepted the generous gift, and the Church was built. The old man had the pleasure of seeing it completed, and then God took him to Himself in Heaven, to reward him there for the glory he had given His Holy Name on earth.—*Müller*.

331. "PLEASE BUY ME!"—A missionary was one day passing through one of the slave-markets of Africa. There were many children there for sale. Amongst them was a little girl who had been stolen from her parents by some cruel men, who had brought her into the market to be sold. When she saw the missionary coming near she thought he was going to buy her; so she looked up into his face with her sad eyes to see if he was likely to be a kind master if he bought her, for she thought he was a slave-owner. When she saw the look of kindness that shone in his eyes, she cried out, "O kind sir, will you buy me? Please buy me." The good priest looked at her for a moment, and a tear came into his eye, but still he did not offer to buy her. "Oh! do not leave me, do not leave me; I will be a good slave to you, I will work hard for you; do not leave me;" and the poor child burst into tears because she saw him turn away his head. She cried out again, "Have you not something to buy me with?" But the missionary had nothing; he had spent all he had in buying food for the poor children he had already purchased, and he had nothing left. So he shook his head sadly and turned away. Then the poor child knew that she would fall into the hands of someone else who would not be so kind to her. Such was the case. A man came towards her, and after looking at her for some time, bought her from her master. She went away with him to be beaten and treated as a brute beast till death would put an end to her sufferings. The priest went away very sad. "Oh," he said, "if all the Catholic children at home would only join the Society of the Holy Childhood, how many poor children could I rescue from slavery and teach to love God!"—*Chisholm*.

332. THE MONK IN ALEXANDRIA.—A very holy man left his cell in the desert to assist at the death of a friend of his youth who dwelt in Alexandria, and who wished to see him before he died. The most of the inhabitants of that city were pagans, who hated the Christian religion. As soon, therefore, as he entered, they knew by his dress that he was a Christian hermit, and began to mock him. Some carried their hatred as far as to strike him and abuse him in many other ways. But the good man passed on without uttering a word of complaint, and bore all patiently for the love of God. Some of them cried after him in mockery, "Did Jesus Christ ever work a miracle?" A man who was passing, and who was a Christian, said, "Yes, Jesus Christ did work many miracles; but even if He had not wrought any, the conduct of this holy man is enough to prove the truth of the Christian religion. What greater

miracle could you desire to see? In the midst of all your cruelty he has never uttered a word of reproach." These words silenced the people; they were ashamed of what they had done, and some of them were led to believe in the true God of the Christians.—*Chisholm.*

333. DEATH OF THE CHILD OF MARY.—Not long ago, a little girl had just made her first Communion. The priest was full of joy, because he saw how carefully she had prepared herself for it, and how full of devotion she had been on that happy morning. As soon as she went home, the girl knelt down before an image of the Blessed Virgin, and said to her: "O my dearest Mother in Heaven, ask Thy Divine Son Jesus to give me the grace never to commit a mortal sin; ask Him to take me out of this life rather than permit me to fall into sin." Not many days afterwards, a little sore began to appear on her cheek. At first no one thought that it would be of any consequence, but it soon grew into a great swelling, and, in the end, showed itself to be a cancer, which, in a short time, ate away one side of her face. The sufferings this caused her were very great, but she bore them all without a word of complaint. "My father," she said to the priest who attended her, "Our Blessed Lady has heard my prayer; I am going to die; she is going to take me out of this world at once, that I may not fall into sin, and so I shall be in Heaven for ever with God." Very soon afterwards the pious child died. She is now happy in God's kingdom.—*Gaume.*

334. THE SLAVE OF THE SLAVES.—Many years ago, when human slavery was common, cruel men went to the coast of Africa, carried off the people who dwelt there, and brought them into America, where they were sold as slaves. There was no one to look after their souls, till God, in His mercy, raised up a holy man who became their Apostle. This was Peter Claver, who was born in Spain in 1581. He was the son of noble and pious parents. In his youth he joined the Society of Jesus, and begged that he might be sent to America, to spend his life among the poor negroes. His request was granted. As soon as he reached that country he began his noble work. Whenever a slave-ship arrived, Peter went on board to meet the unhappy men. He received them with great kindness, and spoke to them consoling and encouraging words. In this way he soon won their confidence. Afterwards he instructed them in the truths of religion. Nothing discouraged him; neither the dulness of some nor the rough, coarse ways of others. When not

thus occupied, his time was spent in the hospitals, where he sat at the bedside of the sick, dressed their wounds, and waited on them as a servant. The name he loved best to be called was "The Slave of the Slaves." On Sundays and Holy days he gathered together all his dear slaves who were well into an open square, where he had put up an altar, and placed benches and matting for their comfort. It is no wonder that Peter gained the love of these poor negroes. If they lived piously, he made them little presents to encourage them, but if they did wrong, he gently reproved them. In this way did he win these ignorant people to God ; and it is said that during his life he converted and baptized no fewer than forty thousand. The holy man spent thirty-six years in this heroic work. At last he fell sick, and for four years lay on his death-bed. During all that time his poor slaves came in crowds to visit him ; day by day he instructed them and consoled them, till at last, on the 8th September, 1654, God called him to his reward in Heaven.—*His Life : Sept. 8.*

335. FLOWERS FROM HEAVEN.—Towards the end of the third century there lived at Cæsarea a Christian lady called Dorothea. When the heathen prefect of that city heard that she was a Christian, he commanded her to be tortured and then beheaded. When she was stretched on the rack, and suffering the most cruel torments, the prefect asked her to spare her life by offering sacrifice to the gods. But the young virgin said : " I despise your gods and pray to the one true God of Heaven, where I hope to live with Him, a land where there is neither night nor sorrow ; a garden where lilies and roses and flowers of all kinds never fade." There was a man standing near who heard these words of the holy virgin ; his name was Theophilus. When he heard them, he laughed and jested like the others, for he also was a pagan and hated the Christian name. As she was being led to execution, he met her again, and said : " When you go into that garden, of which you have told us so much, will you have the goodness to send me some of those fruits and flowers which you said were so lovely ?" Dorothea looked at him as he spoke. " I will do it," she said—" I will do it without fail." There was no time for more ; for the executioner placed her head upon the block, and, with one blow of his sword, it was struck off. Shortly after, there came up to Theophilus a boy of heavenly beauty : in his hand he carried a basket, in which were some most beautiful apples and four roses, two white and two red, of such brilliant colour, and of so rich a fragrance, that their like was never seen before.

He held them out to Theophilus. "These flowers are for you," said the child, "will you not take them?" "And whence do you bring them?" asked Theophilus. "From Dorothea," he said, "these are the flowers and the fruit she promised to send you." "Roses in the winter time!" he cried out—it was then the sixth of February and a time of great frost—"yes, indeed, and roses such as never blossomed in an earthly garden. Prefect," he said, "your work is not yet done; your sword has slain one Christian, but it has made another. I also am of the same faith for which Dorothea died." Within an hour Theophilus was condemned to die; and on the spot where Dorothea had been beheaded he too poured forth his blood, and went to enjoy God eternally in Heaven along with that holy martyr.—*Lives of the Saints : Feb. 6.*

336. THE NOBLEMEN AND THE MONK.—Two noblemen went to visit a certain monastery. As they were going the round of the cells, they chanced to enter that of a venerable monk, whose hair was white as snow. His countenance was joyous as that of an angel, and his whole person calm and gentle beyond what can be described. At seeing this they were amazed. They said, one to the other, "How can a man who wears such a coarse garment, and who lives the austere life of a monk, be so cheerful and always smiling?" At these words he pointed to the window of his cell: "You have but to go over there to that window, and you will at once see what gives me my strength and joy." "We see nothing from this window. A few inches of the blue sky through a chink in the roughly built wall are all that can be seen." "That is just what gives me comfort," said the monk. "When melancholy comes upon me, I have only to look at that little portion of the sky, and immediately the thought of the eternal joys that are to come gives me comfort, and the clouds of sadness melt into sunshine of consolation and peace. I then pray to my Father in Heaven to hasten the time when, in that happy kingdom, I may find eternal rest."—*Chisholm.*

337. "TAKE COURAGE."—There was once a young man of noble birth, and possessing much wealth. Remembering what Our Lord had said about the difficulty of a rich man entering the Kingdom of Heaven, he resolved to leave to someone else all his great possessions and become a humble monk in a Franciscan monastery. He began his new life with great fervour. But as time went on his devotion began to fade away. His first fervour

had almost entirely disappeared, every one of the duties of the monastic life became a burden to him, and he resolved to give them up. On the night he had fixed for leaving the monastery, he happened to pass before an altar, on which the Blessed Sacrament was reserved. Falling on his knees, he bowed down in lowly adoration. As he was saying his prayers, God, who had pity on the weakness of His child, allowed him to see a wonderful sight to encourage him. He saw a beautiful procession, which passed before him. It seemed to be going from earth towards Heaven. All those who were in it were clothed in magnificent garments, their faces beamed with heavenly joy, and they seemed to be leading in triumph, to God's kingdom, a young man as beautiful as themselves. This glorious vision filled the monk with great joy, and he cried out to one of the blessed spirits in the procession, "Tell me, I pray thee, O spirit of God, who are these bright souls I see and whence they come?" The one to whom he spoke answered, "We are those who, when on earth, had left all things to follow Christ, and are now in heavenly glory; we have been sent by our Father above to conduct to Heaven, with all this magnificent pomp of Paradise, the soul of that young monk who has just died." The heart of the religious was now filled with such a burning desire of one day obtaining the same glory, that he at once returned to his cell; his first fervour returned, and to his dying day he remained faithful.—*Chronicles of S. Francis.*

338. OBEDIENCE ON THE THRONE.—S. Henry, Emperor of Germany, visiting one day a certain monastery, experienced an ardent desire of quitting his throne, and devoting the remainder of his days to the penitential and religious exercises of the cloister. He accordingly requested an interview with the Abbot, and earnestly besought him to receive him among the number of his religious. The Abbot, knowing well the Emperor's saintly life, and the piety and wisdom with which he exercised his government, formed the following plan to satisfy to some degree his pious desires, without withdrawing him from a position which he occupied with so much advantage to religion. Having assembled the monks in solemn chapter, he questioned the Emperor in their presence, as to whether, like them, he was ready to practise entire obedience until death, according to the rule and example of Jesus Christ. The Emperor replied that this was his earnest desire. Upon which the Abbot said, "From this moment I receive you among the number of my monks, and charge myself with the care

of your soul, if you, on your part, promise to observe faithfully whatever I enjoin you." Henry replied that he would do so. "Then," said the Abbot, "I order you to resume the government of the empire entrusted to you by God, and to promote, as far as you can, the salvation of the subjects committed to your charge." The Emperor was grieved at this unexpected command; nevertheless he obeyed, and thus had the merit of exercising the evangelical counsel of obedience, though seated on the throne of a mighty empire.—*Anecd. Chrét.*

339. THEODOSIUS AND S. AMBROSE.—The Emperor Theodosius stained his hands in the blood of his subjects, by permitting in haste the slaughter of several thousands in Thessalonica. S. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, wrote to him a strong letter of remonstrance, exhorting him to repentance and satisfaction. When later on, the Emperor, without complying with this injunction, presented himself at the doors of the Church, S. Ambrose met him, respectfully refusing him admittance. The Prince urged that David also had sinned against his people, to which the Bishop replied: "Having imitated his sin, imitate also his repentance." Theodosius submitted; he did penance for his sin, and was afterwards reconciled to the Church, a true model of humility and obedience.

340. S. GERTRUDE.—Every time S. Gertrude said the Lord's Prayer, she said this third petition, "Thy will be done," with the greatest fervour. Sometimes she would say it over and over again, because every time she did so, she felt her heart all on fire with the love of God. One day as she was saying it in this way, Our Lord Himself appeared to her in a visible manner. In His right hand He seemed to carry health, and in His left hand sickness. He said to her, "Gertrude, my daughter, which of the two do you wish Me to give you, health or sickness?" She only said, "O my God, Thy will, not mine, be done." This answer was so pleasing to Our Lord, that He gave her, even in this world, many special marks of His love. One day He appeared to a holy nun, of the same convent, called Mechtildes. He was seated on a beautiful throne, with S. Gertrude at His side. She was gazing with rapture on His sacred countenance, and He also seemed to be looking on her with eyes beaming with love. Mechtildes then understood that this great favour had been given to her because she was always so obedient to His blessed will.—*Her Life: Nov. 15.*

341. S. LOUIS AND THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER.—When the death of his mother was announced to S. Louis, his first impulse was to shed a torrent of tears. But coming to himself, he fell on his knees, and thanking God for having given him so good a mother, expressed his resignation to the Divine will, in the loss of one he loved so tenderly.—*Valley*.

342. S. JANE ON THE DEATH OF HER HUSBAND.—The Baron de Chantal was accidentally shot by a friend, one day while out in the fields, and a week later died in the arms of his disconsolate lady, left a widow at the age of twenty-eight, with four little children at her side. But she bore her trial with Christian patience and true resignation to God's will, consecrating the remainder of her days to the service of God and His poor.—*Her Life : Aug. 21*.

343. THE SCHOOLMASTER'S CHILDREN.—There was a schoolmaster who had two children, a boy and a girl, who were distinguished among all the other children for their great piety and their child-like innocence. They were their father's joy, and he looked forward to them as the support of his old age. But God, who disposes of all things in the manner He sees most useful to us, had arranged otherwise. One day both the children became suddenly ill. The father happened to be absent from home at the time, and before he returned they were both dead. The poor mother was affected beyond all that can be imagined. Tears of grief fell from her eyes in torrents as she gazed on the lifeless forms of her two little children, a short time before so happy and so full of mirth. But she, like so many other saintly mothers, was full of faith. She tried to dry her tears, and taking the bodies, she herself carried them into another room, where with her own hands she prepared them for burial, and covered them with a white cloth. In the meantime the father returned home. Not seeing the children coming as usual to meet him, he said to his wife: "Where are the children?" "They are not very far away," she answered, and then tried to speak of something else. The husband, seeing that his wife was, as usual, calm and cheerful, thought that although he did not see them, they must be quite safe, and sat down to table and ate the dinner she had prepared for him. When he had finished, and had returned thanks, as was his custom, his wife said to him: "I am going to ask you a question. Some time ago I received from a rich gentleman a valuable treasure, which he wanted me to keep for him till he would come to ask me to give

it back to him. He has come to-day to ask it from me ; do you think I should give it to him ?” “ Most assuredly, since it belongs to him. Why do you ask me such a question ?” She replied : “ Because I wanted you also to consent to my doing so. As she said these words she rose, and leading her husband into the room, raised the white cloth, and his eyes fell upon the lifeless bodies of his two children. “ O my God !” he cried out, pale with anguish. “ O my children !” and he sank down in a chair that was near, and buried his face in his hands. His grief at length found relief in a flood of tears ; his wife also wept. Taking the trembling hand of her husband, she said to him : “ Did you not tell me a few moments ago that it was my duty at once to return the treasure confided to my care as soon as the owner came to seek it ? God gave us these two little ones to keep for Him till He should come and ask us to return them to Him. He has come for them to-day. They belong to Him, not to us.” The good man threw himself on his knees at the bedside, and with hands and eyes raised to Heaven, he cried out : “ The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.” The next day he laid them in their grave. Tears indeed fell from his eyes, for he loved his little children, but his heart was calm and resigned to the holy will of God.—*Chisholm.*

344. POISON IN THE FLOWER.—An English lady went from this country to India, where she was for some time the guest of a French officer. One morning, she went out alone in the garden to enjoy the morning air. As she was walking among the gay flower-beds, she saw a flower of a most beautiful colour ; going over to it, she plucked it and began to smell it. But hardly had she done this, when a negro, who was in the garden, sprang quickly to her side, and snatching the flower out of her hand, crushed it to pieces. He said some words to her which she did not understand, and then ran away. The lady was very angry at the rudeness of the slave. As soon as she entered the house, she told his master of the insult she had just received. The slave was at once sent for, that he might be punished for his fault. But in a few words, spoken in the same language in which he had spoken to the lady, the slave explained to his master why he had done what at first seemed so rude, and showed him that unless he had done so the lady would most certainly have been poisoned. The flower the lady had plucked was one which, though very beautiful to look at, contained the most deadly poison. The slave, seeing the

lady pluck the flower, and not being able to make her understand by words the danger she was in, saw no other way of saving her from death than by snatching the flower from her hand, as he had done. On hearing this, the lady thanked him and gave him a handsome reward.—*Schmid*.

345. THE HEAVY RAIN.—A rich merchant was returning home from a certain town with a large sum of money in his purse. He was on horseback. The way was long and solitary, and he had scarcely set out on his homeward journey when the rain, which had for some time been threatening, began to fall in torrents, and he was soon wet through. The rider began thinking to himself how much better God would have acted had he allowed the rain to hold over till he was safely landed at home. Then he came to a part of the road which was bordered on both sides by a thick wood. In this place robberies had often been committed. The gloom of the night, which was deepening every moment, and the dulness of the weather, made the man anxious to reach the other end of the wood, so he began to ride more quickly that he might the sooner reach it. But he had not gone far when the horse suddenly stood still and nearly threw its rider, who had scarcely time to regain his saddle, when he saw standing in the middle of the road a man disguised from head to foot, holding a pistol in his hand. “Your money or your life!” were the words that reached the ears of the gentleman, and caused him to shudder. In an instant he put spurs to his horse, thinking thus to gallop past him. But the robber, foreseeing this, raised his pistol and fired. The gentleman shut his eyes as he saw the flash in the darkness, and, thinking his last hour had come, recommended his soul to God. It was all the work of an instant. But he was not shot dead, he was not even hurt; for the heavy rain had wet the ruffian’s powder, and prevented it taking effect. Then he galloped onwards, and was soon beyond all danger. He did not once look behind him till he reached his home. His wife and children saw him enter pale and trembling, and thinking some terrible misfortune had happened to him, asked him in hurried accents to tell them what it was. “I am quite safe,” he said, “and without any injury. But had it not been for the deluge of rain, which I thought so great a misfortune when I set out on my journey, I never would have reached home alive.” He then related to them his adventure in the wood, and his narrow escape from death. He ended with these words:—“How foolish it was of me to complain of the weather that God sent, and how good it was of

Him to send down such a heavy rainfall, which was most certainly the cause of my being preserved from death. Let this be a lesson for you, my dearest children," he continued, speaking to his little ones, who through joy at his escape had thrown their arms round him. "Whenever you say that petition of the Lord's Prayer, 'Thy will be done,' think of this. If there had been no rain to-day, the powder would not have been wet, and you would not now have a father to speak to you again, or to cling to as you are now doing."—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

346. "THANKS BE TO GOD."—A young man was on his way to the ship that was to carry him over from France to England. From his earliest childhood his parents had taught him to submit in everything to God's holy will, and to see, in everything that happened, the work of God. The ship was on the point of leaving her moorings, and the young man began to run that he might reach it in time. But as he kept his eyes fixed on the ship, he did not see a block of wood that lay upon the street. He stumbled over it in his great haste and fell to the ground. A heavy box which he carried on his shoulder fell upon his leg and broke it in two. His first words were as usual, "This is for my greater good : thanks be to God." The people who saw the accident, and who ran to lift him up, were astonished to hear him say these words. One of them said to him, "How can this accident, which has hindered you from going on your journey, be for your greater good?" "I cannot tell you," he replied, "but God knows; and although I may never know why He has hindered me from this journey, which I thought so necessary and important, He certainly willed it, and that is enough for me. May His blessed will be done." In the meantime the ship sailed without him and he was carried home. During that night a terrific gale, so common on the coast, sprang up, and the next day many shipwrecks were reported. Amongst the vessels lost was the one in which the young man was to have sailed to England. The people saw in this event how wise are the ways of God's Providence, and how happy are those who submit in all things to His blessed will.—*Hautriève.*

347. WATERING A STICK.—There came once to one of the monasteries of Egypt a young man anxious to devote himself to God's service, and ready to obey superiors in everything. The abbot thereupon stuck in the ground a withered branch of a tree, which he chanced to have in his hand, and ordered the young man to go

and fetch water from the Nile, two miles distant, and water the twig till it should strike roots and put forth leaves. He bowed and set about the task imposed on him, and for two years went regularly backwards and forwards to the river, with a heavy load of water, often panting under the charge like a beast of burden. As this act was done out of pure love for God, in the person of superiors, it was real obedience and pleasing to God, who deigned to manifest, by a signal miracle, how acceptable it was in His sight ; for, during the third year, the branch struck root and began to put forth leaves, to the admiration of all beholders, an unmistakable proof that there is no work, however simple or frivolous it may seem, which, if done from obedience, does not become supernatural and meritorious before God.—*Sulp. Severus.*

348. THE BISHOP AND THE DYING MAN.—Many years ago, in times of persecution, a Catholic bishop, while travelling in the Highlands of Scotland, for the purpose of visiting the scattered members of his flock, was benighted one dark and stormy night in the midst of a lonely and desolate tract of country. After wandering about for some time in the greatest uncertainty, he was guided at length by the glimmering of a light to a lonely cabin, at the door of which he knocked, and begged for a night's lodging. The woman of the house received him with frank hospitality, bade him welcome to the warm fireside, and apologized for not being able to offer him a bed. "The only one that we have," said she, "is now occupied by my husband, who is lying at the point of death." "I am truly sorry to hear of your affliction," said the bishop, "but I trust he is well prepared for so great a change." "Alas," said the woman, wiping her eyes, "he will not be persuaded that his end is so near. Though he is above eighty, and though the doctor says that his hours are numbered, yet he persists in saying that his time is not yet come." "Will you allow me to speak to him?" said the bishop ; "perhaps the opinion of a stranger may have greater weight, and he may be persuaded to prepare for his approaching departure." "Willingly," said the woman ; and with that she led the way into the inner room. Having approached the bedside, the bishop saw that there was little time to be lost ; everything betokened the near approach of death. This he did not conceal from the old man, and he exhorted him to make good use of the few hours which remained to him upon earth ; but his words seemed to produce but little impression. "Sir," said the old man, "I know that my age is great. I know that my strength is almost

gone ; but, for all that, I know that my time is not yet come." "My dear friend," said the bishop, "do not deceive yourself. Why should death not come to you as well as to the rest of men?" "I will tell you, then, sir," said the old man, raising himself up in bed. "Why should I fear now what man can do to me? I am a Catholic. I have remained faithful to my God, in spite of every danger and every difficulty, though in this wild place I have not seen a priest but twice in thirty years. But every day during these thirty years I have prayed to God that I might not die without the consolations of religion. He will not refuse this prayer—I know He will not ; and when I have a Catholic priest at my bedside to give me the last Sacraments, then I shall believe I am going to die, but not till then." "My son," said the bishop, "prepare yourself for death ; I am a Catholic priest." The holy rites were administered ; the faithful soul slept in peace ; and the good bishop went on his way, rejoicing and praising God for His wonderful works towards the children of men.—*The Little Flower Garden.*

349. HERMANN, THE TAILOR.—There lived in a village in Germany a tailor, whose name was Hermann. For twenty years this good man supported his family by working at his trade, and during all that time they never knew what want was. He had also, by his good example and by watchful care, taught his children to serve God in this world, that they might be happy with Him for ever in the next. But, in the year 1770 a great famine broke out all over the country, and the good Hermann often passed three or four days without any work. Very soon he had to sell even the furniture of the house to buy bread for his little ones. At last even this failed him, and one morning he rose from his bed without knowing where he was to find a morsel of food for his famishing children. He was surrounded by them crying out to him for bread, and holding out their little hands to him. "O father, we are so hungry," they cried, "give us something to eat." These words pierced his very heart. To console them he said : "I have nothing just now to give you, my dear children, but try and have a little patience till mid-day, and then we shall have enough to eat." "But where will it come from?" they all cried out. He pointed with his finger towards Heaven ; and then, rising up, he left them that they might not see his tears. He went into the next room, and, falling down on his knees, prayed to God in these words : "O my God, shall I have the grief to see my little ones die of hunger before my eyes? Thou, who givest food to the birds of the air,

come and help us, for now is the time." As he was ending this prayer, one of the children came running to tell him that there was someone at the door who wanted to speak to him. It was a lady who came to ask if he could make some clothing for her three children, who were to assist at a marriage in a few days. To induce him to do the work more quickly, she brought him a little present, which she said would likely be acceptable in these hard times. Saying these words, she took from a basket she was carrying in her hand, a loaf of bread, some fresh meat, a little bag of flour, and other kinds of food. Hermann then told the lady of the sad state to which they had been reduced by the famine, and how he had that very hour promised his children food, without knowing whence it was to come. The lady was moved to tears at his story and his pious confidence in God. Before going away, she told him that as long as the famine lasted she herself would provide for him and his family. Who can describe the joy of that happy family and their gratitude to God for His Fatherly assistance. They sat down to table, and after begging the blessing of God, they partook with joy of the food which He had sent them.—*Christian Perfection*.

350. THE THUNDERING LEGION.—Marcus Aurelius, the Roman Emperor, was engaged in a disastrous war. His army had been hemmed in by the enemy within a narrow defile, and was, moreover, on the point of perishing for the want of water. Among his troops, however, were a large number of Christian soldiers, who, seeing the danger which threatened them, had recourse for help to the God of Heaven. Kneeling on the ground, they poured out earnest entreaties to God to rescue the army and their Emperor from destruction, by sending them a supply of water and enabling them to escape from their dangerous position. The enemy, and even their fellow-soldiers, stood amazed at this unexpected sight, but they were far more astonished at the speedy answer which God gave to their prayers. They had not been long on their knees when suddenly the sky became dark, the wind howled through the forests, vivid flashes of lightning shot across the heavens, and torrents of rain began to descend. The Roman soldiers first received the refreshing drops in their mouths, being ready to die with thirst; they then caught them in their helmets; but while they were so engaged, the enemy, wishing to overpower them in the storm, began the attack. The violence of the tempest was now turned upon the forces of the enemy. Blinded with wind and rain, they were unable to follow up the attack, and soon fled in disorder.

The Romans, refreshed and strengthened, pursued them with great vigour, and gained a complete and decisive victory. The pagan Emperor justly attributed this victory to the prayers of his Christian soldiers, and they were from that time known by the name of the *Thundering Legion*.—*Butler*.

351. S. NICEPHORUS AND SAPRICIUS.—Sapricius and Nicephorus were two Christians who dwelt in the same town during the persecution of the Emperor Valerian. For many years they entertained for each other the affection of brothers, till at last an unhappy quarrel took place between them, and their former love was succeeded by the most bitter hatred. After some time Nicephorus, entering into himself, conceived a great desire to be reconciled to Sapricius. He accordingly applied to some friends of the latter to procure a meeting between them, but in vain. He then went in person to the house of Sapricius, and, throwing himself at his feet, besought him to consent to a reconciliation; but Sapricius refused to listen to the proposal. Meanwhile, a violent persecution broke out against the Church, and Sapricius, who was known to be a Christian, was seized and brought before the judge. Although cruelly tortured in many ways, he persisted in his profession of faith, and declared that he would rather die than sacrifice to idols. Upon this confession he was condemned to lose his head. Nicephorus, hearing of what had passed, and that Sapricius was actually on the way to execution, ran from his house, and met him at the end of the street. There casting himself upon the ground, he besought him earnestly to pardon him; but Sapricius turned away his head. Nicephorus, almost broken-hearted, ran to the place of execution by another road, and there throwing himself on his knees before Sapricius, cried out, "Martyr of the true God, pardon me, I conjure you!" but the wretched Sapricius refused to listen. At the same moment Sapricius, by a just judgment of God, was seized with a terrible fear of death, and when told to lay his head upon the block, cried out trembling, "Why would you put me to death? I am ready to offer sacrifice." Nicephorus, grieved to the heart at the apostasy of the wretched Sapricius, and feeling himself animated with a courage which God bestowed upon him in reward of his charity, cried aloud that he was a Christian, and ready to die for his faith. The Roman judge instantly condemned him to be beheaded, and thus in a moment he received the glorious crown of martyrdom, which Sapricius had deservedly lost.—*Butler : Feb. 9.*

352. THE PRIEST AND THE SOLDIER.—About one hundred years ago, when the terrible Revolution broke out in France, a certain priest gave a beautiful example of doing good to one who hated him. One day he was in the Church at his prayers. Suddenly someone ran to tell him that the Republican soldiers were coming towards the Church to take him prisoner. They tried to seize him, but rushing out, he ran in great haste towards the river, about a mile distant. The two soldiers also ran after him. Without delay he leapt into the water, and swam safely to the other side. One of the soldiers attempted to follow him. The priest, seeing this, again began to run, and was soon out of danger. But as he stopped to rest a little on the top of a hill, he thought he heard cries for help proceeding from the direction of the river. He looked round, and one glance told him all. The soldier who had plunged into the river in pursuit was unable to swim, and was being carried away by the stream. In a moment the good priest retraced his steps, plunged once more into the river, and was soon at the side of the drowning man. He seized him by his hair as he was sinking and drew him to land. It was some time before the soldier regained consciousness; but when at length he opened his eyes and saw who it was that had saved him, he was filled with amazement. All the priest said was: “You were on the point of perishing while seeking to take away my life, and I have saved you from death. I thank God, who has given me this opportunity of doing good for evil.” That soldier afterwards became the priest’s greatest friend.—*Chisholm.*

353. THE TWO SEBASTIANS.—The blessed Sebastian Valfré, when a boy at school, was distinguished for his amiable manners and sweet and gentle disposition. One day a quarrel arose between two of his companions, and one of them, who was likewise called Sebastian, being very angry, openly declared that he would have his revenge for the injury he had received. The young Valfré, hearing of this, went to the angry boy and thus accosted him: “Did you say the *Our Father* this morning, my dear Sebastian?” “I did,” replied the other. “But did you say it attentively?” continued Valfré, in a sweet and persuasive tone. “Most certainly,” said the other, who did not see the drift of the question. “Then,” continued Valfré, “since you said it with attention, you must have observed these words, *forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.* Ah, my dear friend, let us not shut ourselves out from the hope of the Divine mercy by refusing to pardon

those who give us offence." The angry boy was so touched by these simple words that he forgave his school-fellow on the spot.—*Life of B. Sebastian Valfré.*

354. S. JOHN AND THE NOBLEMAN.—We read in the life of S. John the Almoner that he had on several occasions tried in vain to reconcile to each other two noblemen who had quarrelled, and lived in a state of mortal enmity. At length, despairing of moving them by his words and entreaties, he sent for the one who showed the greatest degree of obstinacy, inviting him to come to his house and assist at the mass which he was about to celebrate in his private oratory. The nobleman accepted the invitation, and on his arrival the Saint began the mass, and proceeded as far as the *Pater Noster*, which it was the custom at that time for those who assisted at the mass to recite along with the priest. S. John accordingly began it, and the nobleman said it with him; but as soon as he reached the fifth petition, the Saint came to a full stop, and left the nobleman to finish it alone. Then, turning to him, he exhorted him earnestly to weigh the meaning of the words he had pronounced: that there, in the very presence of Jesus Christ, he had implored God to pardon him or not, according as he forgave or refused to forgive his enemy. The nobleman was so struck with this reflection, that he fell at the Saint's feet, promising to dismiss all thoughts of revenge, and to go at once and ask his enemy's forgiveness. No sooner was the mass over than he put his design into execution, and from that moment became a sincere friend to his former adversary.—*Butler.*

355. ALIPIUS AT THE GAMES.—S. Augustine relates the following of his friend Alipius, a young man of excellent qualities, but who met with a grievous fall. Here is how it happened: Some of his young friends who were studying law with him, going one day from dinner together, met him on the way and undertook to take him with them to the amphitheatre. It was one of those fatal days when the people were delighted by the sight of human bloodshed. As he had an extreme horror of such cruel exhibitions, he at first resisted with all his strength. But the others, using a sort of violence as is sometimes done among friends, drew him away in spite of himself, for, let Alipius say as he would, they carried him off. Whilst the whole amphitheatre was in the transport of these barbarous pleasures, Alipius restrained his heart from taking part in them, and kept his eyes closed. Would to God that he had sealed

his ears! For, having been struck by a great shout which something extraordinary had raised, curiosity prevailed and, intending only to see what it was, he opened his eyes. It was enough to give his heart a deeper wound than that which one of the combatants had just received. Thereby it was that that heart, in which there was much more presumption than strength, and which was so much the weaker for having counted on itself instead of expecting all from God, found itself suddenly wounded. Cruelty glided in at the very moment when the blood just shed met his eyes, and, very far from turning them away from what was passing, he kept them fastened on it, allowing himself to be intoxicated by that barbarous and criminal pleasure. It was no longer the same man who had been dragged thither by force. Behold him now as fond of plays as the others, mingling his cries with theirs, becoming as warm and as much excited as any of them by what was passing. Finally, he left the place with such a passion for shows and games that he thought of nothing else, and not only was he ready to go back again with those who had brought him, but he was more infatuated than any of them, and even induced others to go.—*Confessions.*

356. THE PRESUMPTUOUS HERMIT.—We read in the lives of SS. Palemon and Pachomius that, while living together in solitude in the deserts of Thebais, they were one day visited by another hermit, who begged admittance into their cell. On entering he perceived a fire and, being puffed up with pride and presumption, said: “You see that fire; well, if you have faith, and slowly repeat the Lord’s Prayer, you may place yourself in the flames without danger.” S. Palemon charitably reproved him for his criminal presumption, telling him that to act thus would be to tempt God, and that whoever did so would have no reason to hope for the Divine protection. The new-comer, however, rejecting the advice of the holy man, threw himself upon the burning coals, and, as Almighty God permitted in punishment of his pride, actually received no hurt; whereupon, the unhappy man, more blinded than ever, reproached the two Saints for their want of faith. The next day he took his departure and returned to his cell, where he quickly met with the punishment of his vainglory and presumption; for as soon as he was alone, the devil began to tempt him with impure imaginations, and he, who had so prided himself on his firmness and courageous faith, yielded shamefully to the wicked temptation. No sooner had he done so, than he gave way to despair,

and, rushing from his cell, cast himself into a blazing furnace, where he perished miserably.—*Lives of the Fathers.*

357. THE GARDENER'S APPLES.—There was once a gardener who had a son whom he brought up in the fear of God. But when he went to school he met some companions who had been brought up very differently. Their conduct, and the words they uttered, showed that they had already grown old in evil. These companions soon made his acquaintance, and he himself began to like them. But his father, who knew well how to fulfil his duty, was watching with a careful eye the kind of children his son had chosen for his playmates, and he soon perceived that they were bad. "Come with me, my child," he one day said to him, "I want to show you something." Saying these words, they both entered the garden together, and the father, taking a basket, placed in it seven apples; six of these were the most beautiful he could find, but the seventh was rotten and full of worms. "These are for you, my boy; you can do with them what you like." The boy took the basket with great delight, but when he saw the rotten apple, he asked his father if he might throw it away. "Why would you throw it away?" asked his father. "Because it will spoil the others." "On the contrary," said the father, "do you not think that the six good ones will cure the rottenness of the bad one and make it sound again? You shall see. Let us leave them all together in the basket for eight days." The son did not seem to believe that this would be the case. But the father took the basket with the fruit and placed it safely under lock and key. Three days afterwards they went to look at it. Already three of the apples were spoiled. "Did I not tell you," said the boy, "that if you left that rotten apple among them they would soon all be spoiled?" The father made no answer, but locked the door again. Five days afterwards they returned to the place, and when they looked they found that all the apples were rotten. At the sight of the spoiled fruit the child began to cry. "Do not weep, my child," said his father; "I will give you other apples. In doing what I have done I only wanted to give you a lesson. Didn't I see you a few days ago in the company of boys who were not good? These boys were, before God, rotten like the apple in the basket. By going with them you also would soon become like themselves, for they would corrupt your innocent and beautiful soul, by making you offend God. One bad boy is sufficient to spoil many good ones, as this one bad apple spoiled the six others that were near it."—*Schouppé.*

358. THE ABBOT AND YOUNG MONK.—A young monk one day went to visit a venerable abbot. As they were speaking of spiritual things, the monk said, "My father, there was a time when I was much troubled with temptations, but, thanks be to God, I am never troubled with them now." The abbot asked him how he had been able to become free from them. "I prayed to God that He would never permit me to be tempted again, and He has been pleased to hear my prayer." The abbot answered, "My son, you have done a very foolish thing. Go back quickly, and pray to God again to send you temptations, and along with them the grace to overcome them. If you have no temptations to fight against, you may easily become careless in the practice of virtue, and may fall into the sin of sloth." The young monk followed this advice, and continued to lead a holy life.—*Lohner.*

359. THE SEVEN CROWNS.—A certain hermit who dwelt in a cave had a virtuous disciple whom he was in the habit of instructing each evening, after which he was accustomed to dismiss him to bed with his blessing. One night it happened that the hermit fell asleep while giving his instruction, and slept so soundly that he did not wake till after midnight. The young man waited in vain for the hermit to awake, that they might make their usual evening prayer together, and that he might retire to rest. At length he grew very drowsy, and was strongly tempted to leave his master and go to bed, but he resisted the temptation and continued to watch by his side. Seven times was he tempted in the same manner, for his eyes were heavy, and he was very weary with watching, but still he persevered, for he was determined that sloth should not prevail over him. At length his master awoke, and finding his disciple by his side, asked him why he had not retired to rest. "Because," replied the youth, "you did not dismiss me." "But why did you not awake me?" said the hermit. "Father," replied his disciple, "I could not presume to disturb you." Thereupon they said their prayers, and the hermit dismissed him to bed. Then falling into an ecstasy, the old man beheld a magnificent palace, in which was placed a throne, and over it seven crowns of glory. At the same time he was told by an angel that they were destined by reward his diligent disciple, who had that night merited these seven crowns by his generous resistance to the temptations of Satan.—*Lives of the Fathers.*

360. SATAN'S COMPLAINT.—S. Anthony tells us the following example :—One day someone knocked very loudly at the gate of the monastery. I myself went to see who was there. When I opened the gate I was very much frightened, for I saw standing before me a man of great stature. I asked him who he was. "I am Satan," he answered. "I want to know why it is that you Christians are always cursing me. For at the first misfortune that comes to you, you always say, 'Cursed be the devil!'" I answered, "We have great reason to curse you, for you are always tempting us, and laying snares to drag us into sin." Satan answered, "I am often not so much to blame as you think, for people are often the cause of their own ruin, by seeking the occasions of sin, hoping that they will not fall, although they know how frail they are. I never could overcome them if they only used the weapons God has put into their hands. So they need not blame me, nor curse me so much, since it is entirely their own fault that they are lost."

361. "KEEP AWAY."—A boy went into a wild beast show. Among the wild beasts there was a great strong lion shut up in a cage, with iron bars in front of it. Somebody told the boy not to go too near the lion's cage, but to *keep away* lest the lion should get hold of him. The boy took no notice of what was said to him. He went close up to the lion's cage. When the lion saw the boy standing close to the cage, he put his great paw through the bars. He took hold of the boy's arm, and tore it away from his body. The boy screamed out frightfully. But it was too late, his arm was gone!—Why did the boy lose his arm? Because he did not *keep away* from the lion. Why do people commit sin and lose their souls? Because they do not *keep away* from temptation. Therefore do you keep away from temptation, from bad company, bad books, and dangerous places.—*Furniss.*

362. THE NEST OF VIPERS.—A countryman was one day walking through a wood. On the side of the path he suddenly beheld a nest full of vipers. As soon as he saw them he started back with fear; but at length he took courage and went to look at the nest. He found in it seven of them, all quite young. When he saw that they were so young, he took up the nest and carried it home with him. For several weeks he fed them with bread and milk, and showed them to all those who came to see him. About three weeks from the time he had brought them home, one of those who

came to see them said to him, "My friend, I advise you to kill these vipers at once, while they are young, for if you continue to keep them, and feed them as you are now doing, depend upon it, they will one day attack you with their poisonous fangs and kill you." "Oh, do not be afraid," he replied; "they are quite young yet, and can do me no harm. I will take very great care that when they begin to grow dangerous I will soon get rid of them." "I would advise you to kill them at once," said the other, "otherwise you may one day find to your cost that they have taken you by surprise." This advice was not attended to. The visitor went away, and the man still kept the vipers. Not many days afterwards the same visitor returned. What was his surprise to see his poor friend suffering dreadful torture! The vipers had attacked him, as he had forewarned. His friend went at once to get assistance, but it was too late. The poison had entered his blood, and the wretched man soon afterwards expired.—*Mrs. Herbert.*

363. THE FATHER'S PROMISE.—Annie Young lived in the country. The school which she went to was more than a mile from her home, and as the roads were bad, it was too far for her to walk in the winter season. So her father always sent her to school in the morning in a sleigh or carriage, and brought her home at night in the same way. One afternoon he stopped at the schoolhouse, and told Annie that he was going along the road several miles, and might not return till after school was out. "But wait for me till I come," he said; "I will be here before dark." As the other children went home, they begged Annie to go with them, but she, nothing daunted by the loneliness, resisted all their entreaties, and though the time seemed long, and her father delayed coming, she still waited, trusting to the promise he had made. It was nearly dark when Mr. Young drove up to the door. He had driven fast to get there. He had been kept longer than he expected, and had left his business unfinished in order to keep his promise and get back to his child before dark. "Were you not afraid I would not come, Annie?" he asked as he wrapped her up in a warm rug. "No, father," was the child's answer; "you said you would come, and I knew you would." How beautiful this is! If we could have the same trust in Our Heavenly Father, in the dangers of this life, as Annie Young had in her earthly father, how happy we should be. And yet her father had not the one-hundredth part of the love your Father in Heaven has for you!—*Gilmour.*

364. LOUIS AND HIS MOTHER.—In the year 1815, there died in the city of Amiens a young boy fourteen years old. His good mother had taught him from the very beginning of his life to hate sin above all other evils. One day, when he was quite a child, he was playing near the fire in his mother's room. The fire was burning brightly, and gave out a great heat. The boy kept his eyes fixed on it for a few moments as if thinking of something, and then said : " Mother, you have often told me about the fire of hell, in which God punishes those who do wrong ; what an awful misfortune it would be for me if I were one day to fall into that everlasting fire." " Do not be afraid, my child," replied the mother ; " hell is only for those who fall into mortal sin ; if you keep away from mortal sin you need have no fear of ever being sent there." Louis never forgot those words of his mother ; and whenever temptation came, he at once put it away by thinking on the terrible punishment of sin ; and thus he persevered in his innocence and died a Saint.—*Schouppé*.

365. THE HEROIC MOTHER.—Marie Leckzinska, spouse of Louis XV. of France, had a son whom she trained up in the fear of God from his infancy. When he grew up to be a young man, he had to leave his mother's home and live for a time among strangers. During his absence, word was brought to his mother that he had to spend part of his time among those who would take a pleasure in corrupting his young heart. As soon as she was informed of this, she threw herself on her knees at the foot of a crucifix, and recommended her beloved child to the protection of his Heavenly Father. " O my God," she prayed, " take my darling boy to Thyself, rather than permit him to offend Thee by sin, or to lose the treasure of his innocence." God heard the prayer of that good mother, and delivered him from the evil that threatened him. When he returned home, the first question his mother asked him was if he had much to endure from the companions he had to mingle with. " Yes, my mother," he replied, " great indeed were the dangers they put around me to ruin me ; but thanks be to God, and to your prayers, I have still kept my soul pure and stainless." Not long after this time, the young prince became suddenly very ill, and died in sentiments of great piety. On the evening of the day of his death, his mother sent for her other children, and, with tears in her eyes, said to them : " Your brother is dead ; it is I, your mother, who asked God to take him to Himself. Some time ago I heard that he was in danger of committing sin. I went on my knees and prayed fervently to God to take him out of this world

rather than permit him to lose his innocence. God has heard me, and I thank Him for His goodness to me. Still I weep for him, for I loved him as dearly as any mother could love her child."—*Fliche*.

366. THE DOUBLE VISION.—S. Francis of Assisi went one day into the mountains of Alverno to spend some time in solitude, and to meditate on the eternal truths of the next life. As he was making this meditation, the rocks and the trees around him disappeared from his sight, and he saw the Heavens above him suddenly open. There he saw God seated on His throne, surrounded by an innumerable multitude of holy Angels and Saints. "O my God," cried out S. Francis, "I see Heaven! Oh! how magnificent is the beauty of Thy house, O Lord! Indeed it is but a small sacrifice to give up all the goods of this world to secure for ourselves such a glorious dwelling-place." While he was saying these words to himself, this beautiful vision suddenly disappeared, and was followed by another one of quite a different kind. Beneath his feet he thought he saw an immense abyss. It seemed to be a bottomless ocean of flames, in which were plunged countless multitudes of the wicked, who were vomiting forth cries of despair, and curses and blasphemy. This sight filled the Saint with fear, and he cried out: "Oh! what an awful place; this must surely be hell itself! Oh! if people did but see this awful abyss, and the torments those have to suffer who are in it, they would never commit sin, that they might never be condemned to it." This second vision also disappeared, and Francis, having returned to himself again, saw nothing round him but the rocks and the woods of Mount Alverno. "I am then placed," he said to himself, "between Heaven and hell. This is what God wanted to show me by this vision. One or other of these must most certainly be my dwelling-place for ever. O my God, grant me grace, while there is yet time, to secure Heaven, and deliver me from the greatest of all evils—the loss of Thee in hell."—*His Life : Oct. 4.*

367. ANGELS ON THE ROOF.—One day S. Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence, was passing through the streets of that city. As he was going past a certain cottage, which had every mark of the greatest poverty, he saw a number of angels on the roof. They seemed to be watching over the people who dwelt within it. Filled with astonishment at this beautiful vision, he entered the cottage to see who the people were that dwelt there, and he found a widow with her three daughters. They were extremely poor, and were occupied, as he entered, in trying to gain for themselves, by their

united labour, enough food to keep them from dying of hunger. The compassionate heart of the bishop was moved at their sad condition. He saw also their great piety, and their entire resignation to the holy will of God. He knew also that God must be in an especial manner pleased with them, since He had sent His angels to watch over them. "My dear children," he said to them, "I see that you are in great need of assistance, and I beg of you to accept of what I now offer you." Saying these words, he opened his purse, and gave them enough to supply all their present wants. He promised also to give them as much as would keep them in comfort all the rest of their lives, since they were so deserving of it. The family thanked their generous benefactor with tears in their eyes for having come to their assistance in their great need; and the bishop went home glad in heart at having been the means of delivering so deserving a family from the evils of poverty.—*Gaume.*

368. S. ROSALIA AT PALERMO.—S. Rosalia has always protected in a special manner the town of Palermo, where her relics are preserved. In 1629 her prayers obtained the cessation of an epidemic, and on July 13th, 1837, Palermo obtained in like manner the cessation of the cholera, so that from that day forward there were no further deaths, though, just before, the deaths numbered hundreds daily.—*L'Univers.*

369. S. PIUS AND THE BATTLE OF LEPANTO.—Selim II., Emperor of Turkey, filled with conceit at the success of his armies, began to meditate nothing less than the conquest of Europe. Pius V., who occupied the See of Peter, alarmed at the danger, formed a league against him, and at length the two fleets of the Mussulmans and the Christians met near Lepanto. Battle was given and raged furiously for some twelve hours, at the end of which the Christians gained a victory, such as has scarcely been equalled in history for the courage and resistance shown on both sides. From the beginning of the expedition, Pius had ordered public prayers and fasting: like another Moses, he raised his hands to Heaven, to draw down God's blessing on the Christian arms. It was the 7th of October, 1571, and the Pope was at work with the Cardinals, when suddenly rising and going to the window, he looked at the Heavens and said: "We must no longer talk of business; what we have now to do is to thank God for the brilliant victory He has just granted to the Christians." In honour of this, he instituted the feast of the

Rosary of the Blessed Virgin, whose help he had fervently implored, and inserted in her Litany the invocation " Help of Christians, pray for us."—*His Life* : May 5.

370. S. GENESIUS SAVES THE PILGRIMS.—S. Hilary of Arles relates a miracle of which he was witness : As the people were celebrating the feast of S. Genesius of Arles, the concourse of people was very great, and, crossing a bridge to go to honour the place of his martyrdom, the arches gave way and numbers were thrown into the river below, which was both rapid and deep. The Bishop of Arles at once had recourse to the Saint, and prayed with such fervour and effect that all those who had been thrown into the waters and exposed to such imminent danger were brought safely to land, without experiencing even the least harm either in themselves or their garments.—*Bollandists* : Aug. 26.

371. S. ASTERIUS.—S. Asterius, in his sermon on the holy martyrs, thus speaks of the invocation of the Saints, and their great influence with God : " We keep, through every age, their bodies decently enshrined, as most precious pledges—vessels of benediction, the organs of their blessed souls, the tabernacles of their holy minds. We put ourselves under their protection. The people flock in crowds from all quarters, and keep great festivals to honour their tombs. All who labour under the heavy load of affliction fly to them for refuge. We employ them as intercessors in our prayers and suffrages. In this refuge the hardships of poverty are eased, diseases cured, and threats of princes appeased. A parent taking a sick child in his arms, unmindful of physicians, runs to some one of the martyrs, offering by him his prayers to the Lord, and addressing him whom he employs as his mediator in such words as these : ' You, who have suffered for Christ, intercede for one who suffers by sickness. By that great power and confidence you have, offer a prayer in behalf of fellow-servants. You formerly prayed to martyrs before you were yourself a martyr. You then obtained your request by asking ; now, as you are possessed of what you asked, in your turn assist me.' " If another is going to be married, he begins his undertaking by soliciting the prayers of the martyrs. Who, putting to sea, weighs anchor before he has invoked the Lord of the sea, ' by the martyrs ? ' " And again, he describes the magnificence with which their festivals were celebrated over the world. " We lay the bodies in rich shrines and sepulchres," he says, " and erect stately tabernacles for their repose, that we may be stirred up to

an emulation of their honours. Nor is our devotion to them without its recompense, for we enjoy their patronage with God."—*Butler*.

372. S. JEROME.—When S. Jerome, one of the greatest lights of the Church, had lost by death his pious pupil Paula, he addressed to her this prayer, convinced that she was already in the possession of the glory of the Saints: "O holy Paula! my faithful pupil, assist by your prayers your old preceptor. Your faith and your piety have already united you to your celestial spouse, Jesus. And because you are now so near Him, you can easily obtain what you ask for me."—*His Life: Sept. 30.*

THE HAIL MARY

373. EFFICACY OF THE HAIL MARY.—In the year 1604 there were in the city of Flanders two young students who, instead of attending to the acquisition of learning, sought only the indulgence of the appetite and the gratification of their unchaste passions. One night they went to a house of ill-fame; after some time, one of them, called Richard, returned home, and the other remained. After having reached his house, Richard, while undressing to go to bed, remembered that he had not said the *Hail Marys* which he was accustomed to recite every day in honour of the Blessed Virgin. Being oppressed with sleep, he felt a great repugnance to say them; however, he did violence to himself and recited the usual *Hail Marys*, without devotion, and half asleep. He went to bed, and during his sleep, he saw before him his companion, presenting a deformed and hideous appearance. "Who are you?" said Richard. "Do you not know me?" replied the other. "How," rejoined Richard, "have you undergone such a change? You look like a demon." "Ah! unhappy me," exclaimed the other, "I am damned. In leaving that infamous house I was strangled. My body lies in the street, and my soul is in hell. Know that the same chastisement awaited you, but the Blessed Virgin, on account of your little devotion of reciting the *Hail Marys*, has saved you from it." Richard, shedding a torrent of tears, fell prostrate on the ground, to thank Mary, his deliverer, and resolved on a change of life for the future.—*S. Alphonsus*.

374. S. ALPHONSUS AND THE HAIL MARY.—S. Alphonsus called the *Hail Mary* the delicious word of the Saints. He never experienced pleasure equal to that he felt when saying this prayer;

and in reciting it at the beginning of the Office, he often shed sweet tears of joy, and in his sermons constantly spoke of its power to his audience.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

375. VISION OF S. FRANCES.—S. Frances was favoured by Almighty God with the visible presence of her angel guardian and with the sight of the evil spirits. She assured her confessor that, when the holy name was pronounced with respect, she saw not only her guardian angel, but also the devils, make a genuflection, with this difference, however, that the former did it in love, while the latter did it by constraint.—*Her Life : Mar. 9.*

376. S. EDMUND AND THE HAIL MARY.—S. Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, had been brought up with a great devotion to the Most Holy Virgin. When sending him to Paris to make his studies, his mother recommended him never to let a day pass without having recourse to his Divine protectress. That virtuous mother often wrote to him to avoid bad company, and to frequent the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist ; often, too, she sent him instruments of penance, to repress, she said, the bad inclinations that might injure his virtue. The holy young man, docile to the counsels of his mother, always showed himself most zealous for the glory of Mary. He went several times a day to prostrate himself before one of her statues ; and to mark his engagement in the service of the Queen of Angels, he placed on the finger of one of her statues a ring, on which he had caused to be engraved the whole of the Angelical Salutation. You shall see how agreeable that devotion, so sincere, and so persevering, was to the Blessed Virgin. After the death of the blessed Edmund, it was remarked that the same prayer was engraved on his episcopal ring, to which that prayer communicated a virtue so efficacious and miraculous, that it was subsequently used to operate a great number of cures. If we do not engrave the words of the *Hail Mary* on a ring, let us engrave them on our hearts, and that will be still better.—*Noël.*

377. S. TERESA'S DEVOTION.—S. Teresa was blessed with a good and virtuous mother, who taught her early to love the Blessed Virgin. She was not quite twelve years old when her mother died, and Teresa was almost inconsolable at her loss. In the midst of her affliction she threw herself before an image of Our Lady, and begged her, with many tears, now that her earthly mother was taken from her, to be a Mother to her in her stead. This act, performed in all the fervour and simplicity of childhood, drew

upon the young Teresa the special love and protection of Mary; and the Saint assures us that she never recommended herself to her Heavenly Mother without experiencing help and relief.—*Her Life : Oct. 15.*

378. "MARY, HELP ME!"—A young man, who had many times fallen into grievous mortal sin, went to confession to a certain priest. The good priest was greatly affected on learning that he had fallen so often. But to encourage him he said: "My child, I will tell you an easy means of overcoming the temptations to which you have so often yielded; if you do what I tell you, you will never fall again." "O my father," he replied, "tell me what it is, for with my whole heart do I desire to overcome these evil habits." "Place yourself entirely under the protection of the Blessed Virgin," said the priest, "say a *Hail Mary* every morning and evening in honour of her immaculate purity, and whenever you are tempted to do evil, say to her at once, 'O Mary, help me, for I am thine.'" The young man followed this advice, and in a short time was entirely delivered from his evil habits.—*Chisholm.*

379. S. MARY OF EGYPT.—S. Mary of Egypt, that great model of penitence, led in her youth an abandoned life in the city of Alexandria, in Egypt. Walking one day on the sea-shore she perceived a vessel on the point of setting out to the Holy Land with a number of pilgrims who were going to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Mary embarked along with them, not for the purposes of devotion, but to obtain a better opportunity of following her wicked life among so vast a concourse. Having arrived at Jerusalem, she repaired to the Church along with the rest of the Faithful who were eager to venerate the remains of the Sacred Cross; but on attempting to enter, she was held back by a mysterious and invisible power. This was repeated each time that she renewed the attempt. While others entered with ease, an irresistible force drove her back to the Church porch. Filled with terror and amazement at this extraordinary occurrence, she began to consider within herself whether it might not be a just punishment for her wicked life, which rendered her unworthy to approach within sight of the sacred relics. Then, bathed in tears, she beat her breast and bewailed her wretched condition, until at length, perceiving above her head the image of our Blessed Lady, she threw herself on the ground, and earnestly besought the Mother of God, the Refuge of Sinners, to intercede with her Divine Son that she might be permitted to venerate, with

the rest of the Faithful, the sacred wood on which He died for the sins of men. At the same time, she promised that if this favour were granted her, she would forthwith abandon her wicked life, and do penance, to the best of her power, for her past sins. Having finished her prayer, she again attempted to enter, and this time she experienced no hindrance. When she had performed her devotions, she returned to the image of Mary to thank her for the powerful protection, and beg her direction for her future life. That same night, warned by a mysterious voice, she set out on foot to the river Jordan, and having received the Sacraments in a little Church upon its banks, crossed the river and entered the savage deserts beyond it. For seven-and-forty years she continued here in practice of the most severe penance, living on the roots of the earth, and suffering the greatest extremities of cold and heat. A year before her death she was discovered in this solitude by the holy priest Zosimus, a monk in the neighbouring monastery, whom God sent to administer to her the Holy Sacraments before her death, and to whom she related her wonderful and edifying story.
—*Her Life : Apr. 9.*

380. S. FRANCIS DE SALES.—S. Francis de Sales, as we read in his life, experienced the efficacy of the prayer: "Remember, O most pious Virgin." At the age of seventeen he was in Paris, pursuing his studies, and entirely consecrated to the exercises of devotion and to the Divine love, which filled his soul with the sweet delights of paradise. To try his fidelity and to unite him more closely to His love, the Lord permitted the devil to represent to him that he was doomed to perdition, and that therefore all his good works were lost. His fears and desolation became so great that he lost his appetite, his sleep, the joy of his soul, and became an object of compassion to all who beheld him. During this frightful tempest, the Saint could conceive no thought, could utter no words, but those of diffidence and sorrow. "Then," he would say, "shall I be deprived of the grace of God, who has hitherto shown Himself so amiable and so sweet to me?" The temptation lasted a month; but at length the Lord was pleased to deliver him from it by means of the Most Holy Mary, the comfort of the afflicted, under whose protection the Saint had already made a vow of chastity, and in whom, after God, he used to say, he had placed all his hopes. During the temptation, he one evening entered a Church, in which he saw hanging on the wall a tablet, on which he read the following prayer of S. Bernard: "Remember, O most pious Virgin, that it

has never been heard that anyone who had recourse to Thy protection was abandoned." Prostrate before the altar of the Divine Mother, he recited this prayer with tender affection—he renewed his vow of chastity—promised every day to recite the Rosary, and then added: "My Mother, if I shall not be permitted to love my Lord in the next world, at least obtain for me the grace to love Him in this life." But scarcely was his prayer finished, when his most sweet Mother delivered him from the temptation. He instantly recovered his inward peace, and with it bodily health, and he afterwards continued to live most devoted to Mary, whose praises and favours he never ceased during his whole life to proclaim in his sermons and writings.—*His Life : Jan. 29.*

381. S. BRIDGET'S REVELATION.—S. Bridget had a son who followed the profession of a soldier and died in the wars. Having news of his death, she was much concerned for the salvation of her son, dying under such dangerous circumstances. As she was often favoured by God with revelations, of which she has composed a book, she was assured of the salvation of her son by two subsequent revelations. In the first, the Blessed Virgin revealed to her that she had assisted her son with a particular protection at the hour of death, having strengthened him against temptation and obtained all necessary graces for him to make a holy and happy end. In the following, she declared the cause of that singular assistance she gave her son, and said that it was in recompense of the great and sincere devotion he had testified during his life, wherein he had loved her with a very ardent affection and had endeavoured to please her in all things.—*Revelations of S. Bridget.*

382. THE CRIMINAL AND THE HAIL MARY.—A man condemned to death, in Germany, refused to hear speak of confession. A Jesuit Father employed all manner of means to convert him: prayers, tears, penances, exhortations—but to no effect. At length he said to him: "Let us say the *Hail Mary* together." The prisoner, to get rid of his visitor, consented, and no sooner had he done so than tears began to fall from his eyes, he made his confession, full of contrition and humility, and would only die with a statue of Our Lady in his hands.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

383. THE COUNCIL OF EPHESUS.—To refute and condemn the errors of Nestorius, who denied the Divine maternity of Mary, the Council of Ephesus was held in the year 431. The population of the town and neighbourhood betook themselves to the square in

front of the Church where the Council was being held, and there they remained nearly the whole day, impatient to learn the results. When at length, in the evening, it became known that Nestorius was condemned and anathematized, and that the doctrine of the Church formally declared Mary to be the Mother of God, the enthusiasm of the multitude was unbounded—they cried out aloud : “Mary is indeed the Mother of God ; Mary, Mother of God, pray for us !” It was already dark, and the men lit torches to take to their homes the Fathers of the Council. The whole town was illuminated, and signs of true faith and joy were everywhere visible, as proof of their love and devotion to Mary.—*Tillemont.*

CHARITY

384. THE ROBE OF S. APHRAATES.—S. Aphraates was born in Persia, but he became a solitary in the neighbourhood of Edessa, in Turkey in Asia. Anthemus, one of the most distinguished men of that period, being ambassador in the kingdom of Persia, thought to please the Saint by bringing him a robe from that country. He came to see him, and presenting him the robe said : “Father, people always love what comes from their own country ; here is a robe that was made in your country, and I thought I would give you the pleasure by bringing it to you.” S. Aphraates took it, laid it aside and spoke of something else. After some time, he said to Anthemus : “My lord, there is one thing that gives me a great deal of trouble.” “What is it, father ?” “I have an old servant who has served me some sixteen years, and to whom I am much attached ; now there is another who urges me to take him in place of the other, under pretence that he is from my own country. It seems to me that it is too hard to dismiss the one without any fault on his part, but merely to take the other.” “You are very right, father ; why, indeed, should you discard him who has long served you faithfully, to take another whom you do not know, simply because he is from your own country ?” “That is all I wanted, my lord ; take away, then, the robe you have given me, for I have one that has served me sixteen years and is still good, so I cannot leave it off to put on another.” Anthemus admired this witty answer, and confessed that he had nothing to say. This story is very much to our purpose ; God has loved us the first, and He has never done us anything but good ; why, then, should we quit His

service and depart from Him to attach ourselves to creatures who are only able to do us harm?—*Martin*.

385. S. MARTIN'S CLOAK.—S. Martin, Bishop of Tours, before being a Christian had been a soldier ; but desiring to be baptized, he had himself enrolled in the number of the catechumens, and applied himself to practise as well as he could the virtues of the Christians. It is particularly remarked of him that he assisted all in his power those whom he saw in need. One day, in the depth of winter, when there only remained to him his arms and military uniform, to which belonged a sort of simple cloak, he met at the gate of Amiens a poor man, half naked and abandoned by everyone. S. Martin believed that Providence had left to him the care of this poor man, on whom no one had compassion. With his sword he cut his cloak in two, and gave the half to the miserable beggar, covering himself with the other half as best he could. This good action appeared so pleasing to Heaven, that, the following night, the charitable soldier had the consolation of seeing, in a dream, Jesus Christ Himself clothed in the half cloak with which he had covered the poor man. He heard that Divine Saviour saying plainly to a multitude of angels who surrounded Him : *It was Martin, who is yet but a catechumen, that covered Me with this cloak.* This vision caused him inexpressible joy, and his sole desire thenceforward was to receive baptism without delay.—*Sulpicius Severus*.

386. THE TRAVELLER.—A traveller advances towards a magnificent city, in which not only his beloved family but also an immense fortune awaits him. Between him and the desired city there lies an unfathomable abyss. Thick darkness overspreads his way, and he has neither guide nor lantern. Across the abyss there is only one narrow, unsteady plank. The unfortunate man is accustomed to make false steps, as past experience has sadly shown. Tell me, now, if a charitable guide came forward to take this traveller by the hand, if he erected on each side of the dangerous plank a strong barrier, if he suspended around the place a number of lamps, so that it would be impossible for anyone to go astray, or fall into the abyss unless by deliberately leaping over the parapet : would you regard these fences as impediments, these lamps as insults, so many cares as wrongs done the traveller, or would they not be so many benefits conferred on him ? Would this guide deserve the name of tyrant, or would he not rather be a true friend ?—The application is easy : The traveller, subject to many falls, is man on

earth. The blessed city, where glory and family await him, is Heaven. The dark abyss is Hell, and the narrow trembling plank is Life. The kindly guide is God, and the lamps and barriers His Commandments.—*Gaume*.

387. THE STREAM AND ITS BANKS.—The Decalogue is only the application of the great precept of the love of God and our neighbour, and may be considered as a beautiful fountain of living water, which the first Adam closed by sin, but which the second Adam reopened in the midst of the world to water it, refresh it, and make it bring forth fruits of grace and salvation. The positive precepts of the Decalogue are like so many different streams, conveying the riches of this fountain to various parts of the earth. The negative precepts are like banks, which hinder the passions from troubling these limpid waters or turning them out of their course.—*Gaume*.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

"I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt not have strange gods before Me."

388. HELIOGABALUS AND THE STONE.—Heliogabalus became Emperor of Rome, A.D. 218. He came from Syria, and brought with him a black stone of triangular form, which he adored as his god. He walked to and fro, and danced before it: a temple was built to receive it, and all the other gods of the empire had to yield it the place of honour.—*Roman History*.

389. PAGAN WORSHIP.—In the worship of idols, offerings were made to the gods, of meal or flour, mixed with salt, of libations of honey, and incense. Not only animals but even human beings were offered in sacrifice, and among the Chanaanites especially, the children of the most noble families. It was thus the pagans served their gods.

390. S. JOSAPHAT.—S. Josaphat was the son of Abenner, king of the Indies. This pagan king, fearing that his son might become a Christian, took the most severe measures to keep him from the knowledge of the Christian religion. He shut him up, even in his earliest childhood, in a large castle, with no one but his tutor to live with, who was instructed to bring him up a pagan like his father, and never, under pain of death, to speak to him of the Christian faith. The tutor obeyed his orders to the letter, and for many years

the young prince never saw but the castle in which he dwelt, and the fields which surrounded it. One day, however, when he had already reached the age of manhood, his father at length yielded to his oft-repeated request, that he might be allowed to go forth into the great world to visit it. He had not gone far, when he met a poor man bent nearly to the ground through old age. Josaphat was astonished at this sight, so new to him, and he asked his tutor what had brought the man to that sad condition. The tutor answered that it was the effect of old age. "And shall we also when we are old, like this man, have the same infirmities?" said the prince. "Yes, all men must follow in the same path that leads to old age, then to death." "And shall I also have to die one day?" asked Josaphat. "And after my death, what shall become of me, what shall happen to my soul?" "Ah! as to that," replied the tutor, "it is a problem which it is impossible for anyone to understand, and which we must not try to discover; it is a mystery which God Himself has covered with a veil." This answer did not at all satisfy the young prince, and only made him the more desirous of discovering that which his tutor wanted to conceal from him. All his thoughts from that moment were fixed on death, and the state after death. He felt that God, who had created him, could not leave him without letting him know what was to happen to him after this life was over. So he besought God in fervent prayer to make him know the truth. God heard his prayer, and in a wonderful way answered it, by sending to him a humble anchorite named Barlaam. That holy man came to him under the disguise of a pearl merchant, who, presenting himself at the castle, was admitted, that the prince, who was exceedingly fond of such things, might admire them, and perhaps purchase some of them. As the prince was admiring the lustre of some of the pearls, Barlaam took the opportunity of a moment in which he was alone with him, to tell him of another pearl which was more beautiful and precious than any of those he had just seen. Josaphat wanted to see it at once. "It is a pearl that cannot be seen with the eyes," said the old man. "The pearl of which I speak is called Truth." "The truth!" exclaimed the young prince; "that is just what I am looking for, and what I wish to possess at all price. I beseech you to tell me what is the truth." Then Barlaam spoke to him of Jesus Christ, and of the eternal happiness which He purchased for us by His death. This was for the young man the light for which he had been seeking. He opened his eyes to it at once, and soon afterwards, having, by the grace of God, found means of secretly escaping the vigilance of

his guard, he fled from the castle, left the kingdom of his father, and at length found the place in the desert where Barlaam dwelt. There, forgetting the crown of the earthly kingdom which was his inheritance, and all the worldly things that were to be his, he thought only of practising the holy religion of Jesus Christ, and thus became a Saint. He is now reigning in Heaven, and the Church on earth venerates him as one of her mighty intercessors before the throne of God.—*His Life : Nov. 27.*

391. THE ARAB AND THE SOLDIERS.—An Arab one day said to some soldiers, who called themselves Christians, and professed to believe in the one true God : “ My friends, do you really believe that there is a God ? ” The soldiers looked at him in surprise as they answered : “ Most certainly we believe that there is a God ; it would only be a fool that could deny that great truth. ” “ And do you believe that that great God knows and sees all things, and that He will one day punish the wicked and reward the good ? ” “ Yes, ” they answered, “ we believe that also. ” “ I thought, ” continued the Arab, “ from your manner of living, and your actions, that you did not believe in any of these things, for they are so very different from those that one would expect to see in persons who are really convinced that God sees them, and that there is a Heaven and a Hell hereafter. ” The soldiers went away without saying another word ; and some of them were so much moved by what the poor Arab had said, that they began from that moment to lead lives more becoming the religion they professed.—*The Young Catholic Instructed.*

392. SQUIRIUS AND THE RELIGIOUS.—The holy Bishop Fronto, persecuted by the Governor Squirius, was forced to leave his episcopal city, with seventy monks, and retire into a desert. Being out of the reach of all human aid, these religious began to complain of having been brought to the wilderness to starve. Without being troubled by their complaints, the Saint put all his hope in God, and encouraged the monks to cast themselves on His care. That very night, the Lord sent an angel to Squirius, ordering him to send provisions to His servants in the desert, threatening him with punishment if he failed or delayed to obey. The Governor, in terror, made all inquiries as to where the religious might be, and, not succeeding, adopted the course of loading seventy mules with provisions, and let them go without guide to the place where He who had given the order might choose to send them. Thus did it

come to pass that the animals came at length to the place where the Bishop and his monks had settled, and there halted, as if to lay at their feet the provisions which Squirius had unwillingly sent to them.—*Scaramelli*.

393. "GOD HAS FORSAKEN US!"—There was once a young man lying dangerously ill. He was the only hope of his aged parents, who were very poor, and his brothers and sisters were all too young to work. They tried every means to make him better, but all in vain; he became weaker every day, and very soon it was apparent to everyone that there was no longer any hope of his recovery. As they were lamenting over this misfortune, a neighbour happened to visit them to inquire about the sick man. "Oh, he is dying," they said, "there is no longer any hope; we have done everything that we could to make him better, but all in vain;" and they continued to weep bitterly. "Have you asked God to make him better?" said the neighbour. "Oh, no," they answered, "God has forsaken us altogether." "How can you say that God has forsaken you, since you have never asked Him to come to your assistance? You believe in your hearts that God can help you, yet you have not asked Him to do so. Where is your faith and confidence? It is not sufficient to believe that God can assist you, you must also, by the daily practice of your lives, act according to your belief. Ask God, therefore, to make your son well again; most certainly He will do so, if He sees that it will be for his good." After these words of gentle reproof, the unhappy parents knelt down and prayed to God to restore their son to health if it were His blessed will. This they continued to do for several days, and at last they had the happiness to see him rise from his sick-bed. In a short time he was well, and able to resume his work.—*Hautriève*.

394. THE WORKMAN'S GRAVE.—A cooper, named Perrot, was being interred, in 1849, when a working-man who had attended the funeral advances to the edge of the grave and, with tears and sobs, thus speaks: "My friends, the worthy man whom you have just covered up never spoke to anyone, during his life, of a good action he once did. Well! I am going to tell you all about it. Poor Perrot, who now rests in this grave, was, as you know, a hard-working man, living by his day's work, like the rest of us. One evening, going home from his work, he met a friend who was going with a heavy heart the same way. Perrot accosts him, inquires into the cause of

his trouble, and learns from him that next day his furniture is to be sold by auction, for the payment of a debt which he cannot meet. 'Come home with me,' said Perrot; 'I have got four hundred francs by me waiting for use, and it can't be put to a better one than paying your debt. Take it, and make no one the wiser, not even your wife or children.' The friend accepted the offer, and was so happy as to be able to pay back the loan, little by little. As for Perrot, he never spoke of it to anyone. I am the friend for whom Perrot did that, and I tell it now over his half-closed grave, hoping that you'll all tell the story wherever you go, so that justice may be done to poor Perrot's memory."—I need not tell you the impression which this recital made on all who heard it. Will not you, also, try to leave such secrets as that to be told of you?—*Noël*.

395. KING DAVID'S EXAMPLE.—King David, of whom the Sacred Scripture says that he was "a man according to God's own heart," fulfilled in an eminent degree the fourfold duty of the first commandment. His lively *faith* made him ever walk in the presence of God, look upon himself as the humblest of His servants, and deem himself happy in being able to contribute to the dignity and splendour of His worship. His faith taught him that it was a greater honour to assist, in the most humble capacity, in the solemn services of religion, than to be the ruler of the kingdom of Israel. *Hope*, or confidence in God, is the natural consequence of a lively faith. David's faith in the Divine Goodness and Power led him to throw himself into the arms of Providence with the most unbounded confidence. Behold him, in his youth, advancing to the combat with the mighty giant Goliath: "Thou comest against me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts." 1 *Kings xvii. 45*. Behold him also fleeing from the pursuit of Saul; or, in his old age, again a wanderer in the desert, while his son Absalom usurps the throne. Never, for a moment, does he waver in his unbounded confidence in the Divine Goodness and Providence. The flames of Divine *love* burnt also brightly in the heart of David. His psalms and canticles are full of the sweetest expressions of praise, gratitude, and love to God. Tender, gentle, and compassionate to all, David showed the sincerity of his love to God by his love of his neighbour. When Almighty God had sent a severe scourge upon the people, in punishment for David's sin, the latter wept bitter tears over their affliction, and besought God to spare them, begging Him rather to turn the arm of His indignation upon himself, who was alone guilty.

Finally, where shall we find a man more zealous for the worship of God, more faithful in prayer, more exact in the duties of *religion*, than holy David? "O Lord," said he, "I have loved the beauty of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth." *Ps. xxv. 8.* And again, "Seven times in the day I have given praise to Thee. I rose at midnight to give praise to Thee. I prevented the dawning of the day that I might meditate on Thy words." *Ps. cxviii.* Could we have a more perfect model of a life of prayer?—*Gibson.*

396. S. EUSTACHIUS, M.—In the reign of the Emperor Trajan there lived, at Rome, a nobleman named Eustachius, who was no less renowned for his birth and riches than for his courage and military exploits. One day while engaged in hunting, he was favoured with the vision of an image of our Lord crucified which appeared to him darting forth bright rays of light between the antlers of the stag that he was pursuing. At the same time he heard a voice saying that, if he wished for happiness, he must abandon the worship of idols, and seek for instruction in the truths of the Christian religion. Eustachius, being converted by this vision, was baptized with his whole family, but soon after began to experience the displeasure of the Roman Emperor. Stripped of his vast possessions and reduced to a state of extreme poverty, he was compelled to withdraw to a distant spot, where God tried him still further by the loss of his wife and children, who were separated from him by sudden and unforeseen disasters. In the meantime, the Roman Army, pressed by the enemy, bewailed the loss of their favourite general, and loudly clamoured for his recall. The Emperor at length consented, and Eustachius was sought for and discovered in his retreat, where he was quietly employed in the pursuit of husbandry. At the Emperor's command he again put himself at the head of the troops, and led them once more to victory. Eustachius was now restored to his former high position, and, being again united to his wife and children, whom he had long believed to have perished, nothing seemed wanting to complete his happiness. Meanwhile the victory was celebrated with great rejoicings, and Eustachius was ordered by the Emperor to take part with his troops in the idolatrous sacrifices, which were offered in thanksgiving to the false gods of the country. Eustachius firmly refused, for he well knew that he owed a higher duty to God than to any earthly monarch. In vain did the Emperor strive alternately to win him by promises or to terrify him by threats, he remained unshaken in his resolution, and nobly declared that he was ready

to die rather than sacrifice to idols. The Emperor, enraged, ordered him, along with his wife and children, to be thrown to the lions, but, as these savage beasts refused to touch them, he commanded that they should be shut up in the body of a brazen bull, which should be placed, until it became red hot, over a glowing fire. The sentence was executed, and Eustachius and his family, singing the praises of God to their latest breath, like the three children in the fiery furnace, accomplished in this manner their glorious martyrdom.—*His Life : Sept. 20.*

397. VEN. JOHN RIGBY.—Among the glorious martyrs who suffered for the faith during the cruel persecution of Queen Elizabeth was a Lancashire gentleman of a good but reduced family, named John Rigby. Having been obliged in consequence of his own straitened circumstances to take service in a gentleman's household, he was unhappily prevailed upon through fear and human respect to frequent occasionally the Protestant Church. At a later period, entering into himself, he bitterly bewailed his past weakness, and was reconciled to God in the Sacrament of Penance. Some time afterwards, having occasion to present himself at the Old Bailey to answer for his mistress who had been summoned on grounds of religion, but was unable through sickness to appear, he was himself charged with being a Catholic, which he gladly acknowledged, and was accordingly condemned to death in virtue of a law lately enacted, which made it treason to be reconciled to God by the ministry of a Catholic priest. Upon hearing his sentence read, which condemned him to be hanged, cut down alive, bowelled and quartered, he cried out with great joy: "Thanks be to God. It is all but one death, and a flea-bite in comparison to that which it pleased my sweet Saviour Jesus to suffer for my salvation." Though he was repeatedly offered his life in case he would consent to go to the Protestant Church, he always courageously refused, saying, "It is not lawful, and I will not go. I desire and look for the day of my execution, but think myself unworthy to die for so good a cause." It is related in the history of his trial that upon one occasion the judge ordered him to be loaded with a pair of heavy shackles. The shackles being brought, the holy confessor of the faith kissed them, and signed them with the sign of the cross before they were riveted about his legs. After he had stood in them awhile the irons fell to the ground, at which he smiled, and bade his keeper rivet them on faster. Soon after they again fell off, upon which he told them to make them faster still, "for," said he

"I esteem them as jewels too precious to be lost." This extraordinary circumstance he looked upon as a token that his soul should soon be set free from the prison of the body. And so in fact it happened, for his execution, which had been long delayed, took place two days afterwards.—*Challoner*.

398. JULIAN THE APOSTATE.—Seduced by pagan philosophy and the indulgence of his passions, Julian abjured religion publicly, scraping his forehead with a stone, as though to efface the character of his Baptism, and he undertook the revival of idolatry. He declared persecution against the Church, and under his reign many martyrs sealed their faith with their blood.—*Church History*.

399. SERMON OF A JUDGE.—An English judge named Holt, a just and upright man, had the misfortune, during his youth, to form bad connections, which inspired him with a contempt for religion, so that he turned into derision the sanctification of Sundays and festivals, spending those days in the very worst company. Happily for him, he was withdrawn by circumstances from these evil courses; by degrees he became more regular in his life, and failed not to recover the esteem of his fellow-townsmen. He was invested with the dignity of judge. One day, whilst discharging the duties of his office, he was forced to pass sentence of death on a man whom he recognized as one of his former associates. The sight of this criminal impressed him strongly and made him reflect on the danger to which he had exposed himself by leading a life similar to his. He could not help asking the wretch what had become of the other companions of their youth. "Alas!" answered the criminal, "there is not one of them alive, except you and myself; some fell under the sword of justice, others died a violent death." The judge, unable longer to repress his emotion, sighed deeply and addressed to those present a touching and most edifying discourse, to show them that the profanation of the Lord's Day makes man a wild beast, deadens the faith, and deprives him of all noble and generous feelings.—*Schmid*.

400. THE DEVIL'S REASON.—If you get hold of a bad book, the Devil will be sure to put some reason into your head why you should read it. A person was very sorry to see that a certain bad book was doing so much harm. He thought he would read it, that he might be better able to speak against it. So he read the bad book. The end of it was that, instead of helping others, he ruined

himself. The Devil will whisper into your ear that a bad book will give you a knowledge of the *world*.—It will give you a knowledge of *Hell* and lead you there.—*Furniss*.

401. S. TERESA.—S. Teresa was a Saint even in her childhood. See what bad books did to her. “It happened,” she says, “that there were some novels and romances in our house. I began to read them, and I gave myself up entirely to this reading. Then I forgot my duties, and thought only of these novels, and I fell into many sins. I began to take a great pleasure in dress. I took great pains to appear nice and well dressed. I loved perfumes and scents, and suchlike vanities. So I remained many years, not knowing the harm there was in it. But now I know well there was great harm.”—*Her Life : Oct. 15.*

402. THE BOOK THAT NEVER STOPPED.—A boy heard of a bad book. A wicked companion had told him of it, and said that he would learn a great deal by reading it. This boy happened to see the book offered for sale, and bought it and read it. The reading of this book made him a thoroughly bad boy. He no more said his prayers or went to chapel. He went into the most wicked company he could find. He went from bad to worse. He lost his faith, and said that he believed there was no God. He died in despair, cursing most frightfully the boy who had told him of the book which ruined him. The mischief of that bad book did not stop with his death. He had lent it to others to read. Many of those to whom he had lent it became bad themselves, and ruined others ; and where the evil of this one book stopped, or whether it ever stopped at all, God only knows !—*Furniss*.

403. THE SOUPERS' SCHOOL.—A very wonderful thing happened in one of the central towns of Ireland. The Soupers, one morning, made a bargain with a poor woman that they would give her a blanket and that she should send her little Bridget to the Soupers' schools. Bridget was a very good child, and went to the school of the Sisters of Mercy. In the afternoon little Bridget came home from the convent. “Bridget,” said the mother, “the Soupers came here this morning, and said that if I would send you to the Soupers' schools they would give me a blanket.” “I am sure you sent them away, mother?” said Bridget. “No,” said the mother, “we are very poor, so I promised that I would send you.” “What !” answered Bridget, “do you really mean that

I must go to the Soupers' school and become a Protestant for a blanket? The nuns told me that Jesus Christ bought my soul with His precious blood; and will you let the Soupers buy it with a blanket?" "No matter," said the mother, "you must be ready to go to the Soupers' school to-morrow at ten o'clock." The child turned pale as death, and sank on her knees; she lifted up her little hands and eyes to Heaven, and prayed thus: "Dear Blessed Virgin Mary, the nuns always told me that you are my good Mother, and that you love me: then, for the sake of the Infant Jesus, do not let me go to the Soupers' school and become a Protestant; let me die rather than be a Protestant." The mother sent the child to bed. Next morning the mother called to her to get up and be ready to go to the Soupers' school; but there was no answer from the child: she was dead! The Blessed Virgin had heard her prayer and her soul was in Heaven.—*Furniss.*

404. THE DESPAIRING SINNER.—An old sinner, who had spent all his life in the commission of crime, having fallen dangerously ill, a priest, who had taken an interest in him, paid him a visit for the purpose of inducing him to think, even at the last hour, on the state of his poor soul. When the priest addressed him on the subject, the sick man made no answer. The priest represented to him the danger to which he was exposed, and exhorted him to make his confession. "Yes, yes, I will confess," said he, but still he deferred it. The priest, fired with holy zeal, still more earnestly exhorted him. "Very well, then," said the sick man, "come to-morrow, and I will make my confession." On the morrow the priest came, and, being alone with the sick man, he made the sign of the cross, and commenced hearing the confession. The sick man was for some time silent, and then, in frightful tones, he repeated these terrific words of Scripture: "The sinner will be filled with rage." And then in a moment he hid his face in the bed-clothes. The confessor uncovered his head, and told him there was no time to be lost, and that it was necessary that he should confess immediately. "Yes, father, I will confess," the sick man replied; and then he repeated the second part of the text: "The sinner shall gnash his teeth, and foam with rage;" and again he hid his face in the clothes. The confessor a second time uncovered his head, and entreated him, with tears, to think of God, and to make his confession. "Yes, yes, father, I shall confess, I shall confess," said he again, and for the third time he hid his face in the bed-clothes, and repeated at the same time: "The desire of the sinner

shall perish with him." The confessor, alarmed, again removed the covering from the head, but, alas! the old sinner was dead!—*Catechism of Rodez.*

405. THE TERRIBLE VISION.—Venerable Bede tells us that in his time there was a man who had once been very pious, but who had gradually fallen into a careless worldly life, and ended by being the scandal of the town in which he lived. After a time he became ill. People who came to visit him, and saw how dangerous his illness was, told him it was time to think of preparing himself for the great passage into eternity. "Oh! there will be plenty of time for that afterwards," he said. "I am too sick and weary at present to think of that. I will think about it when I get better." But he did not get better; every day he became worse. One day he seemed to see something terrible, for turning to those who were in the room, he cried out in a voice which froze the blood in their veins, "Alas! I have deceived the world! I have deceived myself! I am lost for ever. God put me into this world to serve Him, and I did not do it. I have not even one good work to offer Him. So I am lost! I am lost!" "Oh! ask God for mercy," they cried. "Say, 'O Jesus, have mercy on me!'" "No! no! it is too late! I have just seen hell, and in it I saw Cain and Judas, and near them a place prepared for me. It is too late! I am lost!" They tried again to speak words of comfort to him, and of God's mercy, but all in vain; the poor man died in despair, because he would not ask for mercy.—*Venerable Bede.*

406. LUTHER.—One evening, towards the end of his life, Luther was walking in his garden, the stars shining brightly above him. "See how the stars are shining," said his wife to him. "O beautiful light," he replied, "but it is not for us." "Why? are we then disinherited from Heaven?" "Perhaps," Luther replied, "because we have abandoned our state: we cannot return, we are too deeply plunged in sin, and it is too late to repent." In these sentiments Luther died, A.D. 1546.—*Dandolo.*

407. MIRABEAU.—One of those who greatly contributed to the French Revolution, Mirabeau, after a life of crime and excess, felt his end drawing near, and his soul became a prey to bitter anguish, and all the horrors of death. In vain he tried to banish them from his mind. He had flowers and perfumes put around him: music to soothe him, but without effect. Then he asked his doctor to take his life: on his refusal to do this, Mirabeau exclaimed: "My

pains and fears are unbearable. I have strength yet for years, but I have not courage for a minute even." Then suddenly, amid fearful convulsions, he died, without retracting a single one of his errors, without repenting of a single one of his crimes !

408. TEMPTATION OF S. BERNARD.—The great S. Bernard was lying on his sick-bed. It seemed that already the hand of death was upon him. Satan, who had often tried to make him yield to sin, but in vain, tried now to make him fall into despair. "You have never done any good," he whispered into his heart, "and you have offended God so much ! How can you expect to obtain Heaven ? Heaven is only for those who have served God faithfully, which you have not done." S. Bernard knew that this was a temptation, and with his usual confidence in God he overcame it. "I know," he said, "that I am most unworthy of God's grace, and that I cannot of myself obtain the kingdom of God. But Jesus Christ my Saviour, by the merits of His sufferings and death, has purchased it for me, and has made over to me the right of obtaining it. It is a pure gift of God's liberality to me, and although I had no right to it, I now have full confidence of possessing it, for I am God's child, and Jesus died for me. So begone, Satan !" —*His Life : Aug. 20.*

409. THREE WORDS OF A PRESUMPTUOUS SINNER.—The famous Chancellor of England, Blessed Thomas More, who was as good a Christian as he was a distinguished magistrate, was exhorting a man to leave off his evil ways and do penance. "Oh ! pray, do not trouble yourself on my account," answered the fool, "you see, I have three words that will suffice to obtain my pardon at the hour of death, and in the moment of danger." "And what are those three so powerful words ?" "These three words are : *Lord, forgive me !*" It was no use trying to convince him that he did wrong in trusting to so small a thing, and that God only forgives those who have done all the penance they could ; he continued his evil courses and his foolish scoffing. One day when he was out riding, he had to cross a bridge ; his horse, taking fright, jumps over the parapet, and casts himself into the waves with the unfortunate rider. That was the moment for pronouncing his three words ; alas ! he had only time to say three others very different ; he cried : "*May the Devil . . .*" and disappeared beneath the waters, leaving all who had known him terrified for his fate in eternity.—*Schmid.*

410. CLINICAL BAPTISM.—This name was given in the early Church to Baptism received on the bed of sickness. Baptism used often to be deferred till the hour of death, sometimes through humility, but very commonly through a spirit of self-indulgence, that those who so acted might be more free to sin in life. To check this abuse, the Church, in the Council of Neocæsarea, in the fourth century, renewed the prohibition, forbidding one who had received Clinical Baptism to enter the ranks of the clergy, on the ground that perhaps this might have been done from some unworthy motive.—*Church History*.

411. THE PRESUMPTUOUS HERMIT.—A monk asked S. Pacomius to pray that God would grant him the grace of martyrdom. The Saint tried in vain to show him this was presumption. “Well,” he said, “I will pray for you, but take care not to fail should occasion for martyrdom come.” The next day the monk was sent out on some business, when suddenly he was surrounded by pagan barbarians, who exclaimed: “Renounce your religion, or die.” The future martyr at first showed some courage, but when he saw a glittering sword over his head, he denied his faith to save himself. Then he went in tears to his abbot. The Saint received him with kindness, he raised his drooping spirits, and while preserving him from despair, taught him not to presume on his own strength in the future.—*Lives of the Fathers*.

412. QUINTUS DENIES THE FAITH.—About the beginning of the second century there came to Smyrna a man called Quintus. At that time there was a persecution of the Christians at Smyrna, and many of them were put to death by horrible tortures, because they would not deny their holy faith. When Quintus saw this, he thought he would like to be a martyr also, and so get to Heaven. He went, therefore, boldly to the judge and said to him, “I am a Christian; put me to death.” The judge was astonished at this strange request, and thought he was a fool. “Let this foolish man,” he said, “get what he wants. Take him and throw him amongst the wild beasts, that they may devour him.” Quintus was very glad when he heard this sentence, and went joyfully along with the soldiers towards the place where the wild beasts were kept. But the poor man forgot to ask God to help him. No doubt if he had done so, God would have given him the martyr’s crown, but because he trusted to himself, he came to a miserable end. For when he drew near the place, and saw the beasts with

their mouths open ready to devour him, and heard them roar so terribly, he began to tremble, and said to those who were leading him, "Stop! do not throw me in there." "We will throw you in at once," they said, "unless you promise to sacrifice to the gods." "Then I promise, if you only take me back again and spare my life." They took him back to the judge: and when the judge ordered him to offer incense to the gods, he did it. So Quintus denied his faith because of his presumption, by trusting to himself rather than to God.—*Bollandists*.

413. THE INDIAN JUGGERNAUT.—This idol is a carved block of wood, with a hideous face painted black, and a distended blood-red mouth. On festival days the throne of the image is placed on a tower sixty feet high, moving on wheels, accompanied with two other idols—his white brother, Balaram, and his yellow sister, Shubudra—who likewise sit upon their separate thrones. Six long ropes are attached to the tower, by which the people draw it along. The priests and all their attendants stand round the throne on the tower, and occasionally turn to the worshippers with indecent songs and gestures. The walls of the temple and the sides of the car are also covered with obscene images, in large, durable sculpture. While the tower moves along, numbers of devout worshippers throw themselves on the ground in order to be crushed by the wheels, and the multitude shouts in approbation of the act, as a pleasing sacrifice to the idol. Pilgrims come there every year; particularly at two great festivals, in March and July, the pilgrims flock in crowds to the temple. It is calculated that there are 1,200,000 of them annually, of whom, it is said, nine out of ten die on the road, of famine, hardship, and sickness. At any rate, it is a well-known fact that the country for miles round the sacred place is covered with human bones. Many old persons undertake the pilgrimage, that they may die on the holy ground.—*Guillois*.

414. SACRIFICES OF THE DRUIDS.—The Druids commonly resided in thick groves, chiefly of oak, whence Pliny derives their name. The names of their two chief divinities were Teutates and Hesus, to whom they offered human victims. It was an article of their creed that nothing but the life of man could atone for the life of man. On solemn occasions they reared huge images, whose limbs, formed of osiers, they filled with living men, and, as Strabo says, with other animals; then, setting fire to the images, they thus sacrificed human victims as an offering to their cruel divinities.

Thieves and robbers, and other malefactors, were preferred for this purpose ; but if those were wanting, innocent persons were taken. Diodorus says that condemned criminals used to be reserved for five years, and on a certain day burned together.—*History of Druidism*.

415. S. STEPHEN THE YOUNGER.—In the eighth century, there lived in the East a holy man called Stephen the Younger. God wrought many miracles by his hands : thus, one day he gave sight to a man who had been blind from his birth, by these words : “In the name of Jesus Christ, Whom you adore in holy images, may sight be given to you.” Another time, when a mother had brought to him her son, who for nine years had been possessed by the Devil, he delivered him from the wicked spirit by making him kiss an image of Jesus Christ. S. Stephen died a martyr to the faith, in defence of the use of holy images.—*His Life : Nov. 28*.

416. DIOCLETIAN AND THE SCULPTORS.—In the reign of Diocletian, there lived at Rome five clever sculptors, whose works of art had obtained for them a high place in the Emperor’s favour. Never did these holy men commence their labour without devoutly invoking the Holy Name of Jesus, and so great a blessing attended this pious practice, that each succeeding work served to raise them higher in the Emperor’s favour. About this time Diocletian was engaged in the erection of a costly edifice, and as he was anxious that the decoration should be as perfect as possible, he sent for the five sculptors to execute the difficult piece of carving which was to ornament the front of the building. The design exhibited the figures of various animals which were to be carved in marble ; the centre of the piece was to be occupied by the images of certain pagan divinities. After a short time the Emperor came to watch the progress of the work. He found the carving complete, with the exception of the vacant space which was to be occupied with the images of the pretended deities. Diocletian praised the sculptors for the skill with which they had executed a portion of the work, but blamed them for their delay in completing the remainder. “Sire,” replied they, “we are Christians, and we are not permitted by our religion to execute any work which may contribute to the superstitious worship of idols.” The Emperor, enraged, ordered them to be delivered up to the judge, to whom he gave secret orders to use every effort to induce them to renounce the faith, that he might not lose, by their martyrdom, the services of

such skilful workmen. The judge displayed before their eyes the most frightful instruments of torture, and strove by alternate threats and promises to induce them to submit to the Emperor's will. His efforts proved unavailing, and he caused them to be inhumanly scourged. As they still remained constant, Diocletian condemned them to be shut up alive in a vast leaden coffin, and thrown into the river Tiber. The sentence was executed, and they thus sealed their noble profession of faith by a glorious martyrdom.—*Lives of the Saints.*

417. SIMON, THE MAGICIAN.—One of the earliest converts to the Christian faith, in the time of the Apostles, was a celebrated sorcerer or magician of the name of Simon. Having seen the miracles worked by the Apostles, and in particular the visible signs which frequently followed the conferring of the Sacrament of Confirmation, he came to S. Peter, offering a sum of money, and saying: "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I also lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost." But S. Peter said to him: "Keep thy money to thyself, to perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money. Do penance for this thy wickedness, and pray to God, if perchance the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee." Simon, thus baffled in his design, shortly after abandoned the Christian religion. Giving himself up entirely to the practice of the magic arts, he now entered into a compact with the devil, who assisted him to perform various wonderful feats, which caused his fame to reach the ears of the Emperor Nero. In order to eclipse, if possible, the fame of the miracles of the Apostles, he engaged to fly through the air in presence of Nero and his whole court, on condition that S. Peter, who presented himself in the Amphitheatre, was securely bound during the performance. This being done, he began by means of the magical arts, which God permitted to have effect for his greater confusion and punishment, to mount into the air, promising the people, as he ascended, that he would shower down upon them good things from Heaven. His momentary success was loudly applauded by the spectators, who clapped their hands, and raised shouts of exultation. Hereupon S. Peter, pitying their blindness, betook himself to prayer, earnestly beseeching God to confound the efforts of the Devil, and not to permit him to obtain so signal a triumph. At the same moment Simon, abandoned by the wicked spirits that held him, fell with a loud crash upon the ground, amidst the laughter and derision of the populace. In his

fall he broke both his legs, "so that he," says S. Maximus, "who had undertaken to fly in the air, in a short time was not able to walk on the ground."—*Butler*.

418. THE ORACLE AT DELPHI.—Delphi, in Greece, was formerly famous for its Oracle of Apollo. In the centre of the Temple was a small opening in the ground, whence arose an intoxicating vapour, and the Pythia, or female who delivered the oracle, having breathed this, sat down upon a tripod, placed over the chasm in the ground, and thence delivered the oracle, put into hexameter verse by herself, or by a poet employed for the purpose.

419. TESTIMONY OF S. PAULINUS.—S. Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, asserts that he once saw a man, possessed, walking feet to the roof and head downwards, without his garments being in any way disarranged, and adds that this man was healed at the tomb of S. Felix.—Sulpicius Severus relates a similar case.—They saw what they state, and it is difficult to refute such witnesses.—*Bergier*.

420. THE TRAVELLER IN SCOTLAND.—A gentleman was benighted, not long since, in a remote part of the highlands of Scotland, and was compelled to ask shelter for the evening at a small, lonely hut. When he was to be conducted to his bedroom, the landlady observed, with a mysterious air, that he would find the window very insecure. On examination, part of the wall appeared to have been broken down to enlarge the opening. After some inquiry he was told that a pedlar, who had lodged in the room a short time before, had committed suicide, and was found hanging behind the door in the morning. According to the superstition of the country, it was deemed improper to remove the body through the door of the house, and to convey it through the window part of the wall was removed. Some hints were dropped that the room had been subsequently haunted by the poor man's spirit. The gentleman retired to rest rather uneasy; and, to protect himself, laid his fire-arms by the bedside. He was visited in a dream by a frightful apparition, and awakening in agony, found himself sitting up, with a pistol grasped in his right hand. On casting a fearful glance round the room, he discovered, by the moonlight, a corpse dressed in a shroud, reared erect against the wall close by the window. With much difficulty he summoned up resolution to approach the dismal object, the features of which, and the minutest part of its funeral shroud, he perceived distinctly; he passed one hand over it, felt nothing, and staggered back to bed. After some time, and

much reasoning with himself, he renewed his investigation, and at length discovered that the object of his terror was produced by the moonbeams, forming a long bright image through the broken window, on which his fancy, excited by his dream, had pictured, with mischievous accuracy, the form of a body prepared for interment.—*Power.*

421. DR. BAYLE AND THE DEATH'S HEAD.—One night in December, at the approach of Christmas, Doctor Bayle was whiling away a few hours with some of the villagers of Vernet, in the south of France, and in the course of conversation the subject of *spirits* was introduced, and each one had something marvellous to tell. The doctor began to laugh at the wonderful stories that were told, and said such things proceeded from prejudice and an excited imagination. “Do you mean to say,” replied an old woman, who was spinning in a corner of the kitchen, “that on this night, the eve of Christmas, you would not be afraid to enter the Church by yourself, and walk there alone and without light?” “Yes, my good woman,” said the doctor, “I would go and walk the Church without being in the least alarmed. This very instant I will enter it; and lest you may disbelieve me, I will bring back from the Church something belonging to it; and just tell me what you wish that should be.” “Here is the key of the Church,” said the sexton, who was present, and added he in a half sly, half artless manner, “when you have opened the door, go up straight to the principal altar, and behind it, in a crevice, you will find a *death's head*—a death's head, they say, never frightens a doctor—and if you bring it back from the Church, it will be a sure sign that you have been there.” “The death's head I will certainly bring back,” replied the doctor; and arising at once from his chair, he proceeded to the Church. Having entered it, he found no difficulty in making out the crevice alluded to. He inserted his hands into the opening, drew forth the skull, and laid hold of it with both hands; and no sooner had he done so, than he thought he heard a sad and mournful cry, but attributed it to a grating sound made by the bones coming in contact with a stone. When he had gained the Church door, another cry, more distinct and mournful than the first, was again heard by him. “It must be the screech of an owl,” said the doctor to himself, and he moved on. In order to close the gate, on leaving the Church, he laid the skull on the floor, and when he had turned the key in the keyhole he stooped down to take it up. Scarcely had he done so, when he heard the very same cry as before. He was not a little surprised at the circumstances,

“but,” said he, “it cannot surely proceed from this lifeless head : but from what does it proceed ?” Scarcely had he asked himself the question when two sounds were heard at one and the same time ; and now no doubt could any longer exist that these cries proceeded from the *death's head* ! “But again,” said he, “it is impossible that sounds can be emitted without the organs of voice ; and in this skull there are surely no organs capable of articulating a single sound.” But all his philosophy again gave way, for the same mournful cries were now repeated in quick succession, and every doubt of their proceeding from the skull was this time at an end. The doctor became alarmed ; perspiration burst from his forehead, and trickled down his cheeks ; his limbs tottered and could scarcely support his body ; he appeared as if fixed to the ground and unable to move a step. At last he appears at the door of the cottage ; the door is opened, and the villagers are there awaiting him. He enters, and, oh ! such a look ! All those assembled in the kitchen start to their feet at once, so pale his look, and such indications of alarm did his countenance present. When he arrived in the centre of the room he laid the death's head on the floor, and at the very moment two cries are heard and the doctor falls off in a faint. All those around run away shrieking with alarm ; the old sexton was the only person that remained behind. He went over to the doctor and soon succeeded in recovering him from his swoon. His first exclamation on getting up was, “The head ?” “Here it is, sir,” was the reply. “Have you heard that noise ?” “Certainly.” “What ! has it then proceeded from the skull ?” whispered the doctor, in tones of alarm. “Very likely, as there may be a bat's nest in it, as there has been every season these many years past,” replied the old sexton. Doctor Bayle himself called back the affrighted villagers, took the skull between his hands, and inserting his fingers into a small opening in the back of the skull, drew forth some pieces of tow and old linen. It was a nest of a pair of young bats, who at once made their appearance, but, being too weak to fly, fell on the ground clapping their little wings. “See the spirit !” exclaimed Doctor Bayle ; “now look at it ! Yet even I myself was for a time shamefully alarmed.”—*An historical fact.*

422. CAPTAIN RIDD.—Lord Byron used to relate the following of Captain Ridd, with whom he sailed to Lisbon, in 1809 :—This officer stated that being asleep one night in his berth, he was awakened by the pressure of something heavy on his limbs, and he could see

as he thought, his brother, who was at that time in the East Indies, lying across the bed. To add to the wonder, on putting forth his hand to touch this form, he found the clothes to be dripping wet. On the entrance of one of his brother officers, to whom he called in alarm, the apparition vanished ; but a short time after he received the startling intelligence that on that night his brother had been drowned in the sea. Of the supernatural character of this appearance, Captain Ridd himself did not appear to have the slightest doubt.
—*Lee.*

423. THE BOY AT COLLEGE.—In 1859, at Sedgely Park, Staffs, a boy of twelve was one morning found to be weeping bitterly, and was quite inconsolable. When asked the cause of his trouble, he replied with difficulty : “ Last night I saw my cousin all in flames, and he said to me : ‘ I’m in Hell : I came here when the doors slammed.’ ” They all thought him dreaming, but a couple of days later, he received a letter saying that a cousin of his, working on a haystack, had fallen on one of the hayforks, and was seriously wounded : he was carried home and his wound attended to. But two or three days after, in the middle of the night, a terrible banging and slamming of doors was heard, and the whole household were aroused and terrified. On going up to the poor man’s room, they were horrified to find him dead ! This narrative can be vouched for by several of the poor boy’s college companions.

424. VICTIM OF A FORTUNE-TELLER.—A young man was one day present while a fortune-teller was plying her trade, and was ridiculing her pretensions to tell the future. To avenge herself, she told him he would die within the year, and that, too, in September. The young man laughed at first, but as it was personal, he began shortly to think of it seriously, and spoke to his parents of it. These took the common-sense view of the matter, and explained how the prediction could mean nothing, the old witch merely desiring to frighten him for his having laughed at her. The boy felt the force of all this, yet could not shake off the thought of a fatal prediction : night and day it haunted him, till at length he became ill, and his very life was in danger. On September 30th he was exceedingly low, so that the doctor thought he could hardly recover. “ If, however,” he continued, “ he gets over to-night he is safe : it is fear that is killing him.” His parents and friends had a most anxious time of it : at length, however, the clock struck midnight : September was gone, October was in, and the young

man coming round to himself, exclaimed : " Thank God, He has preserved me to you yet awhile : ask Him to forgive me my folly." In matters of faith, we must be simple-minded and humble ; but as to all superstition, strong and determined.—*Catechisme en Exemples.*

425. S. BERNARD'S HEADACHE.—The great S. Bernard, in his youth, was at one time afflicted with a violent headache, which deprived him of his rest, and which all the remedies that were prescribed were unable to relieve. Thereupon some of the attendants bethought themselves of a woman who was reported to have the power of healing diseases by means of certain charms applied to the sick person. They accordingly introduced her into his chamber, but no sooner had the holy youth perceived her intention, than he leaped from his bed and drove her from the room. Having done so, he again lay down, and fell into a refreshing slumber, on awaking from which he found himself entirely cured. *His Life : Aug. 20.*

426. THE PERSIAN ABRACADABRA.—In former times this was one of the most venerated of those magical formulas that were constructed out of the letters of the alphabet, and supposed to be highly efficacious for the cure of fevers. The letters arranged as below are written so as to form a triangle, and be capable of being read many ways. They were to be on a square piece of paper, which was folded up and worn under the garments.

A B R A C A D A B R A
 A B R A C A D A B R
 A B R A C A D A B
 A B R A C A D A
 A B R A C A D
 A B R A C A
 A B R A C
 A B R A
 A B R
 A B
 A

427. THE SUPERSTITIOUS WIDOW.—A widow, advanced in years, became one day dangerously ill. Her daughter earnestly implored of her to have the priest sent for, that she might receive the last Sacraments of the Church ; but she made answer that there was no necessity. The daughter spoke to a friend in the neigh-

bourhood on the subject, and asked the person to unite her entreaties with her own in inducing her mother to have the priest sent for ; but the old woman answered, laughing : " Fear not ; I am not going to die yet. The cuckoo has prophesied that I have twelve more years to live." There are some who think that the number of years they will have to live will be in exact proportion to the number of continued notes they have heard from a cuckoo. As she was every day getting worse, the daughter sent for the priest at last. The priest came at once, but when he entered the house, the old superstitious woman was without sense or feeling, and remained so till she died.—*Lohner*.

428. LOUIS XIII. OF FRANCE.—I am sure you have often heard it said that Friday is an unlucky day, that nothing should ever be undertaken on that day, and so forth. This superstition is very common in Paris, which, nevertheless, pretends to be the first city in the world. Louis XIII., King of France, was not one of those who shared this silly belief. Having fallen dangerously ill in 1643, Extreme Unction was proposed to him. He wished to have the opinion of his physicians ; he asked Bouvard whether his disease were curable. " Sire," said Bouvard, " God is all-powerful." Then the King, with a gay and smiling countenance, said in the words of the prophet : " I rejoiced at the things they have told me : we shall go into the house of the Lord." And, believing that he was to die on the following day, which was Friday, he immediately added : " Oh, the desirable, the agreeable news ! Oh, the blessed day for me ! this is, indeed, a lucky Friday ! But this is not the first time that Fridays have been favourable to me. It was on a Friday that I ascended the throne, that I gained my first victory, that I took the city of S. John d'Angely, and, finally, that I fought Soubisse. But this one will be the happiest of all my life, since it will place me in Heaven, there to reign eternally with God." It was in these so Christian sentiments that this wise prince prepared to receive the last Sacraments, and then to appear before God. He died on the 14th of May, 1643.—*Guillois*.

429. THE FOOLS' TAX.—There existed formerly, at Alexandria, a law which required astrologers to pay a certain tax, which was called The Fools' Tax, because it was raised on the profits of astrologers and fortune-tellers, through the folly and credulity of those who consulted them ! If such a tax existed nowadays, the number of those who would have to pay it would not be small !—*Guillois*.

430. THE APOSTATE LUTHER.—Of Luther it is related that when some conscience-stricken follower came to tell him of the remorse he experienced at having abandoned the true faith, Luther, in the very language of Hell, would say: "Go to the altar! sacrilege upon sacrilege, and you will soon cease to feel remorse!"—*His Life*.

431. THE ROBBER CHIEF.—A band of robbers numbered among them a young man, as yet timid, whose sense of right had not been quite stifled. "Go and make bad Communion," said the chieftain, "and you will no longer fear!" Unfortunately the young man followed this diabolical advice, and soon found how true it is that sacrilege hardens the heart, for he became in time the most desperate of a desperate lot.—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

432. GOETHE'S ADMISSION.—The famous Goethe, in one of his books, writes a magnificent page on the beauty and power of the Sacraments of the Church; then he declares that a bad Communion made him leave the Church to embrace Protestantism, for he thought, as S. Paul says, he had eaten his own condemnation, and he thought thus to stifle remorse. Full of gloom and despair and fear, he wrote a wicked book that has caused innumerable suicides. Thus did sacrilege become the poisoned source of many evils.—*Huguet*.

433. SIR WALTER SCOTT AT ABBOTSFORD.—It is well known that while Sir Walter Scott remained at Ashestiel, none could be more fortunate, none more happy. He removed to Abbotsford, the very name of which testifies to its having been Church property. Thenceforward, in spite of all his genius and all his honesty, he is inextricably involved in embarrassment on embarrassment, ending in total ruin, and this by a series of the most accidental and unlikely circumstances. Many other similar examples can be found in this country, the consequence of the sacrilegious spoliation of the monasteries and Church possessions.—*Spelman*.

434. A SOLDIER PROFANING A CHURCH.—In the time of the first French Republic, several regiments of soldiers who were in Italy were passing through a village, when a violent storm suddenly arose, followed by a heavy fall of rain. Some of the soldiers, finding the Church open, went in for shelter. It was one of those unhappy years when every effort was being made to destroy religion, and when all those whose faith and piety were not deeply rooted made a boast of impiety and irreligion. Many of these unhappy soldiers behaved in the Lord's temple as though it were a profane

place. Some proposed to have wine brought thither. It was brought in large jars. But, as there were not enough of goblets or cups to drink from, there was one of the soldiers impious enough to provide himself with a sacred ciborium, by a horrible sacrilege. He goes up to the altar, breaks in the door of the tabernacle, dares to take the consecrated vessel in his hand, throws on the ground the sacred hosts it contained, and goes back to his comrades with his prize as though he had done something great. But the moment of God's terrible vengeance had arrived. Just as the wretch dipped the holy ciborium in the jar of wine he fell down dead, and lest anyone should doubt that his death was the act of Divine vengeance, the ciborium which he had profaned could not be taken from his hand by anyone till the pastor of that afflicted parish was brought, and he, removing it without any difficulty, replaced it in the tabernacle. Several inhabitants of the village, who were in the church, were witnesses of the sacrilege committed by the soldier and the terrible chastisement inflicted upon him. One of them, a bad Christian, was converted on the spot. Several others, even among the soldiers, did all they could to repair the horrible scandal given on that sad occasion. I have this fact from a French priest who was then in the country, and who related all the circumstances just as I have now.—*Lasance*.

435. THE CURSE OF COWDRAY.—Sir Anthony Browne had been specially favoured by the Tudor Kings, and his coffers enriched to overflowing with Church plunder. In the abbot's hall of a once stately religious house, from which the monks had been cruelly and illegally cast out, a feast was being held on the popular knight taking possession of the consecrated building. When the feast was going on, an outcast monk, uninvited and unexpected, is reported to have made his way through the guests, and boldly walking up to the chair where Sir Anthony sat, cursed him to his face with all the force and solemnity of the ancient and accustomed malediction. He ended his forcible sentence thus: "By fire and by water your race shall come to an end, and utterly perish out of the land." Two hundred and fifty years passed, and then the curse was exactly fulfilled: Cowdray House was completely destroyed by fire, and soon after, the eighth Lord Montague and his two heirs were drowned!—*Lee*.

436. THE EMPEROR LEO AND THE CROWN.—The Emperor Leo IV., in 780, took from the Cathedral of Constantinople a crown

of gold, enriched with diamonds, which the Emperor Heraclius had presented to that church. Scarcely had he placed it on his head, than at once he was covered with pustules and pimples, which carried him off in three days of cruel sufferings, and under circumstances such as to make it clear it was a punishment from God.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

437. THE SOLDIER AND THE STATUE.—The Saracens having forcibly entered a church in Cyprus, one of them, seeing a statue, exclaimed: "What's the use of that statue?" "It will procure blessings on those who honour it, and a punishment on those who dishonour it," replied a Christian near. "Well! I'll take an eye out of it," continued the soldier, "and we'll see what harm it can do me," and, suiting the action to the word, he thrust a spear into the right eye of the statue, when at the same moment his own right eye fell from its socket, and he was seized with a burning fever!—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

438. PROFANATION AND PUNISHMENT.—One Good Friday two workmen entered a refreshment house, near Reggio, and asked for a meat dinner. The landlord remarked that meat was not becoming on that day and he had none. The two men then told him to cook them a chicken. When dinner was ready they sat to table, and began by drinking health to the Devil and using blasphemous language. To crown their impiety they took a crucifix from the wall and threw it under the table, and every now and then threw to it scraps of meat and vegetable from their plates. But God was now to take His revenge: one of these wretched men was suddenly seized with violent pains and died within a few minutes; the other was so terrified that he had a fit of epilepsy, which deprived him of reason for the rest of his life.—*Patriota Catholico.*

439. SACRILEGE AVENGED.—In the year 1834, upon the Eve of the Assumption of Our Lady, the Puritan population of Charleston, in the United States, being excited by fanatics, rose up against the Catholics, and with cries of fury, rushed towards the Ursuline Convent. It was night-time, and the inmates were reposing in peaceful slumber when they were aroused by the shouts of the mob and the smashing of the outer doors. Before the pupils had time to dress, the kindling flames flashed over their peaceful dwelling, and it was with difficulty they made their escape, while their invaders were engaged in plundering the church and convent. In

the midst of the tumult one of the ringleaders ascended the altar, seized the ciborium, and, horrible to relate, emptied the precious particles into his pocket. He then repaired to an inn at Charlestown, where, surrounded by a throng of eager listeners, he related his sacrilegious exploit. In the midst of his recital he suddenly recognized among his audience an Irish Catholic, who was listening with intense horror. On perceiving him he drew from his pocket several hosts and, holding them forth, said in a sneering tone, "Here, behold your God! Why need you go any more to seek Him in the Church?" The Catholic stood dumb with horror. At the same moment the blasphemer turned pale, and, feeling himself seized with a sudden colic, left the apartment. A quarter of an hour, half an hour, elapsed, yet he returned not. A vague fear fell upon the bystanders. They followed him to the closet to which he had retired, and there found him—a corpse. He had died the death of Arius.—*Annals of the Propagation of the Faith.*

440. THE "PECUNIA FRACTA."—When stretched upon a bed of sickness, or overtaken by misfortune, the Anglo-Saxon of olden times called not only on God, but begged some Saint to pray for and with him to their common Lord. With his own hands the suppliant, or, if too weak, some friend, bent for him a gold or silver coin, with the promise that should he recover, or be freed from his sorrow, he himself would go and carry that piece to the Church of the Saint whose intercession he had asked.—*Rock.*

441. S. WENCESLAUS IN THE SNOW.—Not content with frequently visiting the Blessed Sacrament during the day, S. Wenceslaus also went at night. Accompanied by a single servant he was going one night on his usual pilgrimage; the weather was very severe and the road covered with snow. Though he had but sandals on his feet, the Saint walked with a firm step, followed by his servant who was shivering with cold, and whose feet, though well shod, were almost frozen. The Saint, seeing his sufferings, said: "Put your feet into the prints of mine and fear not." This the attendant did and felt the cold no longer, but rather a genial warmth which soon spread through his body, and thus he could continue his journey without further suffering.—A lively image of what the Christian will experience in his soul, who tries to walk in the footsteps of the Saints by imitating their virtues.—*His Life: Sept. 28.*

442. S. STEPHEN AND THE EMPEROR.—The Emperor Constantine Copronymus carried on, for twenty years, a war against holy images,

striving, in every way, to induce Catholics to give up honouring them. A great many suffered martyrdom sooner than abandon the holy practice of honouring and venerating images ; and among the others was S. Stephen the Younger. The emperor cited him to his presence, and when he stood before him the prince asked him if he still persisted in his idolatry ? The Saint fixed his eyes on the ground and made answer : " If you are resolved to condemn me, order me off to punishment. We adore Jesus Christ when we pay honour to the image which represents Him ; we honour the Saints when we pay marks of respect to their images, whilst you call them idols and trample them under your feet." " Do you believe," said the emperor, " that we trample on Christ by trampling on His image ?" " God forbid," said the martyr. Then taking a piece of money in his hand, on which was stamped the image of the emperors, he asked those who were present : " Whose image is on this coin ?" They answered : " The image of the emperor and that of his son." " What treatment should he receive," said S. Stephen, " who should trample upon that image ?" They all cried out that he should be severely punished, as it bore the image and the name of the emperor and that of his son. " Is it, then, so great a crime," said the Saint, " to insult the image of the emperor of the earth, and no crime to trample underfoot and to cast into the fire the image of the King of Heaven and earth ?" Some days after this examination, the emperor sent an order that he should be scourged to death in prison. They who undertook this barbarous execution left the work unfinished. The tyrant, hearing that S. Stephen was yet alive, cried out : " Will no one rid me of this monk ?" On this, certain of his courtiers stirred up a mob of impious wretches, who, running to the jail, seized the martyr, dragged him through the streets of the city with his feet tied with cords, and many struck him with stones and staves, till one despatched him by dashing out his brains with a club.—*His Life : Nov. 28.*

443. S. ELISABETH AT EISENACH.—One great festival day, S. Elisabeth went down to the Church at Eisenach to assist at Holy Mass. Every time she entered a Church, she was accustomed to turn her eyes immediately towards the crucifix. This she now did, and seeing the image of Our Saviour crowned with thorns, and His hands and feet pierced with nails, she felt overcome with sorrow and love, and fell fainting on the ground. Her attendants, full of alarm, raised her up and carried her to the Church porch for air, and

sprinkled her with holy water. She was soon restored to strength, but from that moment she formed a resolution to renounce all pomp of dress, except on those occasions when the duties of her rank, or the will of her husband, obliged her to it.—*Her Life*.

444. BASSUS OF HIPPO.—In the town of Hippo, there was a man named Bassus, who was one day praying before the relics of S. Stephen the Martyr, for his daughter, dangerously ill, when some of his people ran to tell him that she had just died. He returned to the house and laid a dress belonging to his daughter, which he had borne with him to the Martyr's shrine, over the pallid corpse, and life was immediately restored.—*S. Augustine*.

445. S. GENEVIÈVE'S RELICS.—In 1129, in the reign of Louis VI., a pestilential fever swept off, in a short time, fourteen thousand persons, nor could the art of physicians afford any relief. Stephen, Bishop of Paris, with the clergy and people, implored the Divine mercy by fasting and supplications, yet the distemper did not abate, and God appeared inflexible. At length the shrine of S. Geneviève was carried in a solemn procession to the cathedral. During the ceremony, many sick persons were cured by touching the shrine; and of all that lay ill of that distemper in the whole town, only three died, the rest recovered, and no others fell ill. Pope Innocent II., coming to Paris the year following, after having carefully scrutinized the miracle, ordered an annual festival in commemoration of it on the 26th of November, which is still kept at Paris. Since that time it is the custom, in extraordinary public calamities, to carry the relics of S. Geneviève, together with those of other Saints, in solemn procession to the cathedral. The present rich shrine of S. Geneviève was made by the abbot, and the relics enclosed in it in 1242.—*Bollandus*.

446. "CANTERBURY AND DURHAM WATERS."—After the martyrdom of S. Thomas of Canterbury, every speck of blood which oozed from his wounds was carefully gathered up by the clergy of the cathedral, and kept there as a relic. Only a week or two had fled, when it became an earnest wish with some sick people to have the merest drop of this blood to swallow by way of medicine. To satisfy these cravings, and to hinder an uneasy feeling at the thought of tasting human blood, a drop was mingled with a chaliceful of water, and in this manner given to those who wished a sip. This was the far-famed "Canterbury Water," and many were the

miracles wrought by its use.—At the translation of a Saint's relics, the bones of the body were washed in water, which were often kept as a relic, and employed as a healing remedy ; it was sprinkled upon the sick, or given to them as medicine. The "Durham Water" was that in which S. Cuthbert's body had been washed, and it was sent about the country in ampuls wrought for the purpose of holding it.—*Rock*.

447. THE FRITHSTOOL PRIVILEGE.—The Frithstool, or Stool of Peace, was a low-backed armchair of stone, placed near the high-altar, or the patron Saint's shrine in certain churches. From this spot, as from a centre, the frithstool spread its privileges of sanctuary over the land and water around the minster which held it, to a greater or less distance in different churches ; a gradation of penalties was incurred by anyone who should apprehend a fugitive, in proportion to his proximity to the stone chair, or seat of peace. Here he became for a time entitled, as in the Cities of Refuge of old, to the widest privileges of the sanctuary, such as existed at Hexham, Beverley, and other places.—*Rock*.

448. THE "MARTYR'S PEACE."—The "Peace of S. Oswin," the Martyr of Tynemouth, though bearing a different name, was, like the frithstool of Hexham, a sanctuary of refuge in honour of the martyred king. For many a long year of vexatious misrule "The Martyr's Peace" was a pleasant and safe shade under which the dwellers on the bleak seashore were glad to cluster. The only recorded instance of violation of this "Peace" is that of Earl Robert, who was thence dragged by violence and made a prisoner by the army of King Rufus.—*Gibson*.

449. A TERRIBLE PUNISHMENT.—After the revolution that disgraced the close of the eighteenth century, a chaplain was called to attend a soldier who was very severely wounded. The priest found a man whose countenance showed the greatest calmness. He said to the wounded man : "My friend, I was told that your wounds were very serious." Smiling sadly, the soldier answered, "Reverend sir, will you raise the bedclothes a little from my chest?" The priest did so, and then drew back with a shudder, for he saw that both arms were gone. "What!" exclaimed the soldier, "you start with horror at such a trifle ; now raise the covering from my feet." The priest did this also, and found that his feet had likewise been carried away. "Ah," he said, "poor fellow, how I pity you ; what

a misfortune !” “ Oh no,” answered the mangled form lying before him, “ I suffer only what I earned for myself. Not long ago, in my fury, I cut off the limbs of a crucifix I chanced to see by the way-side, so that the image of my Saviour fell to the ground ; and in the next battle my own arms and legs were carried off by a cannon ball. As I treated him, so also has He treated me. But thanks be to God for punishing me in this world for my crime, that He may spare me in the next, as I hope and trust He will in His infinite mercy.”—*Ave Maria.*

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

“*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.*”

450. REVERENCE OF S. FRANCIS FOR GOD’S NAME.—S. Francis of Assisi always pronounced the name of God with respect. If he found a piece of paper lying about with this name upon it, he took it up and put it away in a special corner in his cell ; he also advised his religious to do the same.—*His Life : Oct. 4.*

451. FEAR OF S. THAIS.—S. Thais, after a life of sin, repented and withdrew to the desert to do penance. She felt her guilt so deeply that she would never pronounce the holy Name of God, of which she ever afterwards had the greatest fear and respect ; but she used to address Him : “ O Thou, who hast created me, have mercy on me !” —*Her Life : Oct. 8.*

452. NEWTON’S RESPECT.—Newton, that genius who penetrated so deeply into the secrets of nature, never heard or pronounced the holy Name of God without uncovering and inclining his head.

453. A SUDDEN PUNISHMENT.—A zealous priest relates the following terrible story : “ I was preparing the children of my congregation for the first Communion. Amongst them there were two boys who were very wicked. I told them that if they did not change their conduct, I would be obliged to make them wait a year longer, for I could not permit them to receive Jesus Christ into their souls without seeing a great change in their conduct. This threat seemed to make no impression on them, they only laughed at it, and I was obliged to send them out of the Church that they might not distract the others. When they reached the street they began to quarrel, and were heard to blaspheme and to take

God's holy Name in vain. A workman who was passing at the time hearing the terrible words they were uttering, chid them and tried to make them cease ; but, instead of obeying, they turned towards him and called him by many wicked names, at the same time cursing and swearing even more than before. The man continued on his way, but he had not gone far when he heard the noise of something heavy falling, and screams for help. He looked round and saw that a wall on the side of the street, on the spot where he had passed the boys, had fallen down, and that the screams must have come from them, and that they must at that moment be buried under the ruins. He ran back along with the crowd that were rushing to the place, and on removing the fallen stones and lime, they found the two boys crushed and dreadfully mangled. They were at once taken to a neighbouring house, but they were both quite dead : the wall had fallen on them whilst the words of blasphemy were yet upon their lips, and they had to appear in this state before the dread tribunal of Jesus Christ to be judged."—*Chisholm*.

454. THE DUC DE VENDOME AND HIS CHAPLAIN.—Alberoni, becoming chaplain to the Duc de Vendome, ate at the table of the Prince and his courtiers. The latter murmured at this. When the Duke was informed, he ordered dinner in a private room with covers for two : the courtiers, much surprised, began to inquire what it could all mean. When the dinner was served, the prince sat down, and asked his chaplain to do the same, saying : " Some people seem to have a difficulty in dining with my chaplain : for my own part I deem it an honour to do so, not only on account of his personal worth, but also and chiefly for the dignity of the priesthood he bears."—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

455. THE PRIEST AND HIS ANGEL GUARDIAN.—S. Francis de Sales, after having given the order of Priesthood to a holy ecclesiastic, perceived that on going out he stopped at the door as if to give precedence to another. Being asked by the Saint why he stopped, he replied that God favoured him with the visible presence of his Guardian Angel, who, before he had received the Priesthood, always remained at his right and preceded him, but afterwards walked on his left and refused to go before him. It was in a holy contest with the angel that he stopped at the door.

456. THE PRIEST BEFORE THE ANGEL.—S. Francis of Assisium used to say that, " If I saw an angel and a priest, I would bend my knee first to the priest, and then to the angel."

457. OUR CATHOLIC FOREFATHERS.—Venerable Bede relates of the early Christians of this country that they always showed their priests the greatest reverence. Whenever they met one they bent their knee before him, respectfully asked his blessing, and kissed the hand that gave it : he was everywhere received with joy and gladness, and his word was listened to as the word of life.

458. THE SCOFFER IN THE CONFESSIONAL.—A party of young men met at an hotel in one of the towns of France : they were Catholic in name, but irreligious reading had been their ruin. They were speaking of confession among other things, in a tone of contempt, when one of them remarked it would be a good thing to go through a mock form of confession. His companions said it would be a capital joke, but defied him to carry it through. "I promise to do it," replied he ; " what would be easier ? I'll bet you as many bottles as we have already taken that I will do it, and that at our next meeting I will relate to you everything that occurred in the confessional." And so it was agreed. The next day, Saturday, some of the party early sought out their bold associate to remind him of the promise. "The promise," said he, "I will fulfil." And, accordingly, he repaired in the evening to a church, and sat himself down at one of the confessionals, where he waited with much impatience till his turn came. He then entered, knelt down, and addressed the priest in these words : "Sir, I beg you to understand that I have not come here for the purpose of really making my confession, but in order to win a bet that I have made. I confess, then, that I have committed such and such sins, but I don't trouble my head in the least about the matter ; I have been guilty of this and that crime, but I don't care in the least about the matter." And in this manner he went on to tell other sins, always adding, scornfully, that the matter gave him no concern. When he had finished, the confessor calmly said : "You have done your part—won your bet—you have confessed your sins ; it is for me now to do my duty, to impose on you an appropriate penance. For three successive days, then, you will repeat three times, morning, noon, and night, these words : 'I shall die, but I don't care about it. There is a judgment to come, but I don't care about it. There is a Hell for sinners, but I don't care about it.' " And so saying, he dismissed him. In the evening the young man returned to his companions, related to them how he had gone to confession, and demanded the immediate payment of his bet. But his companions, however, insisted that he should first perform the penance he re-

ceived, as it was an integral part of confession. "If that be all," replied he, somewhat unwillingly, "so let it be; I give you my word of honour that I will go through with the whole business. The bet is fairly won." And, in fact, he began to repeat the words prescribed him, hastily and thoughtlessly at first, but by degrees with unusual emotion. They seemed to call up from the grave the extinct belief of his childhood; they made him restless and dejected; at last his lips ceased to pronounce the awful syllables; he reflected seriously upon death, eternity, and the state of his soul. In a few days grace had accomplished its work. He returned to the same confessor, disclosed to him the state of his soul, and begged his assistance to make a sincere and true confession, in order to obtain forgiveness of God. He made the confession, and during the remainder of his life was most diligent in the performance of every religious exercise.—*Catechism of Rodez*.

459. REGULUS AND THE OATH.—Regulus, a Roman general, was made prisoner by the Carthaginians, during the first Punic war, and condemned to six years' imprisonment. The fortune of war having changed, his enemies found themselves obliged to send to Rome to sue for peace. Regulus was one of the deputation, but he was made to promise, on oath, that if he did not succeed he would return again to his prison. In Rome, to the surprise of all, Regulus spoke before the Senate in favour of continuing the war, which he thought would all be to the advantage of his country. When negotiations for peace fell through, all endeavoured to dissuade Regulus from returning to Carthage, but he remained unshaken. "I know," he said, "what awaits me there, but I do not so much fear torments and prisons as the infamy of breaking my oath; duty requires I should return to Carthage, the rest I leave in the hands of the gods." He refused even to see his wife and children, lest his courage should give way, and amid the tears of all he re-embarked. When they learned at Carthage what he had done in Rome, they made him suffer excruciating torments and then put him to death.—What an example does this generous pagan leave of the respect due to the oath.—*Roman History*.

460. THE CHRISTIAN BROTHER.—Not many years ago there was a mother who had two sons. The elder one was a soldier who had distinguished himself by his bravery in the Crimean War. After the siege of Sebastopol he obtained permission to spend some time at home with his mother. When he reached home he was

grieved to find his little brother Henry, who was only ten years old, lying at the point of death. His mother sat weeping by his bedside, every moment expecting to see him breathe his last. All that the doctors could do to restore the boy to health had been in vain. His eyes were already glazed in death. He saw not his mother and brother who held his cold hands in theirs. "He is dying; he is dying!" exclaimed the disconsolate mother. The priest, who was there already, spoke of resignation to God's most blessed will, and began the prayers for the departing soul. The soldier also prayed. No one near him heard what he said, but God in Heaven heard him. "O my God," he prayed, "if you make my little brother better I solemnly vow to consecrate my whole life to the education of children of his age. I will teach them to love You and bless You." The child suddenly began to breathe more regularly. Soon afterwards he opened his eyes; they met those of his mother, and he smiled. A cry of joy burst from her lips: "He is not going to die," she exclaimed. "See, he is already better!" Joy now filled that happy home. Day by day the child grew stronger, and was soon able to leave his bed. Then did the elder son make known to his mother the vow he had made. "Here, dearest mother, is my sword; give it to Henry when he grows older, he will be able to use it. As for me, I must leave you again to go and fulfil my vow." "You must not go," she cried out in her maternal love for him. But he remembered the vow he had made, and not even his mother's tears could hinder him from fulfilling it. He is now a Brother of the Christian Schools.—*Hautriève*.

461. THE CHICKEN PETRIFIED.—An Arab made a vow never to eat anything that should have had life; thus, no meat, no fish, no eggs, not even milk food. It was a difficult vow to keep, but this fervent Arab was a long time faithful to it. I know not by what fatality he forgot himself so far as to kill a fowl himself, have it cooked, and eat of it. It was an open violation of his vow, and, so to say, a mockery of God, to whom he had made it of his own freewill, and without instigation from anyone. God, knowing that he was at bottom a good Christian, contented Himself with giving him a warning capable of making him reflect. Scarcely had he eaten the first mouthful of the fowl, when all that remained in the dish became hard as stone, so that no one could break even the smallest piece from it. At first no one would believe such an extraordinary occurrence; people ran in crowds to convince themselves of it by their own eyes. The learned Theodoret states that he

himself saw and touched this miraculous fowl. The poor Arab, to whom the circumstance occurred, was struck by the prodigy ; he thanked God for having called him to a sense of his duty, and ever after scrupulously observed the vow he had made.—*Theodoret.*

462. S. FRANCIS AND THE ROSARY.—A person having heard that S. Francis of Sales had made a vow when young to say the Rosary every day, wished to do the same, but not without consulting the Saint beforehand. “Don’t do any such thing,” he answered. “But,” said the other, “why deter others from doing what you yourself have done from the days of your youth?” “That word ‘youth’ settles the matter : in those days I did it without reflection : now that I am older, I say to you : don’t do it : I don’t wish to deter you from saying the Rosary : on the contrary say it regularly and fervently : but as a good practice, not as a vow, so that should you omit it, you will not offend God. It is not sufficient to make a vow, you must also keep it. I admit my vow has sometimes embarrassed me, and I have before now thought of seeking a dispensation.” The authority and example of such a Saint are worth pages of argument.—*His Life : Jan. 29.*

463. GOODWIN, EARL OF KENT.—One day when King Edward the Confessor was giving a grand banquet to the lords of his court, amongst the guests was seen Earl Goodwin, whom the public voice accused of the murder of Alfred, King Edward’s brother. A young page, who was waiting at the table, made a false step when presenting wine to the King ; yet still he managed to avoid spilling any of the liquor. Then, in order to indicate that one of his feet had secured the other, the young man quoting some words from Holy Scripture said laughing : “It is true enough that *the brother who is supported by his brother, stands firm.*” These words recalled sad memories to King Edward’s mind. “Ah !” said he, applying them to himself, “ah ! if I had my brother Alfred still, how well we could assist each other !” Saying these words, Edward cast a scrutinizing look on Earl Goodwin. The latter, thinking to satisfy a Prince so religious by a solemn oath, exclaimed : “May this morsel of bread be the last I shall eat, if I had any act or part in the murder of Prince Alfred !” The wretch ! his imprecation was instantly heard : the bread stopped in his throat, and choked him, leaving the guests to consider whether the accident was a Divine chastisement, or the natural effect of the culprit’s agitation.—*English History.*

464. AN INHABITANT OF SCHWARSTEIN.—An inhabitant of Schwarstein, accused of theft, declared he was innocent, and offered to swear to it; but his oath was refused, owing to the bad reputation he bore. He was not, however, convicted, but the judge thought well to address him a severe admonition, to which the accused replied: "May the thunderbolt crush me if I am guilty!" A few days later the thief was sitting in his house when suddenly a thunderbolt fell and killed him instantly, his three children near him escaping with a severe fright. The house was in flames, but no one would venture in to remove the body, till at last the priest of the place did so with his own hands. The house was burnt to the ground, though, strange to say, not one of the adjoining houses was injured, in spite of a strong wind blowing at the time. The event caused a great sensation, and even led to the conversion of many.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

465. THE DEALER STRUCK DEAD.—A man had bought a wretched cow at a fair, for next to nothing, and wanted to sell it again for a hundred francs. In order to make a show of being honest and disinterested, he said to everyone who presented themselves to buy the cow: "I tell you frankly now—for I don't want to deceive you—this cow cost me ninety francs, and I only ask a hundred—that is little enough profit, you'll admit, for, you know, everyone must live." "But did she really cost ninety francs?" "On my word she did, that I may die this moment if I don't tell you the truth!" He had scarcely uttered this horrible imprecation against himself when he fell dead in the midst of the market-place, before a crowd of people. No one doubted but it was a judgment from Heaven; but it was made still more manifest when, some hours after, the original owner of the cow happening to pass that way, told the truth, that the unhappy dealer had only given him fifty francs for the cow. Let us beware of making use of such forms of expression as, *upon my word of honour*, and suchlike, so common in the mouths of persons who have little or no honour to pledge.—*Noël.*

466. OATHS OF SECRET SOCIETIES.—The oaths administered by the secret societies, and especially the Freemasons, are both rash and unjust oaths; for the members swear obedience to unknown superiors, to obey unknown orders and commands, though they know well that such commands are oftentimes crimes, such as murder even. It is not surprising then that the Supreme Pontiffs

have so often condemned these societies and stigmatized the oaths they take.—*Guillois*.

467. THE REFRACTORY PRIESTS.—During the French Revolution, *refractory priests* was the name then given to those who had the courage to refuse taking oaths which their conscience did not justify them in taking. These generous confessors of the faith were nearly all banished, imprisoned, or even cruelly put to death. Four of them were going quietly to Havre to embark for England; a sentinel stopped them, demanding their passports. It was there stated that they were priests, and the oath was immediately proposed to them. "It is for refusing," said they, "to take that impious and execrable oath that we are now being banished from our country." The misguided populace then cried out: "They are refractory priests," and, falling on them, they killed the first two, who were priests of the diocese of Séez. The two others, belonging one to the same diocese, the other to that of Mans, are dragged to the river-side. There they are again summoned to take the oath, but they still reply: "Our conscience forbids it." They are thrown into the river; they rise to the surface of the water, and the people call out to them: "Swear, and you shall be taken out!" "No," cried the two martyrs, drowning in the river, "no, we cannot, we will not swear!" And when scarcely able to speak, they repeated, "We will not swear." At the sight of this invincible constancy, the spectators became furious with anger; arming themselves with pitchforks, they applied them to the necks of the generous confessors, plunged them again into the water, and kept them there till they were dead.—*Noël*.

468. THE TWO WALNUT-TREES.—Claude Guillemot was a very irritable man, quarrelling over the least thing with everyone about him. He had a near neighbour, not quite so passionate as himself, but still not very agreeable. It happened that these two individuals had a dispute concerning two large walnut-trees which separated their respective farms, and which each claimed as belonging to him. Claude Guillemot at first restrained himself so far as to consent to leave the matter to arbitration, but when it was decided that the walnut-trees should belong to his neighbour, he became furious, swore to be revenged, and to burn his adversary's house. "This I swear to do," cried he, "and, if I don't, may God open Hell under my feet and cast me into it!" He thus bound himself to commit a crime, and vowed himself to Hell if he did not.

His fit of anger once passed, however, he made this reflection : " If I am discovered I shall be sent to end my days in the galleys ; but no matter for that, I have sworn to do it, and I'll keep my oath." A month after, when he thought no one would suspect him, he arose in the middle of the night, and lighting a bunch of matches wrapped them in some light inflammable substance, then went on tiptoe and threw the whole on his neighbour's roof. The roof was made of straw, and soon took fire. Unhappily for the incendiary, as he hurried away he tripped over a stone, lost his balance, and fell with his head against the trunk of a tree, whereby he was knocked senseless to the ground. The fire made rapid progress. A black smoke ascended in dense masses from the burning house ; the flames spread a lurid light around, and burning sparks were carried to a great distance. The roof at last fell in, and all the inmates of the house perished, the victims of Claude Guillemot's crime. As for him, he soon recovered from his stupor ; but who can describe his feelings when he saw his own dwelling in flames, and found himself surrounded by a multitude of people, all of whom accused him of being the cause of the disaster ! His wife and children houseless, himself arrested, given up to justice, and finally sentenced to the galleys for life, these were the consequences of his having kept his wicked oath. He had sinned by taking it, and he sinned still more by putting it into execution.—*Noël.*

469. A SINFUL OATH.—A man who had summoned the priest to the bedside of his wife, who died a holy death, was shortly taken ill himself, and received the visit of the same ecclesiastic. This time, however, he would not see him, saying his wife had been free to receive his ministrations, while he himself was not, for he had once bound himself by oath to have nothing to do with Church or priest, hence this visit could only be treated as the visit of a friend. The priest, greatly surprised and pained, explained how such a sinful oath could never be considered as binding. The other only replied that for him every oath was binding. Yet this one had been to him a source of grief and anguish from the time he had seen his wife die in the sentiments of piety and religion. He declared he had often thought of writing to the head of the society, of which he was a member, to seek release from his oath, and until that was granted, he could not, and would not, receive the ministrations of the Church. He wrote accordingly and obtained his request, so that, on his next visit, the anxious ecclesiastic was able

to give him the consolations of religion, and he died in peace. It can never be too well known that it is not perjury, but further sin, to keep an oath which it is a sin to make.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

470. S. ELIGIUS.—King Clotaire II., who reigned in France from 584 to 628, having heard of S. Eligius as a very upright man, and a skilful goldsmith, had him brought to his court, which was then near Paris. After having admired the wisdom of his words, and the purity of his sentiments, he said to him: "I will keep you near my person, so that I may make your fortune; here are some relics of Saints, swear on them that you will ever be faithful to me." Hearing this proposal, so simple and so natural, S. Eligius was troubled; he promised Clotaire to be faithful to him, but he would not dare to take the oath on the holy relics, because it seemed to him that there was no necessity for so doing. The more the King insisted, the more he excused himself, for fear of displeasing God. At last the King was touched by the delicacy of his conscience; he approved of his refusal, and told him: "I understand your refusal, and I honestly believe that your unwillingness to swear lightly is a much surer guarantee for your fidelity than all the oaths in the world."—*Genevaux.*

471. CHILD ADDICTED TO SWEARING.—S. Gregory tells us that "a child accustomed to swear, in his impatience, by the Name of God, was seized with a mortal distemper, and assaulted by evil spirits, which caused him to depart this life in his father's arms. The father, being too indulgent to him, neglected correcting him for this vice, and so," as the same Saint observes, "had bred up in this child a great sinner for Hell."

472. BLASPHEMY, WATCH IN HAND.—Many years ago, a man in his club-room in London, defied God to strike him dead if the horrid blasphemies he uttered were untrue; taking out his watch, he gave his Divine Maker full five minutes to carry out the imprecation. A terror seemed to diffuse itself over the assembly as they watched the hands slowly move over the interval, and looked at the sturdy ruffian who had thus dared to insult his Maker and stand with folded arms to await the result. Nowadays probably such a scene enacted again would not create terror, but only a laugh!—*Ricards.*

473. THE MAN AND HIS DAGGER.—In the ancient city of Toulouse, there is an old manuscript in which it is recorded that there

was once a wicked youth, who one evening went out into the fields and began to blaspheme in a fearful manner. In his mad wickedness he drew his dagger, and, pointing it towards Heaven, defied the Almighty, calling upon Him to dash him to pieces if He existed and had the power. And see what happened. A snow-white leaf floated down from the sky and fell at the young man's feet. Picking it up in surprise, he saw written on it, in letters of gold, these words: "Have mercy on me." Great was his astonishment to see that God Himself should offer mercy to him, such a sinner. Penitence, tears, and love poured forth from his heart: he knelt down, thanked the goodness of the God he had blasphemed, and was converted from that hour!—*Stolz*.

474. THE LANGUAGE OF HELL!—All intelligent creatures are divided into three classes. First, the angels and Saints, whose country is Heaven, and whose language is to praise and glorify God; secondly, the devils and damned souls, whose country is Hell, and whose language is to blaspheme the God of Heaven and to curse their folly in having brought themselves to Hell by their own deliberate act; thirdly, we men still upon earth, travelling towards one or other of these two countries. If a stranger be travelling about and can speak but one language, that language will show to what country he belongs, as it did S. Peter, in the Passion (*Matt. xxvi. 73*). So our language here will help to discover to us which will be our country hereafter in eternity.—*Hay*.

475. LA SALETTE.—On September 19th, 1846, on Mount La Salette, in the South of France, Our Lady appeared to two young shepherds, Melany and Maximin. Her eyes were full of tears, and she complained to them that her son's arm was getting so heavy she could hardly prevent it falling and crushing the world for its sins, and she announced that punishments and evils would follow if men did not repent. The Blessed Virgin named three sins as causing the anger of Heaven: blasphemy, the profanation of Sunday, and disregard for laws of fasting and abstinence.—*Catechisme en Exemples*.

476. THE BLASPHEMER STRUCK BLIND.—A few years ago the town of Nottingham was visited with a most awful thunderstorm. Among those who sought shelter from the pitiless storm in the Milton's Head public-house was a young man, a lacemaker by trade. For some time he amused himself with ridiculing the fears of the

company, but his language, which was, from the first, light and unbecoming, became at last impious and profane. He used the holy Name of God in the most blasphemous manner, and, with bitter oaths, expressed a wish that a thunderbolt might come down and strike the company blind. Then, raising himself, he looked through the skylight over the room in which they were sitting, and, with profane gestures, defied the lightning. At that moment a vivid flash entered the room, and in an instant he was lying speechless on the floor. He was taken up by the trembling bystanders, none of whom were injured, and laid upon a couch. The first words he uttered, on recovering his speech, were "God forgive me!" He remained, however, blind, and was removed to the general hospital. —*Catholic Weekly Instructor.*

477. THE BURIED CRUCIFIX.—A priest relates the following: About the beginning of last century, at Aughton, in Lancashire, there lived a good Catholic, a Mrs. Spencer, on whose farm some young men had one day been giving some help. When the work was done and the evening meal over, five of them, Protestants, remained in a room together. Now, there happened to be a crucifix over the chimney-piece, which they took down and began to ridicule. They said it was the Papist's God, etc. "Let us go," said one, "and bury it, and see if it will rise in three days." They carried their blasphemy into effect, and actually dug a hole in the ground, into which they thrust it. Mrs. Spencer, who was engaged in another part of the house, did not hear of the profanity till afterwards. In relating it to me she was very much moved, and said: "Mark my words, not one of those who took part in this blasphemy will die in his bed." I did mark her words, and have lived long enough to witness their exact fulfilment. These men are all dead, and not one of them died in his bed. Two were brothers: one was killed by falling out of his cart, the other cut his throat in a barn. A servant-man of theirs was also present, and he was killed by his team. Another drowned himself in a pit, and the fifth died in his chair.—*Gibson.*

478. THE BLASPHEMER STRUCK DEAD.—A man was once busy cutting and dressing stone on a Sunday for the building of a dancing hall, when a pious neighbour, passing by, said: 'God will punish you for this! are you not afraid of Hell?' "Oh, Hell is full!" exclaimed the blasphemer, and, at the very moment, fell dead to the ground.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

479. DEATH OF NESTORIUS.—Nestorius, at the end of his days, found his trials increase with his impiety. His body began to corrupt while still alive, and his tongue, instrument of so many blasphemies against Jesus Christ and His holy Mother, was eaten away with worms. Driven forth from the company of men by these evils, he fell from his horse and was killed.—*Guillois*.

480. DEATH OF VOLTAIRE.—On February 25th, 1758, Voltaire wrote to a friend : “ In twenty years God will be a plaything ! ” On February 25th, 1778, twenty years later, day for day, the arch-blasphemer was seized with the vomiting of blood that brought him to the grave. The violence of his disease soon made him belie his incredulity, and before one of those priests whom he had so often calumniated, he made a retraction of his impieties and scandals ; he then asked for the last Sacraments, but his friends around him prevented any priest approaching, so that he did not receive them. His sneers and blasphemies of half a century seem to have worn out the patience of the Most High. The sick man falls into raging convulsions ; with rolling eyes, pale and trembling, he throws himself into every position, devouring his own excrements, and tearing his flesh to pieces ! That Hell which he had so much ridiculed he now sees open before him ; he groans with terror, and his last sigh is that of a reprobate.—*Gaume*.

481. THE BLASPHEMER IN THE TAVERN.—In the year 1847, some persons were sitting at table in a tavern kept by a man named Levailant. Amongst the working men present there was a weaver who kept swearing continually, and, desirous of showing off, as it were, before the others, commenced denying that there was a God ; from that he proceeded to belch forth all sorts of blasphemies against Him and His religion. Levailant endeavours to soothe away this frenzy by words of mild persuasion, but the weaver answers in a scoffing tone : “ Your God ! I will sup with Him to-night ! ” Alas ! he had scarcely uttered this blasphemy, when he fell on his face, as if struck by lightning. They hastened to raise him up ; the unhappy wretch was dead ! No one doubted but this awfully sudden death was a punishment from Heaven.—*Noël*.

482. THE SCOFFER OF RELIGION.—One Sunday a party were seated around a table in a public-house at the hour of the celebration of High Mass. At the moment when the tolling of the Church bell announced the elevation of the Sacred Host, one of those seated at the table, well known for the irregularity of his life, rose

suddenly and gave vent to the most blasphemous expressions: "I must show you," said he, "what the priest is now doing." And then he commenced a blasphemous mockery of the most august ceremony of Christianity. In derision of the Consecration and the Adoration, he inclined over the table, and then bent the knee, pronouncing at the same time, with a blasphemous tongue, the form of Consecration. Again he made a second genuflection, and, to the amazement of all around, he did not arise, but remained motionless, as if fastened to the floor! At first it was thought that he purposely remained kneeling, but it was soon seen that he was unable to rise unaided, and that he required the support of two persons to rise from his kneeling posture. Everyone became alarmed at what had happened to the blasphemer, and a perfect stillness reigned around. When those present recovered from their terror and surprise, and breathed a little more freely, they began to examine the cause of the extraordinary effect, and it was found that the blasphemer's knee was fractured, and the knee-cap shivered into two parts. The surgeon who examined the fracture said that, in his long experience, he had never seen one like it. All who heard of the accident, and those who were present when it occurred, agreed in thinking that the stroke came from God, in punishment of the blasphemies uttered against Him.—*Noël*.

483. A MOTHER'S CURSE.—S. Augustine tells us that at Cæsarea there were ten children—seven boys and three girls—of an honourable family, who all, upon their mother's curse, were visibly punished by Almighty God. The occasion was this: the eldest of the children abused his mother, not only by injurious words, but also by striking her, and the rest of the children stood by unconcerned at the insult and injury, and said not one word to their brother in her behalf. The woman, impatient of the injury and overwhelmed with grief, ran to the Church to curse her eldest son. The Devil, laying hold of her violent passion, persuaded her to curse them all, to which she easily consented. So, taking hold of the font, with her hair all flying loose and her breasts bare, she prayed to God that all her children might become vagabonds, be banished from their home, and wandering about strange countries, become a terror to mankind. In consequence of this curse, the eldest, being the chief in wickedness, was immediately seized with such a trembling in every part that he alarmed all that looked upon him. The same punishment seized all the rest within the space of one year, one after another, in the order as they were in age. The mother, seeing that

her wicked prayer had so fatal an effect, was not able to support the remorse of her conscience and the reproach of her neighbours, so she went and hanged herself, finishing a miserable life with a more wretched end. The children were so filled with shame and confusion at their mother's sad fate that they could not bear the sight of their neighbours, but left their country, and, turning vagabonds, wandered over much of the Roman Empire. After some time the eldest was cured at Ravenna through the intercession of S. Laurence. The sixth, called Paul, with his sister, Palladia, came to Hippo fifteen days before Easter, being admonished to do so by Augustine; and there, at the tomb of S. Peter, they begged Almighty God, with prayer and tears, that He would be pleased, through the intercession of the Saints, to free them from their trembling; and Paul was cured, though his sister was not.—*De Civitate Dei*.

A rich widow lived in Florence; she had two children whom she loved, even to weakness, never refusing them anything. One day, however, she felt she must refuse their request, which so irritated them that they at last even raised their hand to strike her. The poor mother, in her exasperation, cursed the two children: "May the furies of Hell possess you, and avenge the insult you have offered me!" At that moment the Devil seized them, and like two wild beasts they began to fight together, and almost tore each other to pieces. The afflicted mother, at this sight, ran to S. Zenobius, Bishop of Florence; he, after rebuking her for her sin, prayed for her children, and healed them: he did more, he effected their conversion.—*Delmas*.

484. THE THREE CURSERS.—Eusebius, in his Ecclesiastical History, relates the following passage of three cursers and swearers: "The first wished he might be burnt if what he said, upon oath, was not true; the second prayed that he might be seized with sickness; and the third, that he might be struck blind if what he asserted were false. They soon obtained their respective requests: The first was burnt alive with his whole family; the second was covered with malignant disorders from head to foot; the third, seeing these visible judgments of God, began to repent, and wept so bitterly for his past impiety that he lost the sight of both eyes through the abundance of his tears."

485. THE CURSER AND THE BEANS.—A man who was much addicted to swearing, being at table with some others, went on

cursing and swearing as usual, without the least attempt to restrain himself. Every time he spoke he added an oath, or something equivalent thereto. On the following day he was summoned to the court without knowing for what. He had scarcely made his appearance in the hall when he saw an individual take a little bag from his pocket, and gravely count out some beans on a table. When he had finished, he said to the magistrate: "I hereby prove that this man, whom you see before you, swore 487 times yesterday evening in such an inn." Being asked how he knew so exactly, he answered: "I chanced to have the left pocket of my coat full of beans yesterday, and when I perceived this man curse so often, I took it into my head to drop one into the other pocket every time he uttered an oath. In this way it was that I reckoned 487, and that number is under the truth, because my beans ran out, so that I was unable to continue my count." The accused could not, of course, deny the fact; he paid a large fine, reddened to the eyes with shame, and retired fully resolved to correct so shameful a habit.—*Schmid*.

486. THE NEWS-BOY.—One evening after the tidings of victory during a time of war, the city was filled with excitement and a brisk business was created among the news-dealers. One little boy came into the sitting-room of an hotel to sell his papers. "Papers, sir? Papers?" said he. A man was sitting by; he seemed to take a fancy for the intelligent looks of the boy, and said to him with an oath: "Come here, my lad, you are a fine boy. Let me have a paper," and he drew the boy to his side. The boy gave him the paper and received for it an extra penny, the man swearing again that he was a fine boy. "What is your father's name?" he asked. "My father is dead," said the boy. "Well," said the man, "I must take you as my own boy," and again he swore, "and I'll make a man of you." The boy made no answer, but still seemed rather shy of his new-found friend. "Now, my little fellow," said the man, who kept on using most vulgar words at almost every sentence he spoke, "how would you like to come and live with me, and be a great man some day?" "I think," said the boy quietly, "that I should not like to live with a man that uses such bad language as you do." The man was silent! What could he say? And the little boy went out to sell his papers.—*Ave Maria*.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

"Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day."

487. BLESSED T. MORE'S RESPECT FOR SUNDAY.—Blessed Thomas More, Chancellor of England, was an ardent supporter of Catholic belief. When going to chapel on Sundays he always appeared very well dressed. One day someone asked him how it was he was so particular in his dress on Sunday, and he at once made answer : "I have always dressed myself with care on Sundays, and on festivals, not to please the world, or through respect for any mortal, but through respect and love for God."—*His Life*.

488. PROFANATION OF SUNDAY AN INJUSTICE.—A farmer ridiculed his neighbour because he did not, like himself, work on Sundays, but, on the contrary, attended the Church services. "Suppose," said the neighbour, "I have seven shillings in my pocket, and meeting a poor man on the way I gave him six, what would you say?" "Well," said the farmer, "you would be very generous, and would deserve every thanks." "But if instead of thanking me, he threw me down and robbed me of my last shilling, what then?" "Why, such a man would deserve to be hanged." "Friend," replied the neighbour, "that's your very case : God has given you six days to labour in, and has reserved only the seventh to Himself, and commands us to sanctify it. And you, instead of being thankful for His gifts and respecting His will, you rob Him even of the seventh day. Are the two cases not alike?" The farmer agreed ; he admitted his fault and corrected it.—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

489. MASSES BADLY HEARD.—To obtain some particular grace, a poor woman promised Almighty God to hear a certain number of Masses : each day as she returned home, after Mass, she put a bean into a box, that she might know the number of obligations fulfilled. At length, thinking her promise must be almost completed, she opened her box, and what was her surprise to find only one bean within ! whereupon she gave way to despondency and discouragement, and complained to God that whereas she had so often assisted at Mass, only one was marked. She had the good thought to consult her director, and explain all to him. He in return explained all to her, how no doubt she had been at Mass very regularly, yet without truly hearing Mass, because of her voluntary distractions, her bad behaviour, and perhaps even her

talking to others, all which had destroyed the merit of her works, and accounted for the loss of her beans. The poor woman withdrew, convinced that Providence had made use of this incident to teach her to be more attentive during the Holy Sacrifice, if she wished it to be pleasing to God and meritorious to herself.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

490. RESULT OF IRREVERENCE.—Pope Pius V. had induced a Protestant to enter the Church, and was preparing him for Baptism. One day the latter was assisting at Mass, but, unfortunately, the Faithful then present were greatly wanting in respect, and the Protestant went away indignant, saying: "No, Catholics do not believe in the Mass: they don't believe in the Real Presence: if they did, they would behave differently in the presence of God." And he remained a Protestant.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

491. THE AFRICAN MARTYRS.—During the cruel persecution of the Emperor Maximian, forty-nine Christians had assembled in a private house to assist at the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which was said by the priest Saturninus. The officers of justice broke into the house during the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries, arrested those who were present, and conveyed them before the public tribunal under a guard of soldiers. By order of the judge they were sent in chains to Carthage, the capital city of the province, where they were again examined and cruelly tortured. Being asked by the Proconsul why they had assembled together in spite of the decrees of the Emperor, S. Saturninus answered in the name of the rest: "It is because we are not allowed to be absent from the Sacred Mysteries. This is the commandment and teaching of the Divine Law. This law we faithfully observe, and for it we are ready to lay down our lives." Upon this the judge ordered them to be cast into prison, where those who had survived the tortures inflicted upon them shortly after fell victims to starvation and the hardships of their confinement.—*Butler.*

492. ANYSIA.—A Christian virgin, named Anysia, was one Sunday going to the assembly for Mass, when she was observed by one of Diocletian's guards. "Stop!" he cried out, "where are you going?" Anysia, in fear, made the sign of the cross on herself, and said: "I am a servant of Christ, and am going to the Lord's assembly." "I will take care to prevent you," said the soldier, "and will bring you to sacrifice to the gods." At the same time

he endeavoured to snatch away her veil, and when Anysia strove to prevent him he in a rage drew his sword and plunged it into her heart. The young virgin fell, bathed in her blood, a martyr to the observance of Sunday.—*Gaume*.

493. S. NICON AND THE PLAYERS.—One Sunday, as S. Nicon was giving out Vespers, the governor of the place, named Gregory, amused himself playing ball near the church. S. Nicon, very much displeased at hearing so much noise during the celebration of the Office, left the church and severely reproved the ball-players. Gregory, who had lost the game, flew into a violent passion against the Saint, and drove him out of the city. Then, commencing another game, he was at once struck with paralysis and sharp pains through every part of his body. He employed all the remedies within his power to alleviate his sufferings, but in vain. By the advice of the Bishop of the place, he recalled S. Nicon, and begged his pardon for what he had done. The Saint reproached him not, but immediately cured him; and from that time Gregory became one of the most zealous defenders of virtue and piety.—*His Life: Nov. 26*.

494. THE AVARICIOUS MILLER.—A miller was so possessed of the demon of avarice, that there was scarcely a Sunday on which he did not work. During the High Mass and other Offices he was seen working at his mill. On one particular festival he went as usual and began to work away. In the evening he returned not. His wife was every moment expecting him, but in vain, for he appeared not. When it was becoming rather late, she went out to look for him, and—frightful spectacle!—she beheld him dead and extended along the ground, with his entire body pierced with something like stakes. In setting out from his house in the morning, he complained of there being no wind, and said that he was going to arrange the mill so that an advantage might be taken of the first breeze that would spring up. He waited some hours in expectation of the wind: he saw the country people going to church, and through shame—for he knew he was doing wrong—he hid himself. When they had passed on he stood up and began to watch the clouds. On a sudden the wind sprung up, the wings of the mill turned immediately round, and the points coming in contact with his body he was cast violently some distance from the place in which he was standing, and died in pain and agony! His death produced a great sensation in every part of the country around, for it was considered.

and justly, a stroke from the hands of God, to mark his horror of the profanation of Sunday.—*Noël*.

495. THE AVALANCHE.—In a small village situated on the slopes of the Alps, there lived a man who was notorious for his open and scandalous profanation of the Sunday. So far from attending Divine Service in his parish church, it was his custom, as soon as the Sunday dawned, to set out with some companions, whom he had misled by his evil example, to hunt the chamois on the mountain side. In vain did his parish priest endeavour, by every means that zeal and charity could suggest, to reclaim him from so unbecoming a practice. It was all to no purpose, and at length, seeing that the miserable man continued obstinate in his wickedness, the zealous pastor threatened him with the anger of God in case he did not desist from scandalizing the neighbourhood by his public impiety. Shortly after, he set out as usual for the chase, one Sunday morning, accompanied by two of his comrades. A heavy fall of snow had taken place during the night, but this gave the party little concern, as it served to render the traces of the game more visible, and to increase their prospect of a good day's sport. They had not proceeded far, when the two companions of the unhappy man, who were following in his track, perceived to their horror that, wherever he trod, his footsteps were marked with blood. Unable to account for the strange occurrence, and struck with a secret fear of the impending judgment of God, they both united in imploring him to discontinue the expedition for that day at least, informing him of what they had witnessed. He refused, however, telling them, with a laugh, that the blood on his track was an omen of a good day's sport. Whatever may have been the cause of this extraordinary occurrence, it exercised a wholesome influence over his companions, who, touched by Divine grace, began to retrace their steps. They had not proceeded far when they heard a noise as it were of thunder behind their backs, and looking hastily round beheld the profaner of the Sabbath carried away by an avalanche, which came rolling down the side of the mountain. They ran with all speed to the village for assistance, and the inhabitants flocked out to search for the unhappy man. It was not, however, till some days after that his body was discovered in a neighbouring ravine, buried many feet beneath the surface of the snow.—*Gibson*.

496. THE PEASANT AND THE AXE.—A labourer of Auvergne, having yoked two oxen to his plough, feared not, to the great

scandal of his neighbours, to go to work in his field on the Sabbath Day. Whilst employed at this forbidden work his ploughshare broke. Instead of desisting from his criminal undertaking, he took his axe to mend it; it was then that God punished him in a most remarkable manner. He permitted that the labourer's hand should close convulsively on the handle of the axe. Notwithstanding all that could be done to take the axe from his hand, it remained the same, so that for two whole years the unhappy man bore that visible mark of the wrath of God. But at length, at the end of that time, he conceived the happy idea of going to pray in the Church of the famous martyr, S. Julian, at Brioude, now in the Department of the Upper Loire. He passed in prayer the night between Saturday and Sunday, according to the custom of that time, and, on the following day, in presence of all the people, his hand was cured; it opened miraculously of itself and let fall the piece of the axe-handle which for two years had remained in its grasp.—*S. Gregory of Tours.*

497. DECLARATION OF THE COUNCIL OF PARIS.—In the Sixth Council, held at Paris in the year 829, the Bishops, after condemning marketing, bargaining, and all country business on the Sundays, add: "There are many who have been struck with lightning for working on these days; of many of these we have been eye-witnesses ourselves, and of many more we have heard by the relation of others. There are also others who have been punished by a sudden contraction of their nerves, and more have been struck dead by fire, and for their sins, their bodies and their very bones have in a moment been reduced to ashes. Besides, many other terrible judgments there have been, and still are, whereby it is sufficiently declared how much God is offended by the profanation of the Sabbath Day."—*Council of Paris.*

498. THE MERCHANT AND THE ARTISAN.—At the beginning of this century there lived at Lyons a poor shoemaker named Berthier, who was to be seen working at his bench every Sunday morning. In the same street, and opposite to his house, dwelt a wealthy merchant, who, being a good Catholic, was grieved to see his poorer neighbour neglecting the duties of his religion, and determined, if possible, to reclaim him. Accordingly one day he spoke to him on the subject, and represented to him how much he offended God by working on Sunday. The shoemaker replied that it was necessity which compelled him to work. "You that are rich," added he, "can well afford to be idle one day in the week, but as

for me, I could neither finish my work nor support my family, if I did not labour on the Sunday." "My good friend," replied the merchant, "all I ask of you is to give my advice a fair trial. But I do not wish that you should be the loser by so doing. Promise me that you will do no work, and will attend Mass upon Sunday for the next six months, and I engage to make good all the losses you sustain by following my advice. Do you accept my offer?" "Willingly," replied Berthier. "It is much easier for me to rest than to work, so that, as I am not in any case to be the loser, it is a bargain." At the end of the six months the merchant paid another visit to the shoemaker. "My friend," said he, "I have been delighted to see that you have kept your promise. Tell me, now, the amount of your losses, for I have engaged to make them good." "Ah, sir," replied Berthier, "it is I that am in *your* debt, not you in *mine*, for I have been the gainer by our agreement." "In what way?" said the merchant. "I will tell you," replied the shoemaker. "At first I found a little inconvenience in not having my work completed, but as I was determined to keep up to my promise, I learned to push on matters during the week, and not to undertake more than I could accomplish. Soon I found that, by resting on the Sunday, I was so much refreshed and strengthened in body and mind as to be able to do as much work in the six days as I had before done in the seven. Meanwhile, I attended Church regularly with my family, and there heard many excellent instructions, which showed me the danger in which I had been of losing my soul for a paltry gain. Accordingly, I began to prepare for my Confession, which I had long neglected. I made it to the best of my power, and received Holy Communion. I need not say that the peace and joy which I have felt since is far beyond any temporal gain; but indeed I have lost nothing, for, somehow or other, I am quite as well off as before." "I am delighted to hear it," said the merchant; "but tell me how are matters going on now between yourself and your wife, for formerly, as everyone knows, there was not a day without a quarrel?" "It is too true," said Berthier, "and I used to think that my poor wife was always in fault; but when I became better instructed I began to see that she was not always wrong, neither was I always right; so when we went to Confession we made it up to bear with each other, and live peaceably for the time to come. Since then, peace and happiness have reigned in our house, and we have now time to devote ourselves to the care of our children."—*Power*.

499. THIRTY THOUSAND FRANCS' WORTH OF JEWELS.—Of two merchants, one of whom closes his shop on Sundays and goes to Mass, whilst the other buys and sells as on weekdays, which is he who best deserves our confidence? I am going to tell you. When the Allies—that is to say, the Austrians, Russians, and Prussians—invaded France in 1814, they made a considerable stay in the country, and especially in Paris: some of them availed themselves of the opportunity of purchasing some of those rare and costly works of art for which France is so famous. A wealthy Prussian officer, amongst others, wished to buy jewels for a large amount. He presents himself one Sunday to one of the first jewellers in the city. “Sir, I should like to see some of the finest ornaments you have in gold and jewels.” “I can let you see them, sir, but I cannot sell them to you to-day.” “You cannot? and why not, pray?” “Because my stores and workshops are always closed on Sundays, and I would not, on any account, depart from that rule.” “Sir, I understand your Catholic scruples, but I leave the city to-morrow, and if you will not sell me the jewels, I must go elsewhere.” “I cannot help it.” “Well! sir, I have but one word to say, and perhaps it may help you to a decision: I intend to purchase jewels to the amount of twenty-five or thirty thousand francs.” “You do me wrong, sir, if you imagine that that sum will tempt me; it is undoubtedly a fine offer, but I confess I like better to remain faithful to my religious principles.” “In that case, sir, as my departure is fixed for to-morrow, I am forced, however much I may regret it, to purchase of someone else what you refuse to sell me.” So saying, the officer bowed and withdrew. He had only gone a little way when a thought occurred to him: “Now here is a jeweller who is very strict in observing the Sabbath, and his strictness annoys me not a trifle; but if this man has firmly refused to sell me his jewels for any amount of money, I have good reason to believe that he would not deceive me in the price, weight, or value of his costly wares; whilst another that will not hesitate to sell on Sunday for the sake of making money will not scruple to cheat me in his merchandise.” Struck by this reflection, the officer returns home, relates what had happened, puts off his journey for one day, and going on the morrow to the honest jeweller, with some others of his friends, they made purchases to the amount of forty or fifty thousand francs.—*Catholic Anecdotes.*

500. S. ALPHONSUS' LESSON.—When S. Alphonsus Liguori was an old man, and could not leave his room, his greatest grief was

that he could no longer go to visit Jesus present in the holy tabernacle. "Do you not know," he used to say, "that you may obtain more by a quarter of an hour's prayer before the altar than by all the other devotions of the day put together?"—*His Life : August 2.*

501. EXAMPLES OF THE SAINTS.—S. Elizabeth of Hungary was accustomed, even in her childhood, to visit Jesus Christ often in the Blessed Sacrament. If she found the Church closed, she would affectionately kiss the lock of the door and the walls of the Church for love of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist.—S. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi made every day thirty visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament.—S. Aloysius spent in the Church, at the foot of the tabernacle, all the time which was not occupied by any duty.—S. Francis Xavier, after preaching and performing all the other heavy labours of his arduous mission, used to go at night and take his repose before his Divine Master in the humble tabernacle of the Church.—S. Francis of Assisi never undertook any work without first going into the Church to ask the blessing of Jesus in his Holy Sacrament.—*Lives of the Saints.*

502. THE TWO VESSELS.—Our Lord one day appeared to Sister Paula, a holy nun who dwelt in Naples, with two vessels in His hands, the one of gold, and the other of silver. As she was wondering what this could signify, Jesus said unto her : " My daughter, I keep in the golden vessel all your Sacramental Communion, and in the silver one your Spiritual Communion."—*Chisholm.*

503. S. JANE OF THE CROSS.—Our Lord once told S. Jane of the Cross that as often as she made a Spiritual Communion she received a grace similar to that which she received when she made a Sacramental Communion.—*Her Life.*

504. THE GREEK ORATOR.—A Greek orator was one day speaking before a large audience on a very important subject, concerning the welfare of the State. His words, however, were but coldly received ; he therefore left his subject, and began speaking of a recent incident that had come to his knowledge. " An Athenian," he said, " wishing to travel, hired a donkey. As he proceeded he got very hot, so got off, and sat down in the donkey's shadow. But the owner objected, saying that in letting him the donkey he had not let the shadow, which, therefore, belonged to himself. The two men got very angry over the subject, came to blows, and

at length fell into the hands of the police." At this point the orator descended from the tribune, when the whole audience clamoured out to know the result of the men's dispute. "What!" said the speaker, in a severe tone, "you take interest in the matter of a donkey and its shadow, and yet you refuse to discuss the welfare of the country! What folly!"—To how many might a similar reproach be made? They listen to all manner of topics, but few care to hear the word of God on the affairs of salvation!
—*Catéchisme en Exemples*

505. BROTHER AND SISTER.—An officer on leave, on reaching home, was asked one evening by his sister to take her to Church to hear some famous preacher. The officer had but little religion, and reluctantly consented, and then only on condition that once his sister got her seat, he should come away. This was agreed to: but once in the Church, the crowd was so great that even he was unable to make his way out, so with much grumbling he had to remain. But the truths of religion spoken from the pulpit touch his heart, he is converted, and returns home with his sister a fervent Catholic once more.—*Mullois*.

505A. S. AUGUSTINE'S EXPERIENCE.—A friend of S. Augustine was one day walking near the city of Triers with three of his gay companions, when two of them, who were officers in the Emperor's army, chanced to enter a cottage which was the dwelling-place of some devout servants of God. Here they perceived upon the table a copy of the life of the great S. Anthony the hermit, which one of them opened through curiosity. Attracted, says S. Augustine, by something which caught his eye, he began to read, and reading, to admire, and admiring, to burn with the desire of imitating so noble and heroic an example. At length, inflamed with what he read, and burning with a holy zeal, he cried out to his companion: "Tell me, I pray, with all the pains we take, what does our ambition aspire to? Have we any greater hopes at court than to arrive at the friendship and favour of the Emperor? And when this is obtained, how long will it last? But behold, if I please, I can become this moment the friend and favourite of God, and remain so for ever." So saying, he paused: but having read a little further, he again exclaimed: "Behold, now I bid adieu to former hopes, and am fully resolved to have no other pursuit but that of serving God. As for you, if you do not imitate my example, at least do not hinder my resolution." The other replied ~~that~~, so far from

hindering him, he wished to stand by his side, in so noble a warfare. Accordingly, taking leave of their companions, they remained in the cottage; whereupon receiving news of which, the two ladies to whom they were engaged, consecrated their virginity to God. This example, which was related to S. Augustine at a time when his mind was still wavering between the force of truth and the violence of his passions, raised immediately a mighty conflict within his breast. Agitated by his feelings, and drawn by the grace of God, he retired into the garden to pray. Here he poured forth the anguish of his heart with bitter sighs and tears, when suddenly he heard the voice of a child frequently repeating these words: "Take and read, take and read." Upon this, rising up in amazement, he went to fetch the book of S. Paul's Epistles, which he had left hard by, and opening it, he lighted upon the words: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh and its concupiscences." He read no further, nor had he need, for at the end of these lines a new gleam of confidence and security streamed into his heart, and all the darkness of his former hesitation was dispelled. He immediately went in and told the good news to his mother, S. Monica, who was transported with joy. He then put himself under the care of S. Ambrose, who shortly after conferred upon him the Sacrament of Baptism.--*Butler*.

505B. S. IGNATIUS.—The character of S. Ignatius was open, generous, and courageous; he was, however, vain and full of ambitious thoughts. He ardently longed to distinguish himself in the service of the King of Spain, and to gain for himself the esteem and applause of the world. An opportunity soon occurred to put his courage to the test. The city of Pampeluna was besieged by the French army, and, owing to the death of his superior officer, it fell to the lot of Ignatius to direct the defence. On this occasion he gave proof of great and noble qualities. Though at the head of but a small force, he scorned every proposal to surrender, encouraged the drooping spirits of the soldiers, and led them in person to attack the besiegers. In the engagement he was wounded by a cannon-ball, which shattered his leg, and he was carried back helpless to the fortress. After the surrender of the city, Ignatius was permitted to retire to his own home, the Castle of Loyola, where he remained for many months helpless and confined to his bed. To while away the time, he desired his attendants to bring him some romances or tales of chivalry, but they brought him, however, a volume of the Lives of the Saints, which they had met with in

their search. Ignatius at first laid it impatiently aside, as ill-suited to his taste ; but seeing that no other book could be procured, he at length opened and began to read it. By degrees his attention became awakened, and he could not help admiring the noble generosity of men who had sacrificed fortune, worldly honour, and even life itself in the service of God. He soon began to compare their lives with his own, to reflect on the emptiness and vanity of all that passes with time, and to understand how wisely the Saints had acted in preferring the service of the King of Heaven to that of an earthly monarch. From that time Ignatius resolved to occupy himself no longer with the vain pursuit of earthly glory, but to devote himself to the great work of obtaining the victory over his own passions and promoting the glory of his Heavenly Master. Accordingly, upon his recovery he retired into solitude, where he gave himself up to the practice of penance and prayer. Soon after he laid the foundation of the illustrious Order of the Jesuits, the members of which, by the great works which they have performed for the education of youth and the preaching of the Gospel, have so well fulfilled those words which S. Ignatius took as the rule and motto of his life : *Ad majorem Dei Gloriam*—"All to the greater glory of God."—*His Life : July 31.*

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

"Honor thy father and thy mother."

506. THE MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER—There was a rich merchant in Paris who led a very worldly life, and entirely neglected his religious duties. His wife died a few years after his marriage, leaving him two daughters. As soon as they were of age to be sent to school, he sent them to a convent to be educated by the nuns. In the convent they received an education which would fit them for the position of life they were to occupy in the world ; but they also received that which is of infinitely greater importance, a thorough Christian training. When the elder daughter was sixteen years of age, her father took her home to attend to his household affairs. In this new position she remained as faithful to her religious duties as she had been when in the convent ; but she had to conceal many of her practices of devotion from her father, lest he might be angry with her. One morning her father happened to go out very early, and met his daughter coming along the street. "Where have you been so early in the morning?" he said to her

in a harsh tone. "My dear father, I was at Holy Mass, where I prayed much for you." "Do you go often to Communion?" he said in a still more angry voice. "Yes, I go very often; for it is there that I get strength and courage to accomplish my daily duties at home, and to please you as I am endeavouring to do." At this answer her father hung down his head and said nothing. When he raised it up again there were tears in his eyes, and he said in a voice choked with emotion: "O! what a happiness it is for me to have a daughter like you. Go to Mass and to your Communion as often as you like, my child, and continue to pray for me." That man did not at once become a fervent Christian, but the prayers of his good daughter soon accomplished the change.—How many children might obtain the conversion of their parents if they would only pray for them!—*Hortus Pastorum*.

507. HEROIC SELF-SACRIFICE.—The son of a rich Liverpool merchant, and student at Ushaw College, was fifteen years of age when he offered to God the sacrifice of his life for the conversion of his father. Early in Holy Week, 1861, he fell ill, and every remedy failed to effect any improvement. He received the last Sacraments on Good Friday, and died that same evening; and his father, falling on his knees by the side of his dead son, looks once more on the calm and placid countenance, and rises up fully resolved to save his soul—the result of the prayer of his child.—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

508. GRENELLE POWDER MAGAZINE.—In 1794 a frightful disaster occurred at Grenelle, near Paris. A powder-magazine, which contained an immense quantity of gunpowder, suddenly exploded. It shook Paris and its suburbs like an earthquake; but its effects were horrible in Grenelle, where nearly 2,000 persons are said to have been killed. The whole neighbourhood was thrown into consternation, and each one trembled for those near and dear to him. A boy, twelve years old, who was boarding three miles away from there, and whose mother resided only a little way from Grenelle, was so frightened by this disaster that he ran on foot, without a hat, and half naked, to make sure that his mother still lived. It seemed to his troubled imagination that he was every moment going to see her disfigured corpse. But, oh happiness! the first person he met at Vaugirard was that good mother. He throws himself into her arms, covers her with tears and kisses, presses her to his heart, and all that without being able to utter a single word,

so much was he overcome with joy. After resting himself for a few moments, and wiping away the sweat that streamed from every part of his body, he remembered that he had left school without telling anyone, and thought he must return immediately. He hastily takes some refreshment, and hurries back to tell his teachers why he had gone home without permission. Alas ! it was God's will to reward him immediately for his filial love ; arriving at the school, he is seized with fever, goes to bed, and expires a few days after, sincerely regretted by his teachers, and still more so by his mother whom he had loved so tenderly.—*Guillois*.

509. LEGACY OF A DECEIVED FATHER.—A rich old man, named Conaxa, had been so imprudently kind as to divide his wealth between his two sons during his own lifetime. He soon perceived that they had no longer the same respect for him that they used to have ; they were not ashamed even to tell him frequently that he was living too long, and that they considered him a burden. The unhappy old man, in despair at such base conduct on the part of children for whom he had done so much, asked advice of a sincere friend, whom he still had. “ You have done very wrong, my dear friend, in acting as you did ; nevertheless, there is one way of extricating yourself : contrive to make your children believe that there are some debts still owing to you. You understand ? ” Accordingly, some days after, whilst Conaxa was at table with his two sons, a farmer comes in to pay him, as he said, *the remains of an old debt*. It was a big bag of silver lent him by his friend. Conaxa did not seem at all surprised, took the bag, put it away to count over at his leisure, gave the farmer something to drink, and gave not the slightest reason to suspect the trick he was playing. No sooner did his sons find out that he had not divided all his wealth between them than they immediately became as kind and attentive as they had before been harsh and uncivil. Conaxa died some years after, leaving a heavy box, which his greedy heirs hastened to open. What did they find in it ? Bags full of stones and pebbles, with a little note to the following effect : “ *I bequeath these stones to stone fathers who divide their wealth amongst their children before their death.* ” I leave you to guess who found themselves fooled and over-reached ; did not the two ungrateful sons well deserve it ?—*Filassier*.

510. THE SON OF CRÆSUS.—Cyrus the Great, during the war with Cræsus, King of Lydia, laid siege to the city of Sardis, and soon

succeeded in carrying it by assault. A body of his soldiers, eager to distinguish themselves by the capture of the King, rushed to the palace of Cræsus, who soon fell into their hands. As, however, he was in disguise, they failed to recognize him. Enraged at their disappointment, one of their number was about to plunge his sword into the breast of their captive, when Aty, son of Cræsus, who had been dumb from his birth, perceiving his father's danger, ran to the spot, and bursting by a mighty effort the bonds which nature had imposed upon him, cried out: "Hold thy hand, barbarian, it is the King, my father!"—*Rollin*.

511. BLESSED THOMAS MORE'S RESPECT FOR HIS FATHER.—Stapleton tells us that Blessed Thomas More entertained such high respect for his parents that he never left his house, even in the days of his power and great influence, without having first demanded, on his knees, the blessing of his aged father.

512. LOVE OF SONS FOR THEIR MOTHER.—A poor widow, who had been deprived of the use of her limbs, felt the most lively regret at not being able to go to Mass on Sundays. When Sunday came round, she invariably said to her sons: "What a happiness would it be to me if I could go to Church and hear Mass! but I cannot go, for I am old, infirm, and the road is long"; and as she said these words, the poor woman shed tears and fetched a deep sigh; then she raised to her lips the cross of her beads, which she was telling with the greatest piety and recollection. Her two sons, who entertained a filial affection towards their old parent, soon contrived to satisfy their mother's pious longings. They attached to her old armchair two poles, and by this means they carried the poor woman to Church. As they entered, for the first time, the road to the Church, carrying the old mother in her chair, the people on the road loaded them with their blessings, and even cast flowers on their path. The pastor of the place, hearing of this loving invention of filial love, ascended the pulpit, and took for his text these words of Deuteronomy: "Honour thy father and mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee." His discourse was full of unction, and produced a thrilling effect upon the congregation. He compared the flowers cast on the path of the two sons, when bearing their mother to Church, to the benedictions which God would soon shower down on them.—*Guillois*.

513. THE UNDUTIFUL SON.—A man of property had an only son whom he loved tenderly. Upon his son's marriage he gave up all

he had to him on condition that he would afford him a home for the rest of his life. The old man soon became infirm, but instead of bearing patiently with the infirmities which often accompany old age, his daughter-in-law expressed herself as highly disgusted with him for his want of cleanliness at his meals. One day, when they were to have company, she went so far as to tell her husband that she would not sit down to table unless the old man was made to take his dinner in the kitchen. Her husband was so weak and unmindful of what was due to his aged parent as to consent to this heartless proposal. The old man was cut to the quick at his son's unfilial conduct; he wept bitterly, and declared that he would sooner go and beg his bread than remain any longer with such undutiful children. His little grandson, hearing what he said, and seeing him go upstairs to fetch a blanket to put over his shoulders, for it was in the depth of winter, ran to his father and told him that grandpapa was gone to get a blanket to wrap himself in that he might go and beg his bread. "Let him go if he likes," replied the unfeeling son. "But don't let him take a whole blanket," said the child. "And why so?" asked his father. "Because I shall want the other half for you," replied the boy, "when *you* grow old, and I turn you out to beg your bread." These words went to the heart of the father, and fearing that his undutiful conduct might one day be imitated by his own son, he ran after the old man, humbly begged his pardon, and ever after treated him with proper respect and affection.—*Mrs. Herbert.*

514. BENEDICT XI. AND HIS MOTHER.—The illustrious Pope Benedict XI. was the son of a humble shepherd. When he was raised to the Pontifical throne, word was spread through Rome that his mother had come to visit him, and the whole city went out to meet her in honour of her son who was the Pope. The good woman put on the humble dress belonging to her lowly station, and appeared before him. No sooner had she entered, than the Pope, at once rising from his throne, left his Cardinals, and went to meet her. When he drew near to her, he threw his arms around her and wept, as he said: "There is no one in the world who could love his mother as much as I do mine." This beautiful example is handed down to us to show that in whatever condition of life our parents are, it is our duty to honour them.—*Life of Benedict XI.*

515. DJEZZAR AND THE DISRESPECTFUL SON.—There is told of the Pasha Djazzar, a famous Turkish tyrant, who terrified all Syria

by his crimes from 1775 to 1804, an anecdote which proves that he had not totally adjoined the sentiments of humanity. This incident, quite interesting in its way, is, moreover, a good lesson for unnatural sons. A young Christian, in whom Djazzar took some interest, was soon to be married. The best room of the house in which he dwelt was on the second story; it was occupied by his father, a man venerable by his age and entitled to respect on account of his infirmities. To please his future wife, the young man civilly asked his father to give up his room to her for some weeks, promising to give it back to him a little after the marriage. The father consented, and went down to the ground-floor, which was neither healthy nor agreeable. At the end of a month he asked his room back, but they begged him to leave it a little longer. He consented, but when he came to ask it at the appointed time his son refused to give it up, and went even so far as to abuse his poor father. The whole neighbourhood was indignant at this proceeding. Djazzar is informed of it by his spies; he sends for the son, and receives him before the assembled divan. "Of what religion art thou?" said the angry Pasha. The terrified young man made no answer. The Pasha repeats his question; then he answers that he is of the Christian religion. "Indeed? Well, make the Christian's sign." The culprit made the sign of the cross without saying anything. "Pronounce the words." "*In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*" And so saying he, of course, raised his right hand as usual to his forehead, then to his chest, and so on. "Ah!" cried Djazzar, in a terrible voice, "so the Father is above, and the Son below? Go, wretch, to thy house, and if it is not so there in a quarter of an hour, thy head shall soon roll in the dust." It is unnecessary to say that the young man went to ask his father's pardon, and made haste to restore order in his house, because he knew that Djazzar's threats were not idle ones.—*Noël.*

516. S. PAUL, THE SIMPLE.—In days long gone by there lived in the desert, with the great S. Anthony, a holy but simple monk called Paul. Whatever his superior told him to do he did at once, without ever asking the reason of the command. S. Anthony, knowing that obedience is one of the virtues most pleasing to God, and seeing his disciple anxious to practise it, resolved to exercise him continually in it that he might gain more and more merit for Heaven. Sometimes he told him to take a pitcher, go to the river and fill it with water, then bring it to him. When this was done

he poured it on the ground and told him to go for more. Paul did this with great pleasure, and without showing any sign of being annoyed at what his Superior had done. At other times he told him to make a basket, as the monks of those days were in the habit of doing. Paul made it with the greatest care, and brought it to S. Anthony. As soon as he looked at it he told his disciple to take it all to pieces and make it over again. Paul did so joyfully, without saying a word. It was in this way he attained to the glory of Heaven.—*Lives of the Fathers.*

517. S. PACOMIUS AND THE COOK.—S. Pacomius, visiting one day the houses governed by him, arrived at one, the name of which I do not remember. As soon as he entered, the abbot, the monks, and all the other members of the Community, hastened to gather round him to do him honour. Amongst the inmates of the house were some children who were boarders, being brought up in the fear of God and in the practice of the virtues proper to their age. One of them, with the simplicity of a child, said to S. Pacomius, as soon as he saw him: “Ah! Father, you do well to come, for we have had very little to eat since your last visit; there is nothing cooked for us any more in the kitchen.” “Never mind, my dear child, I will take the matter in hand, and see if we cannot have something cooked for you.” Thereupon the holy abbot sent for the cook, and asked him how it was that he no longer cooked either vegetables or any other food for the monks. “Father, I did so for some time, but I soon observed that these good brothers touched nothing that was cooked; they contented themselves with olives, or some other fruit, and took nothing else. Then I began to think that it was no use cooking for nothing, and, as the young brother who assists me was quite able to do all that was necessary for the refectory and the kitchen, I employed myself in making mats like the other religious.” “And how many have you made since then?” “Father, I have made about five hundred.” No sooner had S. Pacomius seen the fine pile of mats than he ordered it to be set on fire; turning, then, to the negligent cook, he said to him, with visible emotion: “I despise all that you have done, because you have acted contrary to the obedience due to Superiors. You were charged with preparing food for the brethren; it was your duty to have done so with the utmost care. If they are mortified, and do not touch what you have cooked, it is their business; yours is to practise obedience.” After this reprimand all went well, because exact obedience was henceforth the rule.—*Lives of the Fathers*

(NOTE: The gap in the text found at this point represents the beginning of the Appendix of Volume II of *The Catechist*. It will be quickly seen, however, that the next numbered story follows immediately from the preceding page, where the Appendix section of Volume I ends, and that no stories have been omitted from the story-section Appendix of *The Catechist*—which comprises the body of this book.)

518. THE PUPIL AND THE MASTER.—The holy abbot Arsenius, before he left the world and retired into the desert, led an innocent and saintly life at the Court of Theodosius the Great, who had entrusted him with the care of the education of his children. This important office Arsenius discharged with the utmost zeal and fidelity, and the young princes profited no less by the example than by the instructions of their virtuous master. It happened one day that the Emperor entered the room while the lessons were going on, and found Arsenius standing, while his pupils sat listening to his instructions. Theodosius hereupon reproved his sons as guilty of a want of proper respect to their master, and in punishment took from them for a time their marks of royal dignity. He then bade them rise from their seats, and invited Arsenius to be seated and continue his lesson, begging him to excuse the thoughtlessness of his sons, who had forgotten the respect which must always be paid, even by princes, to those who have the charge of their instruction.—*Butler*.

519. A FATHER'S STORY.—There was, not long ago, a little boy who was preparing to make his first Communion. A few days before that great event the child went to his father to ask his pardon for all the faults he had ever committed. His father said to him that he was very well pleased with him, that he had always been a very good boy, and that he hoped for the rest of his life he would continue to be always as dutiful. Let us continue the

account of what then happened in the father's own words. "The child looked at me with tears in his eyes, and at last threw his arms round my neck. I myself was moved to tears. I saw from the first that he wanted to ask me for something, and I also knew what it was; but I must confess I had the harshness to refuse to listen to his petition. I said to him, 'Go away now, my boy, I am at present very busy; come back to me to-night or to-morrow and tell me what it is, and if your mother thinks it right I will give it to you.' The boy, in confusion at my abrupt answer, had not the courage to ask me again, and after once more embracing me, went to the little room in which he slept, which was next to the one we were in at the time. I was angry at myself for making the boy so sad, especially since I knew very well what he wanted was for my own good; so I rose up and followed him to see what he would do. I went to his room, and as he had left the door a little open, I looked in without being observed. I saw him kneeling before an image of the Blessed Virgin praying with the utmost fervour, and shedding tears. Ah! I then felt for the first time the great blessing God had bestowed on me in giving me a child so good and pious as he was. I went back to my own room, sat down at my desk, and buried my head in my hands, and was almost weeping. When I lifted up my eyes my little boy was at my side, his face covered with smiles, in which I thought I saw a mixture of fear. 'Papa,' he said, as he looked earnestly into my face, 'the favour that I am going to ask you cannot be put off till to-morrow, and my mother is pleased that I should get what I am going to ask. This is what I am going to ask: Will you come with mother and me to Holy Communion on the day of my first Communion? Now, papa, don't refuse me; do this for the sake of the good God who loves you so much.' I could not resist the appeal of my little boy, especially as I felt within me something telling me to go, so I pressed him to my breast and answered: 'Yes, yes, my darling, I will go with you. Come, take me any time you like, even this very night if you choose, and lead me to your confessor and say to him: "I have brought my father with me: he wants to make his confession." '—*Mullois*.

520. THE DYING FATHER.—There was once a little girl whose father lay at home very ill. She was only ten years old, but she had gone to Sunday-school from the time she began to walk, and had always paid great attention to the instructions that were given there. When she saw that her father was so ill, she was filled with

grief, for he had not been to the Sacraments for years, and she knew that if he did not repent before he died she could never see him in Heaven. So she went to his room, and put her arms round his neck. "Oh, papa," she said, "you are very ill, and the Catechism says that if a person has been neglecting his duties, and dies without repenting, he cannot get to Heaven; and you know that you have not been to the Sacraments for a very long time, and it is that which makes me so sad. For I do love you so much, and I want to see you one day in Heaven." Tears came into the eyes of the dying man. "Run, my own dear child," he cried out—"run as fast as you can and bring the priest; tell him that your father is dying, and desires to receive the last Sacraments." The little girl ran immediately, and in a short time the priest stood at his bedside. The dying man made his confession, and received the last Sacraments with the greatest devotion. He did not die for some time afterwards, but when the end came, his little daughter wept much for him, but this time there was much joy in the midst of her sorrow, for she knew that her dear father was with God in Heaven, and that she would one day meet him there.—*Chisholm*.

521. "BE KIND TO YOUR MOTHER."—Frederick, King of Prussia, one day rang his bell, and, no one answering, he opened the door and found his page fast asleep in his elbow-chair. He advanced towards him, and was about to waken him when he perceived a letter hanging out of his pocket. Curiosity prompted him to know what it contained; so he took it out and read it. It was a letter from the young man's mother, in which she thanked him for having sent her a part of his money to relieve her misery, and telling him that God would reward him for his filial affection. The King, after reading it, took out a purse full of money and slipped it, along with the letter, into the page's pocket. Returning to his chamber, he rang the bell so loudly that it awoke the page, who instantly made his appearance. "You have had a sound sleep," said the King. The page was at a loss how to excuse himself, and, putting his hand into his pocket by chance, to his utter astonishment found there a purse. He took it out, and turned pale when he saw what it was. "What is that?" said the King; "what is the matter?" "Ah, sire," said the young man, throwing himself on his knees, "someone is trying to ruin me. I know nothing of this money that I have just found in my pocket, nor do I know how it has been put there." "My young friend," said Frederick, "God often does great things for us even in our sleep. Send that

to your mother, salute her on my part, and assure her that I will take care of both her and you."—*Ave Maria.*

522. GUSTAVUS AND THE PEASANT GIRL.—As Gustavus III., King of Sweden, was one day passing through a village, he noticed a young girl drawing water from a well. Gustavus walked up to her and asked a drink. She immediately gave it to him. "Amiable girl," said the King to her, "if you wish to accompany me to Stockholm, I will procure you a more suitable occupation." "However desirous I may be to better my condition," answered the girl, "I could not for a moment entertain your kind proposal. My mother is old and infirm, and I am the only one she has to assist and support her; she lives in this cabin." And the King entered the miserable dwelling, and, seeing the poor woman stretched on a wretched bed, "You are much to be pitied," he said to her. "I would be," she replied, "were it not for this good child, who in every way tries to help me and prolong my days: may God reward her!" "Continue thus to be kind to your mother," said the Prince to the girl, handing her at the same time a purse of gold; "and in a short time I will obtain you more. Adieu: I am your King." On his return to Stockholm, the monarch conferred on the mother a pension for life, and after her death it was to revert to the daughter.—*Schmid.*

523. A FATHER'S OPPOSITION.—A wealthy man had an only son whom he destined to perpetuate his name. The son, however, feeling he had a religious vocation, after persevering efforts, was at length received. The father followed him to the novitiate, and by entreaties and tears succeeded in bringing him back to the world. After awhile, the son again felt the call of God to religion, and he entered a second time, and a second time in like manner was drawn back to the world. The father now wished to have him married, and had already found him a partner; the son, however, as was natural, made a choice of his own. This produced discord and mischief, which went to such a length that one day he killed his father, with the result that the son died on the scaffold!—How many evils follow from opposing a religious vocation, which is sometimes too little appreciated, even in Christian families!—*Catechisme en Exemples.*

524. MADAME DE CHEVERUS.—The mother of Cardinal de Cheverus was one of those rare women who perfectly understand the education of youth: to her mind, the simplest and most Christian system was the best. By example, as well as by word, she

inspired her children with the fear of God, with a love of study and work, with compassion for the poor and suffering. She insisted on obedience being shown both to the children's instructors and to herself; but she carefully avoided reprimands which embitter rather than correct. She always taught them to fear, as the greatest punishment, exclusion from the common family prayers; and this fear kept them all from evil.—*Guillois*.

525. "YOU MUST BE A SAINT!"—There lived about the middle of the thirteenth century, in Brittany, two pious Christians. God blessed their union by giving them a son, whom they called Yves, and whom they resolved to bring up in piety and the knowledge of God's holy law. The mother especially watched over him, and ceased not to say to him, over and over again: "Yves, you must be a Saint." The child, hearing these words so often, said to her one day: "Mother, what is a Saint?" "A Saint, my child, is one whom God has made to be for ever with Himself in Heaven. A Saint is one who loves God above all things, and His Son Jesus Christ: one who keeps all the commandments of God, that he may be with Jesus Christ in Heaven." The child used to listen to these lessons of his mother with his hands joined, and his eyes fixed on hers, as if drinking in every word she said, and when she had ended he used to say to her: "My mother, I must be a Saint; I will love God with my whole heart, and all my lifetime I will try to please Him." His father's lessons were also full of heavenly wisdom: "My child, your mother has taught you how to love God, I will teach you now how to love your neighbour for God's sake." And he would take his little boy with him in his missions of charity towards his neighbour, and show him those outward deeds of virtue that mark the Christian before men, and make him glorify his Father who is in Heaven. And thus the holy child grew up a Saint.—*Life of S. Yves*.

526. A MOTHER'S ADVICE.—A pious mother, who had brought up her son with great care, seeing him about to leave her to enter the world, in order that he might earn for himself a livelihood, desired to give him a lesson which he might never forget. For two days before the time of his departure, she gave him nothing to eat but sweet food and other dainties. At first the young man was pleased with it, and thought that his mother had given it to him as a mark of her affection, since he was so soon to be separated from her. But when the evening of the first day had come, he asked her to give him some solid food, as he had already begun to be

dissatisfied with the sweet food she had given him. But she told him that he must be content with what she had placed before him. The next day, as he received the same kind of food, he became so disgusted with it that he could not even look at it, and he begged his mother not to allow him to perish with hunger, but to give him some plain bread. His mother said to him : " My dear child, I had a special object in placing before you all these sweet and dainty dishes. You are about to leave me to enter a world that is full of wickedness. It will put before your eyes many things which at first sight appear pleasing enough—glory, honour, riches, and pleasures. They dazzle the eye, but they can never satisfy the heart. They may be very pleasant for a moment, but they bring along with them in their train only remorse and unhappiness. Oh, my child," she continued, " do not allow yourself to be deceived by them. Yesterday I saw with what avidity you at first ate the sweet pastry I had prepared for you. To-day, on the contrary, you are filled with disgust at even the very look of it. So it is with those who allow themselves to be deceived when they first enter the world. They so often fly at once to its pleasures, which very soon bring them much bitterness. Be warned, therefore, in time, my child, and as soon as you are tempted by these things of which I have spoken to you, thrust them aside, and be content with the plain food of a Christian—that is, bearing patiently with all your crosses here on earth, that you may obtain an eternal reward in Heaven."—*Lettres Édif.*

527. THE SECRET DANGER.—There lived, a short time ago, a good and wealthy gentleman who had a son that gave early promise of a life of piety. His father, seeing these good dispositions in his child, did everything in his power to foster them, and he had the happiness to see the boy grow up a model of every virtue, so that he was the consolation of his parents and joy of his companions, as well as an example for them. Fifteen years of his life had passed by in this manner, when suddenly, without any apparent cause, a terrible change came over him. He became sullen and sad ; he shunned the company of his former companions, and even when at home with his parents he seemed without life, and always kept his eyes on the ground, and scarcely ever spoke to them. This sudden change from joyous gaiety to sadness, from an ever-open and pleasant countenance to one of dull despondency, alarmed his father. He thought that perhaps some malady had taken hold of him, and sent for a physician, who, having carefully examined him, declared that he could not discover any disease. His father then

began to fear lest some evil temptation had found its way into his soul, so he went to the priest, who resolved to visit him. When the priest entered, Henry's eyes fell on the ground, and he would have rushed out of the room had it been possible for him to escape. The priest spoke to him in that gentle, familiar tone which had been hitherto the joy of Henry every time he met him. But the only response to his kind words was a deep blush on his cheek and a rigid silence. The priest continued to speak to him in the affectionate tones of a father, and the result was that the boy, taking up a book from his father's table, exclaimed: "That book has been the cause of all the evil that has befallen me." The priest looked at the book, and saw that it was one of those bad, irreligious books spread about by the agents of Satan, and which are to be met with so frequently at the present day. But thanks be to God, the evil was detected in time. By a good confession he blotted out the evil he had done, and with peace of conscience came also his former joy, as well as his natural gaiety.—*Chisholm*.

528. S. JEROME'S ADVICE.—S. Jerome, in his letter to *Læta*, puts her in mind that she had obtained her daughter of God, at the tombs of the martyrs, in order that she might be brought up to serve Him. "Let her," he says, "be brought up as Samuel was in the temple, and the Baptist in the desert, in utter ignorance of vanity and vice. Let her never hear, learn, or discourse of anything but what may conduce to the fear of God. Let her never hear bad words, nor learn profane songs; but as soon as she can speak, let her learn some parts of the Psalms. No rude boys must come near her, nor even girls or maids but such as are strangers to the maxims and conversations of the world. Let the words which she learns be chosen and holy, such as the names of the Prophets and Apostles." He adds that she should never see anything in her father or mother which it would be a fault for her to imitate; and that she should never go out but with her mother to the church or tombs of the martyrs.—*Butler*.

529. EFFECT OF A FATHER'S EXAMPLE.—A pious lady had taken particular care of the education of her son, and had brought him up in the purest principles of religion. His piety, his fidelity to all his duties, seemed to go on increasing. Nevertheless, when he had reached the age of about seventeen, he appeared to relax very sensibly; his mother was grieved to see him gradually laying aside his pious practices; at last he even ceased to frequent the Sacraments and to discharge the first duties of a Christian.

Alarmed by such sad results, his mother knew not to what to attribute the cause, for it seemed to her that Alphonse (which was the young man's name) frequented no bad company, nor read any bad books. One day she goes into his chamber, and there, alone with him, she sheds a great abundance of tears, and conjures him to tell her whence came this change in his conduct. "Well, since you require it, I will tell you. In my first years, formed by your pious lessons, I loved religion, I practised it with all my heart, and I was happy, oh! yes, I was happy! But, since then, I have reflected. I love you still very much, my dear mother, but I see that I am old enough now not to imitate you. Now, I am going to do as my father does; he is a good man, everyone says, but I see that he performs no act of religion, and I want to be like him, for fear of displeasing him." "Ah! my son, what do you say? What a revelation!" Whereupon she goes, as fast as her trembling limbs will carry her, to her husband's apartment, alarms him by her tears and sighs, and has only strength to say these words: "Oh, husband, your son!" then she faints away. Her husband does all he can to restore her to consciousness, succeeds at last, questions her, and is made acquainted with the scene that has just passed. The worthy father is overcome; he understands and confesses his fault, goes to his son, and exclaims: "Ah! my son, that lesson is too much for me, I cannot resist it—you bring me back to virtue." The same day they both went to a priest, and returned to the way of religion, from which they strayed no more.—*Noël*.

530. S. ANSELM'S ADVICE.—"If, after having planted a tree in your garden, you should so hem it in on all sides that it could not possibly extend its branches, what sort of tree would it become after some years' growth? Would it not become stunted and crabbed, and perfectly useless? So it is with children. If you be too harsh in your conduct towards them, constraining their liberty, and by too severe correction, destroying their natural good feelings, they will grow up obstinate, hardened, and steeled against any good advice. Seeing nothing in you but severity and harshness, they have no esteem and affection for you, for they think that your severity is the effect of hatred and envy. These feelings increase with their years, and their minds being confined and inclined towards vice, and not having been brought up with kindness and love, they look on the whole world with feelings of aversion and bitterness. A mind fully formed and resolute takes pleasure in humiliations and afflictions, and prays for its enemies; a weak soul

must be led by sweetness and kindness, and its faults should be sometimes charitably overlooked."

531. THE MOON IN THE WATER.—A lady had a son whom she was so afraid of making sick by contradicting him, that he became a little tyrant, and grew furious when they refused him the least thing. The lady had often been warned by her husband and friends of the injury she was doing her child by yielding to all his caprices ; but in vain. She was in her room one evening, when she heard her son crying in the yard as if he were burned ; he even scratched his face because a servant would not give him what he wanted. " You are very impertinent," said she to the servant, " to refuse my son what he asks for ; I want you to give it to him immediately." " If he cried till to-morrow, madam, he couldn't have it." At these words the lady herself becomes furious, and runs to her husband, who was in the parlour with some of his friends, to have him instantly dismiss the impudent servant who had opposed her will. The gentleman follows her to the yard, whilst the others go to the window to see how the matter was going to end. " You saucy fellow," said the master, " how did you dare to disobey your mistress by not giving the boy what he asked for ?" " Indeed, sir, the mistress cannot give it to him herself. There, a little while ago, the boy saw the moon shining in a pail of water, and he insists that I must give it to him." At these words the gentleman and the rest of the company burst out laughing ; the lady herself, angry as she was, could not help laughing too. But, at the same time, she was so ashamed of the ludicrous scene to which she had given rise that she corrected herself, and made the little rebel an amiable and engaging child.—*Filassier*.

532. THE BAD MOTHER.—A certain boy had the habit of stealing from his neighbours trifling articles, which he brought home to his mother, who never chastised or reproved him. When he grew older he became a confirmed thief. At length he was discovered in the act, and, being taken by the officers of justice, was brought before the judge, who condemned him to death. When he arrived at the place of execution, he perceived his mother among the crowd, shedding many tears and bewailing his fate, upon which he begged leave to speak to her once more before he died. Permission being granted, his mother drew near, and he bent his head as if he would whisper something to her, but, instead of doing so, he caught her ear between his teeth and bit it off, regardless of her shrieks and reproaches. Hereupon the judge reproved him severely for his

unnatural conduct, to whom he said : " I have only treated her as she deserved, for it is she who has brought me to this. Had she punished me in my childhood for my petty thefts, I should not, now that I am grown up, have been compelled to die on the gallows."—*Æsop*.

533. S. LEONIDAS AND HIS SON.—S. Leonidas, father of Origen, gave his son a good education. Besides profane learning, in which he excelled, the child also studied the Holy Scriptures : he even tried to find hidden meanings under the text, and never ceased asking questions on it. Leonidas, with a severe countenance, had to repress this curiosity and zeal, and warned his child not to indulge in ideas too deep for his young years. Yet in his heart, Leonidas thanked God for having given him such a son, and often while Origen was asleep, he would uncover his breast and kiss it as the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost.—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

534. THE MOTHER OF AN IDIOT.—A newspaper of Nantes, in France, of December 18, 1846, stated : " A portress had a son of seventeen, deprived of reason from his birth. In spite of all representations made to her from various quarters, nothing would induce her to put him into a home. She showed him those little attentions and affections which a mother alone can show, and of which she does not tire. About three months ago she fell ill, and the son suffered for want of his mother's care, and in the end lost his health, and yesterday he died. His poor mother is simply broken-hearted."

535. S. ZITA AT PLACE.—S. Zita, while yet a child, was put to service in the family of a citizen of Lucca. For a long time this family was extremely prejudiced against her, and her passionate master could not bear her in his sight without transports of rage. It is not to be conceived how much the Saint had continually to suffer in this situation. So unjustly despised, overburdened and often beaten, she never lost her patience, but always preserved the same sweetness, the same meekness and charity, and abated nothing of her application to duty. A virtue so constant at length overcame all jealousy and malice, and her master and mistress discovered at last the treasure their family possessed ! What a terrible example for employers to avoid, what a noble model for servants to imitate !—*Butler, Apr. 27*.

536. GOOD MASTER AND SERVANTS.—Remember this, that good employers make good workmen, and that good masters make

good servants. S. Francis de Sales, that mild and amiable Bishop, was fond of relating the following story, which was probably his own : A prelate of distinction was so ready to admit to his service all those who presented themselves, that he had a great number of domestics who were of no use whatever to him, and cost him a great deal. He was told of this ; his relations themselves made him understand that he was wrong to act so, and that he was incurring great expense. " I will dismiss some of my people," said he then, " but give me the exact list of all those who are useless to me." It was done accordingly. After reading it attentively, he sent for all those who were inscribed in it, and said to them : " My poor friends, I am told your services are no longer necessary in my house, and I find myself under the sad necessity of discharging you. What do you think of it ?" " Ah, my lord !" they all cried out together, " if you send us away we are lost ! what will become of us ?" " Since that is the case, my friends, I swear to you I will not send you away. I kept you before because I had need of you, and now I will keep you because you have need of me. Stay, then, and whilst there is bread in my house, you shall have your share of it ; when there is no more, we shall mingle our tears and die of hunger together." Let us act in the same spirit as far as occasion requires, and our name will be blessed by all those who are in our service.—*Filassier*.

537. FÉNÉLON.—The Duke of Burgundy, son of Louis XIV., was considered an incorrigible child. Fénelon, however, succeeded in taming him down. And by what means ? By a policy of silence and gentleness, accompanied with firmness. The young Dauphin's brothers, tutors, and attendants, received orders never to speak to him when he was roused to passion, or was in any way guilty. He thus found coldness and silence on every side. When the passion passed away, he understood the lesson that had been given, and would express sorrow and regret for his fault, and thus in time his character was entirely changed for the better. Would that parents and masters imitated the gentleness of Fénelon, when correcting and reproving those placed under their care !

538. S. MONICA'S SERVANT.—In the house of S. Monica lived an old servant, who was much respected on account of her great eminent virtues. She was treated as one of the members of the family. To her care the children were entrusted, and they were obliged to obey her. Indeed, it was to this old servant that S. Monica was indebted for her excellent training. In every place,

and under all circumstances, she never ceased instructing and admonishing her. S. Monica was not forgetful of the care bestowed upon her, but ever after proved her gratitude to this old and prudent servant. A long time after the death of this good old woman, she still spoke of her attention and kindness, and she often became the subject of conversation between S. Monica and her son Augustine, as we read in his book of the *Confessions*.—*Butler*.

539. A JUST RETRIBUTION.—A certain father, who led a sinful and scandalous life, had a son who, in consequence of his evil training, was as wicked and abandoned as himself. The father was drunken and degraded; the son wilful, passionate, and rebellious. One day when the father reproached his son for his undutiful conduct, the latter, in a fit of fury, seized his father by the hair of his head, threw him on the ground, and dragged him to the very door of the house. Having arrived at the threshold, the old man raised his voice and cried out, "Stop, wretched son; when I was your age I never dragged my father farther than this." Thus did the unhappy father acknowledge the Justice of God, who permitted his son to treat him as he had treated his own parent.—*Anecdotes Chrétiennes*.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

"Thou shalt not kill."

540. THE PARIS GRAVE-DIGGER.—It was about the year 1825. They were preparing to inter a dead body in the cemetery at Paris. The grave-digger had made the grave, and, as is usual with men who dig the earth, he rested himself standing, leaning on the handle of his spade. All at once, thinking of nothing in particular, he sees, amongst the bones he had taken from the grave, a human skull; he approaches, takes it up, and begins to examine it closely. What was his surprise when he perceived beside the left temple a little rust. He examines again, and sees distinctly the end of a knife-blade that had broken in the skull. Very much astonished, he begins to reflect, and endeavours to remember who was the individual that was buried there some years before. As he had been a long time attached to the cemetery, he remembered that, nearly fifteen years before, there was buried there a man found

dead in his bed, and whose murderer had never been discovered. He immediately takes the head, runs to the Crown lawyer, relates how he came to find it, and what he had heard of the man's mysterious death. The police take the rusty piece of blade from out the skull, go to the house formerly inhabited by the dead man, make a general search, and at length find the old broken knife, to which this piece just fitted; the children of the deceased were interrogated, and, after much investigation, it was discovered that the eldest son of the unfortunate victim had been the perpetrator of the crime. He confessed it himself, and received the punishment he deserved.—*Catholic Anecdotes*.

541. THE MURDERERS OF S. MEINRAD.—S. Meinrad one day received the visit of two strangers, who proved to be malefactors in disguise, for, thinking he had great treasure hidden near his cell, they fell upon him and brutally murdered him. Instead of a treasure, they found a hair shirt and some books, and immediately took to flight. But two tame ravens of the Saint, witnesses of the crime, were the avengers of it. Tracking the steps of the murderers, they followed them up and attacked them with their beaks, and managed to get in at the windows of the inn at Zurich, where they had taken refuge. This extraordinary event raised suspicions against the men, and the two murderers were seized and condemned on their own admission of their guilt.—*Monastic Flowers*.

542. INCIDENT IN THE LIFE OF MGR. CHEVERUS.—This zealous missionary was once called, in the United States, to assist two young Irishmen condemned to death to prepare for their last hour. It was customary there to take the condemned men to church to hear a final exhortation before death. Mgr. Cheverus ascends the pulpit, and, casting his eyes around, sees there an immense number of women come to witness the public execution. "Orators," he began, in a loud and severe tone of voice, "are usually flattered at seeing a large audience before them. As for me, I am ashamed of the audience I see here. There are, then, men for whom the death of a fellow-being is an object of pleasure and curiosity! But you, women, what come ye here to do? Is it to wipe the sweat of death from the brows of these poor men? No. It is to witness their anguish and sufferings, and that, too, without a tear. I am ashamed of you: you are a disgrace to your sex." In this strain he continued his short address. The execution followed almost immediately, but not a single woman was present at it.—*Guillois*.

543. A JOURNALIST'S WIT.—A professor thought he had been insulted by a journalist, and with two friends presented himself at the office to seek redress. As no satisfactory conclusion was arrived at, the journalist stating that he had no intention of giving offence, a duel was determined on, hour, weapons, and everything arranged. "Now," said the journalist, "a duel is a serious matter, and I fully intend that one of us shall remain on the spot." "So do I," replied the professor, and they separated. The following morning they met again for the duel. Everything was arranged, and the signal to begin was about to be given, when the journalist, approaching his antagonist, said again: "It is quite understood that one of the two remains on the ground." "Certainly," said the other. "Then it's you that remain, for I'm off!" And, throwing down his pistol, he took up his hat, made a bow, and withdrew. At this the witnesses could but laugh, and the two principals themselves joined in, shook hands together, and parted friends.—*Hautriève.*

544. OPINION OF ROUSSEAU.—"Beware of confounding the sacred name of honour with that fierce prejudice which places virtue at the sabre's point, and is calculated only to make brave scoundrels. This frightful prejudice consists in the most extravagant idea that ever entered the human mind—that all the duties of society can be supplied for by gallantry; that a man is no longer a knave or a calumniator, but civil, humane, and polite, when he knows how to fight; that a lie may become truth, and robbery lawful, as soon as a man can defend his cause with weapons. To be brief, the courageous man scorns a duel, and the good man hates it. In my eyes he who with gaiety of heart enters on such a struggle is only a wild beast that strives to tear another to pieces."

545. ANTI-DUELLING ASSOCIATION.—M. Olier, founder of S. Sulpice, in Paris, lamenting the frequency of duelling in France, thought to supplement the laws against it by opposing honour to honour. He formed an association of gentlemen, well known for their courage, who under oath promised never to give or accept a challenge to fight a duel, nor to be seconds to one. He tried to admit to the association only those who had distinguished themselves in the field of battle by their daring and courage. It was on Whit-Sunday, 1651, that the members solemnly and publicly placed in M. Olier's hands a formal document signed by them, all declaring their promise, and for many years their influence was so great that

the number of duels diminished considerably in France, and Louis XIV. was led to show no consideration to any who had fought them.—*Guillois*.

546. THE BOY IN THE SNOW.—Two boys were going home one winter evening, but not together. One had been working all day in the valley, and had to wade through the deep snow up the mountain-side, and he got so weak and cold that he fell down, and was soon quite benumbed. After a while the other passed by, and he called out to him to help him home. But this second lad thought to himself: "He has been thrown down and injured in some quarrel, and I might have a deal of bother in having to appear as a witness in the case!" So he left him lying there, and the following day he died! Was his companion not guilty of this death? A year afterwards, this same young man was out shooting in the same neighbourhood, and was accidentally hit by a stray shot from a woodranger; he fell down, and in a quarter of an hour he died on the very spot where his companion had died before. Does it not seem as if there was a meaning in this?—*Stolz*.

547. SOPHRONIA, THE ROMAN MATRON.—Sophronia, both beautiful and virtuous, was illicitly loved by Maxentius, who betook himself to violence to gain her consent to his evil wishes. She begged the tyrant's officers to allow her a little time, and she retired, not, indeed, to deck herself out in vanity, but to recommend herself to God in fervent prayer for help in so great a trial. While she prayed, her heart was moved by an extraordinary inspiration of the Holy Ghost: she put forth her hand to a dagger, plunged it into her breast, and fell a bleeding victim before God, in homage to holy chastity.—*Eusebius*.

548. A YOUNG SUICIDE.—A few years ago, a mere boy of sixteen was found dead in his room: he had deliberately suffocated himself, already tired of existence, almost before having tasted life. What led him to such a crime? Incredulity and irreligion. His father had said: "When my boy grows up, I'll leave him to choose his own God and his own religion." The time for choosing had arrived, and he chose death. Unhappy son! Unhappy father!—*Mérault*.

549. THE TWO SCHOLARS.—Augustus and Henry were two scholars who went to the same school. Henry was passionate and cruel, and one day, having quarrelled with his comrade at a game, he became so angry that he challenged him to fight. Augustus

refused, saying that it was forbidden by the Church to do that. But Henry would accept no refusal. "If you will not fight," he cried, "I will blow your brains out with this pistol." Augustus, seeing no way of escaping, took a pistol in his trembling hand in order to defend himself, for he saw how awfully in earnest his companion was. They drew lots who was to fire the first shot: it fell to the lot of Augustus. Taking the pistol in his hand, he fired it into the air, for he did not wish to hurt his companion. When he had done this, Henry, in savage fury, said, "It is now my turn," and, looking on his innocent companion with the eye of a tiger, he prepared to take aim. Then he fired the pistol, and poor Augustus lay dead at his feet. What cruelty in one so young!—*Chisholm*.

550. S. FRANCIS STRUCK IN THE FACE.—One day S. Francis Regis learns that some libertines had assembled in a country inn of bad repute; that they had drunk to excess, and, in their orgies, were uttering horrible blasphemies and giving themselves up to all sorts of wickedness. Without pausing to consider the danger to which he exposed himself, the holy priest goes to the place, makes his appearance amongst these wretches, and endeavours, by words of charity and reason, to restrain the course of their scandalous conduct. His exhortations were not heeded, and one of these libertines even rose from the table, and, going up to him, gave him a blow in the face. Without manifesting the least emotion, S. Francis Regis turns the other cheek to him and mildly says: "I thank you very much, my dear friend, for the opinion you have of me: if you knew me better, you would see that I deserve still more." These words, this tone of mildness, this so truly Christian moderation, filled the profligates with salutary confusion; they asked pardon of the Saint, and immediately withdrew.—*Daubenton*.

551. THE TRAPPIST ILL-TREATED.—A monk of La Trappe one day heard a horse galloping up behind him, and soon had beside him a young officer asking the road to Rennes. The Trappist, bound by his rule to perpetual silence, pointed out the road with his finger. The officer, who was probably not fasting, having repeated his request and received the same reply, grew angry, dismounted, and gave several cruel blows to the poor, helpless monk. Satisfied with this proof of bravery, the hero prepared to mount his horse again. The animal, however, began to prance and rear so much that the rider was unable to mount. The ill-treated religious saw this, and at once took the horse by the head, without a word of complaint, and even held the stirrup for his assailant. The latter

humbled and overcome by such generosity, did not leave without acknowledging his fault and begging pardon for his cowardly attack.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

552. THE PEACEFUL EMPEROR.—The Superior of a monastery one day presented S. Henry the Emperor with a fine horse: this horse had been stolen from a soldier, and the thief had sold it as his own to the Superior. The Emperor was one day riding this horse, when the soldier from whom it had been stolen suddenly seized it by the head and claimed it as his own. When he had shown his title, the Emperor replied: “Since it is truly yours, take it.” The soldier, almost thinking such readiness a mockery, began to hesitate, but the Emperor was not satisfied till he had taken it away, and thus showed to his attendants that we must avoid quarrelling and preserve peace and concord.—*Baronius.*

553. A SOUL’S DAMNATION.—Two gentlemen who had been for a long time on the most friendly terms had a violent quarrel, and became known in the town where they resided as declared enemies. Their hatred had lasted many years, when one of the two fell dangerously ill, and lay at the point of death. His friends earnestly entreated him to send for his confessor and settle the affairs of his soul, to which he at length consented. The priest, on his arrival, knowing well the circumstances of the case, represented to the sick man the necessity of being reconciled with his enemy before he could be admitted to the Sacraments. His penitent consented to the proposal, and the other party was sent for; meanwhile the priest proceeded to hear his confession. His enemy, having at length arrived, was introduced into the chamber of the sick man, who asked pardon for the offence he had given, and begged that they might be reconciled. The other party consented, and soon after took his leave, but, on quitting the room, was heard to exclaim to someone at the door, “The coward is afraid.” At these words the dying man sat up in his bed, and cried out in a violent passion, “No, I am not afraid, and, as a proof of it, I return you all my former hatred.” So saying, he fell back and expired.—*Mrs. Herbert.*

554. THE BOYS AND THE FROGS.—What the frogs in the fable said to the children may be truly applied to those who pain their companions by their ungenerous words. Some boys, playing near a pond, saw a number of frogs in the water, and began to pelt them with stones. They killed several, when one of the frogs, lifting his head out of the water, exclaimed: “Pray stop, my boys: what is fun to you is death to us.”—*Æsop.*

555. S. MACARIUS AND THE IDOLATER.—One day, as S. Macarius was walking in the desert with one of his disciples, the latter went on a little in advance. He had not gone far before he met a heathen priest, running with a heavy log of wood upon his shoulders, whom he thus accosted: "Where art thou going, thou devil?" The idolater, being much enraged, took the log, gave him a severe beating with it, and left him half dead upon the ground. He then put the wood back on his shoulders and went on his way, running as before. Soon after he met S. Macarius, who thus addressed him: "God save thee, poor labouring man!" "You do well," replied the pagan, "to salute me in a friendly manner;" upon which the Saint rejoined: "I saw that you were tired, and were, nevertheless, running hastily, so I greeted you in order that you might stop and rest yourself awhile." The heathen priest, hearing these words, cried out: "From this I know you to be a true servant of God." Then, casting himself at his feet, he implored S. Macarius to instruct him in the Christian religion and receive him into the number of his disciples.—*Lives of the Fathers.*

556. S. AUGUSTINE AND HIS FRIEND.—S. Augustine, before his conversion, led a life of great dissipation, reviling the things of God, and seeking only the vain pleasures of this life. After his conversion, he wept bitterly for the sins of his former life; and for the instruction of others, he wrote a book in which he declared before the whole world the evils he had done, that others, by reading them, might be led to the grace of repentance. Among other things, he relates the following:—"When I was at Tagastus, there lived there also a young man for whom I conceived a great affection. We were both young and of the same age, and I had known him when I was only a child. He loved me so much that he did everything I asked him; and when I proposed to him to renounce the Catholic faith, in which he had been born, and which he had practised all his lifetime, he did it for my sake." When they had lived for about a year in this way, and constantly in each other's company, the young man became ill, and was soon brought to the point of death. For some days all hope of recovery was abandoned, and Augustine sat day and night at his bedside, waiting till the end would come. But God wished to prolong his life for our example and instruction. A favourable change came over him, and his consciousness returned. When he had so far recovered as to know those around him, his eyes fell on Augustine. "As soon as he saw me," writes that holy Bishop, "he turned his eyes from me

in horror, as if I had been his most deadly enemy, and with a firmness which surprised me, who so little expected this treatment from so dear a friend, he declared to me that if I desired to be his friend I must for ever abstain from speaking against the Catholic Faith. I was annoyed at this, but the grace of God at the same time spoke to my heart, and I saw the evil I had done in drawing away a soul from God by my bad example and my evil words, and I left his bedside to weep in secret over my sin." Augustine was absent for a few days ; but being anxious to see his friend again, to encourage him in his pious resolution to live for the future a holy life, he went to visit him. When he approached his friend's house he saw everywhere signs of grief. God had called the young man to Himself during his absence.—*Confessions of S. Augustine.*

557. THE MONKEYS AND THE NIGHT-CAPS.—There was once a man who made his living by going from village to village selling night-caps and other odds and ends. One day he had been travelling through a lonesome country. The night was coming on, and he could see neither village or house anywhere. He saw, however, at a little distance from the road, some trees. He thought the best way would be to sleep that night under the trees. So he left the road and walked towards the trees. As soon as he came there, he untied the parcel of night-caps, and took out one of them. He put it on his head, and laid himself down to sleep. As he was tired with his journey, he soon fell fast asleep. He slept soundly till next morning. On awaking, he sat up and began to look about for his night-caps. To his surprise, he found that not one of the night-caps was there. There was the paper, there was the string, but not a single night-cap remaining. At this moment, it happened that the man looked up. There amongst the branches of the trees, he saw about a hundred monkeys. Each of them had a night-cap on its head ! During the night the monkeys had come down from the trees, stolen the night-caps, and put them on their heads, because they saw that the man had a night-cap on his head. The man, seeing that the monkeys had stolen his night-caps, and knowing that he could not get them back again, began to be very angry. In his anger he seized hold of the night-cap which was still on his head, and in a great passion threw it down on the ground. Immediately a great shower of night-caps came down upon him, for the monkeys, seeing the man pull the night-cap off his head and throw it down upon the ground, followed his example and did the same themselves.—You see how readily even creatures, which

have no sense or understanding, learn to imitate what they see done before their eyes. So are we prone to imitate evil.—*Furniss*.

558. WOE TO MY SEDUCER!—In the University of Padua there was a young nobleman who was a model for all young people of his age, but, unhappily, did not know how to guard against the seductions of bad example. He contracted a friendship with another fellow-student, who gradually succeeded in making him as corrupt as he was himself. His virtuous friends, frightened at the change that was wrought in him, tried to bring him back; but neither their tears nor their prayers could make the least improvement. God spoke in His turn. One night, when this poor young man was sound asleep, he all at once woke up with a start and appeared in mortal terror. He uttered frightful cries, which soon brought every one in the house around his bed. They speak to him, question him, ask what is the matter with him; he answers not a word, but continues the same heart-rending cries. A priest is brought, who tries, in his turn, to calm him, and exhorts him to put his trust in God. At last the dying man turns his terrified gaze on the priest, and gives utterance to these awful words: "Woe to him that seduced me! In vain would I pray to God to forgive me my sins!" Two or three minutes after, he turns to the wall, and expires in that terrible despair. Sad consequence of the bad example he had received and the bad company he had kept.—*Debussi*.

559. SCANDAL AVENGED BY GOD.—Some years ago there lived two young men, who disedified their whole neighbourhood by their dissolute conduct. The curé of the parish, finding that his good advice and repeated warnings were treated by them with contempt, addressed himself to their parents, hoping that they would assist him by their authority to bring their sons to a sense of their duty. Instead of doing so, however, they blamed him for interfering in the concerns of their families, and insolently told him that they knew how to bring up their children without his advice. The good priest meekly replied that whoever despised the advice of his pastor was guilty of an act of contempt against God Himself, which certainly would not remain unpunished. The next day, which was Sunday, was spent as usual by the young men at the public-house, where they openly boasted of their insolence to their pastor, and declared that they set him at defiance. Meanwhile a dreadful thunderstorm gathered in the air, and, bursting over the village, filled everyone with terror. The young libertines, accompanied by two companions, ran to the church tower to sound the

consecrated bells, as is usual in Catholic countries on such occasions. While they were thus engaged, a dreadful peal of thunder resounded through the air immediately above their heads, which filled them with such alarm that they all hastily ran down the steps of the tower to seek some place of greater security. A vivid flash of lightning, however, entering at the same moment by the loopholes of the tower, passed down the stairs as if in pursuit of the fugitives. Descending in a zigzag form, it struck and killed on the spot the second and fourth of the company, who were the two wicked youths; their companions escaped without injury. The lightning then descended into the Church, where the people had begun to assemble, and, picking out the mother of one of the young men, dashed her violently against the wall. This awful judgment of God produced the deepest impression upon the guilty parents, who came to the curé with tears in their eyes, to beg pardon for the disrespect they had shown him.—*Instructions of Youth.*

560. S. ARSENIUS AND THE PILLOW.—S. Arsenius, before becoming a religious, had occupied a considerable position in the world, having been the preceptor of Arcadius, son of the Emperor Theodosius the Great. He had, therefore, tasted the sweets of life which are met in Courts. Some time after he had embraced the religious life he fell sick; then his Superior obliged him to take care of himself; he caused a mattress and a pillow to be given to him, so that he might sleep easier. A solitary came to see S. Arsenius whilst he was in that state, and was scandalized at these little indulgences which he allowed himself. The Superior perceived it, and, drawing him aside, said to him: "Tell me, Brother, what were you before you entered into religion?" "Father, I was a shepherd, for my parents were very poor." "So you are better off and live more comfortably since you have been a monk than when you were in the world?" "Certainly, Father!" "How, my dear Brother, can you find fault with the compassion we have had for Arsenius, who lived at Court, and had all the delicacies of the world at his command? You must acknowledge that it was wrong of you to be scandalized at the little exemptions which his Superior has imposed upon him."—*Noël.*

561. THE COOK.—A good old man, most faithful in obeying the laws of God and His Church, finding himself obliged, for reasons of health, to eat meat on Fridays, duly asked and obtained permission to do so, and ordered his cook to prepare a meat dinner. The cook, not informed of the doctor's injunctions, nor of the

priest's permission, was surprised at seeing her good master break the abstinence. She came in time to think, in her ignorance, that as he had done, so might she do, and made no scruple in doing so, till one day the master, on learning it, hastened to explain his case and to teach her what her duty was. Two lessons may be learnt from this incident: First, to put a kind interpretation on our neighbour's actions, and to presume he has good reasons for what he does. Second, it is well to explain our conduct, when it seems in any way against the law.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

562. TOUSSAINT.—This writer of so many sinful works, when he came to die, began to reflect on his past career, and was filled with regret for all the evil he had caused by his writings. For his own sins he felt that God in His mercy would grant him pardon: but when he thought of the sins which his works might lead others to commit, he was filled with fear. He gathered his family around him, along with some friends, and addressing himself to them, he expressed his desire to retract all the evil he had written, and implored his son not to follow the bad example he had set him, and in presence of them all begged God's pardon and forgiveness.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

563. THE SOLDIERS OF JULIAN.—It was customary, on certain occasions, for the Emperors, seated on their throne in pompous array, to give money to the troops with their own hands. In one of those ceremonies, which took place in 361, Julian had an altar placed beside him, with a brasier and incense, and each soldier was required to throw a little incense on the fire before receiving his present. They were given to understand that it was only the renewal of an ancient custom, of no importance whatever. Most of them did not perceive the stratagem prepared for them; but, on being reproached with what they had done, they gave the liveliest proofs of repentance, ran through the streets and squares crying aloud: "We are still Christians; be it known unto all. O Jesus Christ! our adorable Saviour, we have not renounced Thee! If our hand was surprised, our heart had no share in it!" They were courageous enough to go and cast the money they had received at the feet of the Emperor, telling him aloud: "Reserve your gifts for those who accept them on such shameful conditions; to us they are far more odious than death. Cut off our hands, which have been defiled, cut short the thread of our life, immolate us to Jesus Christ, whom you have made us betray against our will." What a lesson, or, rather, what a reproach for the apostates

of our times, who, very far from repairing the scandal they have given, renew it every day by persevering in their apostasy!—*Reyre.*

564. ENGLISH OFFICER AT MASS.—In the *Life* of Lieutenant De Lisle the following incident is recorded: There was at one time a French man-of-war stationed not far from his ship in one of the harbours of the Pacific Ocean; and as there was a priest on board this ship, De Lisle thought it best to take the men there to hear Mass rather than go on shore. Leave was asked and obtained; so a quarter of an hour before the time for Mass he arrived with his men. The men were led into the place where the holy sacrifice was to be offered up, but De Lisle himself was invited by the officers into the cabin, where they showed him every politeness. By-and-by, the quarter of an hour having expired, De Lisle looked at his watch and said: “Ah! I see it is now the hour for Mass to begin.” These French officers were Catholics, but lived, as too many do, in total disregard of religion. They never expected the young English officer would himself go to Mass, but that he would only see that his men went. So when De Lisle said, “It is now time to go to Mass,” they replied, in astonishment: “Mass! surely you are not going to Mass!” “Yes, I am,” said De Lisle; and at once taking leave of them, he went off and entered the place where Mass was to be said, and, humbly kneeling down in the midst of his men, heard Mass with great devotion. About the time of the *Sanctus*, one of the French officers came quietly in. On the following Sunday two or three came in. The Sunday after, the whole of the officers attended Mass from the very commencement, and they continued to do so for the six weeks longer that the two men-of-war were within easy reach of each other.—*Life of Lieutenant De Lisle.*

565. CHANGE IN A GENERAL.—An old General was one day asked by a friend how it was that, after so many years spent in the camp, he had come to be so frequent a communicant, receiving several times a week. “My friend,” answered the old soldier, “the strangest part of it all is that my change of life was brought about before I ever listened to the word of a priest, and before I had set foot in a church. After my campaigns were over, God bestowed on me a pious wife, whose Faith I respected, though I did not share it. Before I married her, she was a member of all the pious confraternities of her parish, and she never failed to add to her signature the words, “Child of Mary.” She never took it upon herself to lecture me about God, but I could read her thoughts, in

her countenance. When she prayed every night and morning, her face beamed with faith and charity; when she came home from the church, with a calmness, a sweetness, and a patience which had in them something of the serenity of Heaven, she seemed an Angel. When she dressed my wounds, I found her like a Sister of Charity. Suddenly I myself was taken with the desire to love the God my wife loved so well, and who inspired her with those virtues which formed the joy of my life. One day I, who was hitherto without faith, and was such a complete stranger to the practices of religion, and so far from the Sacraments, said to her: 'Take me to your confessor.' Through the ministry of this man of God, and by the grace of God, I have become what I am, and what I rejoice to be."—*Chimes*.

566. THE SOLDIER'S CROWN OF THORNS.—A young Frenchman, of eighteen years, settled at Veria, in Turkey in Asia, had the misfortune to renounce his religion, and become a Mohammedan. But his conscience left him no rest when once he understood the enormity of his crime. He goes to find a Greek priest, confesses his shameful apostasy, and publicly receives Communion. All that did not seem to him sufficient to repair the scandal he had given; his fervour and repentance made him do something more. He applied to his body sharp thorns, which entered into the flesh; having taken thorns like those wherewith Our Lord was crowned, he plaited them into a crown, and placed it on his head. In this state he went through the streets of Veria, striking himself with a knotted cord, and crying out: "I have been a vile apostate, but I have become a Christian again!" Nor was that all. The Governor of the city had him arrested, and exhorted him to desist from this folly, and persevere in the religion of Mohammed, which he had embraced a few days before. Threats, promises, torments, nothing could shake him. He was at last beheaded, and crowned by a glorious martyrdom, the penance he had undertaken with so much courage and energy.—*Reyre*.

567. BERENGARIUS.—Berengarius denied the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, and he brought many other persons into his error. When he was on his deathbed, as we are told by Blessed Leonard, he was seized with a great fear. The priest who assisted him in his last passage tried to encourage him. What was his answer? "I am about," he said, "to go before the judgment-seat of Christ; I will tell you that for my own sins I hope for pardon; but for the sins I have made others commit I fear I shall not be pardoned. I fear I shall be damned, for I do not know how to repair the damage I have done."—*Power*.

568. THEODOSIUS.—The people of Thessalonica rebelled against the Roman Governor, and put him to death. On hearing this insult the Emperor Theodosius is inflamed with anger and passion. He thereupon orders his troops secretly to surround the people gathered together in the circus, and is thus able to put to death some 7,000 of them, without distinction of guilty and innocent. To such crimes will anger carry a man !

569. QUEEN ELIZABETH.—Elizabeth seems to have inherited the temper and irritability of her father. The least inattention, the slightest provocation, would throw her into a passion. In the sallies of her anger her discourse abounded with imprecations and abuse. Nor did she content herself with words ; not only the ladies about her person, but her courtiers, and the highest officers in the State, felt the weight of her hands ; she gave one a blow on the ear, and spat on another, with the foppery of whose dress she was offended.—*Lingard*.

570. EXAMPLE FROM GALEN.—Galen tells us that, while yet a child, he chanced to see a man who was trying to open a door in great haste, and because the key would not act, got into such a rage that his face seemed all on fire : he gnashed his teeth and stamped on the ground. Then, as if the door were guilty, he began to kick it like a madman ; next, venting his fury on the key, he was seen to gnaw it like a dog. Nor did his madness stop here ; for, lifting up his darkened eyes to Heaven, with contortions of his lips, he commenced uttering horrible blasphemies against God, foaming at the mouth like a lion. The illustrious physician says that, child as he was, he was horror-struck at this sight, of what seemed to him more like a wild beast than a man. No one ever saw *him* angry during the whole of his life.—*Scaramelli*.

571. VALENTINIAN AND THE AMBASSADORS.—The Quadri, defeated by Valentinian, sent ambassadors to sue for mercy. When they presented themselves, the Emperor saw that they were men, coarse, poor, and badly clad. Thinking that this was an insult offered to himself, he grew so angry and passionate, that he broke a bloodvessel, and died in the course of a few hours—death the result of anger !

572. A CHILD OF TEN.—X. had an only son, who, though endowed with talent and many good qualities, had also the terrible fault of being very passionate and obstinate. One day he showed this to such an unreasonable degree that the father thought it necessary to use threats and violence, but the child remained as obstinate as ever. X. therefore sent for a man to come and flog

the child. While this was proceeding, suddenly his cries and tears cease : he stands pale and immovable, unconscious of the questions put to him, and his face becomes a perfect blank ; the poor boy, under the impulse of his anger and passion, had lost the use of his reason, and remained an idiot the rest of his days.—*Carron*.

573. THE MONK AND THE PITCHER.—A certain good religious, finding in the monastery, where he dwelt, many things which always made him angry, one day said to himself : “ I see it is necessary for me to take up my abode in the desert, for there, there will be no one to contradict me, or annoy me, and I shall no longer be tempted to yield to this terrible sin of anger.” Saying this, he retired to the desert, and built for himself a little cell, where he spent many happy days by himself, without anyone going near him to tempt him to impatience. But one day, going to the stream to draw water, the pitcher which he had placed on the side of the stream, after filling it, was overturned three times successively. Immediately, his old temptation assailed him again, and flying into a passion, he lifted up the vessel and dashed it to pieces in his anger. When calm had again been restored, he said to himself : “ The Devil has deceived me in making me think that I could overcome this vice of anger by flying the society of men. No ; the real remedy is to fight it till I have overcome it. I will therefore return to my monastery, and for the time to come I will do this.” Saying this, he at once returned to the monastery, and by daily fighting against that vice of anger, he finally overcame it altogether, and made rapid progress in the way of virtue.—*Lives of the Fathers*.

574. THE BOTTLE OF WATER.—A woman went to the priest to complain of her husband’s passion and temper, and angry words. The priest, who knew that her tongue also was rather voluble, gave her a small bottle of pure water. “ Take this,” he said, “ and when next your husband gets angry, take a mouthful and you will soon find the value of it : your husband will remain quiet.” An opportunity soon presented itself, and she followed the advice she had received ; the same a second time, and a third, with the marvellous results that were promised ! Returning to thank the priest for what she considered a miraculous water, he said : “ There’s no miracle in the water : it’s your own tongue has done the good, by keeping silence for once : the only merit the water has is to have forced you to keep silence, for you were unable to talk, whilst you had your mouth full.”—To oppose one in anger is to add fuel to the fire : silence is the best remedy.

575. S. JOHN THE ALMONER.—It is said of S. John the Almoner that he conquered all his enemies by his meekness ; and by his sweet and amiable disposition converted his bitterest opponents into his warmest friends and supporters. Upon one occasion he had recourse to Nicetas, the governor of the city, in behalf of the poor of his flock, who were in danger of being grievously afflicted by an oppressive tax which it was proposed to levy on them. He was, however, received with great coldness and even with insult ; for the governor, being prejudiced against S. John by certain calumnies which had reached his ear, instead of listening to him with the respect to which his sacred character and eminent virtue entitled him, flew into a passion and abruptly turned his back upon him. The holy man showed no signs of indignation or displeasure, but when the evening was come, reflecting with sorrow on what had passed, he sent a friend to the house of Nicetas with this short message—“ The sun is about to set.” The governor, touched with the allusion to the words of Scripture, “ Let not the sun go down upon your anger,” instantly rose and went to meet the Patriarch, at whose feet he cast himself, confessing his fault, and earnestly imploring pardon. S. John tenderly embraced him, and assured him that he was already forgiven. This happy reconciliation caused the greatest edification to all the citizens, who knew not which to admire more, the humility of Nicetas, or the meekness of their holy Archbishop.—*His Life : Jan. 23.*

576. THE MURDERER PARDONED.—A noble lady of Gaeta, whose son had been cruelly murdered, is worthy of being cited as an example of Christian forgiveness. As soon as the magistrates were informed of the crime that had been perpetrated, they caused all the gates of the town to be shut, and gave every necessary order to prevent the escape of the murderer. The wretched criminal, terrified at the thought of the dreadful punishment which awaited him if he were taken, sought in vain for some safe place of concealment. But the only spot, as it occurred to him, in which he could hope to escape detection was the house of his victim, and thither he betook himself for refuge. The mother of the murdered man was living in it, and received, at one and the same time, the sad intelligence of her son's death, and information that his assassin was in her power. But under her own roof she felt bound to aid him, and caused him to be conveyed to a place of concealment within the house. Some time after she sent for him, and reproached him gently for his crime ; but assured him of her forgiveness, and even provided

him with money to assist him in his flight, and to enable him to escape pursuit.—*Noël*.

577. A SISTER OF CHARITY'S REVENGE.—During the cholera epidemic in Paris, in 1832, Sister S. Mary was one day going into the charity hospital, when she was rudely insulted by a working man, who followed and abused her, and would even have struck her if someone had not prevented him. The good Sister knew only how to pardon and pray. Some days passed. In the beginning of the month of April, hundreds of cholera patients were crowded into the wards of the hospital, mingled with the dead bodies of those who daily expired. One morning, a new patient was brought in, whose condition appeared desperate. "No more room," was the abrupt answer of the person charged with the reception of patients; "doctors and nurses can attend no more." But Sister S. Mary was there; she recognized the patient, and exclaimed: "I will take charge of him, I will find him a corner somewhere. Do not refuse him; I will tend him myself." She immediately enters on her task, and without neglecting the other patients, she attends to this one with the most assiduous care. At the end of eight days the man was in a state of convalescence; but one morning, he missed from his bedside the good Sister S. Mary, his benefactress. "Alas!" he was told, "she took the cholera herself, and died during the night." In fact, the good Sister died attending the wretch who had insulted her some days before; she recognized him, and revenged herself on him, after the manner of the Saints.—*Guillois*.

578. THE CISTERCIAN BROTHER.—In the annals of the Cistercian Order, we read that one of the monks, each time he received Holy Communion, perceived in his mouth a delicious taste, sweeter far than honey, which remained for two or three days together. One day, however, when he had pained a brother monk, and approached the holy table, without reconciliation, instead of that sweetness, he had nothing but bitterness in the mouth, worse than gall, God wishing thereby to teach him how necessary, according to the words of the Gospel, it is that we should be reconciled to our neighbour before approaching the altar.—*Matt. v. 24*.

579. REVENGE AND HOLY COMMUNION.—Two women, one rich and the other poor, lived in a state of constant uncharitableness. Let it be said, however, that the poor one had tried to effect a reconciliation, but her efforts had failed before the haughty dis-

positions of the other, who ever sought to revenge what she considered the insults offered to her. Easter comes round, and the rich woman, who thought to make her hatred and communion go hand in hand, approached the holy table, but the priest refused her communion, according to the laws of the Church, in a case so notorious. Under the weight of her confusion, the unhappy woman made the most formal promise, that she would lay aside all feelings of revenge, and be reconciled to her neighbour: she was then allowed to receive communion; and the other, after Mass, hastened to approach and thank her for the pardon thus publicly given. This should have appeased her rich neighbour; but the latter immediately exclaimed: "You, to be a friend of mine! Never! I would rather be hanged on the nearest tree than enjoy *your* friendship!" Scarcely had she uttered these words than she became pale and trembling, and then fell down dead in the presence of the terrified bystanders.—*Ardias*.

580. BLESSED PETER AND THE BELL.—Blessed Peter Fourrier had in his parish a wicked man who had seduced a young female, and led her into sin. A good confession made to the Saint opened the eyes of this poor sinner, and she was sincerely converted. Enraged at this change, which he had not the courage to imitate, her seducer discharged all his fury on the pious pastor. He waited for him one day at the Church door, began to abuse him, and dared to strike him with his fist. That did not last long, however, for the children, coming out from Catechism, and venerating their pastor, attacked the insolent ruffian and quickly drove him away. Many persons ran after him, and he would have been hardly dealt with, were it not for the ingenious device of the Blessed Peter. He goes to the Church in all haste and begins to ring the bell, as if a fire had broken out somewhere. Hearing the alarm-bell, all the people run towards the Church asking what is the matter. The good pastor ascends the pulpit, relates his stratagem, and winds up by saying: "My dear brethren, let us pray for this poor lost soul, it has much need of our prayers." In this way he kept them in Church for half an hour, and his enemy had time to escape. God did not fail to reward his servant for this act of charity so ingenious; on the following morning, the criminal came to throw himself at the feet of the Pastor of Mattincourt, made a general confession, repaired the scandal he had given, and led ever after an exemplary life.—*Chapia*.

581. S. PHILIP'S TENDERNESS.—S. Philip was very tender towards brute animals. Seeing someone put his foot on a lizard, he

cried out : " Cruel fellow ! what has the poor thing done to you ?" Seeing a butcher wound a dog with a knife, he could not contain himself, and had great difficulty in keeping himself cool. He could not bear the slightest cruelty to be shown to brute animals under any pretext whatever. If a bird came into the room, he would have the window opened, that it might not be caught.—*Newman*.

582. S. JOHN AND THE PARTRIDGE.—S. John the Evangelist was one day recreating himself by playing with a partridge, when a man came to visit him, dressed as a hunter, with bow and arrows in his hand. Surprised at seeing the Saint thus occupied, he ventured to express his surprise. The Saint, however, replied that as the hunter's bow could not be always on the stretch, so the mind of man required occasionally some relaxation, and he was therefore taking the innocent pleasure which this beautiful bird of God's creation afforded him.—*Cassian*.

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

"Thou shalt not commit adultery."

583. S. ANDREYSIA. — S. Andreysia, a maid of noble race and of great beauty, when her parents resolved on her marrying, betook herself to earnest prayer that God would render her countenance repulsive, that, being abhorred by men, she might the more easily preserve the fair lily of her virginity. Her prayer was heard, and soon her face was covered with sores, and overspread with a loathsome leprosy, so that, becoming hateful to her earthly spouse, she was left free to give herself to her heavenly Bridegroom in the cloister. That there might be no doubt as to this disfigurement being bestowed as a safeguard of her virtue, God was pleased that she should recover all her former charms, as soon as she had pronounced the solemn vow of perpetual virginity.—*Scaramelli*.

584. S. BERNARD'S VICTORY.—It is related of S. Bernard, that on one occasion he allowed his eyes to rest for a short time with some degree of curiosity on a person of the other sex. Although he was not conscious of anything more than a passing curiosity, he had no sooner reflected on his fault than he was touched with remorse on considering the danger he had run, and severely reproached himself for his indiscretion. Whereupon, to punish himself for this

fault, as well as by way of remedy for the future, he ran at once to a pool of water, and, though it was the depth of winter, cast himself into the half-frozen pond, where he remained so long, that the natural heat of his body was wellnigh extinguished by the cold. This generous act was well rewarded by God, who from that moment not only extinguished in him all motions of concupiscence, but bestowed upon him the gift of that tender and ardent love of Jesus and Mary which breathes forth in all his words and writings.—*His Life : Aug. 20.*

585. DANCING AND THE CAPITAL SINS.—Dancing may lead to all the deadly sins. To *pride*, by the desire of excelling in beauty, appearance or elegance and skill. To *covetousness*, neglecting an aged and infirm parent, in order to spend all on perfumes and dress. To *lust*, by yielding to the impure thoughts and desires suggested in dancing. To *anger*, by the quarrels and enmities so often born there. To *gluttony*, in the banquets which accompany dancing. To *envy*, at seeing one's self surpassed in beauty, dress and attractions. To *sloth*, by the loathing and dislike of all forms of prayer and devotion.—*Cat. de Bourges.*

586. S. TERESA'S TEMPTATION.—S. Teresa was brought up by her virtuous parents in the practice of fervent piety. At a very early age she took great delight in reading the Lives of the Saints, the perusal of which strongly incited her to the imitation of their virtues, so that she grew up a perfect model of goodness and piety. At the age of twelve she lost her excellent mother, and about the same time, fell into the dangerous habit of reading love tales and romances, in which she was encouraged by a young cousin, who had come upon a visit to her father's house, and who was much addicted to such reading. Every day the young Teresa gave a greater portion of her time to the perusal of these dangerous books, and, consequently, had less to devote to study, prayer, and useful employment. The consequence was, that in a short time she became idle, worldly, and fond of dress, and would no doubt have fallen deeper, had not her father, perceiving the change which her dispositions had undergone, placed her in a convent of Augustinian nuns, where, removed from the occasion of sin, she after a time recovered her former virtue. She often thanked God in after-life for delivering her from so great a peril, and in her writings she warns all parents to guard their children carefully against such dangerous reading, which had wellnigh proved the instrument of her own ruin.—*Her Life : Oct. 15.*

587. A READER OF NOVELS.—During the course of a mission, a lady came to see one of the Fathers who preached. She saluted him affectedly, making use of silly exaggerated words. He easily knew from that, that the lady was in the habit of reading novels, and other books of the kind. “I see that you read novels, madam!” “I do, Father, but then they do me no harm whatever; I merely read them for recreation.” “It would be well for you in that case, madam, before reading one of these books, to kneel down and say to God: ‘My God, I am going to read this romance to please Thee; I know there are bad doctrines in it, bad examples, and bad advice; no matter, I am going to read it to accomplish my baptismal vows, and to promote Thy glory and the salvation of my soul.’” “But, Father, I could never say such a prayer as that; it would be mocking God.” “No, madam, if the book be good, you can and should say such a prayer.” “But—but, Father——” “Ah! there it is; you begin to feel that the book is not so harmless as you thought at first. Tell me, were you more pious formerly than you are now?” “Yes, Father!” “And did you read novels then?” Oh! no, Father, not at all.” “Did you once prefer serious studies, useful work, grave occupations?” “Yes, Father!” “And did you then read novels?” “No, Father!” “Were you once wiser, more obedient, less addicted to luxury and foolish expense?” “Yes, Father!” “And did you read novels?” “No, Father!” “You formerly frequented the Sacrament with more relish and with more exactness?” “Alas! yes, Father!” “And did you read novels?” “No, Father!” “Well! madam, I have nothing more to say to you; you see yourself the danger of reading such silly productions.” —*Noël.*

588. LACORDAIRE’S REPLY.—A lady of the world one day asked Father Lacordaire if there were any harm in reading novels, and going to plays. “It’s for you to tell me that,” replied the witty Dominican.—*Guillois.*

589. S. AUGUSTINE AT HOME.—The Father of S. Augustine, unable, notwithstanding his great wish, to meet the cost of his son’s education, brought him home from school, until such time as he might be able to send him to Carthage to complete his studies. Augustine therefore, at the age of sixteen, was obliged to remain at home, doing nothing; then it was, as he admits, that idleness led him into the very depths of voluptuous pleasure. His holy mother, S. Monica, was terrified at the sight of her son’s iniquities, and often urged him to quit them for the path of virtue. It was

only after long years of prayer and tears for him, that she at length saw him yield to grace, and renounce the impure pleasures that idleness had taught him.—*His Life : Aug. 28.*

590. THE ISRAELITES AND MADIANITES.—When the Israelites were on the point of entering the promised land, Almighty God strictly commanded them to avoid all communication with the wicked inhabitants of that country. “Beware,” said He, “thou never join in friendship with the inhabitants of the land, which may be thy ruin. Thou shalt not enter into league with them. Let them not dwell in thy land, lest perhaps they make thee sin against Me” (*Exod. xxxiv. 12 ; xxiii. 32, 33*). Unmindful of the Divine commandment, the Israelites allowed the Madianite women to enter their camp, and were seduced by them into the commission of grievous sin—the double sin of fornication and idolatry. Upon this occasion, a terrible punishment was inflicted, both on the Israelites and their seducers. Of the former, twenty-four thousand were slain by the hand of God ; while the Madianites, as the authors of the evil, were almost utterly exterminated, at the Divine command, by the swords of the Israelites (*Num. xxv., xxxi.*). Almighty God then repeated His command to the Jews in the strongest terms, warning them of the terrible consequences which would ensue in case they disobeyed Him. “Destroy,” said He, “all the inhabitants of that land. But if you will not kill the inhabitants of the land, they that remain shall be unto you as nails in your eyes and spears in your sides. And whatever I had thought to do to them, I will do to you” (*Num. xxxiii. 52, 55*).

591. HUBERT AND LOUIS.—In a small town in France lived a young man named Hubert, whose piety and good conduct were an example to all persons of his age. It happened on one occasion that a public entertainment, accompanied with fireworks, dancing, and other amusements, was given in a neighbouring village, and Hubert took a walk in that direction by way of recreation. On his way he was joined by a young man named Louis, who was noted in the country for his immorality and impiety. Hubert, instead of making a civil excuse for quitting his company, weakly allowed himself to be drawn into conversation, and after they had talked for some time on indifferent subjects, Louis, following up his advantage, began to rally his friend on his piety, and to paint to him the pleasures of a gay life, in glowing colours. Hubert at first felt some displeasure at his conversation, but began to be ashamed of what his companion called a want of knowledge of the world.

Having arrived at the fair, he was introduced by Louis to several wicked associates, and after visiting together the principal objects of attraction, the whole party entered into one of the booths to refresh themselves with wine. Heated with liquor, and inflamed by the wicked conversation of his companions, Hubert yielded to the tempter, joined in their dissolute conversation, and was led on to the commission of a still more grievous sin. Scarcely had he thus offended his God, when part of the building, which had been erected for the occasion, gave way, and the unhappy youth was buried beneath the ruins. Louis, who escaped, was so touched with remorse at the untimely fate of Hubert, that he entered shortly after into a neighbouring monastery, and spent the remainder of his life in the practice of the most severe penance.—*Mrs. Herbert.*

592. HADDING OF DENMARK.—King Hadding had for a long time been besieging a city without success, when at length he obtained his end by a peculiar stratagem. He seized all the pigeons that came out from the town to feed in the country around, and then tied under their wings a long ribbon, dipped in brimstone. When night came, he set fire to these and let the pigeons return to the town, where they soon set fire to it, for it was all built of wood, and thus it was easily reduced to ashes.—The Devil acts in much the same way with us. He fills young hearts with the fire of love, at first innocent, but afterwards becoming criminal, till at length, by evil companionship, he is able to ruin many souls that otherwise he could not gain possession of.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

593. THE BLEEDING CRUCIFIX.—It is related in the life of S. Francis Borgia, that a certain Spanish gentleman, who was addicted to the sin of impurity, was stricken in the flower of his age by a mortal distemper. S. Francis, having heard of the circumstance, was inspired by a holy zeal to make every effort to bring him to a sense of his sad condition, and move him to repentance. Before going to visit him, he first went and threw himself at the foot of the crucifix, earnestly beseeching God to bless his endeavours, and grant him the salvation of this unhappy soul. "Go," said our Blessed Lord to him interiorly, "go to the sick man and exhort him to repentance. I promise you that My grace shall not be wanting." S. Francis set out on his errand of charity, and obtained admittance to the sick man's bedside. In moving terms he represented to him the sad condition of his soul, and exhorted him to make his peace with God by a good confession; but at the mention of confession the dying man turned away, and declared that he would never

consent to it. S. Francis returned home, and again throwing himself before the crucifix, earnestly implored Our Divine Lord to soften the hardened heart of the sinner. "Return to him," replied Jesus, "and take with thee the crucifix. Can he resist the sight of a God, dead on the cross for his salvation?" The Saint immediately went back to the dying man, and showing him the crucifix, urged him in burning words to repent and confess his sins, placing all his trust in the mercy of God, who had shed the last drop of His blood upon the cross, in order to save him. At the same moment, by a prodigy of grace, the sacred image appeared torn with wounds and covered with blood. Alas! the hardened sinner still remained insensible to the voice of Divine grace. Having cast one look upon the crucifix, he turned to the wall and died in despair.

594. DEATH OF CHRYSOARIUS.—S. Gregory, in his Dialogues, relates that there was a man in his time, named Chrysoarius, a man as full of vices as he was wealthy in riches, but, above all, extremely addicted to the sin of impurity. God willed to put a period to the sins of this man, which he daily heaped one upon another, and sent him a severe sickness, of which he died, but in a very extraordinary manner. Approaching his last end, he suddenly perceived a multitude of evil spirits, who presented themselves to him in hideous forms, and made a show as if they would immediately carry him into hell. He began to tremble, look aghast, and mournfully cry out for help. He turns himself on every side to avoid the sight of these horrid shapes, but which way soever he moves they are continually before his eyes. After many a struggle, feeling himself surrounded and violently seized by these wicked spirits, he began horribly to cry out: *Truce till morning—truce till morning!* and shrieking thus, his soul was torn from his body, and he died miserably without obtaining the truce he required.

595. THE SIGHT OF IMPURE SIN.—A father, seeing his son fall into impure ways, thought to cure him by taking him through the wards of a hospital destined for the shameful diseases. There he showed him the pains and sufferings which impure libertines had brought upon themselves, and the wrecks they had made of their bodies, and their careers. The sight of so many horrors had the effect of curing the young man of his evil inclinations.—*Guillois.*

596. A DOCTOR'S OPINION.—A medical man of renown, in a large industrial centre, one day maintained that one of the most destructive battles of Napoleon, repeated every year in that town, would not destroy so many victims as did debauchery and sin.—*Franco.*

597. VISION OF S. ANSELM.—S. Anselm once saw in a vision an immense river whose waters, black and putrid, carried down an infinite number of men, women and children. The muddy torrent cast them hither and thither without cease, but what surprised him most was to see all this crowd of people apparently happy and content, laughing and gay, in the midst of it: their joy, however, did not last, for, overtaken by a furious tempest, they were all cast into an abyss, where they perished. S. Anselm, full of grief, asked of God an explanation of the vision, and he was told that the river represented the world: its muddy waters, the criminal pleasures to which so many are addicted, without remorse and apparently without thought or fear. Thus they live on, till some violent sickness or sudden death arrests their course, and they are dragged down to the eternal abyss, for preferring Satan to God, and their evil passions to virtue.—*Catholic Manual*.

598. TEMPTATION OF S. THOMAS.—S. Thomas of Aquin, who, on account of his exceeding purity and sublime learning, is surnamed the *angelic doctor*, was inspired in his youth with the desire of devoting himself to the service of God in the Order of S. Dominic, but had to undergo the most formidable opposition from his friends and family. Among other artifices they sought to undermine his virtue, in order that having once fallen into mortal sin he might abandon the worship of God in disgust. With this view, they one evening introduced a wicked woman into his chamber, promising her a considerable sum of money if she succeeded in seducing him into sin. No sooner, however, had she entered the apartment than the holy youth, overcome with horror, snatched from the fire a burning brand, and, calling on God for assistance, drove her from the room. Then, falling on his knees, he with many tears thanked God for his deliverance, and implored Him to give him grace never to forfeit the precious jewel of his purity. At the same time, he consecrated himself once more to the service of God by renewing his vow of perpetual chastity. Soon after he fell into a deep slumber, during which he beheld two Angels approach his bedside and gird him about the loins with a cord, to signify his deliverance from all impure temptations, with which he was never afterwards molested.—*His Life : March 7*.

599. S. BERNARD AND THE ROBBERS.—S. Bernard, with some of his companions, was once on a journey, and when night came on they went to a certain house to sleep. The landlady of the house was captivated by the appearance of Bernard, whose face reflected the

innocence of his soul. She appointed for him a room not far from her own, that when the household retired to rest she might be able to go and converse with him. When all were in bed, the door of his room was gently opened, and the lady of the house went in. When Bernard saw her in the room he immediately began to suspect the reason of her coming there, and, raising his heart to God, he prayed for His grace to overcome the temptation. Suddenly he cried out as loud as he could the words, "Thieves! thieves! robbers!" As soon as she heard these words, the audacious woman fled. But the people of the house all rose in haste and armed themselves with whatever weapons they could find, and ran about the whole place in search of the thieves. After a fruitless search of half an hour, they returned each to his own room, and tried to compose themselves to sleep. The same thing happened a second and a third time, and with a similar result; and by the time they had retired for the third time, the grey dawn of morning had begun to appear, and the danger of another attack was averted. When the little company had resumed their journey, the companions of S. Bernard asked him what he meant by crying out so often during the night and alarming the whole house, and said that surely he must have been dreaming all the time. "No, dear friends," he answered, "it was all too true; there was a robber in the house. Our hostess was the robber, and she wanted to rob me of a treasure which I esteem more than all the treasures of the world—the treasure of holy purity. Thanks be to God, I escaped: I overcame the temptation."—*His Life*: Aug. 20.

600. S. CATHERINE'S TEMPTATION.—S. Catherine of Siena, that favourite spouse of Our Blessed Lord, who bore in her body the stigmata or marks of the Sacred Wounds, was at one time of her life subject to the most violent temptations of Satan. That wicked spirit, envious of the angelic purity of her soul, was wont to fill her mind with filthy imaginations, and to assail her heart with the most impure temptations. Unceasingly did she call on God for help, but she seemed to receive no answer. Her mind was obscured with frightful darkness, and she seemed on the very brink of the precipice. Upon one occasion after her temptations had ceased, Our Blessed Lord came to visit her, filling her with heavenly consolations. "Ah, my Divine Spouse," she cried out, "where wast Thou when I lay in such an abandoned and frightful condition?" "I was with thee," He replied. "What," said she, "in the midst of the filthy abominations with which my soul was filled?" "Yes,"

answered the Lord, "for these temptations were most displeasing and painful to thee. By fighting against them thou hast gained immense merit, and the victory was owing to My presence." Thus did S. Catherine learn that God is never nearer to us than when we appear the most abandoned, and that he is never wanting to those who call upon Him with humility and confidence.—*Her Life : April 30.*

601. S. EUDOXIA'S CONVERSION.—At the end of the first century, there lived a young woman, who was famous for her great beauty and charms, and whose life was one of great sin. So great was the reputation she had gained for evil, that it was commonly said that she had been the cause of more iniquity than any other evildoer in the country. Eudoxia, for that was her name, was living this kind of life when it pleased God to call her, like another Magdalen, to a life of sanctity. One night she was lodging in a house which stood close to a monastery. It was late, and the traffic of the day being ended, a stillness hung over the city. As the night was calm and beautiful, Eudoxia sat near the open window of her room. Suddenly she heard a sound as of someone reading. She listened; it came from the neighbouring monastery. It was the custom in that holy house, as elsewhere, for each one of the monks to read a pious book every night before retiring to rest. And it happened that one of them, whose cell was nearest to the house where the woman lodged, thinking himself quite alone, and that no one was near, read aloud from his book. Eudoxia listened at first with some curiosity to find out the subject of which he read. It was a meditation on the eternal torments of those who die in mortal sin. The poor woman began to tremble, as she listened to the terrible description read by the unknown voice, and when the monk had finished and retired to rest, happy in the thought that he was not conscious to himself of any grievous sin, Eudoxia also lay down on her bed. But she could not rest; the fear of the terrible judgment of God upon sinners drove sleep away from her eyes, and she was tossed to and fro all the night in terrible agony. As soon as it was morning she went in search of a priest who might instruct her in the mysteries of the true faith; he received her with kindness, and ordered her to lay aside for ever her gay garments, and renounce her evil companions; then he instructed her in the truths of the Christian religion. Eudoxia received baptism from the hands of the bishop, and from that moment her life was a model of edification to all.—*Chisholm.*

602. PRACTICE OF S. PHILIP.—S. Philip used to say that Holy Communion and devotion to Our Lady were the only means for a young man to remain good and pure. A student who was addicted to impure sins went to consult the Saint, who made him return again and again to Confession after his falls, and then to Communion, and by this frequent reception of the Sacraments, always carefully received, the young man was at length cured of his evil habit, and in time was thought fit even to be promoted to the priesthood.—*De Ségur.*

603. S. JEROME STUDYING HEBREW.—S. Jerome had had the misfortune, in his early youth, of contracting bad habits. But no sooner was he baptized, that is to say, at the age of adolescence, according to the custom of that age, than he set about correcting himself. Do you know what was the means that succeeded best with him? It was to work much. He began to study, to read, to copy books, all the while practising the exercises and the virtues of a solitary of the desert. The sin that he found it hardest to avoid was precisely that of the sixth commandment. Nevertheless, he was not discouraged; he seemed to say to the demon of impurity that tempted him every day: "Ha! thou wilt not leave me alone! what, though I fast, give myself the discipline, ruin my health with all manner of austerities, thou dost still pursue me? Well! I know how to subdue thee!" He succeeded at last, and do you know how? Still by work. To the studies he had already undertaken he added a new and not very easy one. He began to learn Hebrew. It was an old Jew that taught him, and after a while he became himself so well versed in the language, that he translated almost the whole Bible into Latin, which was rendering a great service to the Church. Let us do like him; when we are tempted, let us work hard; if the temptation continues, let us work still harder; if it be obstinate, let us be obstinate in working, and all will turn to good account for us.—*Genevaux.*

604. THE YOUNG SOLITARY.—A young solitary did not employ his time as conscientiously as he ought to have done. In consequence of this he was frequently idle, and during these idle moments he was often tempted with impure thoughts. One day, when he was tormented more than usual with them, he went to his superior and told him about it. The superior, who knew the young monk's disposition to idleness, said he would try to cure him. So he at once gave him much more constant labour and more heavy work than he had been accustomed to, and commanded him to accom-

plish it without delay. A few days afterwards, the superior, meeting him alone, asked him if he were still troubled with the temptations he had complained of to him. "Ah! no," he replied. "How could I find time to be tempted, since you have imposed on me so many and such continual labours? I have not even time to breathe." In this way also will those Christians who are tempted in the same manner be effectually cured, if they only adopt the same means.—*Lives of the Fathers.*

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

"Thou shalt not steal."

605. THE THREE ROBBERS.—A merchant, who was travelling through a forest with a quantity of jewels and precious ornaments, was attacked by three robbers, who stripped him of all that he possessed and beat him severely. Having done so, they carried off the stolen treasure into their cave, and sent the youngest of their number into the neighbouring town to buy wine and provisions. During his absence the two remaining robbers said one to another: "Why should we be obliged to share our treasure with that boy? As soon as he returns let us make an end of him." Meanwhile their young companion thought within himself as he journeyed to the town, "What a grand thing it would be if all that gold and silver were my own! And why should it not, for I can easily poison my two comrades?" Accordingly when he bought the provisions, he purchased some poison which he mixed with the wine; he then set out on his return. No sooner had he reached the cave than his two companions set upon him and murdered him with their daggers. They then ate heartily and drank the poisoned wine. In a short time they died amid agonies of pain, and the dead bodies of the three were soon after discovered beside the treasure, which was restored to the rightful owner.—*Gibson.*

606. TWO SUDDEN DEATHS.—The door-keeper of a seminary suddenly disappeared and could not be found. Meanwhile, the procurator having been absent, returned, and on trying to open his door, found the lock to have been tampered with. He managed, however, to open it, but what was his surprise to find there a man seated at the desk, one hand in an open cash-box, and the other on his heart. The priest made straight for him, but what was his

greater surprise and horror to see it was the lost porter, dead in his chair. It is supposed, that while committing a guilty theft, something must have led him to think he was caught, which so affected his heart as to cause instant death! Theft brings its own punishment.—*L'Univers*.

The abbot of a monastery came to die, and was buried in the vault of the enclosure. A lay brother, not living up to the perfection of his vocation, was desirous to gain possession of the ring buried with the deceased abbot. He therefore secretly takes the key of the vault, and with a few tools in hand, goes to effect his sacrilegious theft. After opening the coffin, he seizes the ring, and closing up again the remains, prepares to leave, when he suddenly feels himself drawn back and falls down dead of fright. He was missed, of course, and sought for everywhere, except in the vault, where no one thought of looking for him. It was only when another burial had to take place that he was found on the ground, the ring in his hand, and his habit caught by the edge under the lid of the coffin. It was this that held him back as he was leaving, and the fright it gave him must have been the cause of his death.—Theft again its own punishment.

607. ROBBERS STRUCK MOTIONLESS.—There was a holy bishop named Spiridion, who lived in the fourth century. As he had been employed, before his episcopate, in keeping sheep, he made no difficulty afterwards of continuing the same exercise to earn his living, for in those days bishops were as poor as the faithful. Some robbers having entered his sheepfold by night, in order to rob it, felt themselves stopped by an invisible hand, and bound, as it were, with bonds that hindered them from escaping. S. Spiridion, coming in the morning, as usual, to turn out his flock, found them in this piteous state. As for them, ashamed to see themselves surprised in such a posture, they confessed their evil purpose. Christian compassion made him pray for them; and after having unbound them by his words, he gave them a sheep, telling them, by way of an agreeable joke, that he wished to reward them for the trouble they had had in watching his flock all night, and after remonstrating mildly with them on the life they were leading, he let them go in peace.—*Sozomenes*.

608. POOR, BUT HONEST.—A poor man one day found a purse containing about two hundred pieces of gold and silver. He knew that he could not make his own of what he found, and so he posted

up a notice, in which was written : Whoever has lost some pieces of gold and silver can recover them by applying to —, who lives in —. The person who lost the money made every inquiry about it, but the money could not be found. At last the notice attracted his attention, and he at once hastened to the spot where he who had found the money lived. He saw the poor man, and after having answered satisfactorily the few questions proposed to him in reference to the money, the purse was handed to him. So grateful was the owner to the poor man that he offered him a tenth part of the money found. It would not be taken. "Take at least three pieces," said he. "No," replied the poor man, "I will have none." "I beg of you, then," said the other, "to accept five pieces." The poor man persisted in his refusal to take any of the money. Being again and again solicited to take a little, he at last consented, but no sooner had he received it, than he divided it with others equally poor as himself.—*Reyre*.

609. THE CHINESE ARTISAN.—A Tartar officer, entering one of the gates of Peking, dropped his purse. A Chinese artisan, who was a good Christian, saw this and followed the officer to the house he entered. "Who are you and what do you want?" said the officer. "You dropped your purse just now: here it is." "Why do you bring it here? don't you know that the law allows you to keep things so found?" "I know that; but I am a Christian, and my religion requires me to restore, if possible, whatever I may find." This reply roused the curiosity of the officer; later on he went to a Catholic missionary, and in time became a zealous Christian.—*Lett. Édif.*

610. HONESTY OF S. ELIGIUS.—S. Eligius, who flourished in the eighth century, was apprenticed in his youth to a goldsmith, and made such progress in his trade that the fame of his skill in working the precious metals reached the ears of King Clotaire II. This monarch being anxious to possess a chair of state of the richest materials and superior workmanship, summoned Eligius to court, and gave orders that he should be supplied from the royal treasury with a large quantity of pure gold and a number of rich and costly jewels. The work being at length completed, the chair was brought home to the palace, and presented by Eligius to the king, who expressed his entire satisfaction and ordered a rich reward to be given to the young goldsmith. But what was his astonishment, when Eligius requested to know his pleasure with regard to the other chair. "For," said he, "finding that the materials were

sufficient, I have made two state chairs, exactly alike and corresponding with the directions given." This remarkable instance of honesty, contrasting as it did with the conduct of so many others who were employed at court, but sought only their own enrichment, made such an impression on the king, that he immediately nominated Eligius to the responsible office of keeper of the royal treasury, a post in which he ever displayed the same spotless integrity that he had shown in the management of his own business. After leading a holy and mortified life at court for some years, beloved by all and esteemed as a Saint, he was consecrated Bishop of Noyon, in which sacred office he rendered important service to the Church.—*His Life : Dec. 1.*

611. S. SPIRIDION AND THE GOAT.—In the interests of the poor, S. Spiridion used himself to work on the lands of his bishopric. One day a dealer having bought of him a hundred goats, paid only for ninety-nine. Because the Saint did not count the money, this man thought he had not noticed the fraud. Spiridion, calling his steward, said: "Let this man take as many goats as he has paid for." The dealer counted a hundred and was about to lead them away, but only ninety-nine would follow him, and do what he would, the last resisted every attempt to take it off, butting him with its horns, and making such a noise that the servants on the farm gathered together to see what was the matter. The Bishop also came and said very gently: "Perhaps this goat won't follow, because you have not paid for it." The gentle rebuke touched the dealer, who, falling on his knees, confessed his fault, and paid for the hundredth goat, which now, bleating and frisky, made no difficulty in following its new master.—*Ribadeneira*

612. AN ERROR.—A poor young workwoman had just been purchasing some goods in a shop, which she paid for in cash. On leaving, she counted over the change she had received, and found they had given her considerably too much. Though this money would indeed have been most useful to her, she at once returns and explains the case. The shopkeeper replies that no mistake is ever made in his house, and that it is she herself who is in the wrong. Even when she explains that the error is in her favour the shopkeeper refuses to listen or retract his words, so the young woman is obliged to leave. But she could not bring herself to keep the surplus, and distributed it all among the poor.—*Hauriève.*

613. HONESTY THE BEST POLICY.—A Quaker passing one day through a market, stopped at a stall to inquire the price of some

pears. "I will not charge you much for them," said the fruit-dealer, "but I am afraid that they will not suit you, for they are old and have lost their flavour." "Thank thee, friend," said the Quaker, "I will go to the next stand." "Hast thou any good fruit to-day?" said he, addressing the next dealer. "Certainly," replied the dealer, "excellent fruit. See, here are some of the finest pears of the season; they are small, but they are of the richest flavour." "I will take some, then, my friend," rejoined the Quaker. "Count me out a quarter of a hundred and send them to my house." The pears were accordingly sent, but they proved miserably poor and tasteless. The next day the Quaker again entered the market. He was immediately accosted by the dealer who had sold him the pears, and who said that he should be very happy to serve him, as he had a choice selection of fruit. "Nay, friend, thou hast deceived me once," said the Quaker, "and though thou mayest be telling the truth this time, yet I cannot trust to thee. Thy neighbour here dealt truthfully with me, and he shall have my custom. Thou wouldst do well to remember this, and to learn that a falsehood is a base thing in the beginning, and a very unprofitable one in the end."

614. THE LAST WILL OF A USURER.—A miser, seeing his last hour arrive, called for a scrivener, and dictated his will as follows: "I give my body to the earth, and my soul to the Devil, to whom it belongs!" His friends around were horrified, and entreated the dying man to lay aside such frightful thoughts, and to remember he was soon to appear before God. But all attempts to change his mind proved unavailing. Persisting in his blasphemy and despair, he repeated the same words again and again, in a louder voice and with greater emphasis. "Yes," said he, "I leave my soul to the devils, that they may carry it to hell, in punishment of my taking what belonged to others by usury. I also leave the Devil the soul of my wife and the souls of my children, because it was on their account that I engaged in those vile and crying practices of usury." He had scarcely uttered these terrible words when his soul quitted his body in frightful agony and despair.—*S. Liguori.*

615. A USURER'S REPENTANCE.—A few years ago, a man, by means of usury, had acquired something like £600 a year income. Being at the point of death, he was moved by God's grace to repent of his injustices, and calling his two sons to him, he said: "You know, my boys, that what I possess is not really mine, for I have acquired it by means that both religion and humanity condemn. My intention now is to repair the evil I have done, and I trust to

your loyalty and piety to carry out my last wishes." The two sons were delighted at the sight of their father's repentance, and a few weeks later, after his death, sundry families were receiving £10, £20, and even £40, by way of restitution. All interest unlawfully acquired was duly restored, to the last penny.—*Guillois*.

616. "DOWN ONE-HALF."—In the fourteenth century, a terrible famine having broken out at Rimini, in Italy, the exorbitant price of grain threw desolation among the inhabitants. It was only a certain usurer that rejoiced, because his granaries were full. Nevertheless, although the corn was already beyond all price, he refused to sell his, hoping that it would rise still higher, and in order to escape importunities, he even retired to the country. Every day he went to walk on the high-road, and never failed to ask the people coming from the town how corn was selling. When told that it was still going up, he heaved a compassionate sigh, but laughed within himself. But it happened that two wealthy inhabitants of Rimini having bought enormous quantities of grain, in order to provide for the necessity of the moment, the corn fell at a single stroke to half the price. The usurer, who proposed to return that very day to the town, to profit by the misery of his townsmen, inquired, as usual, of the passers-by what was the price of corn. What was his surprise to see joyous troops of villagers coming along, driving before them asses laden with corn. "What has happened?" he asked, trembling with anxiety. "Praise be to God!" cried all the peasants at once, "corn is down one-half this morning!" "*Down one-half!*" slowly repeated the astonished usurer. He runs to the city, people meet him, salute him, bid him good-morning, but to all these attentions he can only reply with these words, slowly articulated: "*Down one-half!*" On reaching his home, his wife and children could get no other answer from him. He took to his bed, his ghastly countenance giving rise to serious alarm. They run for a doctor, who arrives in all haste, and asks him what is the matter with him. "*Down one-half!*" murmurs the unhappy man. A priest arrives, wants to hear his confession, speaks to him of trusting in the mercy of God. "*Down one-half!*" repeats the dying man, whom everyone regards as stricken with madness. His condition became worse and worse; medicine and care were alike ineffectual, and the infamous usurer expired, articulating one last time the words that seemed to be the warrant of Divine justice: "*Down one-half!*"—*Schmid*.

617. A COSTLY BREAKFAST.—In 1794, a poor French refugee lived in a village of Westphalia, in the depth of winter—a most

severe winter, too ; he wanted to purchase some wood, and applied to an individual whom he met in the street with a load of wood. The townsman, seeing that he had a stranger to deal with, put an exorbitant price on the wood ; he asked three pounds, that is to say, about sixty francs, although it was worth no more than eight or ten. The bargain made, the wood delivered, the wood-seller goes to have his breakfast at an inn, and is not ashamed to boast of having plucked a stranger, selling him for sixty francs what was worth but eight. "It was all fair," he added, laughing ; "the wood belonged to me." His breakfast ended, he asks the landlord for his bill. The latter, indignant at the man's villainy, coolly told him it was three pounds. "How ? three pounds for a piece of bread, a piece of cheese, and two glasses of beer ?" "Yes, sir, what you took was my property, and I have a right to put what price I please upon it, so, if you are not satisfied to pay my demand, let us go before a magistrate." "That is just what I want ! let us go at once." When the magistrate had heard the two stories, he hesitated not to decide in favour of the innkeeper, and condemned the hard-hearted man to pay the sixty francs demanded. As soon as the worthy innkeeper received the money, he kept eight francs for himself, and went with the other fifty-two francs to the unfortunate Frenchman, who had been the victim of the morning's shameful bargain.—*Noël*.

618. FATHER OF LOUIS XVI.—One day when the Dauphin, father of Louis XVI., was following the royal hounds, his coachman wanted to cross a piece of land from which the crops had not yet been taken. Seeing this, the Dauphin told him to keep to the highway. "But you will not be at the rendezvous in time," said the driver. "Even so," replied the prince, "I would rather miss it ten times over, than do a pennyworth of damage to the field or crops of a poor farmer."—*Proyart*.

619. THE OX OF S. MEDARD.—A peasant stole from the Saint an ox which had a bell hung round its neck, drove it into his stable, and locked the door. But though the beast stood quiet, the bell, nevertheless, kept ever ringing. The thief, dreading discovery, took the bell off the animal's neck and threw it on the ground, but it kept ringing still. Then he filled it with hay, and still it rang : at last he shut it up in a box, and in the box it rang still. Terrified at so manifest a prodigy, he restored the ox to its owner, and immediately the bell ceased to give its sound.—Now, the like happens to those who soil their hands with ill-gotten goods ; justice, like the clamorous bell, sounds in their conscience, and

says : " Keep not what belongs to another." Some will go to confession again and again, but conscience will never rest till restitution be made.—*Surius*.

620. A WITNESS.—A worthy man in an Eastern city was to bring 30,000 francs to a notary. He learned that a missionary was going to preach, in a little while, in a neighbouring Church, and in order to have the pleasure of hearing him, he went to the house of an acquaintance, and requested him to keep the money for him while he went to hear the sermon. " Open that cupboard," said he, " and put into it what you will." He opened the cupboard, placed his bag in it, and went to church. After the sermon he came to claim his money. " What money ?" he was asked in a tone of surprise. " Why, the bag of 30,000 francs I placed in that cupboard." " If you put it there, take it." He ran to get his money, but it was no longer there. He thought at first that it was a jest, but the serious and angry way in which the owner of the house spoke convinced him that he had been robbed. He goes out, and instead of repairing to the notary's, he goes to the house of one of his friends, where the preacher happened to be ; he tells them the story of the deposit. At the end of a quarter of an hour, the missionary goes out, without saying anything, and repairs in all haste to the house of the thief. Without entering into any detail, he accosts him directly and tells him plainly : " I come for the 30,000 francs that Mr. Such-a-one left in your charge, about three hours ago, and which you deny having received. You think, perhaps, that you did that without being seen, but I have a witness to produce against you. Give up the money, or you are ruined for ever." At the word *witness*, the unhappy man changed countenance, and appeared visibly agitated. Seeing that, the missionary draws a crucifix from his pocket and places it before his eyes, saying to him still more earnestly : " There is the witness against you, to whom you must one day account for your criminal action !" The culprit confessed his crime and gave up the 30,000 francs ; the missionary took it back himself to the poor man from whom it had been taken, who little expected to see it again.—*Noël*.

621. THE NEW WILL.—There was a certain rich man who had amassed his means by fraud and injustice. The end of his life came, and he sent for a priest, and prepared to die well by making a last will and testament, in which he commanded his heirs to make full restitution of all that he had unjustly acquired, and also to give a great portion of his riches to various charitable works, in

order that he might in this way restore to the full all that he had unlawfully obtained. When the will was finished, it happened that his wife heard of what he had done, and that, instead of the great fortune which she had looked forward to possess at her husband's death, she would receive only a very moderate income. She at once, taking her little ones with her, went to the bedside of her dying husband, and in the midst of their tears and her own, she cried out : " Oh ! what will become of us now ? We shall be left to pine away in poverty and misery." The dying man ought to have answered : " And what will become of my soul, if I die in my sins ?" But he had not the courage to say these words. His wife, forgetting altogether the ruin of her husband's soul in eternity, and thinking only of the pleasures of the present life, made him consent to revoke his will, and to make another, in which there was no question of restitution or pious legacies. Not long after he had signed this new will, the unfortunate man, filled with remorse and despair, died, and went to give an account of his life to the Just Judge, who renders to everyone according to his works.—*Schouppé*.

622. THE UNJUST FATHER.—One who had been for many years guilty of unjust practices, being at last at the point of death, sent for a confessor to administer to him the last sacraments. The confessor told him that the first step to be taken was the restitution of property, as his goods had been unjustly acquired. " But what shall become of my children ?" said the dying man. " The salvation of your soul ought to be much dearer to you," said the confessor, " than the fortune of your family." " I cannot resolve on doing what you require, I cannot do it," replied the unfortunate man, and in a few moments afterwards he expired. How awful a death ! How much it should cause those to tremble who have acquired their goods by fraud and injustice!—*Catéchisme de l'Empire*.

623. THE HONEST SHOP BOY.—In a certain large manufacturing town, a youth named Francis had obtained a position as clerk in the office of a rich manufacturer. He was energetic and willing, and soon won the confidence of his employer. One day a letter came recalling an order for goods. The merchant handed the letter to Francis, and with a smile, said : " Francis, write an answer to this letter, and say that the goods were shipped before the letter countermanding the order came to hand." Francis looked into the face of his employer with a sad but firm glance, and replied : " I cannot do that, sir." " Why not ?" asked the merchant angrily. " Because that is not the truth, for you know that the goods are still here in

the shop, and it would be a lie to write what you ask me." "I hope you will always be as particular," replied the merchant, turning on his heels and going away. Did Francis lose his place? No; the merchant, although angry at the time, knew from these words the value of the lad. He not only kept him in his office, but soon raised him to the position of his confidential clerk. Honesty will pay both in this life and in the next.—*The Chimes*.

624. THE WORKMAN AND THE PURSE.—A young man found a purse which contained a large sum of money. Instead of taking it to the police, he spent it in feasting with his friends. He was not long, however, in feeling the sting of conscience and in recognizing that the money thus foolishly wasted might have been put to better use by the person who had lost it, and who might now be in great want. He immediately resolved to work hard and impose privations on himself, till he repaired the evil, and saved as much money as he had squandered. And he had the courage to keep his resolution. He at length was able to hand to the police the purse he had found, along with as much money in it as it at first contained. A noble example that fully repaired the evil he had done.—*Mullois*.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

625. S. ATHANASIUS AND HIS ACCUSERS.—The Arians, wishing to get rid of S. Athanasius, accused him to the magistrates of having, in his wrath, cut off the hand of a certain man, whose name was Arsenius, and, as a proof of what they asserted, they produced the hand of a man which had been cut off, and declared that it was the hand of Arsenius which they had found, he being safely concealed in the meantime. But, hearing of their designs against the Saint, Arsenius secretly went to him, and warned him of what they were about to do. When the time came, the Saint was brought before the Council, and publicly accused by the Arians of the wicked deed which they had invented. Athanasius then cried out:— "Is there anyone present here who ever saw Arsenius?" Many of the people answered that they knew him well. Then the Saint ordered a door to be opened, and Arsenius came in covered with a long mantle. "Is this man Arsenius?" asked the Saint. "Yes," was the answer that came from every part of the room; "it is

indeed Arsenius." Then the Saint, lifting up one side of the mantle, showed the man's hands and said: "What need is there of further proof that I am innocent of the charge you bring against me?" The Arians saw their plot had failed, and would have vented their rage on the Saint, but he escaped their hands.

His Life : May 2.

626. TOTILA AND THE BISHOP.—In the days of Totila, King of the Goths, there lived a holy Bishop named Cassius. It happened that Totila, seeing him one day, formed a bad opinion of him, on account of his red and fiery complexion. "This man," said he to himself, "is certainly a drunkard." But Almighty God undertook upon the spot the defence of His servant. At the same moment He permitted a devil to enter into the person of Totila's sword-bearer, who became grievously tormented by the evil spirit. The bystanders in alarm carried the poor possessed man to the feet of the holy Bishop, who at once delivered him by simply making over him the sign of the cross. Thereupon Totila retracted his judgment, and ever after esteemed and revered Cassius as a Saint.

S. Gregory the Great.

627. THE RING AND THE LOAF.—A woman had placed on a table a gold ring which, an hour after, had disappeared. Her suspicions immediately fell upon a young student, because he was the only one who had entered the house. He was carefully searched, but nothing was seen of the ring. Nevertheless, he was still suspected. Next day, at dinner-time, a loaf of bread was laid on the table, and several slices were cut from it. All at once, behold the ring falls on the table. It was easily understood that the woman who had placed her ring there on the previous evening had laid the loaf on it soon after, without attention, and the ring had sunk into the bread, still fresh and soft. A singular circumstance, and an additional proof how careful we ought to be in giving way to this evil tendency, common as it is, to suspect others on the slightest occasion.—*Schmid.*

628. A REPUTATION SAVED.—Alphonsus, King of Aragon, went one day to a jeweller's, with some of his courtiers. He had scarcely left the shop, when the owner ran after him to complain that he had just lost a very precious diamond. The King returned along with his suite and had a bowl of bran brought in. He then commanded each of his attendants to close his hand, plunge it into the bran, and withdraw it open, and he led the way. When all had

done the same, the bowl was emptied and the diamond found among the bran. Such was the plan the king adopted to save the honour of the thief, and avoid the danger of a rash judgment on the rest.

Hautriève.

629. LOUIS THE SEVERE.—Louis the Severe, Duke of Bavaria, was in one of the provinces bordering on the Rhine, when he received by chance from his wife a letter that was not intended for him. The duchess had written two letters on the same day; one was meant for her husband, and the other for one of his officers. Unhappily she made a mistake in directing them, and the duke received the letter intended for the officer. As it contained some kind and cordial expressions, he instantly supposed that his wife had betrayed him. A gloomy jealousy then takes possession of his soul, he hastens home, enters the castle in a rage, kills a person on his way, throws the duchess into prison, and, next day, regardless of either pity or justice, or the earnest protestations of his wife, he has her beheaded. This was in the year 1255 or 1256. The unhappy man failed not to discover that his wife was innocent, but the discovery came, alas! too late. He was so grieved thereby that his hair became suddenly white in the space of a single night. Such was the chain of crimes and misfortunes that resulted from a rash suspicion and a hasty judgment.—*Schmid.*

630. THREE RASH JUDGMENTS.—A pious solitary who lived in Egypt, in the fourth century, was guilty of three rash judgments. The first was having accused some of the brethren of impatience and immortification, because they had had recourse to physicians for tumours that came into their mouths. The second, having blamed others for making use of goat-skin covers to sleep on or under, instead of sleeping on the bare ground. The third was having taxed some religious with vanity because they had blessed oil asked of them by pious persons who came to see them. “To punish me for these sins,” said the humble solitary, “God permitted that I should fall into the same faults. In fact, having an abscess in my mouth, I suffered so much that my superior ordered me to consult the doctor; the same ailment obliged me to sleep under a cover; and, finally, some persons urged me so much, that in order to get rid of them I gave them a phial of oil which I blessed. So it was that I learned how wrong I was in judging and condemning my brethren.”—*Rodriguez.*

631. THE THIEVING MAGPIE.—A jeweller in Paris, constantly missing little trinkets from his shop, resolved at last to catch the

thief. His suspicions fell on his servant, the only person in the house with him. So he one day left some precious stones on the table, as by mistake, and went out. On his return, he found some had gone: the proof seemed clear, and the servant, convicted of theft, was even put to death. Some time later, a magpie that the goldsmith had long possessed took in his presence a ring and flew off to a tree with it. He managed to follow it, and in the hollow of the tree he found, to his dismay, all the trinkets he had lost, for which his servant had been condemned. Deeply distressed at the death of an innocent person, he made known the case, reinstated her character, and founded a mass in perpetuity for the repose of her soul.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

632. S. JOHN OF KENTY AND THE BRIGANDS.—S. John of Kenty, on his way to Rome, was once attacked by brigands, who seized all they could find about him. Then they asked him if he had anything else on him worth taking. On his replying in the negative, they let him go on. But he suddenly remembered he had a few gold coins stitched into his cloak, and immediately retraced his steps to say he had not told the truth, and offered them to the robbers. They, astonished at his openness, not only refused to accept the money, but even restored to him what they had already taken.

Catéchisme en Exemples.

633. S. THOMAS AND HIS COMPANION.—One day a friend of S. Thomas of Aquin cried out to him by way of amusement: "Thomas, look at the flying ox." S. Thomas looked around him in astonishment to see where the strange animal was, but of course could not see it anywhere. His friend then began to laugh, and said to him that he was surprised to see that he was so credulous. But the Saint replied: "It is much easier to believe that an ox could fly than that a Christian could tell a lie."—*His Life: Mar. 7.*

634. S. ANDREW'S REMORSE.—S. Andrew Avellino was sent in early life to Naples to study the civil law. A fault into which he fell opened his eyes, and made him see the precipice which lay before him. Once, in pleading a cause, in a matter, indeed, which was of no weight, a lie escaped him, for which, upon reading these words of the Holy Scripture, *The mouth that lieth killeth the soul*, he was struck with so great a remorse and deep compunction, that he resolved immediately to renounce his profession, and to give himself up entirely to a penitential life, and to the spiritual care of souls.—*His Life: Nov. 10.*

635. S. JOHN ON LYING.—A great many monks paid a visit one day to S. John of Egypt, in his retirement in the desert. He asked them if there were any ecclesiastics among them. They all answered no. "This person is a deacon," replied the Saint, pointing to one of them, who, through humility, had always concealed from the monks that he was a minister of the Church of God. The ecclesiastic still denied that he was one. John took his hand and kissed it, saying: "My son, never disavow the grace which you received from God, and allow not your humility to betray you into a lie. We should not lie even for the best motives; for whatever is opposed to truth cannot come from God." The deacon bowed with respect to the correction given.—*His Life : Mar. 27.*

636. THE EMPEROR AND THE INNKEEPER.—The emperor Rudolph was one day at Nuremberg, and, as was the custom at that time, those who had any grievance used to go to him for redress. On this occasion a merchant went to him, and reported that having come into that city on business, he went to one of the chief hotels, and as he had in his possession about two hundred marks of silver in a leathern sack, he confided it to the care of the innkeeper during the time he was to remain in his house, that he might put it in a place of safety, but did not ask him for a receipt. When the time came for his departure, he went to the innkeeper and asked him to give him his money, as he was now about to leave the city. The innkeeper looked at him in surprise, and declared that he had never seen either the sack or the money; and as the merchant had no letter, he found it impossible to prove that he had given him the money. He also informed the emperor that, being one of the chief citizens, the innkeeper had been chosen to be one of the deputation which was to come that day to offer him the homage of the people. The emperor told him to hide himself somewhere where he might be within call, and that he would see what he could do for him. Not long afterwards the members of the deputation arrived, and the emperor talked familiarly with each of them, inquiring their names and their professions. When he came to the innkeeper, he said to him in a jocular manner: "I admire your hat very much; will you give it to me in exchange for mine?" The innkeeper was only too delighted to do so, thinking that he was indeed highly favoured. Not long afterwards Rudolph left the room, telling the guests to wait till his return. He met one of the officers of his suite near the door and said to him: "Run as fast as you can to such-and-such an hotel, and tell the landlady to

give you immediately the leathern sack, which her husband had hidden, for it is much needed at the present moment. And as a sign that the case is urgent, show her this hat, and she will immediately recognize it as his." The officer did as his master had commanded, and went to deliver his message. The woman, seeing her husband's hat, and knowing that no one but themselves knew about the stolen money, thought that her husband had sent for it, and gave it to the messenger without any hesitation, who carried it to the emperor. As soon as he received it, he returned to the audience-chamber, and calling to his side the guilty innkeeper, and having also sent for the merchant, he related before the company the whole story. The innkeeper at first answered in indignation that the story was made up to ruin his reputation. Then the emperor, raising up his hand in which was the leathern sack, showed it to him and to all those who were present. The innkeeper was struck dumb with astonishment, which was only increased when the emperor related the manner in which the sack had come into his possession. The emperor then gave him a severe reprimand, and ordered him to pay a very heavy penalty.—*Chisholm*.

637. THE ABBOT AND THE MONK.—One day, a young monk went to the cell of the holy abbot Serapion, to ask him for advice and instruction. Serapion told him to enter, that they might both kneel together in prayer. The monk said: "O father, who am I that I should enter the cell of a holy man like you, much less that I should be permitted to pray at your side? I am a great sinner, and most unworthy of wearing the habit of a monk, or even of looking up to heaven." The abbot saw at a glance that the man before him was not so holy in the eyes of God as he imagined himself to be; so to give him a lesson of humility, he told him to go back to his cell and remain there; not to wander about, for those who did so were usually far from perfect. While the abbot was saying this the face of the monk became very red from subdued anger, which finally burst forth into words, in which he said some harsh things to the holy man. Serapion stood this storm without showing the least sign of displeasure, and, when it was ended, he calmly said to him: "When there is a question of you yourself humbling yourself, you succeed admirably; but, when another one tries to do this, you burst forth into anger. Now I know what you are, and you now know what you have been. Your pretended piety was, after all, only hypocrisy; by it you might, indeed, succeed in deceiving men, but you can never deceive God. If you now want my advice, this

is it. Shun that hypocrisy which has its seat in pride, and seek to be before men only what you are before God." The monk profited by these severe words, and the lesson was not lost in his future life.—*Lives of the Fathers.*

638. THE BISHOP AND THE SOLDIERS.—It is related in Church History that upon one occasion the emperor Maximilian, a cruel persecutor of the faithful, despatched a troop of soldiers to apprehend and cast into prison Anthony, the venerable Bishop of Nicomedia. It happened that, without knowing it, they came to the house of the holy Bishop, and, being hungry, knocked at the door and begged for some refreshment. He received them with great kindness, invited them to sit down at table, and set before them such food as he had at his disposal. When the meal was ended, the soldiers entered upon the subject of their mission, and requested him to inform them where they could meet with Bishop Anthony. "Here he is before you," replied the Saint. The soldiers, full of gratitude for his generous hospitality, declared that they would never lay hands upon him, but would report to the emperor that they had not been able to find him. "God forbid," replied the Saint, "that I should save my life by becoming a party to a lie. I would rather die than you should offend Almighty God." So saying, he gave himself into their hands, and was conducted to prison.—*Gasme.*

639. S. FLAVIAN CONDEMNED.—S. Flavian, being condemned to death, the people did all they could to save him, and as they knew the Emperor's decree was passed only against the clergy, numbers of them cried out that he was not in holy orders. But the young deacon protested, willing to lay down his life, rather than approve of even the appearance of a lie!

640. A LITTLE MARTYR TO TRUTH.—A little orphan boy, ten years old, was adopted by a farmer, from a hospital in Milwaukee. Some time after his installation in his new family, the little boy having had occasion to remark some very bad conduct on the part of the farmer's wife, thought it his duty to inform the husband. But the woman denied the charge so vehemently that the farmer was convinced that his wife had been calumniated. The wife then insisted that the boy should be whipped till he retracted what he had said; and the husband taking a scourge, suspended the child from a beam in the room and whipped him with so much barbarity, that the blood streamed on the ground. He stopped then and

asked the child if he still persisted in what he had said. "Father," said he, "I have told the truth, and I cannot retract, to tell a lie." The blows commenced again with renewed fury, and continued till the poor little fellow fell almost lifeless into the arms of his executioner, to whom he said, throwing his little arms around his neck: "Father, father, I am dying! I have told the truth!" And he expired. The Court took cognizance of the affair. The miserable woman was convicted of the crime of which she was accused, her husband was condemned as guilty of murder on the person of his adopted child; finally the young orphan was proclaimed *the Martyr of Truth*.—*Réc. Hebdom.*

641. DEATH RATHER THAN A LIE.—During the French Revolution, the priests were proscribed and forced to conceal themselves in the very forests and caves of the mountains. A young girl, Magdalen Larralde, living on the borders of Spain, was afraid to have recourse to her own parish priest in his concealment, and used to cross the mountains to receive the Sacraments on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees. One day, on her return, she was seized by the French soldiers, and taken as a spy to their general. In answer to inquiry, Magdalen said, in all simplicity, what her object was in crossing the border. The general, touched by her youth, and anxious to save her, quickly replied: "Do not speak of Sacraments; say, rather, the French troops drove you in fear to Spanish ground." Magdalen replied this would be a lie to say, and she could not do so. In spite of urgent representations, her firmness never yielded, and she refused to save her life by telling a lie: she was therefore condemned to the guillotine.—*The Month.*

642. THE IMPOSTOR STRUCK DEAD.—S. James, the Bishop of Nisibis, travelling one day through the country, was accosted by a beggar to give him an alms to bury a companion who had just died by the wayside. The Bishop gave him an alms and went on, praying for the poor man's soul. The beggar, laughing at his success in imposing on the Saint, ran back to his companion, who was lying on the ground pretending to be dead. On coming to the spot, he called to him to get up, as the trick had been successful, but he received no answer. He approached nearer, and took his companion by the hand in order to arouse him, but what was his horror at finding that he was really dead! Immediately, with loud cries and lamentation, he ran after the Saint, and, throwing himself on his knees before him, acknowledged the deceit which they had practised, and implored his pardon and intercession. The servant

of God, having first reproved him for his sin, betook himself to prayer, and the unhappy man, who had provoked God to deprive him of life, was restored at the prayers of the Saint and became a sincere penitent.—*Butler*.

643. MIRACLE IN FAVOUR OF TRUTH.—S. Stanislaus, Bishop of Cracow, had bought some land of a man named Peter, and settled it upon his Church. The nephews of the deceased vendor accused the Bishop, contrary to truth, that he had not paid for the land. The Saint made every endeavour to show that he had, but without effect. Polish historians relate that after three days' prayer and fasting, he went to the Church, and causing the man's grave to be opened, commanded him, in God's name, to rise and bear witness to the truth that the land had been paid for; God granted his prayer, and to the astonishment of the whole court, Peter appeared and declared that the land had been paid for by the Bishop, and being led back to the grave, he returned again to his former state.—*Life of S. Stanislaus : May 7.*

644. "ONLY A LITTLE LIE!"—A little child of nine years of age was one day weeping bitterly. He had committed a fault by taking something which his father had told him not to touch, and he was afraid that his father would come to know about it and punish him. The servants of the house who saw him weeping, and knew the reason of his tears, said to him, "If your father asks you if you took it, you have only to deny it, and you will not be punished." But the child, looking at them with much indignation, answered: "What? Tell a lie about it? No, never! I would rather be punished than think of doing such a thing." This should be the answer of every Christian child to anyone who asks him to tell a lie.—*Chisholm*.

645. FLIGHT OF S. ATHANASIUS.—S. Athanasius, having embarked to escape from the Arians, was being pursued by them, when he told the pilot to turn back and face the fleet of his enemies. These at once cried out and asked: "Have you seen Athanasius, the Bishop?" To which the others replied: "It's only a short time since he passed this very spot, going up the river," which was quite true. By this means he escaped.—*His Life : May 2.*

646. S. THOMAS IN EXILE.—S. Thomas of Canterbury, persecuted by Henry II., was making for France on horseback, when one of the King's emissaries met him and partly recognized him. "Well, this *is* the Archbishop's turn out," said S. Thomas. The

man was satisfied with the reply, which was literally true, and the Saint escaped.—*His Life* : Dec. 29.

647. THE TWO CATS.—A sausage-maker was doing an excellent trade, while a neighbour, not so successful, resolved to ruin that trade. He therefore went to the sausage-maker one day when the shop was full of customers, and threw across the counter two dead cats, and said : “ I see you are busy to-day ; you can pay me next time.” As may be supposed, the poor man’s trade was ruined by this single action, which was nothing less than a calumny.

648. A SINGULAR GHOST.—A farmer of Southam, in Warwickshire, was murdered on his way home. On the following day a man came to the farmer’s wife, and asked if her husband had got home the evening before. “ Alas ! no,” she replied, “ and I assure you I am very uneasy about him.” “ Your uneasiness, madam, can scarcely equal mine, and for this reason : Last night, as I lay awake in bed, your husband appeared to me ; he showed me several wounds he had received on his body, and told me positively that he had been murdered by *Such-a-one*, and that his body had been thrown into a marl-pit situate at a certain place on the road.” The woman, terribly alarmed by this sad disclosure, caused a search to be made. The marl-pit was discovered, and in it was found the dead body, bearing wounds in the places which had been pointed out. The person whom the ghost had accused was seized and delivered up to justice, as being strongly suspected of the murder. His trial took place in Warwick, and the jurors would have condemned him as rashly as the magistrate had ordered his arrest, if Lord Raymond, the principal judge, had not suspended the warrant. Addressing himself to the jurors, he said : “ I think, gentlemen, you appear to give more weight to the testimony of a ghost than it deserves. I cannot say that I put much faith in such stories ; but, however that may be, we have no right to follow our own inclinations in this matter. We form a court of justice, and must act according to law ; now, I know of no law that admits, in justice, the testimony of a ghost. And even if there were any such, it seems to me only fit and proper that the ghost should appear here to make his deposition himself. Crier, call the accusing ghost.” The crier called three different times, without the ghost appearing, as you may well suppose. “ Gentlemen of the jury,” continued the judge, “ the prisoner at the bar is proved to be of unblemished reputation ; it has not appeared, in the course of the trial, that there was any sort of quarrel between him and the

deceased. I believe him innocent. As there is no proof against him, either direct or indirect, it seems to me that he ought to be discharged. On the other side, from several circumstances that struck me during the trial, I strongly suspect the person who says he saw the ghost of being himself the murderer; hence it was not difficult for him to point out the position of the wounds, the marl-pit into which the body was thrown, etc. In consequence of these suspicions, I think it my duty to have him arrested, until further investigation takes place. Police, arrest *Such-a-one!*" Hearing this address, so wise and so energetic, everyone agreed that Lord Raymond was right. The accuser became the accused; a search was made in his house, where several articles were found belonging to the deceased. Finally, he himself confessed his crime, and was sentenced to death at the next assizes.—*Filassier*.

649. SLANDERER REBUKED.—S. Augustine, the illustrious Doctor of the Church, had an extreme horror of all uncharitable conversation. To prevent any discourse of this nature from being held in his presence, he caused the following inscription to be painted in large letters upon the walls of the room where he usually entertained his friends:—

‘Slanderer, beware, this is no place for thee;
Here nought shall reign but truth and charity.’

It happened one day that some of his guests began to speak in his presence of the faults of an absent neighbour. The holy Bishop, with a grave and severe look, immediately reprovved them, saying: “My friends, you must either cease to speak on such a subject, or it will be necessary for me to have those verses blotted out from the walls of my room.”—*Gaume*.

650. S. ATHANASIUS AND HIS PERSECUTORS.—S. Athanasius, patriarch of Alexandria, was accused by the Arians, in their great hostility to him, of having ravished a virgin consecrated to God. And in order to prove their accusations against him, a woman was prevailed on by them to own and attest the fact in open council. Whereupon Timothy, one of the Saint’s clergy, turning to her, “Woman,” said he, “did I ever lodge at your house? did I ever, as you pretend, offer violence to you?” “Yes,” said she, “you are the very person who violated me,” adding, at some length, the circumstances of time and place. The imposture, thus plainly discovering itself, put the contrivers of it so much out of countenance, that they drove her immediately out of the assembly.—*His Life: May 2.*

651. S. VINCENT AND THE PURSE.—A judge, with whom S. Vincent was staying, accused him of stealing a purse of money, and calumniated him among his friends and acquaintances. S. Vincent, little disturbed by so foolish an accusation, was content to say: "God knows the truth." For six years the suspicion rested on him, and no other reply did he ever make in defence of himself. The real thief in the end confessed his guilt.—*Dumont.*

652. THE STOLEN BOOK.—Among the holy solitaries who formerly peopled the deserts of Egypt was a monk named Paphnucius, who, for his singular piety, austerity, and innocence of life, is justly venerated among the Saints. His extraordinary virtue and reputation for sanctity excited feelings of envy in the breast of a certain wicked monk. Being determined to destroy the character of S. Paphnucius, he secretly entered his cell one Sunday morning when all the religious had gone out to Mass, and hid his own Prayer-Book under a pile of mats which lay in one corner. When Mass was ended he complained aloud to the Abbot Isidore, in presence of all the community, that someone had entered his cell and stolen his Prayer-Book. The assembled monks were filled with grief at hearing of the event, for such a crime had never yet been heard of among them. Meanwhile the wicked monk earnestly besought Isidore to send some of their number to search the cells, and to forbid anyone to leave the spot until the return of the messengers. Three monks were accordingly chosen for the occasion, and they at once set out to execute their commission. They searched every cell, and the book was of course found in that of Paphnucius. It is impossible to describe the grief and astonishment of the assembled monks at hearing the result of the inquiry, for S. Paphnucius was both beloved and venerated by all his brethren. The proofs were, however, convincing, and as the Saint uttered not a word in his defence, he was adjudged guilty and condemned to a severe penance for the space of fifteen days. No sooner was the term of the penance expired than Almighty God took into His own hands the defence of the innocent Paphnucius and the punishment of his guilty accuser. The wicked monk became possessed by an evil spirit, and went from cell to cell to seek his cure from those who enjoyed the greatest reputation for sanctity. No one, however, was able to afford him the least relief, until at length, throwing himself at the feet of Paphnucius in presence of all the solitaries, he confessed his crime, and published aloud the innocence of the Saint. He then implored of the holy man to return him good for evil by obtaining

his cure from God ; upon which S. Paphnucius, kneeling down, offered up his prayer in his behalf, and delivered him from the devil who tormented him.—*Cassian*.

653. LESSON TO A SLANDERER.—A certain bishop had invited to his table a number of guests. During the repast one of them began to speak of the faults of a person who was absent. When the bishop heard what he was saying, he called to his side one of the waiters, and said to him in a loud voice : “ Go and ask that gentleman of whom they are now talking to come here.” The guest who had just been speaking suddenly ceased and looked towards the bishop, who, casting a severe glance towards him, said : “ I have sent for the gentleman of whose faults you are talking, in order that he may be able to defend himself ; for it is unjust to speak of another in that way, without giving him an opportunity of doing so.” No one ever after that time spoke of the faults of his neighbour in the presence of that good bishop.—*Chisholm*.

654. PERSECUTION IN JAPAN.—When the first Christian missionaries went to preach the gospel in Japan, certain merchants from Holland went to the Emperor, and told him that the only aim that these missionaries had was to bring the Portuguese and the Spaniards into the country, that, in time, they might take possession of it, and add it to their dominions. This great calumny was the source of the ruin of religion in that empire, and the cause of a great persecution against the Christians who dwelt in it. At that time there were 400,000 Christians in Japan ; forty years afterwards there was not even one to be found in the whole empire. This was the result of a lie which was raised by the cupidity of these merchants, who wished to be the only ones to have a right to come into that country. What an account will they have to give, at the Judgment Day, of the calumny which brought such evils on the Church, and caused the ruin of so many souls !—*Missions in Japan*.

655. A SAINT UNDER INTERDICT.—In 1719, when the Venerable Jean Baptiste de la Salle lived in retirement, it was the will of God that he should be exposed to contradiction. The pastor of S. Sever, his parish, a virtuous priest animated by the best intentions, but deceived by evil reports and false appearances, conceived a very bad opinion of him. He succeeded in infusing similar suspicions into the mind of a vicar-general, who, on his side, far from persuading the archbishop out of his prejudice against the holy founder,

sought to envenom him still more. The result of all this calumny was very sad, for the archbishop launched a rash interdict against the Venerable de la Salle, took from him all the powers he had given him, and forbade him thenceforward to exercise any of them in his diocese. It required a Saint to see himself unjustly condemned only a little while before his death, and yet say nothing. But what was the consequence? It was this: The Venerable de la Salle died on the 7th of April, 1719; well! he had scarcely breathed his last when God permitted that his very enemies, or rather those who had believed the calumnies against him, were the first to proclaim his innocence. The vicar-general, on hearing of his death, exclaimed: "He was a Saint! he died a Saint!" As for the pastor of S. Sever, he was so ashamed of the bad opinion he had of him, that he caused the reparation of it to be inscribed on the public register of his parish, where these words may still be seen: "He signalized and rendered himself commendable by the practice of every Christian virtue."—*Blin.*

656. THE BAG OF SAND.—S. Prior was very harsh and severe towards himself, but indulgent and charitable to others. One day, when he was present at an assembly of solitaries in the desert, they began to confer on divers subjects of piety. After a little while, some of the monks came to speak of a grave fault committed by a brother who was not there. S. Prior at first kept silent, but afterwards, perceiving that they still continued to wound charity, he quitted the assembly, took a sack, filled it with sand and laid it on his shoulders. He also took a small basket, put a little sand in the bottom, and took it in his hand. It was in this singular state that he again made his appearance among the solitaries. You may imagine how eagerly everyone asked him what he meant by that. "Alas!" he answered with a sigh, "this sack of sand represents my numberless sins and transgressions, but I take care to carry them behind my back, so as not to see them; this basket, on the contrary, which contains only a little sand, represents the faults of others, which I have before my eyes to judge and condemn them. Would it not be better for me to carry my sins before me to bewail them, and pray to God to forgive them, than to meddle with those of others?" This discourse, so ingenious and so true, touched the solitaries; they not only ceased to speak of the faults of others, but agreed that it was only by acting so that salvation could be attained.—*Lives of the Fathers.*

657. THE NOBLEMAN'S DEATH.—History informs us that a certain nobleman, much given to the vice of detraction, was admonished in his dying moments to make his confession, and to think seriously of the salvation of his soul. But he replied that he could not prevail upon himself to do so, and notwithstanding the many and urgent entreaties of his friends he remained obstinate to the last. Then putting out his tongue and touching it with his finger: "This wicked tongue," said he, "is the cause of my damnation;" which words were no sooner pronounced than he expired, thus leaving an awful lesson to all who are addicted to this fatal vice.—*Chisholm*.

658. ANTIOCH AND THE EMPEROR.—Theodosius finding himself obliged to levy a new tax on his subjects, the populace of Antioch mutinied and discharged their rage on the Emperor's statue, which they dragged with ropes through the streets and then broke to pieces. But as soon as their fury was over, they began to reflect on the contumely they had been guilty of, and of the possible consequences of their extravagance. The Emperor was indeed angered against them, and was intending to take signal revenge, but through the intercession of Flavian, Bishop of Antioch, he relented and showed mercy.—*Butler*.

659. S. FRANCIS AND HIS SLANDERER.—S. Francis de Sales, in his exertions to turn away from crime a young woman of irregular habits, gave offence to a young libertine. In a vindictive spirit, the profligate circulated a slanderous report in regard to his virtue. He forged a letter, asserting that it was directed by the Saint to this guilty woman. In that letter, the libertine, imitating the writing and style of S. Francis, expressed himself in language gross and immoral. The calumny produced its intended effect on the minds of many. The Saint was looked on as a hypocrite; but he patiently bore the malicious and false accusation. Two years afterwards, the guilty concoctor of the letter, struck with remorse at the foul deed which he perpetrated, made a public acknowledgment of his villainy, and directed that all possible publicity should be given to his retraction.—*His Life : Jan. 29*.

660. THE BLIND MAN.—There was at Nanterre, near Paris, a poor blind man who was asking charity in the public square before the Church. He had the misfortune to displease a wicked woman who was engaged in business that brought her once or twice a week from S. Germain to Paris. She vowed vengeance against the

poor man, and for more than six months she had the persevering wickedness to say, every place she went to, that this blind man was unworthy of public pity. "If you knew how matters stood with him," said she; "only fancy, that man has a whole bag of silver, and by his begging he has actually become so rich that he owns a great portion of the rich plains around Nanterre." Little by little this absurd calumny spread abroad, and was believed. When the poor blind man approached a carriage he was shamefully driven away with harsh, cruel words. Then no more alms for the unfortunate man; for almost three months he scarcely received a farthing; he was reduced, therefore, to the greatest destitution, together with his wife and four young children. Meanwhile the Mayor of Nanterre, who knew that this poor man did not own a foot of ground, was touched with his misfortune. He took the trouble of having notices posted up in various places, warning all persons passing through Nanterre that the stories told of the poor man were exposing himself and his family to die of hunger; that there was not a word of truth in what was said of him; and that it all came from the malice of a dealing woman from S. Germain who came to Nanterre three or four times a week, etc. It took some time to counteract the sad effects of this calumny, but finally the truth prevailed, and the poor blind man became again the object of public charity as before.—*Filassier*.

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife."

661. THE TEMPTING DEVILS.—A monk one day seemed to see two demons speaking together, and asking each other concerning the progress they were respectively making with two persons whom they were trying to tempt. One said: "I am doing very well with him that I have to deal with; I have only to present a bad thought to him, and immediately he takes to it and dwells upon it; when he finds himself surprised by that thought, he turns over in his mind all the ground it has gained there; he amuses himself with examining whether he resisted or consented, how it could have come into his mind, if he gave occasion to it, or if he did all he ought to have done to give none; in short, as often as I please, I torture his mind in this way, and put him almost beside himself." "For

me," said the other demon, "I am losing time with him that I am tempting. As soon as I suggest a bad thought to him he immediately has recourse to God, or the Blessed Virgin, or some Saint, or else he turns his mind to something else; so I know not where to take him."—By this we may see that the devil is very glad when we amuse ourselves reasoning on a bad temptation which he has suggested to us; for then he lacks neither will nor address to make it pass out of our mind to our heart. On the contrary, a good way to resist it is, not even to want to listen to it, and not to make head against it, but immediately to turn the mind away from it, without paying any attention to it.—*Rodriguez.*

662. TWENTY YEARS' TORMENT.—A poor solitary was much tormented with bad thoughts, without daring to acquaint his confessor with his trouble. "I am lost!" said he to himself; "it is frightful to have such bad thoughts; if I tell my spiritual father he will be scandalized, and will have a very bad opinion of me." Nevertheless, after having borne these interior torments for full twenty years, he resolved to speak of them to an old Father of the desert, in whom he had great confidence. When he had done so, the holy man began to smile, and said to him: "My son, place your hand on my head; I take your sin upon myself, so trouble yourself no more about it." "How, Father," asked the solitary, much surprised at these words; "it seems to me that I have already one foot in hell, and you tell me not to trouble myself about it." "But, son," said the old man, "do you take pleasure in these thoughts?" "On the contrary, Father, they have always given me great sorrow and much pain." "That being the case," replied the man of God, "it is a proof that you did not consent to them, and that it was the Devil who excited them in you in order to make you despair." These words of the old man so consoled and strengthened the solitary, that he was never again attacked by the thoughts that had so long tormented him.—*Rodriguez.*

663. THE YOUNG CYRIL.—A young man, named Cyril, gave himself up without restraint to drink and immorality. Constantly in a state of intoxication, he passed nights and days in drinking saloons with companions like himself. One day, returning home in this state, he begins by stabbing his sister. On hearing her cries, the father rushes to the scene, and him, without remorse, this unnatural son also stabs and kills. In a few moments he likewise kills another sister, coming to the rescue of her father, What crimes in a single day, the results of excess in drink!—*S. Augustine.*

664. S. TERESA'S DANGER.—S. Teresa was a very good child. Now hear what she says about the harm which bad company did to her. "I would advise fathers and mothers never to let their children go into company which is not good. I know it from experience. The company of a girl who was a relation of mine did me much harm. I took great pleasure in being with her, in talking with her about vain and foolish things, and in sharing her amusements. I found I had in me all the bad dispositions of my bad companion, and so I lost the fear of God." It happened that her father found out what was going on. He sent her to a convent, where she soon got back those good dispositions which she had laid aside when she was with her bad companion. How often children lose in bad company the graces which God gives to their early years!—*Furniss.*

665. THE MIDNIGHT SCREAM.—There was a certain boy who went into bad company. He was taught by one of his wicked companions to commit a very wicked sin which he never knew before. A year or two passed and still he went on committing this sin. One night he awoke out of sleep. He began to scream frightfully. His people came round him to see what was the matter, and asked him why he screamed. They could not get any answer from him. They told him to pray. At last he spoke, and what do you think he said? "Woe," he said, "woe to that bad companion who taught me that sin. It is of no use for me to pray. I see hell open ready to receive me." With these words on his lips he died!—*Furniss.*

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods."

666. DEATH THROUGH ENVY.—A Prussian had a fine fortune, and was the owner of numerous cattle; but, notwithstanding all this, he was no less jealous of what was possessed by others. In the evening, when the cattle were returning from the pasture, he was accustomed to place himself before the door of his house to watch the flocks going home from the fields; whenever he saw a finer cow than any of his passing by, he was as vexed as could be, saying: "Ah! I have no cow like that." If in the spring he saw his neighbours' farms presenting the appearance of a fine harvest,

he said sorrowfully to himself : " See ! everything prospers with others, whilst nothing succeeds with me ! " Thus he had the unhappy art of tormenting himself. And what was the result ? After dragging out for some time a sickly, miserable life, he was seized with a violent bilious fever, and died just two days after receiving a legacy of two hundred thousand francs, left to him by a relative.—*Schmid*.

667. KING PHYTHIAS.—Phythias, a king of Lydia, was exceeding avaricious ; and though he had amassed great treasures, expended nothing more than was requisite for the mere necessities of life. His queen, who was a person of good sense, took the following method in order to correct him of this vice : On a certain day, when Phythias returned hungry from the exercise of the chase, she ordered his attendants to place before him dishes filled with gold newly taken from the mines. The prince, charmed at the sight of so much gold, looked at it for some time with the greatest complacency. His hunger, however, increasing, he called for food. " How ! " said the queen ; " do you not see before you what you love best in the world ? " " What can you mean ? " rejoined the king ; " gold cannot surely stay my hunger. " " Then, is it not great folly, " said the queen, " to have such a passion for a thing which is utterly useless when shut up in your coffers ? Believe me, gold is of real service to those only who judiciously exchange it for the conveniences of life. " Phythias felt the full force of the lesson, and from that time he became as liberal as he had been before avaricious.—*Power*.

668. THE TWO BROTHERS.—Two noblemen were one day passing together through a forest. They were brothers, and each of them possessed great riches. As they were passing through the solitary place, the demon of covetousness inspired them both with the same wicked thought, that of killing his brother, in order to obtain his share of wealth. But, as they were Christians, and feared to offend God, they both resisted the temptation. When they reached the nearest village, the one said to the other : " I am going to look for a priest, for I want to go to Confession. " The other one answered : " I also have the same desire in my mind. " So they both went to the Church and made their confession. After both had finished, and were about to continue their journey, one of them said to the other : " My dear brother, I must tell you of a terrible temptation that came into my mind as we were passing through the forest. Satan tempted me to take away your life, that I might obtain

possession of your wealth." The other brother started back in surprise. "My dearest brother," he said, "the same thought also came into my mind, and I was tempted to kill you, that I might become possessed of your property : but I, like yourself, banished the temptation." This revelation filled them both with such a horror for wealth, which so nearly was the cause of crime, that, on the spot, they both resolved to renounce for ever the riches of this world, and went to live together in a hut which they built for themselves in the forest.—*Lives of the Saints.*

THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH

669. CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.—This famous navigator of the fifteenth century never weighed anchor or set sail on a Sunday or Holiday. And even when on the high seas, he always kept those days with the greatest solemnity. His vessels then resembled a floating church, in which were heard the praises of God.—*Lohner.*

670. A PHYSICIAN NEGLECTING MASS.—Some time ago a curious discussion took place between a physician and a labourer who worked on his farm. The doctor accosted the worthy man, appearing surprised to see him in his Sunday clothes. "Where are you going that you are so well dressed, Lawrence?" he asked without further prelude. "I am going to Mass." "Bah! you would do better to stay at your work." "Oh! sir, I never work on Sunday." "You are a fool." "Fool or no fool, I have made up my mind to that. I love religion, and I want to practise it, for it is that which makes me happy." "It is the priests who have put such notions in your head." "The priests never told me anything but what was right, and for my good." "Well! now, how can a sensible man like you say that? They have made you believe that there are Three Persons in one God! It is all well enough to say that there is one God, we can believe that; but the idea of three Persons in God! Did they go up to heaven to find that out?" "When one has a headache, sir, you say it comes from the stomach, and that an emetic must be taken; did you go down into the stomach to see the connection between it and the head?" "Oh! but I studied that." "Well! the priests studied too!" "Yes!

but his study is limited to teaching you incomprehensible mysteries." "Yet, they say, doctor, that there are incomprehensible mysteries in medicine too, though it is easier to know diseases and their remedies than the perfections of God, which are so far above us." "It is true there are difficult things in diseases, but at least we cure the sick, and they are the better of our advice." "I don't know, doctor, whether you can always cure your patients; but I know I am always the better of the priest's advice. You admire the peace and order that reign in my family; the good conduct of my children. Well! I owe all that to the advice and instructions of our pastor; it is not everyone that could say as much, especially when they have no religion." The doctor understood that these words applied to his son, whom he had brought up without religion, and who was giving him a great deal of trouble; he thought it prudent to put an end to this dialogue, in which he had got the worst of it, and went away muttering something to himself.—*Schmid*.

671. S. MARGARET.—This holy Queen always sought to inspire her children with the greatest respect for the holy sacrifice. "Nowhere," she would say, "must we avoid more carefully a lazy, slothful posture than in church during Mass." The young Princes learned the practice of behaving well at Mass from the example of their royal mother, as well as from her words. One of the Edinburgh folk said one day to a neighbour: "If you want to know how the Angels pray in Heaven, look at our Queen and her children in church."—*Her Life: June 10*.

672. A PROFANER OF FESTIVALS.—Vincent of Beauvais relates that a man, carting his harvest home on a holiday of obligation, was struck as by an invisible hand; a devouring fire fell upon him, and consumed his sheaves and his cart, along with the oxen that were drawing them.—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

673. DOING THE DEVIL'S WORK.—S. Stephen, visiting one of the villages of his diocese, on a patronal feast of the parish which had attracted thither a multitude of people from all the country round, perceived that devotion was not the principal motive of this gathering. Then he employed prayers and remonstrances to turn them from public dances and profane sports; but it was all of no use. The insolence of this unbelieving people animated the zeal of the holy prelate; making an extraordinary use of his episcopal authority and full of confidence in God, he commanded the devils who were

exciting these evil doings to become visible to the eyes of those who were committing them. Scarcely had he made this injunction in the Name of God, when those infernal spirits appeared mingling with the gamblers, the dancers, and those who were giving themselves up to the excesses of the table. They had faces so frightful, they belched forth so much fire, that those poor people, more dead than alive, began to cry "Mercy! mercy!" turning their suppliant eyes on their holy Bishop. S. Stephen, touched by their repentance, had only to say one word, and all those hideous spectres disappeared; he profited by the occasion to represent to his rebellious flock the enormity of their fault, and to exhort them to repair it by penance. Although we may not see the Devil every time we thus do wrong, yet we cannot doubt but he is there, and rejoices in our unhappy willingness to hear him.—*Noël*.

674. KING'S CAKE.—On the day of the Epiphany, there is something that may give us the opportunity of practising the great virtue of charity. The "King's Cake," which assembles friends and neighbours around the same table, becomes for them an occasion of concord and peace, and of mercy to the poor. How affecting is the custom, still kept up in good Catholic families, of taking "God's part," or part for the poor, before all others. The parish priest, who, on this day, joins in the festivities, is requested to mark off the part for the poor, and urged to make it larger. This is set aside, and if by chance the bean is not found in the portions given to the guests, then to have the right of searching for it in the part of the poor, an alms must be given to the priest for the relief of the poor of the parish.—*Gaume*.

675. THE MIRACLE OF BOLSENA.—A wonderful miracle hastened the establishment of a feast of the Blessed Sacrament. Pope Urban IV., in the thirteenth century, was at Orvieto, a small town about sixty miles from Rome, and near Bolsena. In this latter place, whilst a priest was saying Mass, he accidentally let some drops of the Precious Blood fall on the corporal, which he folds and folds in such a way as to absorb it all. On opening the corporal, however, he finds everywhere a figure of the Sacred Host, perfectly drawn in the colour of blood. By command of the Pontiff, the miraculous linen is taken to Orvieto. The miracle is proved, and the Holy Father, mindful of the entreaties already made to him regarding the establishment of a feast of the Blessed Sacrament, instituted this festival of Corpus Christi, which has been solemnly observed ever since.—*Gaume*.

676. S. THOMAS AND S. BONAVENTURE.—When Urban IV. had decided to institute this festival, he wished the office for it to be written by the most pious and learned men: he sends therefore for the Angelic Thomas and Seraphic Bonaventure, and unfolding to them his designs, sets them to work. Some time later, on the day fixed, the two reappear, and S. Thomas begins reading the antiphons and hymns and the various portions of the office, taken from the language of Holy Scripture with great judgment and skill. As he reads on, Bonaventure, delighted at what he hears, tears his own composition to pieces, and when asked to read in his turn, he falls at the feet of the Pontiff, and exclaims he would have thought it sacrilege to let his poor work exist by the side of such wonderful beauties. Nearly eight hundred years have now rolled by, and the admirable work of S. Thomas is still the ornament of the Roman Breviary.—*Gaume.*

677. THE MIRACLE OF FAVERNEY.—One day in 1608, at Faverney, in France, there was erected, for the procession of the Blessed Sacrament, a wooden altar, richly decorated, whereon the Blessed Sacrament was exposed. A taper, placed too near a curtain, having taken fire, the altar and all its ornaments were burned in an instant. Surprising thing, the Blessed Sacrament was not only not damaged by the flames, but it remained suspended in the air without any support, and that for thirty-three hours, to the great astonishment of the multitude, who flocked from all parts to contemplate this prodigy. A priest of the neighbourhood came in procession with all his people, and prepared to celebrate Mass at the high altar. Whilst he was saying it, the Blessed Sacrament went of itself to place itself on that altar, after the elevation. All this took place in sight of an immense multitude of spectators, from amongst whom were chosen fifty witnesses, the best instructed and most trustworthy. The Archbishop of Besançon, after the most critical investigation, caused the account of this miraculous host to be printed and published, and from that day to this the memory of the miracle is well preserved in the little town where it occurred.—*Favre.*

678. THE THREE FOUNTAINS.—S. Paul was martyred about a mile and a half beyond the present magnificent basilica of S. Paul's outside the walls. His head bounded three times after his decapitation, and from the spots where it touched the earth there burst forth fountains of water which still exist. A church has been built here, and an altar stands over each of the three fountains.

679. OUR LADY'S TOMB.—When the Blessed Virgin died, she was in due course laid in the tomb. One of the Apostles, unable to be present at her death, arrived three days after her happy departure. Full of sorrow and regret, he besought the others to open the tomb, that once more he might rest his eyes upon her. It was therefore opened, but, O prodigy! the sepulchre was empty, and some lilies, emblems of purity and virginity, had sprung up in the place where the chaste body had lain, that immaculate body, which was too holy to remain in the grave, and which angels bore away when the voice of God woke it from its short sleep in death.—*Gregory of Tours.*

680. THE TWO HUNTSMEN.—Two young men had agreed to go out hunting together upon a certain Holyday of Obligation, but only one of them took care to hear Mass before starting upon the expedition. They had scarcely been out an hour, when suddenly the sky grew dark, and a fearful storm came on, accompanied by such terrible peals of thunder, and such vivid flashes of lightning, that it appeared as if the end of the world was approaching. But what alarmed them most was that, in the midst of the tumult of the elements, they heard from time to time a voice of thunder saying, "Strike, strike." At length the storm began to clear off, and they resumed their way, when suddenly the thunder pealed forth afresh with great fury, and the huntsman who had failed to hear Mass that morning was struck dead on the spot by a flash of lightning. His companion, beside himself with terror, knew not which way to turn, and his terror was increased when he heard the same voice repeating, "Strike! strike the other also." At these words he was ready to sink upon the ground in mortal anguish, but his courage returned when he heard another voice reply, "I cannot strike *him*, for he has heard this morning the *Verbum caro factum est*—'The Word was made flesh,' " the concluding words of the last Gospel, at which all the congregation bend their knee in honour of Our Lord's Incarnation.—*S. Antoninus.*

681. OPINION OF ROUSSEAU.—"What is to be thought of those who want to deprive the people of their festivals, as if they were so many distractions, turning them aside from their labours? This maxim is false and barbarous: and so much the worse, if the people have only time to earn their bread. The just and beneficent God who wills they should be occupied, wills also they should be refreshed. Nature imposes on them exercise and rest, pleasure and pain alike. The disgust of labour oppresses the miserable more than labour

itself. Do you wish to have the people active and laborious? Give them festivals."

682. MARIA LECKZINSKA.—This virtuous Queen of Louis XV. gives us a noble example of submission to the Church. In the last years of her life, her health was such that she was no longer able to observe the fast of Lent with her former exactness. She therefore sent one of the highest of her Court to seek dispensation for her from her Bishop, wishing thereby to show honour to her pastor, and to teach him who bore her commission what he ought to do in similar circumstances.—*Guillois*.

683. KING STANISLAUS.—King Stanislaus of Poland was a faithful observer of the ancient discipline of the Church; he made but one meal in Lent, not even allowing himself the collation; moreover, on Fridays he denied himself the use of fish and eggs. From his dinner on Holy Thursday, till the following Saturday, at noon, he denied himself every species of nourishment, even bread and water. That interval, specially consecrated to the memory of Our Lord's Passion, the pious monarch employed, as far as his affairs permitted, in prayer, and in visiting churches and houses of charity, where he poured forth abundant alms. It was only through submission to the holy authority which he respected in his pastor that he consented, when over eighty years of age, not, indeed, to infringe on the commandment of the Church, but to moderate a little the severities he added thereto. Notwithstanding these austerities, that would be admired even in an anchorite, King Stanislaus, justly named *the Beneficent*, lived to the age of eighty-four years.—*Filassier*.

684. ANECDOTES OF LOUIS XVI.—It is related of the unfortunate Louis XVI., King of France, that when he was a youth of twenty years, he said one day to his courtiers, "I have not done much in the way of keeping Lent this year, but next year it will be different, for I shall have to fast." "Sire," said one of them, "that will be impossible, for you would not be able to hunt." "No matter," replied Louis, "I must give up hunting if it is necessary, for a mere amusement does not excuse anyone from obeying the laws of the Church."—The same King, when in prison and in the hands of his merciless enemies, was equally exact in observing the days of abstinence, and was wont to content himself for his meal with a piece of dry bread, when forbidden food was placed before him in derision by his cruel gaoler.—*Anec. Chrét.*

685. BOILEAU AND THE DUKE.—The Duke of Orleans invited the famous Boileau to dinner on a Friday, and meat was served up. Boileau was content to eat bread and vegetables. "You must eat meat, like the others," said the Prince: "they have forgotten it is Friday." "Sire," replied the poet, "you have but to knock with your foot, and fish will come forth from the earth." This answer pleased the Duke; and the poet's persistence in abstaining from meat increased the Duke's esteem and veneration for him.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

686. GENERAL DROUOT.—A traveller went one Friday to an hotel to dine. There were several already at table, and when the waiter brought a dish of meat to the new-comer, the latter declined it and asked for fish. The waiter seemed surprised, and the others at table began asking for more meat in a coarse and rough manner. Our traveller said nothing, but seemed to enjoy his fish dinner. At length he joined in the general conversation, and by his tact and grace won the admiration of those around him. In time the talk fell on the laws of the Church, and to an indiscreet question put to him, he replied: "I always abstain from meat when it is forbidden: for the Church has received from God the right to make laws, as I have received from the Emperor the right to command my soldiers. There is no society possible without law and authority." His listeners were astonished, and kept silence.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

687. THE TRAVELLER AND HIS DOG.—A man, followed by a fine dog, sat down to table where several acquaintances were also seated. It happened to be a Friday, and these, seeing him come in, exclaimed: "Here's our pious friend who eats no meat, so there will be the more for us." "Not at all," replied he, "I claim my share." Amid much raillery, he took the plate of meat and set it on the floor, saying to his dog: "Eat that, *you* have no soul to save." This was rather pointed, and his companions were inclined to be angry, but the good humour of the other made them keep silent.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

688. BUFFON AND THE DOCTOR.—A celebrated physician, who was at the same time a great naturalist, was invited to dine at M. Buffon's. There were at dinner some philosophers, more famous for the incredulity they made show of, than for their knowledge of mathematics or *belles lettres*. It was on Friday, and the host, who had, perhaps, forgotten that it was a day of abstinence,

had only meat soup served in the first course. The Christian doctor took none, and was determined to wait for the dessert even, sooner than violate the rules of abstinence. Most of the guests perceived this, and many of them knew the cause. Amongst these was Diderot, unhappily so well known for his hatred of religion. He first put this question to the doctor: "Doctor, why do you not eat?" and he immediately added with a mocking smile: "Is it because to-day is Friday, and that you see nothing here you can eat? Now, do you really think that flesh meat is not so good on some days as on others?" "Yes, sir," answered the physician; "yes, I am satisfied that flesh meat is injurious every day on which the Church has seen fit to prohibit its use; I am a physician and a Christian, and am, therefore, more capable of judging than others, who are, perhaps, neither one nor the other." This modest and courageous answer produced its effects. Buffon called his butler, and told him in a low voice to remove the dishes, and to serve no meats in the second course.—*Guillois*.

689. FERDINAND OF NAPLES.—King Ferdinand was going from Rome to Naples; his son was with him. They were travelling in disguise, so that no one knew them, and were in great haste, being on business of importance. The King and his son went into an inn to take some refreshments, and sat down at a table where others were dining. It was a Friday, and although there were some Catholics present, they seemed to have forgotten the law of abstinence, and were taking food forbidden by the Church. Only one young man was dining on food allowed on that day. The rest of the company began to mock him, and to say that he was very foolish to make any distinction between Friday and the other days of the week. Their railleries made no impression on him. "You may do as you choose," he said to them, "but I will act up to what my religion requires of me as long as I live." The King listened to the conversation for some time in silence; but when the young man had said these words, he also spoke and praised him, saying that one who was faithful in this way to God could be always trusted. At length the King rose from the table without making himself known to them. He told the young man to follow him, and asked him where he was going, and what he was about to do. "I am going to Naples," he answered. "I am going to seek admission into the army of King Ferdinand. Although I am by birth a Florentine, I do not wish to enter the army of my native city, because the soldiers are so careless about their religious duties."

The King took a piece of paper from his note-book, and, writing on it a few lines, sealed and addressed it; then, giving it to the young man, he said: "Take this letter to the place indicated on the address; it may be of some assistance to you when you reach Naples." The King departed, and the other continued his journey towards Naples. When he reached that city he delivered his letter to the person to whom it was addressed, who was no other than the Commander-in-Chief of the King's army. Having thus fulfilled his commission, he turned to go away, but to his surprise he was told to enter the commander's room, and was received by him with marked honour and respect. The letter contained a command from the King appointing him to the rank of Lieutenant, and he was immediately installed in that office.—*Chisholm*.

690. S. ANTHONY IN THE DESERT.—When S. Anthony was twenty-one years of age, he left his home to spend the rest of his life in the desert to prepare for Heaven. From that time he began to fast rigorously. The only food he ate was a little bread mingled with salt, and his drink was water. He took this only once a day, and that after sunset. Sometimes he did not touch food for two days at a time, and sometimes not for three or four. Satan often came to tempt him. He tried at first to frighten him by making a loud and dismal noise; then he would strike him till he was covered with wounds, and often left him half dead. But nothing ever troubled the Saint. He had many disciples, whom he trained up to live as he himself did. "Believe me, my brethren," he often said to them, "Satan is more afraid of the fastings, prayers, and good works of the servants of God than of anything else they do, because these holy exercises inflame their hearts with the love of God, and secure their perseverance."—*His Life : Jan. 17*.

691. MARTYRDOM OF S. FRUCTUOSUS.—In the early ages of the Church, Friday was kept not only as a day of abstinence, but as a fasting day in honour of Our Lord's death, nor was it permitted to touch food until three o'clock in the afternoon, the hour at which he expired. Now, it happened that S. Fructuosus, being condemned to death for refusing to adore the false gods, was led to execution on a Friday morning along with two of his deacons. They had been condemned to be burnt alive in the public amphitheatre, and as they were conducted thither they were attended by vast crowds of people, eager to receive the dying blessing of the holy Bishop, who was beloved alike by Christians and pagans. Some offered him refreshments on the way, and begged him to take

at least a cup of wine to strengthen him before his last combat. "I thank you," replied he, "for your charity, but it is Friday, and it is yet but ten o'clock." The martyrs were fastened to wooden stakes, and the flames consuming the bands with which they were secured, left their arms at liberty, which they extended in the form of a cross. In this posture they expired before the flames touched their bodies, and at the same moment the heavens were seen to open, and their happy souls to enter therein crowned with glory.—*His Life : Jan. 21.*

692. WHAT A CHILD CAN DO.—A certain mother having been invited to dinner, took with her her little girl, who was just ten years old. It was an abstinence day, and the only food on the table was flesh-meat. Those who were present partook of the forbidden food, except the little girl, who refused to touch it; and when she was asked why she did not do as the rest did, she said that it was because the Church forbade the use of flesh-meat on that day. Frequently during the course of the meal did they ask her to lay aside her scruples, but the child refused. Her mother even, who ought to have given her better example, also asked her to do as she herself was doing; but to no purpose, for the little girl remained firm. This resistance on the part of the child had its effect on the guilty mother, and her conscience soon began to reproach her for what she had done. As soon as they left that house to return home, she said to her daughter, at the same time embracing her with great affection, "My dear child, I am truly grieved for what I did to-night, and especially for asking you to transgress the law of God's Church; but I promise you never to do this again, and for the rest of my life you shall never see your mother be so weak as to break any of the Commandments through human respect, or for any other motive." The penitent mother did as she promised, and she was won over to the path of duty by her little girl who so faithfully kept the law.—*Chisholm.*

693. "TOO LATE!"—The Venerable Bede relates that the pious King Coinred had at his Court a nobleman to whom he was much attached, on account of his good qualities and faithful service. Unhappily, this poor man neglected the duties of his religion, and remained for years without approaching the Sacraments, continually deferring from day to day, notwithstanding the earnest entreaties and remonstrances of Coinred. At length he was attacked by a dangerous malady, and the King went to visit him, urging him to delay no longer, but to send at once for his confessor. Some days

after, the King went a second time, and finding him at the last extremity, besought him in the most moving terms to have pity on his own soul, and send at once for the priest. But he, turning upon the King a look of anguish, exclaimed, "It is now too late. There is no more time now for Confession. I am lost; Hell is my portion." So saying, he fell back and expired.

694. THE DOCTOR AT EASTER.—A clergyman, speaking to his flock on the folly of delaying their conversion, related to them the following parable: On my way hither, I beheld a most affecting spectacle. A young man thrown precipitately on the highway, his carriage broken, and he himself, though not dead, yet suffering in every member of his body intense torture. The people approached him, and begged of him to accept the aid of a physician. "A physician!" said he, "yes, at Easter I will have a physician." Judge of the astonishment of the spectators: they imagined he had lost his senses.—Be not surprised, my brethren, when I ask you, Are you not like this unfortunate, foolish man? Have you not been running in the way of vice? have you not even suffered a dreadful fall? your soul, is it not more than wounded? is it not dead? We speak to you of a Physician that is all-powerful, through the mission he has received from God, and who can bring that soul again to life; and you say: "At Easter, at Easter, I will have recourse to the Physician." And how many are there among you, dearest brethren, who do not put even this limit to your delay?—This comparison made a lively impression on the minds of the auditors, many of whom approached, soon after, the tribunal of Penance.—*Mérault*.

695. GENERAL BEDEAU.—On his return from an expedition in Africa, in 1846, General Bedeau met a priest on his way to Constantine. He immediately makes a halt, and kneeling on a stone, he makes his Confession to the priest. Then, turning to his men, he says: "In a few days we shall have to appear again before the enemy: if anyone wish to put his conscience right, let him come forth and do as I have done!"—*De Ségur*.

696. BAD EASTER COMMUNION.—A young man, who lived in criminal habits, resolved, nevertheless, to make his Easter Communion. This new Judas did not make his sacrilegious Communion with impunity. Scarcely had he received the Sacrament, when he was possessed by a Devil who shook him every day in a horrible manner. The Bishop, having ascertained the reality of the posses-

sion, sent a messenger to exorcise the demoniac. The missionary, in order to let the spectators see that the man was really possessed, commanded the Devil to lift him up and hold him suspended in the air; the Devil did so. He then commanded him to give him back the body; the fiend obeyed: he threw him on the ground without hurting him in any way. "Answer me," said the priest then to him, "why didst thou take possession of the body of this unhappy Christian?" Because I had a right to him; he is mine, for I reign in his heart ever since he made a bad Communion." This declaration struck all who heard it with a salutary fear, and did them more good, perhaps, than the sight of a fervent Communion.—*Guillois*.

697. OMISSION OF THE EASTER PRECEPT.—S. Gregory the Great was once saying Mass for one who had been dead many years. While he was saying *Requiem Æternam*, in the Introit, he heard a voice saying: "I shall never have eternal rest or light." Thinking it might be an illusion, the Saint recommenced the Introit, and heard again the same distressing voice. He continued, however, and completed the Holy Sacrifice, and God made known to him that the unhappy man for whom he was praying was lost eternally, for having once, deliberately and through his own fault, omitted to fulfil the precept of Easter Communion, on account of some injury he refused to pardon.—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

698. EXAMPLE FROM S. CYPRIAN.—During the cruel persecution raised against the Church by the Emperor Decius, a certain Christian and his wife, to secure their safety, fled from their house in the city of Carthage, leaving behind them their little girl of twelve months old in charge of the nurse. The latter, unwilling to be burdened with the care of the child, took her to the pagan magistrates of the city, who, out of hatred to the Christian religion, caused her to be fed with bread soaked in wine that had been offered to idols. The persecution soon after abating, the parents returned to Carthage, and the little girl was restored to her mother. She, not knowing what had happened, took her with her to the house where the Christians were assisting in secret at the Holy Sacrifice. When the time of the Consecration arrived, the little child began to struggle violently, and appeared as if she sought to explain by signs what had passed before the magistrates. At length the moment of Communion came, and the Deacon of the Mass, after communicating the rest of the faithful, brought the consecrated chalice to the little girl, seeking to administer to her a

few drops of the Precious Blood, according to the custom of the time. She, however, violently resisted, turning her head away and seeking to push away the chalice with her little hand. At length, however, he succeeded in communicating her, but no sooner had she swallowed the consecrated wine than she began to vomit, and threw up all that she had taken. The Precious Blood of Christ could not remain in a heart which had been defiled with the presence of wine that had been offered to idols.

699. FIRST COMMUNION VEIL.—A young girl who had been brought up by virtuous parents, had the happiness to make her first communion with exceeding fervour and in the most excellent dispositions. The remembrance of the happy day on which she first received Our Lord continued for a long time ever present to her mind, and became a powerful motive to encourage her to the practice of virtue. Every month she returned again to the Divine Banquet, and on her communion days it was her frequent custom, when in private, to clothe herself again with the veil and wreath that she had worn on the occasion of her first communion, in order that she might renew the sweet emotions which she had then experienced. It happened, however, that as time went on, her fervour and piety relaxed. She grew lukewarm and slothful, careless about her prayers, and negligent in approaching the Holy Sacraments, until she at last fell away by degrees into a worldly and sinful life. The sight of the garments which she had worn on the day of her first communion now became hateful to her, for they never failed to awaken in her the voice of conscience, until at last, to avoid their continual reproach, she shut them up in a drawer which she seldom opened. Here they continued unnoticed for many years, during which this once innocent and holy soul fell deeper and deeper into the abyss of sin. At length it pleased God to look upon her with eyes of mercy. Going one day by accident to the drawer where the veil and wreath had been laid by, she came upon them unexpectedly. Her first emotion was of impatience. "Wretched veil," said she, casting it on the ground, "can I never banish you from my sight! And yet," she added, for Divine grace began now to work in her heart, "how happy was I when first I wore you! Where is the innocence which then adorned my heart, where the robe of grace with which my soul was clad on that blessed morning when first I went to receive my God?" So saying, she knelt down and fervently kissed these tokens of her early innocence and piety. Then, bursting into tears, she implored Our

Lord to pardon her many crimes and past ingratitude, and restore her once more to His love and friendship. From that moment she quitted her evil life and became a sincere penitent.—*L'Homond*.

700. THE ORATORIO.—S. Philip Neri, born in 1515, has been considered the founder of the Oratorio, a kind of sacred musical composition, in which the text is illustrative of some religious subject, sometimes taken directly from Scripture. The Saint engaged poets and composers to produce dialogues in verse and set to music, which were performed in his church, or Oratory, on Sundays and festivals. This proved to be a great source of attraction to the people, and once he had brought them together, he gave them solid instructions on the truths of God, and this was a means he employed to keep them faithful to the practices of Religion.

701. A MARRIAGE BLESSED BY HEAVEN.—During the time of the Crusades, a young English gentleman, named Gilbert, undertook a journey to the Holy Land, accompanied by his servant Richard, to fight against the Infidels who were at that time in possession of the holy places. Both were soon taken prisoners, and fell into the hands of a Saracen Prince, who treated Gilbert with some consideration on account of his superior education and excellent qualities. In this state of slavery the virtues and piety of Gilbert attracted the attention and admiration of his master's daughter, who took every opportunity of conversing with him unobserved. She questioned him regarding his country and religion, and the interest which she took in his answers encouraged him to unfold to her by degrees the truths of our holy Faith. He so moved the Princess that she took a resolution to embrace the Christian religion at any cost, whenever the opportunity occurred. Meanwhile a plan of escape was secretly formed among the slaves, and Gilbert and Richard found themselves once more at liberty after a captivity of eighteen months. The young Princess wept bitterly when she saw herself deprived of Gilbert's instruction and advice, and detesting from her heart the superstitions of Mahomet, took a generous resolution of seeking out Gilbert in the land of his birth, in order to procure through his means the grace of Baptism. Accordingly she fled secretly from her father's house, and embarking in an English vessel, arrived at length, destitute and friendless, in the city of London. Almighty God did not abandon a soul which had so generously corresponded with the call of grace. As the Saracen maiden was wandering in great distress through the busy streets of London, unable, on account of her ignorance of the language, to

make any inquiries as to the object of her search, she suddenly recognized among the crowd the form of Richard, who had been sent out on some message by his master. Overjoyed at this meeting, she acquainted him with the object of her journey, and implored him to conduct her to his master, that he might complete the work of her conversion. Gilbert, informed of her arrival, procured a lodging for her in the house of a pious lady of his acquaintance, where, on the following day, he went to visit her. The young maiden, throwing herself at his feet, besought him with tears to procure for her that priceless gift of the Divine friendship, which he had declared to be more precious than life itself. Gilbert was deeply moved at her lively faith and generous dispositions, and not only promised to do his utmost to obtain for her what she asked, but felt himself inspired by God to make her the offer of his hand, that he might be able, with a better title, to devote himself to the work of her instruction. His resolution was approved of by the Bishop, whom he consulted on the subject. Shortly afterwards she was baptized under the name of Matilda, and then solemnly espoused to Gilbert in the presence of the Bishop, who himself gave the nuptial benediction to the holy couple. Soon after their espousals Gilbert, to fulfil a vow which he had taken, returned to the Holy Land, where he served for three years and a half against the Infidels. His time of service completed, Gilbert returned to England, to the joy of his virtuous spouse, and God blessed their union with a son, the great S. Thomas à Becket, who received the crown of martyrdom under Henry II., in defence of the liberties of the Church.—*Hist. Édif.*

THE SACRAMENTS

702. BANK-NOTE VALUE.—The Roman Emperors, on their accession to the throne, used to throw money to the people. One of them once thought to throw them slips of papers signed by himself, and showing sums more or less considerable, which the State would pay the bearer on presentation. The people, not realizing the conventional value of these papers, despised them; but some, well advised, gathered up a large number of them, and became rich in

a single day.—If man can thus give value to what has no value in itself, how much more can God attach wonderful graces to common and simple elements!—*Métrauh.*

703. HOLY WATER AND THE GRASSHOPPERS.—Blessed Theodoret, a doctor of the Church, relates that S. Aphraates, having left his own country, became a solitary in the neighbourhood of Antioch. That country is sometimes ravaged in a singular manner by clouds of grasshoppers, which settle down on the fields, devouring everything green that they can find, and, to crown the misfortune, sometimes cause a plague, by the multitudes that die and corrupt on the ground. In a certain year, when this pestilence appeared in all its horrors in the vicinity of Antioch, a poor man went to S. Aphraates, beseeching him to come to his assistance. “Father,” said he, “we are lost. Here are the grasshoppers coming; they will eat up my field of wheat, and it is all I have to feed my wife and children, and pay the Emperor’s taxes. I beseech you, man of God, have pity on me!” “But, my good man, I can do nothing of myself; it is only God who can work a miracle in your behalf. Nevertheless, if you have confidence, bring me a pitcher of water.” The poor labourer went out, and quickly returned with the water; S. Aphraates dipped his hand in it, said a prayer over it, and having blessed it, gave it to the man, telling him to take the pitcher, and sprinkle a little of the holy water it contained all round his field. He did so exactly, and the power of the miraculous water was speedily manifested. The grasshoppers arrived, and in a moment darkened the air, and covered the country to a great distance; but not a single one crossed the limits of our labourer’s field; such of them as went in that direction were thrown back as if by an invisible agency. The crop on that field was most abundant, convincing everyone of the sanctity of Aphraates and of the virtue of holy water.—*Genevaux.*

704. S. ALPHONSUS.—When S. Alphonsus was lying on his death-bed he asked the fathers to give him Holy Communion, since he could no longer say Mass. One day, when there was some delay in bringing the Blessed Sacrament, he began to cry out aloud: “Oh! give me my dear Lord; when will you bring me my Jesus? Oh! go quickly, for I desire so much to be with Him.”—*His Life: Aug. 2.*

705. S. PHILIP.—S. Philip Neri had a great love for Jesus in the Adorable Sacrament of the Altar, and his heart was always

burning with the great desire he had of receiving Him into his soul. When he was stretched on his death-bed, and the priest was bringing him the Holy Eucharist to be his Viaticum, he raised himself up on his bed, notwithstanding his weakness, and cried out with a clear and powerful voice : " O my Love, my Love, my Jesus, my God, come to me."—*His Life : May 26.*

706. BLESSED IMELDA.—In the fourteenth century there lived at Bologna a holy virgin named Imelda, of tender years, but of extraordinary piety. At the age of eleven she had been admitted into the Dominican Convent in that city, where she became the admiration of the community on account of her exact observance of the religious rule, her spirit of penance, and the fervour of her devotion. Above all things, it was her delight to spend hours in prayer before the Holy Sacrament, holding sweet converse with the Divine Spouse of her soul ; and it was her longing desire to be admitted to his embraces in Holy Communion. This, however, had never yet been permitted by her confessor, on account of her tender years, though she frequently approached to the Sacrament of Penance, and had often and earnestly implored him to admit her to the Heavenly Banquet. It happened one day, on the eve of our Lord's Ascension, that all the religious were approaching the altar, while Imelda alone was prevented from sharing in the Sacred Feast. On beholding the Divine Fountain of grace flowing so near, while she was excluded from quenching her ardent thirst with its living waters, Imelda was overwhelmed with grief, and kneeling before the altar, protested that her only desire on earth was to be united to Him in the Holy Sacrament. At the same moment, a Sacred Host was seen descending from above, until it remained suspended over the head of the holy virgin, who was now absorbed in an ecstasy of love. Her confessor, perceiving what had happened, ran to the spot, and taking with reverence the Host upon the paten, in obedience to this evident sign of the Divine Will, placed it on the tongue of the devout virgin. No sooner had she received the sacred particle, than the rapture of love which consumed her soul at the possession of her Divine Spouse burst asunder the ties which united it to the body, and she was borne in the embraces of her Beloved to the eternal sight and enjoyment of Him in Paradise.—*Lives of the Saints.*

707. NEGLECT OF THE SACRAMENTS.—A certain holy and zealous priest, addressing his people, said to them : " How many sick persons repair in the summer season to Vichy, Biarritz, and other

celebrated watering-places, at very great expense, in order to obtain the cure of some corporal disease! In the Sacraments we have admirable sources for all the ills of the soul; and these sources of grace invariably cure all those who, with proper dispositions, have recourse to them. And yet how many spiritually sick among us, who do not avail themselves of those admirable waters, flowing through the Sacraments out of the Saviour's fountains for the cure of all the maladies of the soul!"—*Power*.

708. JULIAN THE APOSTATE.—This Emperor, twenty years after his baptism, renounced the Faith, and returned to paganism. Convinced that his Baptism and Confirmation had impressed a character upon his soul, he took every means in his power to rid himself of it, as it constantly reminded him of his apostasy. History says that he had the blood of victims offered to idols poured over his head, and made use of many superstitious practices to efface the character he had received. Alas! in spite of his sacrilegious efforts, when the Angel's trumpet summons men to judgment, it will be as Christian that he will arise and go forth to answer for the abuse of the abundant graces which the Sacraments brought to his soul.—*Massillon*.

709. THE TWO FOUNTAINS.—In the midst of a vast plain, there was a beautiful and magnificent fountain. It shed its limpid and abundant waters over the fields by means of seven little channels that were ever full. It is true that its waters sometimes appeared a little bitter, but they had a wonderful virtue. In fact, according as one drank from one stream or another, he received its salutary effects; here, old men became young and vigorous; there, the ugly, those who had any deformity, any natural defect, appeared handsome, straight, well formed; all the sick returned thence healed and strengthened. Even the bodies of the dead were there restored to life when plunged in, with certain precautions. But better still: at this marvellous fountain the poor became rich, the wretched found happiness, sorrowful people drank gaiety and joy.—Beside this fountain there is another, whose waters also flow in great abundance; it appears, at first, to be as sweet as honey; but scarcely is it in the stomach when it produces vomiting, nervous convulsions, and often even death. Well! would you believe it? notwithstanding the daily experience of the different effects of these two fountains, although many persons, undoubtedly, come to draw water from the first, a very great number fear not to drink of the second. It is a folly, you will tell me. Doubtless it is, and a great folly.

Try never to be of the number of those who are attacked by it. You understand that the first spring of which I have spoken to you is the Sacraments, whilst the second is the deceitful joys and pleasures of the earth.—*Griidel*.

710. TESTIMONY OF GOETHE.—Notwithstanding strange errors into which he fell, Goethe knew how to render a solemn homage to the sublime harmony which exists between the Catholic religion and the highest faculties of the soul, with its purest affections. “Protestant worship, considered as a whole,” said he, “is too meagre, too empty. Examine it in detail, and you will find that the Protestant has not enough of Sacraments; there is but one in which he participates actively and spontaneously, and that Sacrament is the Supper; as for Baptism, he only sees it conferred on others, and he does not actually feel its salutary effects on himself. Yet the Sacraments are what is most sublime in religion; they are the visible symbol of an extraordinary grace and favour which God grants to men.” After this preamble, Goethe gives a rapid and eloquent description of our seven Sacraments; then he adds: “It is important that the source of salvation which springs for us in these Sacraments should flow, not once only, but whilst we are on this earth. And of these means, the efficacy of which we shall have experienced during life, we shall feel, at the gates of death, ten times more the inestimable benefits. Following a custom which has taken root in his earliest years, and which is become dear to him, the Christian, whose life is fading away, embraces with fervour the visible symbols of the truths which promise him a new life: earth has nothing more to offer him, its promises are dumb; but he receives from Heaven the pledges of an eternal felicity.”—*Noël*.

BAPTISM

711. BAPTISM OF CLOVIS.—Towards the end of the sixth century the whole of Gaul, or modern France, fell under the power of the Franks, who gave their name to the country. At that time they were under the command of King Clovis, who was yet a pagan, though he had married a virtuous Christian Princess named S. Clotildis. The latter laboured earnestly and prayed continually for the conversion of her husband, who, though fierce and hasty

like the race to which he belonged, was possessed of a noble disposition and generous heart. All her efforts, however, appeared unavailing. It happened at length that Clovis was on the point of marching forth to a decisive engagement with a neighbouring nation, who had been for some time threatening his kingdom. Clotildis on this occasion renewed her entreaties, and exhorted her husband, if hard pressed by his enemies, to call on the God of the Christians, and promise to renounce the abominations of idolatry. He did so and was victorious, upon which he at once placed himself, along with his principal nobles, under the instructions of S. Remigius, the Archbishop of Rheims, to be prepared for the Sacrament of Baptism. The solemn festival of Christmas was chosen for the celebration of the sacred rite, and the King, laying aside his crown and royal robes, and covering himself with ashes, spent the intervening time in fervent prayer and works of penance. Meanwhile the neighbouring Bishops assembled to assist at the sacred ceremony, and the cathedral was adorned for the occasion by the piety and liberality of S. Clotildis. The day having at length arrived, Clovis and his attendant nobles were baptized with the greatest solemnity in presence of a countless multitude. On arriving at the sacred font, the holy Bishop, turning to the King, thus addressed him: "Bow down thy head with meekness, great Sicambrian Prince. Henceforth adore what thou burned, and burn what thou hast hitherto adored." He then conferred upon him the Sacrament of Baptism, which the King received with the deepest sentiments of humility and contrition.—*Butler*.

712. BAPTISM BY CHILDREN.—An American captain, with his three children, lived in a Catholic family. The children attended the nuns' school, and, after an instruction on the necessity of Baptism, William, the eldest, speaking to one of the children of the Catholic family, said: "Have you been baptized?" "Yes," replied the other, "in my infancy." "Then baptize me," said William, "for I might die to-night, and I want to go to Heaven." And it was done: then he in turn baptized his two younger sisters. When at length the father returned home, all three rushed up to him to tell him what they had done, and to beg him also to be baptized. To please them he consented, and was baptized. Would to God it may have been serious and formal, for three days later he had a sudden death, and appeared before his Maker.—*Miss. Cath.*

713. BAPTISM OF S. GENESIUS.—During the reign of Dioclesian there lived at Rome a comic actor named Genesius, who was a pagan

by birth. Being chosen among others to perform a comedy in presence of the Emperor, he took upon himself to ridicule the mysteries of the Christian religion, of which he had learnt something from friends who professed the faith. Accordingly, lying down on the stage and pretending to be sick, he exclaimed, "Alas! my friends, I feel a heavy weight upon me, and would gladly be relieved." "But what," said his companions, "shall we do to give thee ease? Shall we scrape thee with a joiner's plane to make thee lighter?" "Fool," said he, "I am resolved to die a Christian, that God may receive me on the day of my death." Upon this a priest and an exorcist, that is, two players who represented them, were summoned. These having taken their seats beside the sick man's bed, the priest began to converse with him, saying: "Well, my child, why did you send for us?" At this moment a sudden ray of Divine grace, like that which converted S. Paul, illuminated the soul of Genesius, and he was changed into another man. No longer in jest, but with a lively faith, he replied: "I have sent for you because I desire to receive the grace of Jesus Christ, and to be born again, that I may be delivered from my sins." The other players then went through the various ceremonies of Baptism, after which, according to custom, they clothed him with a white garment. Thereupon, certain actors in the garb of soldiers, to carry on the jest, seized and dragged him before the Emperor, accusing him of being a convert to the Christian religion. To the astonishment of the assembled multitude, Genesius now openly professed himself a disciple of Jesus, and declared himself ready to suffer every torment rather than abandon the faith. Upon this noble confession, Dioclesian, exceedingly enraged, ordered him to be inhumanly beaten with clubs, and afterwards placed in the hands of the executioners for further torture. Being extended on the rack, he was cruelly torn with iron hooks, and burning torches were applied to various parts of his body. But in the midst of his torments he continued to cry out: "There is no other Lord of the universe but Jesus Christ. Him I adore and serve, and to Him I will adhere, though I suffer a thousand deaths for His sake." At length his head was struck off, and thus he completed his glorious martyrdom.—*Butler*.

714. S. FRANCIS AND THE FONT.—S. Francis of Sales would often lead his young companions to the parish church, and arrange them round the sacred font where in infancy they had been baptized. "See," he would say, "this is the spot that should be

dearer to us than any other, for here it was we were made children of God." Then they would say together the "Glory be to the Father" in thanksgiving for God's mercy, and, kissing the font on bended knee, disperse for their games.—*Life of S. Francis : Jan. 29.*

715. LOUIS XV. AND HIS CHILDREN.—Religion makes no distinction between the rich and the poor ; cleansed and regenerated by the same Sacrament, they have an equal right to the same favours, and he who is the most faithful to his Baptismal engagements is the greatest in the eyes of God. This is the lesson which the Dauphin, father of Louis XVI., one day inculcated on his children. Two of his sons had received only private Baptism at the time of their birth. At the age of seven or eight the sacred ceremonies were supplied. The Prince, their father, called for the Baptismal parochial register in which their names were inserted. On opening it, he pointed out to them the name which immediately preceded theirs—it was the son of a very poor man. " You see, children," remarked the father, " in the eyes of God all ranks and conditions are equal ; He allows no distinction except that made by religion and virtue. One day you will be distinguished and powerful in the eyes of the world, and this boy will not even be known ; but if he prove more virtuous than you, he will be greater and more illustrious in the eyes of God."—*Power.*

716. A MISSIONER'S STRATAGEM.—A foreign missionary writes : " In the thickly populated parts of our district we appoint persons to impart Baptism when necessary. They are usually women of a certain age, skilled in treatment of children's ailments, and thus they have easy access everywhere. They carry a bottle of holy water with them, and go to houses where they know there are children ill. And when by their experience they are able to judge that any child is clearly in danger of death, under one pretext or another they pour some holy water on its head, secretly using also the form of Baptism, and by this innocent fraud, every year in our mission, some seven or eight thousand children are baptized, many of whom die very soon after."

717. A CHILD BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE.—At Uzale a woman had an infant son ; she so ardently desired to make him a good Christian, that she had him already inscribed on the roll of the catechumens. Unfortunately, he died before they had time to baptize him ; his mother was overwhelmed with grief, more for his being deprived of life eternal, than because he was dead to her. Full

of confidence, nevertheless, she takes the dead child, and publicly carries it to the Church of S. Stephen, the first martyr. There she commences praying for the son she had just lost. Whilst praying, and shedding bitter tears, her son moved, uttered a cry, and was suddenly restored to life. And because his mother had said, "Thou knowest why I ask him back," God was pleased to show that she spoke sincerely. She immediately brought him to the priests; he was baptized, sanctified, anointed, hands were imposed upon him, and after thus receiving the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, he died anew. The pious mother, happy in having seen him regenerated in the waters of Baptism, took care not to lament his death; on the contrary, she followed him to the grave with a gay and smiling air, because she knew very well that he was not going into a cold sepulchre, but to dwell with the Angels in Heaven.—*S. Augustine.*

718. NEOPHYTES OF NEW CALEDONIA.—A missionary writes: "From the day of his baptism, Louis is no longer the same. When I spoke to him of confession, he seemed quite surprised. 'Do men sin,' he said, 'when once baptized?' Admirable feeling, and one that should make us blush, that having made so many promises to God, we should so often fall again into the same faults."

CONFIRMATION

719. THE RESOLUTE OFFICER.—An officer, illustrious for his birth and fortune, was on the point of obtaining a very lucrative situation, when he was accused of being a Christian—that religion excluding him, by the laws, from all offices and dignities. The governor gave him four hours for consideration, and told him to weigh well what he was going to do. During the interval which had been given him, he was visited by the Bishop, who took him by the hand, led him to the Church, and begged of him to enter the sanctuary. Here the Bishop pointed to the sword which the officer wore, and presenting him, at the same time, with a copy of the Gospels, asked him which he would choose. The officer, without hesitation, with his right hand took hold of the Sacred Book. "Adhere, then, to God," said the Bishop; "be faithful to Him, and He will fortify you, and recompense your choice. Depart in peace." The officer went from the Church, and present-

ing himself before the governor, made a generous confession of his faith in Jesus Christ. Sentence of death was then pronounced upon him, and he, by expiring for his faith in sharp but passing torments, merited eternal and ineffable joys.—*Mérault*.

720. FORTITUDE OF A MARTYR.—Among the numerous confessors of the Faith who, during the last century, courageously underwent torments and death in the kingdom of Tong-Quin, the name of Michael Mi is deserving of special mention. He was arrested, along with his aged father-in-law, Anthony, on the charge of being concerned in the concealment of a priest, who was taken, and who suffered with them. The poor old Anthony, who was on the verge of seventy, shuddered at the sight of the instruments of torture which were displayed before the tribunal, but Michael encouraged him by reminding him of the eternal reward which they were about to purchase so cheaply, at the price of a few short and passing sufferings. “And as to the stripes which you dread, fear not, father,” said he; “I will offer myself to endure them in your place.” Accordingly, after he himself had been flogged without mercy, so that his whole body was a mass of wounds and blood, he, of his own accord, lay down again upon the ground, saying to the judge: “My father is aged and infirm; take pity on him, and suffer me to be flogged in his stead.” And when this was permitted, he with the greatest joy endured a second scourging, nor did a groan or sigh escape him while his wounds were being reopened, and his flesh again torn and rent asunder. After many examinations and cruel torments, the three confessors of the Faith were at length condemned to be beheaded, and set out with serene and joyful countenances for the place of execution. Michael Mi distinguished himself especially by his undaunted courage. “Give me some money,” said the executioner to him, “and I will promise to cut off your head at a single blow, so that you may have less to suffer.” “Cut it into a hundred pieces if you like,” said the Christian hero; “it matters not, provided that you manage somehow to cut it off. As for money, I have plenty at home, but I would rather that it should be given to the poor.” So saying, he bent his head to receive the fatal stroke, and went to receive the triple crown of faith, charity, and filial piety.—*Annals of Prop. of Faith*.

721. S. MARTIN AND THE ROBBER.—S. Martin of Tours, while yet a youth, was travelling over the Alps, when he fell into the hands of robbers, one of whom drew his sword and held it suspended over his head, as if about to inflict a mortal blow. He would,

indeed, have done so, had not his companion stayed his hand. The holy youth showed no symptom of fear, but recommended himself entirely to the protection and disposal of Divine Providence. The robbers, struck with astonishment at his calmness and self-possession in so imminent a danger, asked him who he was, and whether he was not filled with fear at the sight of the swords uplifted to slay him? He replied that he was a Christian, and that he had no fear, because he knew that the Divine Goodness is always most ready to protect us both in life and death, and that it is never nearer to us than when we are exposed to the greatest dangers. He added that his only subject of grief was, that they, by the lives they led, deprived themselves of the mercy of God. The robbers listened to him with astonishment, and admired the courage and confidence in God which virtue inspires. His fervent words made a deep impression upon their hearts, and he who had attempted to kill him became a Christian, and, entering into a monastery, led henceforth a life of devotion and penance.—*His Life : Nov. 11.*

722. JULIAN AND HIS PAGE.—The Roman Emperor Julian, who had been brought up a Christian, but abandoned his religion upon ascending the throne, determined to make public profession of his impiety by a solemn sacrifice to the idols. He accordingly repaired to the temple, attended by all his Court, among whom was a Christian page, who had a short time previously been admitted to the Sacrament of Confirmation. Everything being ready for the sacrifice, the Emperor ordered the priests to commence the sacred rites. They endeavoured to do so, and raised their knives to strike the victims prepared for the sacrifice; but what was their astonishment when they found themselves unable to proceed! Their knives became suddenly blunted and incapable of inflicting a wound; while, to add to their consternation, the fire on the altar was suddenly extinguished. Thereupon the presiding priest exclaimed: "Some unknown power prevents our sacrifice. There must be some Christian present, who has been baptized or confirmed." The Emperor, on hearing these words, immediately ordered search to be made, when behold! one of his own pages stood forth and thus addressed him: "Know, O Emperor, that I am a Christian, and have been baptized. A few days ago I was anointed with the holy oil to strengthen me for the combat. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, who has redeemed me by His cross. It was I, or rather the God whom I serve, who prevented the impiety you

were on the point of committing. I invoked the sacred name of Jesus, and the demons had no longer any power." At these words, the Emperor, who, though an apostate through malice and self-interest, knew well the power of the Name of Jesus, was struck with terror, and, fearing the Divine vengeance, retired from the temple in confusion. The Christians, on the other hand, were filled with courage at seeing the admirable effects produced in the soul by the strengthening grace of Confirmation.—*Catholic Anecdotes*.

723. THE CHINESE CHILD.—A Chinese girl of ten met with a missionary, and entreated him to give her Confirmation. "And if the Mandarin puts you into prison for your faith, what will you say?" asked the priest. "I will say I am a Christian." "And if he bids you renounce your faith, what will you do?" "I will say, 'Never!'" "And if he brings the executioners to cut off your head, what will you say?" "I will say, 'Cut it off.'" Delighted at seeing the child so firm and resolute, the missionary acceded to her wishes, in spite of her tender years, and shortly she was confirmed.—*Annals of Prop. of Faith*.

724. CALIGULA'S HEART.—The body of the Emperor Caligula was taken to be burnt, according to the Roman custom. It was all soon reduced to ashes, except the heart, which the fire seemed unable to affect. It was found to contain a certain poison which neutralized the action of the fire. When that was extracted, the heart was consumed like the rest of the body. It was not the fire that failed, but all depended on the state of the heart. Woe to us if the fire of the Holy Spirit takes no hold on us! The poison of sin in the heart can alone paralyze that Divine and powerful flame.—*Suetonius*.

725. NEGLIGENCE OF A BISHOP.—One day, a man, in deep affliction, went to S. Maurice, Bishop of Ghent, and earnestly besought him to come to his house, to confirm his child, who was very ill, and must soon die. It was the custom then to administer that Sacrament even to children who had not yet the use of reason. The Bishop acceded to his request, but his occupations not having permitted him to go immediately, the child died during that short interval. When the holy man learned the news, he was in such trouble that he bewailed, for several days, with copious and bitter tears, what he called his negligence. His grief at length reached such a point that he persuaded himself he was no longer worthy of being a Bishop, and fled to England, where he took service as gardener in a Prince's household, the better to conceal his former

dignity. Long after, his friends succeeded in discovering the place of his retreat, and after much persuasion, prevailed upon him to return to Ghent. What a high esteem must not that holy Bishop have had for the great Sacrament of Confirmation!—*Schmid*.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

726. THE SACRILEGIOUS JEW.—In the year 1290, a poor woman lived in Paris, who, in order to purchase some food, pawned her cloak for thirty pence in a Jew's shop. Some days before Easter she entreated the Jew to lend it to her, that she might be able to repair to church to comply with her Easter duty. "With pleasure," said the Jew; "I shall not even require it back, if you bring me a little of the bread which you call your God: I wish to see if it be God." The woman agreed, and then went to receive the Paschal Communion. When the Holy Communion had been given her, she, without being perceived, concealed the sacred Host, and brought it, according to agreement, to the Jew. When he received it he placed it on the table, cut it with a penknife, and immediately blood flowed from it. His wife became very much alarmed, and made every effort to prevent him from proceeding further in the work of blasphemy. But he would not be restrained. He now forced into the Host a nail, and it bled again. This extraordinary occurrence amazed the Jew, and he withdrew in the greatest astonishment. In the meantime his son, who had just gone out, said to some boys whom he saw going to Church, that there was no use in going to adore their God, as his father had just killed Him. A woman who was then passing by, hearing the jest from the boy, entered the house, beheld the sacred Host, which was still hovering around the place, and when she appeared, descended into a small vessel which she carried in her hand. The woman at once took it to the Church, and placed it in the hands of the priest. The Bishop of Paris, being informed of what had taken place, ordered the Jew to be arrested, who, confessing his crime, received the punishment which he merited. The Jew's wife and children became Catholics, and were baptized. The miraculous Host was preserved with the greatest care at the Church of St. John-of-Grève,

where it was to be seen previous to the Revolution. In the year 1295, a citizen of Paris built an oratory, called the *miraculous* chapel, on the site where stood the house of sacrilege.—*Fleury*.

727. THE COUNT OF HAPSBURG.—Rudolph, Count of Hapsburg, one day following the chase in the mountains in Switzerland, perceived a poor priest who was much embarrassed to cross a stream swollen by rain; he had to cross it to bring the holy Viaticum to a sick person. Immediately the noble count alights from his horse, makes the priest mount him, and follows himself on foot with much recollection. The priest afterwards wanted to give back his horse to the Prince, but the latter answered: "I do not deem myself worthy of ever again mounting a horse which has had the honour of bearing the Lord of lords; it is from Him that I hold in fief all I possess." And so saying, he left his beautiful courser at the service of the poor priest and his Church. The report of this so edifying event was soon noised abroad through the valleys of Switzerland, and thence into the provinces of the German Empire; it everywhere caused a pious joy to all the people, great and small.—*Schmid*.

728. VITIKIND OF SAXONY.—Vitikind, Duke of Saxony, while yet a pagan, being at war with the Emperor Charlemagne, was curious to know what took place in the camp of the Christians. It was the Easter season, when all the Christian army made their Easter duty. Disguised as a pilgrim, Vitikind entered the camp. He witnessed with admiration the ceremonies of the Sacrifice of the Mass, but was very much astonished to see in each Host that the priest presented to the people a most beautiful infant, surrounded with brilliant light, who seemed to enter the mouths of some persons with great joy, and entered most reluctantly the mouths of others. This miraculous vision, which shows the different dispositions with which Christians receive Communion, caused Vitikind and his subjects to embrace the religion of Jesus Christ.—*McMahon*.

729. INFANT IN THE CRADLE.—In the year 1144 the kingdom of Brabant had for its chief a little child about a year old. Certain enemies, knowing this, thought that it would be a favourable opportunity for invading Brabant and conquering it. So they declared war against it, and entered it with a great army. But the people of Brabant were not to be so easily overcome. They took the little child lying in his cradle into the middle of the camp, and when the battle began, they hung up the cradle on the branches of a tree,

that the soldiers, seeing the child and hearing its infantile cries, might be encouraged to fight bravely. The battle raged fiercely, and for some time it was doubtful who were to gain the victory. At one time the invaders seemed to have the advantage, but a feeble cry from the cradle inspired the soldiers of Brabant with renewed courage, and they won the day.—How much more will Holy Communion give us strength and courage against all our enemies!—*Chisholm.*

730. THE BOY IN THE FIRE.—It was the custom at Constantinople in the sixth century, at times when the Blessed Sacrament was renewed in the Ciborium, to distribute among young and innocent children the Sacred Hosts which remained from the last Consecration. It happened one day that a little Jewish boy was brought from the schools along with other children for this purpose, and received Communion along with them. On reaching home, his father, who was a glass-founder by trade, questioned him as to the cause of his returning so late from school. The child simply related what had happened, whereupon the father, blinded by fury and carried away by his hatred of the Christian religion, seized the child and flung him into the red-hot furnace where the glass was melted. The mother, unaware of what had happened, on discovering her loss, filled the house with her cries and lamentations, seeking everywhere her missing child. On the third day, happening to pass by the furnace, she heard a voice calling her by name. On opening the furnace door, she beheld her child seated in the midst of the flames, alive and uninjured, and not appearing to suffer the least inconvenience from the raging element. Having clasped him in her arms, she asked him how it was that he was not burnt up in the midst of the red-hot coals. "Mother," said he, "a lady dressed in purple often came to me during these three days, and threw water round me to put out the fire. She also brought me food." The whole city was soon filled with the news of this prodigy, which resulted in the immediate conversion of the child and his mother. The unhappy father, however, continued hardened in his infidelity, and was condemned to death by the Emperor Justinian for the attempted murder of his child.—*Anc. Chrét.*

731. THE ENCHANTED BREAD.—During the cruel persecution which raged against the Christian religion in the kingdom of Tong-Quin under the tyrant Minh Menh, the grandfather of the present monarch, the power and efficacy of the Holy Eucharist in sustaining the courage of the martyrs was manifest even to the infidels. While

these glorious champions of Jesus Christ were cruelly racked and scourged, or their flesh was torn off their bones with red-hot pincers, the Holy Name of Jesus was ever on their lips, and they continued to profess their faith with undaunted courage. The Mandarins, amazed at a fortitude so far beyond the power of human nature, attributed it with truth to the Heavenly Food which the Christians partook of in their assemblies. "Truly," they would say, "this man has been eating of that enchanted bread which casts a spell upon the soul."—*Annals of Prop. of Faith.*

732. THE COLONEL IN THE CRIMEA.—During the Crimean War, a French officer, who was a man of great piety, received an order to attack one of the enemy's strongholds. In an instant he was at his post at the head of his men, and rushed forward to the attack. The onset was terrible, but in the midst of the glittering bayonets and the showers of bullets, the officer was as calm as if he were on parade. His bravery gained the day, and the fort was captured. His General, who had witnessed the scene from a distance, went to meet him. "Colonel," he cried out, "what bravery! Where did you learn to be so calm and so self-possessed in the midst of such imminent danger?" "My General," he answered, with sublime simplicity, "I received Holy Communion this morning." All who heard this answer were filled with admiration at so much courage and piety.—*Chisholm.*

733. S. CLARE PROTECTED.—Frederick II. was attacking the town of Assisi, with an army composed of the lowest ranks of society, and many were infidels. Near the gate of the city stood a convent of nuns, governed by the holy abbess S. Clare. This was the first place these ruffians attacked. They placed ladders against the walls and prepared to ascend, and it seemed as if in a few moments the spouses of Christ would fall into the hands of those wicked men. But Jesus was there to help His servants. In this extremity S. Clare called together her nuns, and going into the chapel, she, by an inspiration from Heaven, caused the ciborium containing the Sacred Body of Our Lord to be carried to the place where the men were already beginning to ascend; then with her eyes raised up towards it, she said: "O my beloved Jesus, save Thy servants whom Thou hast brought hither to serve Thee, and whom Thou dost so often nourish with Thy precious Body." Her prayer ended, she was interiorly admonished that the protection of Heaven was over her. The soldiers were struck blind, and a panic arose amongst them; they all took to flight as though pursued by an immense army.—*Her Life: Aug. 12.*

734. THE COURAGEOUS NUNS.—A gentleman went to visit a hospital which was under the care of the Sisters. During the time of his visit, an operation had to be performed on one of the patients, which caused her intense pain, and her cries of anguish resounded throughout the house, rending the hearts of all who heard them. The gentleman could not endure them, and instantly left the ward. The Sisters alone remained calm and firm at the side of the poor woman. “How can these good Sisters stand there so courageously,” he asked of the Superioress, “when even I, who have strong nerves, cannot endure it any longer?” “Sir,” she replied, pointing to the door of the tabernacle in their little chapel, “it is there they get that courage and strength which you so much admire. It is Jesus Himself who gives it to them in the Holy Eucharist.”—*Chisholm.*

735. S. FRANCIS AND THE SOLDIER.—S. Francis of Sales was on one occasion preparing a garrison of soldiers for the Easter Communion, when it happened that one of them, through forgetfulness, ate a piece of bread at the mess-table before going to receive the Blessed Sacrament. His comrades, who had observed him eating, were extremely shocked at seeing him afterwards go up to the altar to receive Communion. When Mass was over, they loaded him with reproaches, and the officer in charge went so far as to tell him that he had committed a horrible sacrilege. Hearing these words, the poor man, terrified at the thought of what he had done, was reduced to the brink of despair. He sighed, wept, and bitterly bewailed his sin; but he met with very little compassion from his comrades. At length one of them, moved at the sight of his grief, advised him to apply for advice to the *good father*, which was the name they had given to S. Francis. The soldier did as he was recommended, but no sooner had he come into the presence of the Saint, than he was so overcome with grief at the remembrance of his fault, that he was unable to utter a word. S. Francis, moved with compassion at the sight of his affliction, begged of him in the kindest and most affectionate words to make known to him the cause of his grief. “Alas! father,” said the soldier, “I have committed a great crime. I went to Holy Communion after breaking my fast. What must I do?” “But did you do it on purpose?” “No, indeed, father,” said the soldier; “I would die a thousand times rather than commit so great a crime on purpose.” “Well, then,” replied S. Francis, “I assure you that God has already pardoned you. Be comforted, and do not, on account of what could

only be a venial sin of neglect, go and fall into a mortal sin of despair." "But, father," said the soldier, much comforted, "will you please to give me some penance for my sin?" "Certainly," said the Saint; "go and say one 'Our Father' and one 'Hail Mary,' and I promise you that God will be satisfied." So saying, he sent back the good man to his barracks, full of joy and consolation.—*His Life : Jan. 29.*

736. S. THOMAS AQUINAS.—Feeling his end approaching, S. Thomas of Aquin earnestly begged the last Sacraments to be given him. In order to receive Holy Viaticum, he would be laid on ashes on the floor, and on this humble bed he made the most fervent acts of faith and love, and shortly after receiving it, he gave up his soul to God.—*His Life : Mar. 7.*

737. S. JULIANA.—S. Juliana Falconieri, a holy virgin who lived in the thirteenth century, was distinguished for her extraordinary devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. In her last illness she earnestly desired to receive Him in the Holy Viaticum, but on account of the continued sickness to which she was subject, it was considered impossible to comply with her pious desire. Moved, however, by her earnest entreaties, her confessor brought into her presence the Sacred Host, that she might have at least the consolation of adoring Our Lord and receiving His last blessing. No sooner did she perceive the object of her ardent affection, than in a transport of love, forgetting her extreme weakness, she cast herself on the ground to adore her God. Then with many tears she asked as a last favour that, since she could not receive Jesus sacramentally, His most Sacred Body might be laid upon her breast, that her heart might be refreshed by the near presence of Him whom she so ardently loved. Her confessor, moved by her tears and entreaties, granted her request, and a corporal having been spread upon the breast of the dying virgin, the Blessed Sacrament was placed upon it in the immediate neighbourhood of her heart. Scarcely had the priest laid the Sacred Host on the chaste bosom of Juliana, than, overcome by the sweetness of Our Lord's presence, and languishing with love, she cried out, "Oh, my sweet Jesus!" and expired.—*Her Life : June 19.*

738. S. LOUIS.—This saintly King, seized with a fatal illness, immediately turned his thoughts to God, to prepare for death. When holy Viaticum was brought to him, he raised himself up to adore it, and received it with an abundance of tears which testified to the fervour and tenderness of his love.—*His Life : Aug. 25.*

739. S. RAYMUND.—When S. Raymund was seized, near Barcelona, in 1240, with a violent fever, it was soon recognized by the symptoms to be mortal; he began then to prepare himself for his last passage, and some historians relate that he was favoured with a vision of angels, from whose hands, as the priest delayed coming, he received the holy Viaticum and then calmly expired.—*His Life : Aug. 31.*

740. S. TERESA.—While S. Teresa was lying on her bed of death, she asked to receive the Holy Communion for the last time. When the priest came into the room carrying the Blessed Sacrament, she raised herself up as if to welcome Jesus whom he brought with him. “O my Lord and my beloved Spouse,” she exclaimed, “at last has come the hour I have waited for so long, the hour when I shall go to Thee in Heaven!” Soon after this, having received Jesus in holy Viaticum, she expired, and went to see, face to face, that Jesus whom she had always so tenderly loved.—*Her Life : Oct. 15.*

741. THE DEVOUT COMMUNICANT.—We read in the life of S. Aloysius Gonzaga, that being permitted by his confessor to receive Holy Communion every Sunday, he divided the week between his thanksgiving and preparation, consecrating three days to each. The same is related of another devout soul, who, in arranging his devotions, observed the following plan: Sunday, the day of his Communion, was spent by him in *union* and interior converse with our Blessed Lord. Monday was a day of *thanksgiving* for the rich treasure which he had received. On Tuesday he continually *offered* and consecrated himself to God. Wednesday was spent in constant *petitions* to Our Lord for his own wants and those of the Church. On Thursday he began his preparation for his next Communion, spending that day entirely in acts of *faith* and *adoration*. Friday was a day of *humiliation* and *contrition*, but of *hope* and *confidence* in the Divine mercy. Finally, Saturday was devoted to acts of *love* and *desire*.—*Catholic Anecdotes.*

742. THE TWO CANS.—Two children went with tin cans to a river to fetch water. One child brought back a great deal more water than the other. What was the reason? It was because the one child had a much larger can than the other.—Two persons go to Holy Communion. One comes back with far more blessings in his soul than the other. What is the reason? Because the one made a much better preparation than the other.—*Furniss.*

743. NEGLECT OF THANKSGIVING.—S. Philip Neri one day, to his sorrow, noticed that a person who had just received Communion was getting up and going away. He at once told two altar-boys to take a lighted taper each, and to accompany the person home. Surprised at this, the young man asked what it could mean, and on the children referring him to S. Philip, he went to inquire of the Saint, who said: "When the priest carries the Blessed Sacrament, he is always accompanied by two acolytes bearing lighted candles: the same honour, it seems to me, is due to anyone who carries it in his heart!" Recognizing his fault, the young man returned to Church and made a due thanksgiving.—How many nowadays might take this lesson to heart!—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

744. THE LITTLE GIRL'S CELL.—Two hundred years ago there lived in France a little girl called Magdalen Vigneron. She had made her first Communion when she was very young, and from that time she found no greater joy than in going often to receive Jesus in the Sacrament of His love. But as she was not permitted to go every day to Communion, she tried to make up for it by making every day many Spiritual Communions. And in order that she might do so without being disturbed, she made for herself a little cell in a lonely place of her father's house. If a servant or anyone else came to look for her, she would quickly come out, carrying some of her toys with her, so that she might in this way hide her devotions, and as soon as the person went away she went back to her prayers. Oh, what delight her soul found in that poor little spot, far from worldly noise and the distractions of her companions!—*Chisholm.*

745. DONATISTS AND THEIR DOGS.—The Donatists, in hatred of religion, used to invade the Catholic Churches, pillage them, and throw the consecrated particles to their dogs. One day, in particular, the justice of God overtook them. Their dogs, suddenly becoming furiously mad, rushed upon their owners, almost devoured them to pieces, and so avenged the sacrilege committed against the most Holy Sacrament.—*S. Optatus.*

746. LOTHAIRES'S SACRILEGE.—A terrible example of the judgment of God on the sacrilegious communicant is related in the history of Lothaire, who lived in the ninth century. Like Henry VIII., he had put away his lawful wife, to marry another woman named Valrade, for whom he had conceived a guilty passion. For this

he was excommunicated by Pope Adrian, who condemned this second marriage as a most grievous crime. Thereupon Lothaire sought to impose upon his Holiness by the specious appearance of repentance, and came to Rome to be absolved from the censures of the Church, representing to the Pope that he had entirely broken off the guilty connection. Deceived by his hypocrisy, Adrian absolved him, and, at his earnest request, consented to communicate him and his principal officers with his own hands, in token of their reconciliation with the Church. The day appointed having arrived, Pope Adrian celebrated the Sacred Mysteries in presence of the King. At the moment of Communion, taking in his hand the Body of Our Lord, he turned towards Lothaire and said: "Prince, if you have sincerely renounced all connection with Valrade, approach with confidence and receive the Sacrament of eternal life. But if your repentance is not sincere, do not rashly receive the Body and Blood of Our Lord, and by profaning them, eat and drink your own condemnation." Then, turning to the courtiers, he said: "If you have neither consented nor contributed to your master's crimes, may the Body of Our Lord be to you a pledge of eternal life!" Some of those present, struck with terror at the words, drew back, but the King and the greater portion of his followers consummated their crime by receiving Holy Communion. A short time after, Lothaire set out on his return to France, anxious to rejoin as soon as possible the wicked woman whom he had pretended to dismiss. He had not gone far, however, when he was overtaken by the judgment of Heaven. At Lucca, both himself and his train were attacked by a malignant fever, which produced upon its victims the most frightful effects. The hair, nails, and even the skin fell off, while an inward fire consumed them. Thus did many die under the eyes of the King; those only were preserved who had withdrawn in time from the Holy Table. Lothaire himself, hardened by his sacrilege and his wicked passion, strove to continue his journey, until at last, losing both sense and speech, he perished miserably without hope or sign of repentance.—*Anecd. Chrét.*

747. DEATH-BED OF A BAD COMMUNICANT.—There once lived a man who had given himself up to every passion, and had become by his life a scandal to all who knew him. Being at length upon his death-bed, his family, who were good Catholics, sent for the priest, who heard the sick man's confession, and prepared to give the Holy Viaticum. He had already taken the Blessed

Sacrament in his hand, and was about to place it on the sick man's tongue, when the latter cried out, "Stop, father, stop! I made a sacrilegious first Communion, and have never made a Communion since. I will not have two bad Communions upon my conscience. One surely is sufficient to suffer for in Hell for all eternity!" In vain did the priest and the bystanders, struck with horror, exhort him to repentance, and remind him of the Infinite Mercy of God, who is ever ready to pardon the repentant sinner. He sank into the depths of despair and died miserably.—*Cath. Anecd.*

748. THE AMERICAN PLANTER.—In the Southern States, there lived a wealthy planter, who for many years had been quite indifferent to all religion, and was now about to die. A priest was sent for, and he soon arrived at the planter's dwelling. His presence filled the family with joy, for everyone hoped that he would be able to afford help and consolation to the sick man, who on hearing of the arrival of the priest did not refuse to see him. After a long conversation with his penitent, the priest left him, but shortly after returned, bringing with him the Blessed Eucharist, that sacred pledge of resurrection and life. At the sight of the Sacred Host the sick man cried out in tones of terror, "Behold my Judge!" The priest tried to reassure him, reminding him that the Mercy of God is Infinite. It was all in vain. "I have sinned," cried out the sick man, "I have betrayed innocent blood. The first time I communicated, it was unworthily." So saying, he covered his face with his hands, sank back in his bed, and expired.—*Letters on First Communion.*

749. THE IMPIOUS BARBER.—In 1803, during the invasion of Piedmont by the French, the procession of the jubilee made on that occasion was going on in Turin. An impious barber, after having scoffed and ridiculed a person whom he was shaving, because he was going to join the procession, went himself from his shop to see it pass. He affected to keep his hat on his head, and would not take it off, after being repeatedly told to do so. He thus braved the pious ceremony and the Blessed Sacrament in the most insolent and obstinate manner. But at the moment when the priest who carried the Divine Eucharist passed before him, the justice of God overtook him: he fell dead on the ground, in presence of the innumerable crowd of spectators, who regarded this awful death as the just punishment of his impiety. This event produced such a sensation, that the police magistrate caused the wretched man's body to be exposed for thirty-six hours at the door of the City Hall.—*Favre.*

750. Illustrative examples may easily be found by means of a simple calculation. For every 15 degrees of longitude, west of Greenwich, the day will be an hour behind us. Hence, with the aid of a map, a wide range of countries can be named in which Mass can be offered, when the hour for offering it with us is passed. For instance, if our instruction is being given about 3 p.m., it will be found that the hour of day, at that moment, in Canada and the United States, and in part of South America, will range from 7 a.m. to mid-day, during which time the Holy Sacrifice will continue being offered. And so on for other hours and other countries.

751. THE JEW AND THE SIEVE.—A Jew was amusing himself in a public square when there passed a priest, who, accompanied by a crowd, carried the most holy Viaticum to a sick person. All the people on bended knees rendered due homage of adoration to the most Holy Sacrament; the Jew alone made no movement, nor gave any token of reverence. This being seen by a poor woman, she exclaimed, "O miserable man, why do you not show reverence to the true God present in this Divine Sacrament?" "What true God?" said the Jew sharply. "If this was so, would not there be many gods, since on each of your altars there is one during Mass?" The woman instantly took a sieve, and holding it up to the sun, told the Jew to look at the rays which passed through it, and then added, "Tell me, Jew, are there many suns which pass through the openings of this sieve, or only one?" And the Jew answering that there was but one sun, "Then," replied the woman, "why do you wonder that an incarnate God, veiled in the Sacrament, though one, indivisible, and unchangeable, should, through excess of love, place Himself in His true and Real Presence on different altars?" By means of this illustration, he was led to confess the truth of the Real Presence.—*Power.*

752. KING ETHELRED AT MASS.—Seeing the ravages which were made in the West of England, in the year 871, by the Danes, and fearing that they would not be slow to invade the Eastern part of the country, the pious and brave King Ethelred marched on to meet them, with an army small as to numbers, but fired with a martial spirit. On the morning of the battle, he attended the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and received Holy Communion, to prepare himself for the desperate combat in which he was about to engage. During Mass a message was sent him, announcing that the enemy, in battle array, was advancing, and that it was necessary he should hurry to lead his troops to battle. But Ethelred continued hearing

Mass with the same fervour and recollection as before. Soon arrived other messengers telling him that not a minute was to be lost if he wished to prevent the enemy from seizing on the most advantageous positions ; but Ethelred answered that he would not leave the church until he had united himself to the Conqueror of conquerors, and had obtained His blessing. When he had communicated, and when the Mass was concluded, he arose full of burning ardour, placed himself at the head of his army, and in a few hours gained a most brilliant victory over the Danes.—*Lingard*.

753. S. LOUIS OF FRANCE.—S. Louis, King of France, attended at two, and sometimes even four, Masses in the day. Having heard that some of his courtiers censured him for devoting to the hearing of Mass the time that was so necessary for settling the affairs of his kingdom, he said : “ See how far the solicitude of these men goes ! I am sure that if I devoted to the chase or to some other frivolous amusement the time that I spend at Mass, I would not hear the slightest word of blame from one of them.”—*Power*.

754. LEGEND OF S. ISIDORE.—Being in the employ of a Spanish farmer, S. Isidore yet contrived to get to Mass every morning, though he had much to bear to do so from his employer and others. A graceful legend says that one morning, while he was still at Mass, his master, going into the fields, found two oxen, guided by an Angel, drawing the plough behind them. From that time forth, far from preventing Isidore from going to church, his employer gave him every encouragement to go, and thanked God for giving him one who brought Heaven’s blessing upon the farm.—*His Life : May 10*.

755. BLESSED THOMAS MORE.—Though Chancellor of England, with many occupations, Blessed Thomas More heard Mass every day. Once a message was brought to him from the King, requiring his attendance on a matter of importance. “ A little patience,” replied the Chancellor ; “ I have not yet completed my homage to a higher Sovereign, and I must await the end of the Divine audience.”

756. THE VIRTUOUS PAGE.—S. Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal, had in her service as page a pious and faithful youth, whom she was accustomed to employ in the distribution of her alms. One of his fellow-pages, filled with envy at the confidence reposed in him, determined to effect his ruin, and accordingly suggested to the King that he was regarded with too much favour by the saintly

Queen. The slander was believed, and the King, stung with jealousy, resolved to take away the life of the page. For this purpose he gave orders to the master of a limekiln, that if, on a certain day, he should send to him a page to inquire whether he had executed the King's commands, he should at once seize him and cast him into the furnace, for that he had been guilty of a grievous crime, and deserved death. On the day appointed he called for the youth, and having given the message that had been agreed upon, he sent him to deliver it. Now, it happened that the page on his way to the kiln passed by a Church at the very moment when the bell was ringing for the Elevation. As it had always been his pious custom in such a case not to pass on until the Holy Sacrifice was ended, he entered the Church, and knelt down to hear the remainder of the Mass. When it was concluded, reflecting that he had not heard an entire Mass that day according to his usual practice, he remained in the Church and heard another. Meanwhile the king became impatient to know whether his designs had succeeded, and, by a wonderful Providence of God, despatched the accuser himself to inquire whether his orders had been executed. This being the very message agreed upon with the master of the kiln, the unhappy youth was immediately seized, and, in spite of all his remonstrances, cast amid the burning lime, where he was quickly consumed. As soon as the Mass was concluded, the page who had been first despatched hastened on to deliver his message. Upon inquiring whether the King's orders had been executed, he was told that they had, and he returned with this message to the King. The latter, seeing him return, was struck with fear and amazement, and, upon hearing the circumstances, perceived at once the innocence of the youth, and admired the Justice and Providence of God, who, while He protected and preserved the virtuous page, allowed the very punishment designed for him to fall on the head of his calumniator.—*Butler.*

757. THE TWO ARTISANS.—Two artisans pursue the same trade ; one is burdened with a family, wife, children, and grandchildren ; the other is alone with his wife. The first has brought up his family in great comfort, and even style, and all his transactions turn out wonderfully—customers at his shop, and sales despatched. So he has gone on, till he finds himself putting by every year a good round sum, to serve in time for marriage portions for his daughters. The other, who is without children, got little employment, was half famished, and was, in short, a ruined man. One day he said con-

fidentially to his neighbour: "How is it? In your home there rains down every blessing of God; while I, poor wretch, cannot hold up my head, and all sorts of calamities light on my house?" "I will tell you," said his neighbour; "to-morrow morning I shall be with you, and I will point out the place from which I draw so much." Next morning he took him to Church to hear Mass, and then led him back to his workshop; and so, two or three different times, till at last the poor man said: "If nothing else is wanted than to go to Church to hear Mass, I know the way well enough, without putting you to inconvenience." "Just so," said the other, "hear holy Mass, my friend, with devotion, every day, and you will soon find a change in your circumstances." And, in fact, so it was. Beginning to hear Mass each day, he became well provided with work, shortly paid all his debts, and put his house again into capital condition.—*Lives of the Saints*.

758. ALEXANDER THE GREAT.—A young courtier of Alexander the Great was attending him while offering sacrifice. While holding the thurible, a piece of burning charcoal fell upon his hand: he allowed it to burn him without a word of complaint. He was afraid to move, lest he might cause distraction or displeasure to the Emperor! What a reproach to us in irreverence and distractions at Mass!—*S. Ambrose*.

759. BLESSED THOMAS MORE, AS ACOLYTE.—Blessed Thomas More, the celebrated Lord Chancellor of England, took great delight in serving Mass, and though his time was much taken up with affairs of State, frequently served several in succession. Upon one occasion a certain courtier, sadly deficient in lively faith, represented to him that King Henry would be displeased at his lowering himself to fulfil the office of a mere acolyte. "Surely," replied the chancellor, "the king cannot be displeased at the homage which I offer to his King."—*The Hidden Treasure*.

760. THE THUNDERBOLT.—It is told as a well-founded story, that a woman, for a long time suffering deep poverty, wandered about in a sort of despair through solitary places, and that there, in some way or other, an evil spirit intimated to her that if she would conduct herself in Church as some do, entertaining those near with idle tales and useless and impertinent talk, he would befriend her, and make her better off. The miserable woman accepted the bargain thus suggested, applied herself to the miserable and devilish work, and succeeded marvellously, for whoever happened to be

placed beside her, found it impossible to attend devoutly to Mass, or any other of the Divine functions, so constant were her observations or questions, and so many and various were the little methods of interruption which she made use of. But no long time passed before she felt the avenging hand of God. One morning there occurred a violent tempest, and a thunderbolt fell among the crowd, which at once slew her, and her alone.—Learn, then, to avoid those who, with idle talk, and with so much irreverence in Church, make themselves truly the servants of Satan ; spurn them, if you do not yourselves wish to incur the wrath of God.—*Power.*

PENANCE

761. THE ANT-HILL.—A traveller found on his road the root of an old tree. He struck the root with his stick, and hundreds of black insects came out of the old root and went away. What was it made those insects go away? It was the little noise of the stick striking on the wood over their heads that frightened them and made them go away.—The sinner has begun his Confession. The devils are still dwelling in his soul, like the insects in the old root. But the words of absolution have sounded in his soul. In the ears of the devils the words of absolution sound louder and more dreadful than ten thousand thunders. In haste they dash themselves out of the soul. They do not stop till they have buried themselves in the deepest hell, and hid themselves from the sound of words so terrible to them.—*Furniss.*

762. MERCY FOR EVERY SIN.—A certain woman, who was a great sinner, was one day crossing a Church, which she had entered with the sole intention of shortening her way, when she perceived a number of people crowding in, as if to assist at some public service. Moved by curiosity, she took her seat among the rest, and the crowd increasing, she soon found herself so surrounded that it was impossible to think of withdrawing. Soon after, a venerable priest entered the pulpit, and began to preach on the Goodness of God to sinners. Among other things, he several times repeated these words, "My brethren, there is mercy for every sin, provided that the sinner repents." These words touched the heart of the woman, and became deeply impressed upon her mind. No sooner

was the sermon ended, than this poor sinner made her way through the crowd, and as the preacher came down from the pulpit, pulled him by the sleeve, saying to him with great simplicity, "Father, is it really true that there is pardon for every sin?" "Certainly," he replied, "God forgives all sinners, if they only repent." "But will He pardon me," said the woman, "who for fifteen years have been committing the most grievous crimes?" "Undoubtedly He will," replied the Missioner, "if you only detest them and give up committing them." "If that is the case, Father," said the woman, "please to tell me at what hour you can hear my Confession." "Immediately," said the priest, pointing to his Confessional. "Kneel down there, and I will be with you directly." Accordingly, having returned from the sacristy, he heard her Confession, which she made with sentiments of the deepest compunction. Her Confession being completed, the poor woman acquainted her Confessor with the extreme danger to which she would be exposed were she to return to her usual place of abode to pass the night. As, however, it was impossible at that hour to procure her another shelter, he allowed her to remain in the Church during the night, a permission of which she gladly availed herself. On the following morning, when the doors were opened, she was found lifeless in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin. There, prostrate on the ground, which she had watered with her tears, she had bewailed the sins of her life so sincerely, that she had expired from excess of grief, a true victim of penance, and striking example of the truth of those words, which had been the means of her conversion, "There is mercy for every sin, provided the sinner repents."—*Cath. Anecd.*

763. S. AMBROSE AND THE DOG.—S. Ambrose tells a story about a little dog, most affectionate and attached to its master. One day the latter went out of the house. When he came back his face was covered—he had a mask on. He opened the door and walked in. The dog did not know him again, because his face was covered. So it barked at him, jumped on him, and bit the end of his finger a little, and it began to bleed. Then the master uncovered his face. The dog, looking up, saw that it had been biting its own master. Great was the sorrow of the little dog when it found it had been biting its own master. It lay down on the floor, with its head on the ground, and began to moan most sorrowfully, and never looked up in the master's face any more. The master did everything he could to take away the distress of the poor dog. But no—the poor dog would no more eat or drink. After a while

it rose up and went down the steps which led to the cellar, and threw itself into a deep hole. For three days and three nights the dog stopped in this hole, neither eating nor drinking, but moaning most pitifully. At last its sorrowful moans were heard no more. The poor creature was dead! And this dog died of a broken heart—broken with sorrow, because it had accidentally, without meaning it, done a little injury to its master.—O sinner, learn a lesson from that dumb creature.—*Furniss.*

764. THE TRUE PENITENT.—In the ages of Faith, a certain penitent fell into a grievous crime, and having accused himself of it, asked if he might hope for pardon. “Certainly,” replied the confessor, “if you are ready to perform the penance imposed on you, viz., seven years’ penance.” “What,” replied the sinner, “I thought a lifetime of penance would be too little.” “Well, then, you will fast for three days only.” “Father, Father, enjoin me a due penance.” Then said the confessor: “Say one *Our Father*, and I assure you, your sin will be forgiven.” At these words, the penitent heaved a sigh and fell down dead, through the intensity of his sorrow, which was truly sovereign.—*Gaume.*

765. THE GIRL’S MISTAKE.—A girl was once listening to a sermon. Amongst other things she heard the priest say, that if people want to make a good confession they must be more sorry for their sins than for anything else. When the sermon was over, the girl remained behind. She went to the priest and said, “Please, your reverence, I think I made a bad confession. You said in your sermon to-day that if we want to make a good confession our sorrow for sin must be greater than our sorrow for anything else. When I went to confession, I remember that I did not cry for my sins. But when my poor mother died, I remember that I cried very much. So I am afraid that my sorrow for my mother’s death was greater than my sorrow for my sins.” “Answer me one question,” said the priest. “Tell me, if you could bring your mother back to life again by committing a mortal sin, would you commit a mortal sin?” “Oh, no,” said the girl, “I would not commit a mortal sin for anything.” “Then,” said the priest, “you love God really more than your mother.” “Yes,” answered the girl directly. “Then do not be afraid. Although you cried for your mother’s death and did not cry for your sins, yet you were really in your heart more sorry for your sins than for your mother’s death.—*Furniss.*

766. THE PREFECT AND THE IDOL.—S. Sebastian promised a Roman Prefect that God would cure his disease, if he destroyed all

his idols. This the Prefect did with one exception. The sickness remained, and the Saint had to induce him to break that idol of gold, which he had carefully hidden away, because it had been handed down to him by his ancestors.—How many sinners are there who have a favourite idol they will not part with, some sin to which they cling tenaciously : their sorrow is not universal.—*Guillois*.

767. THE MAN IN CHAINS.—There was a man in prison chained fast to the wall. There were chains round his arms, and his legs, and feet. He wanted to get away, so he tried to loosen the chains. He worked very hard. At last he got the chains away from his arms. Then he slipped his feet out of the chains. He got his right leg away. But, when he came to work at the chain on the left leg, he found it impossible to get it away. Take notice, it was all the same to him whether he was held fast to the wall by one chain only, or by several chains, for he could not get away.—In like manner, as long as the devil holds the soul by one mortal sin, the soul cannot get away from him, nor have any of its sins forgiven : contrition must be universal.—*Furniss*.

768. THE INVETERATE SWEARER.—A soldier had a bad habit of swearing. One day he asked an acquaintance to give him a help in some difficulty. This person, who knew the soldier's bad habit, replied : " I can take no interest in one who is always swearing." " Well," replied the other, " I should be glad enough to give it up, but I can't." " Nonsense ; just make a firm resolution, and you'll succeed : I'll give you a sovereign, if you pass the day without swearing." The soldier accepted the bargain ; though he had many temptations, he resisted manfully, and succeeded in keeping his firm resolution. He thus won the sovereign. But the amendment effected at first through a human motive he afterwards kept through a higher one. Such is the power of will, in a man who is determined to keep the resolution he makes.—*Schmid*.

769. THE GAMBLER AND HIS DOG.—A gambler, who often lost in a moment more than he gained in a week, always had a dog with him called Phylax. A friend met him one day without the dog, and wondered why that was. " Ah !" he replied, " the last time I brought Phylax to the house I'm going to, he got so many kicks and blows that he has not forgotten them, and nothing will induce him to go there again." " Then Phylax is wiser than his master," said the other, " who, so often duped there, returns again and again to the house !"—A true image of the sinner, who, so often ruined in

his soul in some occasion of sin, returns to that occasion, through lack of efficacious resolution.—*Melker*.

770. THE BUNDLE OF STICKS.—A monk, told by a young man that he had tried to correct all his faults, but without success, replied ; “ I am not surprised ; take that bundle of sticks and break it in two.” After one or two useless efforts, the young man replied it was impossible. “ Truly,” said the monk : “ but untie it, separate the sticks, and you’ll be able to break them separately.” So with your faults ; attacked all at one time, you can do nothing with them ; take them one by one, and you’ll succeed.—*Dumax*.

771. THE BAG OF SERPENTS.—A certain man used to carry about with him a bag full of poisonous, stinging, deadly serpents. One night he laid the bag of serpents down on the floor. He forgot to fasten it up, and went to bed. During the night all the serpents crept out of the bag. They went and twisted themselves round the man while he was asleep. In the middle of the night the man awoke. He was dreadfully frightened when he found the serpents twisted round his head, and arms, and legs, and feet, and all his body. If he stirred the least, these serpents would bite and sting him. The bite or sting of any one of these serpents was sure to be his death ! So he lay as still as if he had been lying in the grave. He called out to somebody to get a pan of warm milk and set it down in the middle of the floor. This was done. The serpents soon smelt the warm milk. First one great serpent untwisted itself from his arm, and went to the warm milk. Then another serpent followed, and then another. At last every one of the serpents untwisted itself from the man’s body, and he was saved from death ! This man could not get away from the serpents of himself. He was obliged to ask somebody to help him.—Every mortal sin is a serpent round the soul. The sinner cannot get away from these serpents of himself. But if he prays to God, God will make these serpents go away.—*Furniss*.

772. THE THREE STATIONS.—We read of a certain holy man, that whenever he approached the Sacrament of Penance, he was accustomed in preparing himself to make three stations or spiritual visits, one to the damned souls in Hell, another to the blessed in Heaven, and the third to Our Lord on Mount Calvary. In his first visit, he meditated on the torments endured by the devils and the lost souls, and their unavailing despair at the remembrance of so many graces and opportunities that they have abused, and of the

eternal delights which they have bartered away for a miserable and momentary gratification. Having thus aroused himself to a horror and hatred of sin, which is the cause of so much misery, he passed on to make his second station in Heaven, where he considered the eternal happiness of the just, the delights of Paradise which are so far beyond all human understanding, the sweet society of the Saints and Angels, the everlasting enjoyment and possession of God. "All this," thought he, "is lost by a single mortal sin, but may be regained by a true and sincere repentance." The third station he made on Mount Calvary at the foot of the Cross. There, he read in the Bleeding Wounds of Jesus the infinite malice and enormity of sin, which required nothing less than the Blood of the Son of God to cancel and atone for it. There, too, he contemplated with loving gratitude the Infinite Goodness and tender Compassion of Him, who for the love of us became as a worm and no man, the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people, who bore the weight of our sins in His own innocent flesh, who was wounded for our iniquities, and bruised for our sins, by whose bruises we were healed. Thus did this holy penitent in these three stations gradually raise himself from fear to hope, and from hope to love; until at length, penetrated with a deep hatred and sorrow for his past sins, and a loving confidence in the Divine Goodness, he entered the confessional, to lay down his burden at the feet of his merciful Saviour.—*Guillois*.

773. THE THREE CHILDREN.—A father had three children to whom he entrusted the care of three little lambs. One day, as they were asleep, wolves came forth and bore away the lambs. On seeing this, the children began to weep and were inconsolable. Their grief arose in this way. The eldest said: "I weep because my father will beat me for allowing the lambs to be carried off." The second said: "I weep because father will punish me, and also because he will be grieved to learn the loss of his lambs." The youngest wept more than the other two, and said: "My father will be greatly afflicted, and I would rather be punished all my life than cause him such pain."—The first of these children is the Christian who has only a servile fear, sorrow based on purely natural grounds: the second and third represent sorrow grounded on supernatural motives, the last being perfect contrition.—*Gaume*.

774. THE DUKE OF NEMOURS.—It happened that the Duke of Nemours died in a duel which he fought against someone who had offended him. He died directly after committing a mortal sin.

He died without Confession, he had but a single moment before dying to prepare himself for death. In that one moment, however, he prayed to God. There was a holy nun of the order of the Visitation ; God let her know that the soul of this prince had been saved. In the last moment of his life, he received into his heart the grace of making a true and sincere act of contrition for his sins. He had not lost the Faith, she says, so he was ready to receive this grace into his heart as a match receives fire. This Act of Contrition saved his soul from Hell. She said that it was a most wonderful thing that God saved him ; because, commonly, only those who lead a good life are saved. She saw that when he was saved a million of other souls were lost ; it was not on his own account that God gave him this grace, but on account of that article of the Creed, the Communion of the Saints, that is, because others prayed for him. She saw this soul in the deepest part of the flames of Purgatory, and that it would very likely remain there till the Day of Judgment. It was covered and surrounded by fiery thorns which hung down on all sides of it.—How good God is, how His ways are above the ways of men ! A man commits a murder, they hang him ; he may be very sorry for it, no matter, they will not forgive him ; they hang him. A man commits the most terrible crimes against God, the man is sorry, God forgives him !—*Furniss*.

775. THE SHEPHERD'S DEATH.—It is related in the life of S. Louis, King of France, that God often gave him the grace of being able to penetrate the secrets of hearts. One day, whilst passing through one of the provinces of his kingdom, he came to a shepherd who was grazing his flock. He approaches him with his usual kindness, looks at him with interest, puts some questions to him, and at length says : “ My son, I know the bad state of your conscience ; it is three years since you made a sincere confession ; I beg of you, if you value your soul, to delay no longer in returning to God ; let me take you back to the fold of the Good Shepherd, for death is already at your door. God is willing to forgive you all your sins.” The shepherd, all amazed, shuddered at these words ; he made a strict examination of his conscience, and confessed his sins with sincere contrition, having earnestly besought the Lord to give him that grace. But behold what need he had to do so ; three days after, he died a sudden death, in the very field where he was feeding his flock.—*Schmid*.

776. CONFESSION DURING THE PESTILENCE.—During the plague which devastated England in 1349, the Bishop of Bath and Wells

felt himself constrained to address a letter of advice to his Clergy, in which, among other things, he says, "Desiring, as we are bound to do, the salvation of souls . . . we, on the obedience you have sworn to us, urgently enjoin upon you and command you, that you at once and publicly instruct and induce all who are sick of the present malady, or shall happen to be taken ill, that, *in articulo mortis*, if they are not able to obtain any priest, they should make confession of their sins (according to the teaching of the Apostle), even to a layman, and if a man is not at hand, then to a woman. We exhort you to proclaim publicly, that such confession can be most salutary and profitable to them for the remission of their sins, according to the teaching and sacred canons of the Church." (Such confession was not obligatory nor sacramental.)—*Gasquet*.

777. MGR. CHEVERUS AND THE PROTESTANT.—The confidence inspired by Mgr. Cheverus, Bishop of Boston, was such that a great number of Protestant ladies of rank and position came to open to him their hearts, and to reveal to him the secrets of their consciences. One of them one day said that the precept of confession would for ever prevent her embracing the Catholic Faith. "No, no," said the Bishop very gently, "you haven't as much repugnance for confession as you imagine: on the contrary, you feel the need and value of it. All these weeks past, you have been coming to me and making a confession without suspecting it. Confession is nothing but making known the troubles of your conscience, as you have been doing, to receive my advice."—*Hamon*.

778. S. FRANCIS AND THE PROUD PENITENT.—A certain sinner who had been guilty of enormous crimes made his Confession one day to S. Francis of Sales, who received him with the tenderest compassion. Seeing, however, that the penitent accused himself of the most heinous sins, without the least appearance of remorse or confusion, the Saint burst into tears. The sinner, far from imagining that it was his own crimes which drew tears from the heart of the Saint, asked him if he was in any pain. S. Francis replied, "I am very well, thank God; but, alas! *you* are far from well." The Saint's tears fell more freely. Again the penitent asked him why he was weeping. "Alas," he replied, "I weep because you do not weep." At these words the sinner was touched with compunction. "Wretched man that I am," exclaimed he, "to feel no sorrow or shame for my own enormous sins, when they draw tears from one who is innocent." So powerfully was he moved by Divine grace that he fell at the Saint's feet, shedding abundant tears, and

implored his assistance and advice. S. Francis, overjoyed at this happy conversion, now encouraged and consoled him, and having prepared him by a good act of contrition to receive the grace of absolution, had the happiness of restoring his penitent to the love and friendship of God. From that time the sinner gave himself entirely to the Divine service, and became a model of true penance. This touching incident, says the historian of S. Francis, was related in after-life by the penitent himself, who used to add, "There are many Confessors who make their penitents weep, but I have drawn tears from my Confessor himself."—*Spirit of S. Francis*.

779. FERDINAND AND HIS CONFESSOR.—The Emperor Ferdinand, preparing for confession, offered an armchair to the monk who came to hear it. The latter declined it, pretending that the Emperor should not abase himself so much. "Excuse me," replied the humble penitent, "the Emperor is nothing at this moment: you are the superior."—*Lasance*.

780. S. JOACHIM AND CONSTANTIA.—S. Joachim was summoned to hear the confession of the Empress Constantia. She led him into her oratory, where a grand throne was prepared for herself, and lower down a simple stool for the Confessor. Pride had established such a custom and weakness had tolerated it. The Saint, addressing the princess, said: "Remember you are here as a criminal; leave therefore your throne and make your confession in a more humble posture, or I must withdraw." Constantia, who was really pious, and only followed custom without adverting to it, did as the Saint required, and, kneeling on the floor, made her confession with sentiments of great faith and piety.—*Guillois*.

781. THE PEASANT'S CONFESSION.—S. Vincent of Paul was one day called to prepare for death a worthy peasant dangerously ill. Whether through ignorance, or neglect, this poor man had his conscience loaded with several mortal sins, which a false shame had always prevented him from revealing; and yet he flattered himself that he was to be saved all the same. The Saint having commenced to hear him, thought he could urge him to make a general confession. The sick man, encouraged by the mildness with which his new director treated him, made an effort, prepared himself carefully, and at length declared his secret miseries, which he had never had courage to reveal to anyone. This sincerity, so necessary at the last moment, was followed by an inexpressible consolation. The penitent found himself unburdened of an enormous weight, which had for many years oppressed him.—*Abelly*.

782. PRAISE BY A PROTESTANT.—The celebrated physician Tissot was giving, at Lausanne, the assistance of his art to a young foreign lady, whose disease soon assumed an alarming character. Being made aware of her dangerous state, and tormented by the regret of leaving life so soon, she becomes violently agitated, and almost falls into despair. The physician judged that this new shock would shorten still more her term of life; he warned her, according to his custom, that there was no time to lose in administering the helps of religion. A Catholic priest is called in; the patient receives, as the only remaining good, the words of consolation that fall from his mouth. She becomes composed, occupies herself with God and her eternal interests, receiving the last Sacraments in an edifying manner, and, next morning, the physician found her in a state of peace and tranquillity that astonished him. He remarked that the fever had abated, and that all the symptoms were changed for the better; very soon the disease disappeared. M. Tissot, Protestant though he was, loved to relate this anecdote; he even exclaimed with admiration: "Behold the power of confession amongst Catholics!"—*Guillois*.

783. FR. GARNET, S.J.—In 1605, Gunpowder Plot was laid and frustrated, one result being a wholesale persecution of Catholics. Among the victims was Fr. Garnet, S.J., who was condemned to be hanged for not revealing knowledge of the plot which he knew only through the confession of one of the plotters; he courageously kept the seal of confession, and went bravely to death for it.

784. S. JOHN NEPOMUCEN.—In the fourteenth century there lived at Prague a holy priest named John Nepomucen. So great was his reputation, that the Empress chose him as the director of her conscience, and under his guidance arrived at eminent sanctity. This pious lady had much to endure from the jealousy of her husband Wenceslas, who, blinded by jealousy, formed the impious design of inducing S. John to reveal to him the Confession of the Empress, and actually proposed this to him, promising, in case of his compliance, to load him with riches and honours. The Saint, struck with horror, represented freely to the Emperor the enormity of such criminal curiosity, and the impossibility of gratifying it. Shortly afterwards, S. John, having ventured to remonstrate with the Emperor upon some act of brutal cruelty, was thrown by him into a dungeon, with a promise of liberty as soon as he consented to disclose the Confession of the Empress. Finding his resolution unshaken, Wenceslas determined to try again the effect of flatteries

and caresses. He accordingly released the Saint from prison, invited him to dine at the royal table, and lavished upon him every mark of honour. When all the guests had retired, the Emperor earnestly besought S. John to consent to his proposal, promising on his part to preserve the strictest secrecy, and to bestow upon him the highest dignities and a princely fortune. On the other hand, he threatened him, in case of refusal, with cruel tortures, and even death itself. The Saint answered courageously, that he would readily lay down his life rather than betray his sacred trust. Upon this the Emperor, transported with fury, called the executioners and delivered S. John into their hands, bidding them to employ every effort to move him to submission. They accordingly carried him back to prison, and having stretched him upon the rack, applied lighted torches to the most tender parts of his body. It was all to no purpose : the only words that passed his lips, under the extremity of his torments, were the sacred names of Jesus and Mary. After a short time the Saint was once more restored to liberty by the capricious Wenceslas, but feeling a conviction that his martyrdom would not long be delayed, he devoted his few remaining days to a fervent preparation for death. As he was returning one day from a pilgrimage of devotion, the Emperor happened to observe him from the windows of his palace, and burning anew with sacrilegious curiosity, summoned him into his presence, and renewed his wicked proposal. The Saint answered only by his silence, upon which Wenceslas cried out in his rage, "Take away this man, and throw him into the river as soon as it shall be dark, that his execution may not be known to the people." This barbarous order was carried into effect, but a heavenly light appeared resting over the lifeless body of the Saint, which floated on the surface of the waters, and the whole city flocked forth to observe the prodigy. Thus was the foul deed discovered, and the relics of the martyr rescued from the waves. The sacred remains were carried in solemn procession to the nearest Church, where they were interred with great honour, God testifying to the sanctity of His servant by numerous miracles.—*His Life : May 16.*

785. THE PRIEST AND THE REVOLVER.—Two men, in the middle of the night, called up a priest, in Paris, to attend a dying man. A cab was got, and they all drove away. When the priest had finished his ministrations, the two men led him to another room and said : "We require to know what the dying man has told you." "Then I cannot answer you ; you know well my secret is inviolable."

Taking out their revolvers, the two men said: "We require this revelation, or we fire." "Then fire!" said the priest, "for I cannot answer you." A moment's silence followed these courageous words, and the men said: "Well done; now we believe!" and quickly making their escape, they left the poor priest to go home alone.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

786. THE ABBÉ HULBERT.—Like other mortals, priests may be afflicted with loss of reason, but even then God guards jealously the seal of confession. The Abbé Hulbert was brought insane into the hospital at Meaux. There some acquaintances, visiting him, said: "You have been a confessor: tell us something." As soon as the Abbé heard these words he became furious, and cried out: "You infamous men! to ask me about confessions: go! such things are never revealed;" and so saying, he drove them forth from his room.—*Guillois.*

787. THE APOSTATE PRIEST.—An apostate priest, in the French Revolution, finding himself in the midst of impious companions, was assailed by them, and every effort was made to compel him to reveal the secrets of confession, he having been made drunk for the purpose. Even force was used against him, but he, seizing a dagger, put it to his breast, and exclaimed: "You may drive this into my heart, but you shall never get thence the secrets you ask."—*Melia.*

788. THE PRIEST AND THE MURDER.—In the year 1853, there lived in Russia a pious and zealous priest, who was much esteemed both as a Preacher and Confessor, and was beloved by all who knew him. Suddenly, to the astonishment of everyone, he was accused of an atrocious murder, and having been found guilty, was condemned to penal servitude for life. Before setting out for his place of punishment, he was, according to the laws of the Church, stripped of his priestly garments by his Bishop in the neighbouring Cathedral, and degraded from the exercise of all his priestly functions. He was then clothed in prison dress, and marched off to Siberia in chains, in the midst of a band of convicts. A quarter of a century passed, and an old man, who had been an organist, lay on his death-bed, oppressed with the terror of an awful secret. Moved at length by Divine Grace, he summoned to his bedside the principal persons of the neighbourhood, and, in presence of them all, declared himself guilty of the murder for which his pastor had been condemned. Anxious to divert suspicion from his own head, he had concealed behind the altar of the Church the gun with which the fatal deed had been committed, and had artfully con-

trived to direct the attention of the police to the parish priest as being open to suspicion of the murder. Search was accordingly made, the gun discovered, and the innocent priest brought to trial and condemned. From that day, a terrible feeling of remorse haunted the unhappy murderer, and made him resolve to proclaim the innocence of his pastor: he determined to give himself up to justice, yet his courage failed him. Time passed on, and death alone was able to extort the terrible secret. Meanwhile the poor priest was subjected to all the hardships of exile, while a word could have set him free, had he been willing to reveal the secret of the Confessional. At length, after twenty-five years, the organist's death-bed confession having been properly attested, a despatch was sent to Siberia, to release the innocent priest; but he had already appeared before the all-seeing Judge, to receive the Martyr's crown.—*The Tablet*.

789. FR. McLAUGHLIN.—Some stolen money was, in 1863, handed to a Fr. McLaughlin, in confession, for restitution. He was summoned to court, and forced into the dilemma of having to betray his penitent or to go to prison as a contumacious witness. Knowing his obligation to respect the seal of confession, he without any hesitation chose the other alternative, and was committed to prison.—*Weekly Register*.

790. THE DEVIL'S RESTITUTION.—"What are you doing there?" said S. Antoninus to the evil spirit hovering round a penitent preparing for confession. "I'm making restitution." "Restitution, indeed!" "Yes; when I wanted to lead this man into sin, I took his shame away from him; now that it is a question of confession, I'm restoring it to him!"—*S. Antoninus*.

791. APPARITION OF A DAMNED SOUL.—A young person of eighteen, who lived in Florence, had the misfortune to fall into temptation, and commit a great sin. No sooner had she done so than she found herself covered with confusion and torn with remorse. "Oh!" said she to herself, "how shall I have the courage to declare that sin to my confessor?" She went, nevertheless, to confession, but dared not confess that sin; she got absolution, and had the misfortune to receive Communion in that state. This horrible sacrilege increased still more her remorse and trouble. In the height of her interior anguish, a thought came into her mind to go into a convent and make a general confession. She did so, and commenced the confession she had proposed making; but, still enslaved by false shame, she related the hidden sin in such a garbled,

confused way, that her confessor did not understand it, and yet she continued to receive Communion in that sad state. Her trouble became so great that life appeared insupportable to her. To relieve her heart, tormented as it was, she redoubled her prayers, mortifications, and good works, to such an extent that the nuns of the convent took her for a Saint, and elected her for their superior. Become superior, this wretched hypocrite continued to lead outwardly a penitential and exemplary life, embittered still by the reproaches of her conscience. She at length made a firm resolution to confess her sin in her last illness, which came sooner than she expected; for she was seized with a fever which quickly rose so high that she became delirious, and so died. Some days after, the religious of the monastery, being in prayer for the repose of the soul of this pretended Saint, she appeared to them in a hideous form and told them: "My dear sisters, pray not for me, it is useless—I am damned!"—"How?" cried an old religious, more dead than alive; "you are damned, after leading such a holy and penitential life!" "Alas! yes, I am damned for having all my life concealed in confession a mortal sin which I committed at the age of eighteen years." Having said these frightful words, she disappeared.—*S. Antoninus.*

792. THE GIRL IN BRUSSELS.—There was a girl, living near Brussels, who went to Confession and Holy Communion every month. During her last illness, one day, she remained for some time with her eyes shut, lost, as it seemed, in deep thought. After awhile she opened her eyes again, and sent for her sister. When her sister came, she said to her, "I am lost for ever! I have just seen it." "Seen what?" said the sister. "I have just seen the very place in Hell which has been got ready for me." Her sister then ran out of the room to fetch the priest. In a short time the priest came. He said: "Well, my child, what is the matter?" "I am lost," she answered, "for ever. I committed some sins when I was little, and I was always frightened to tell them in Confession." Then, in the presence of the priest and of others in the room, she mentioned what the sins were. "Now," said the priest, "I know what the sins were. You have only to accuse yourself of them in Confession, and they will be forgiven." Her only answer was, "I am lost for ever." "But," said the priest, "if you ask God to have mercy on you, He will forgive your sins." "I know He will," the girl said, "but I have abused His mercy so often that I will not ask it any more." The priest stayed three

days and three nights, trying to persuade the girl to confess her sins. It was of no use. She died with these words on her lips : " I am lost for ever."—*Furniss*.

793. THE DYING CHILD.—A child went to the altar to receive the Holy Communion. When the child was receiving the Holy Communion nobody could see any difference betwixt it and the other children. When it had received the Holy Communion it came back from the altar, and knelt down in its place. After kneeling there for a few moments, it fell down on the floor. Some people came to raise it up from the floor, but they found that its eyes were shut, and it could not speak. They carried the poor child out of the chapel, and took it to a house that was near. The doctor was sent for, and he came and looked at the child, but he could not tell what was the matter with it. When the Holy Mass was finished, the priest went over to the house where the child was. He looked into its pale face, and spoke to it, but the child made no answer ; its eyes were still shut, and seemed to have no sense. The priest stood there wondering what could be the matter with the child. All at once the child opened its eyes and said the words : " I made a bad Communion this morning. When I went to Confession there was a great sin which I was afraid to tell, and I would not tell it." As soon as the child had said these words, it turned round and died.—*Furniss*.

794. S. ANGELA OF FOLIGNO.—Angela of Foligno had in her youth the misfortune to conceal some sins in confession. Fear and shame closed her lips for some years, when one day she fervently invoked the aid of S. Francis of Assisi, towards whom she felt great devotion. He appeared to her and pointed out the confessor she was to go to. Next morning she followed his advice and with true repentance made a general confession, and so repaired the past. She now felt intense joy in the heart, and advanced rapidly in virtue, till at length, through God's mercy, she died in the odour of sanctity.—*Dumont*.

795. THE UNHAPPY SINNER.—A certain rich man in the Netherlands, having fallen into a grievous sin, was so overwhelmed with confusion, that it seemed to him as if death, or even damnation, was preferable to the shame of confessing his guilt. He was, however, grievously tormented in conscience, nor did he see any hope of relief, until he happened at Antwerp to hear a preacher say from the pulpit that if we had forgotten a sin, we could obtain

pardon for it without confessing it. Upon this he determined to do all in his power to blot out the sin from his memory, and with this object, he gave himself up to every kind of pleasure and worldly amusement. He set out upon his travels, visiting various countries, and spending many months in journeying by sea and land. So far, however, from forgetting his sin, there seemed hardly a moment when it was not present to his mind, tormenting him almost beyond endurance. Finally, he gave himself up to the study of mathematics, a subject of such engrossing interest to a diligent student, as completely to occupy the mind, to the exclusion of everything else. This plan, after a fair trial, he found equally ineffectual. At length, weary of his life, he determined to put an end to it, and actually entered his carriage to proceed to a certain place, where he thought of executing his purpose. On his way thither it happened, through the merciful Providence of God, that he overtook a religious of his acquaintance and offered him a seat in his vehicle. In the course of the conversation Confession was mentioned, upon which the gentleman exclaimed abruptly, "Why do you speak of that?" These words awakened the suspicions of the priest, who spoke so earnestly to the unhappy man, that the latter acknowledged that he had resolved to hang himself, because he could not confess a certain sin, and was unable any longer to endure the reproaches of his conscience. Upon this the religious assured him that he knew of a way by which he could afford him certain relief. Having arrived at their destination, the priest proposed to his friend a walk in the neighbouring wood. Here they returned to the subject of their conversation, and the priest mentioned various sins which would be likely to create shame in the breast of a sinner. At length he named the crime which was the subject of his friend's long and bitter remorse, upon which the gentleman exclaimed, "That is it, Father; that is the very sin the remembrance of which drives me to despair." "Kneel down, then," said the priest, "and since you have now told me what the sin is, accuse yourself of it and the rest of your faults. I will then absolve you from all." The sinner at these words threw himself on his knees, and freely opened his heart. Moved by the grace of God, he bitterly lamented his past sins, and received absolution in excellent dispositions. Ever after he was wont to exclaim, "Oh, Confession, what peace, what happiness you bestow upon the soul!"—*Gibson*.

796. THE SOLDIER'S LITTLE SINS.—A venerable clergyman was crossing the Mediterranean in a steamboat. A poor blind man was

sitting on the deck of the boat, silently munching a piece of dry bread ; no one took any notice of him. He was all at once approached by an African chasseur going home on leave. "Old man," said he, "you seem to fare but poorly ; here, take a share of the contents of my flask ; it will do you good, and do me no harm." And the soldier sits down beside the poor man, and enlivens the meal by relating some incidents of his African campaign. Soon the passengers formed a circle round the two joyous messmates. The last drop of wine had been swallowed by the blind man, when the chasseur cries out : "That is not the end of it, old fellow ! to-morrow I must moisten your dry bread for you again." And at the same time he unceremoniously takes off the blind man's dirty hat, and goes round the boat with it, even waking up those who were asleep, presenting his improvised begging-box to each, saying with an accent not easily imitated : "For a poor blind man !" When he came to the priest who relates the fact, the latter shook hands with him and said : "That is right, my worthy fellow !" "Ah ! Reverend Father, it is for satisfaction for my little sins, for I gave the big ones to Father Parabère, who was our chaplain there below," and so saying he escaped into the admiring and astonished crowd, and went to pour into the blind man's capacious pocket the fruits of his collection.—*Catholic Anecdotes*.

797. THE GOLD RING.—A man of noble rank, but unhappily a great sinner, at length, touched by grace, felt some desire to be converted ; but as he was too well known in France, he went to Rome, with the intention of making his confession to the Sovereign Pontiff himself. Pope Pius VI. actually heard his confession, and was even edified by the excellent dispositions he manifested ; and yet when it came to the imposing of penance, the foreign nobleman would accept none of those which the Pope gave him. None was to his liking. He was too weak to fast, he said ; he had not time to read or pray much ; to retire into solitude to devote himself to pious meditations, or even to make a pilgrimage to some venerated shrine—all that his occupations did not permit. To watch, to give himself the discipline, to lie on the ground, oh ! his health would suffer too much. The Pope, in his wisdom, then gave him, for his whole penance, a gold ring, on which were engraved the Latin words *Memento Mori*, which means, "Remember thou shalt die." He imposed it on him to wear this ring on his finger, and to read at least once a day the words engraved upon it. The nobleman went away well pleased to have so light a penance. Nevertheless,

it was soon to be followed by others much more serious. The daily sight of that ring penetrated him so with the thought of death, that he ceased not to say within himself: "Alas! since I am condemned to die, what have I to do here below except to prepare for a good death? What use is it to pamper my body and take such care of it, since it is to rot in the ground?" When he had made these reflections for some time, no penance appeared too painful for him. He thenceforward accepted all those that were imposed upon him, and persevered till death in those happy dispositions.—*Schmid*.

798. S. FRANCIS AND THE SOLDIER.—A soldier, moved to repentance, on hearing S. Francis of Sales preaching on the mercy of God, threw himself at the feet of the Saint, almost in despair. S. Francis received him kindly, and prepared him for confession. Finding him full of sincere contrition, he gave him as his penance a *Pater* and *Ave* simply. The soldier, full of fear of God, humbly asked a longer penance, but the Saint pacified his fears, and bade him be content with the penance given him. Some time later, having obtained his discharge, the soldier again goes to S. Francis to inform him that he now intends to enter a monastery to do penance for his sins. The pain of living without pleasure is well worth the pleasure of dying without pain.—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

799. S. ALOYSIUS AND THE WEATHER.—S. Aloysius, speaking of the inconveniences caused by the heat and cold of summer and winter, said that of all mortifications they were the most pleasing to God, for two reasons: first, because they came from the hand of God, and therefore should be most dear to us; second, because they are more hidden, and thus less exposed to be influenced by vanity or pride.—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

800. VISIT TO A PRISON.—Supposing we went to a large prison and found a number of unhappy beings laden with chains, condemned to painful work for twenty or forty years, or perhaps for life. We say to them: "The King, in his goodness, is willing to shorten the time of your punishment, or even to remit it altogether, on condition of your saying a short prayer, or doing some simple work of piety, short and very easy. If you accept the condition, the doors of the prison will be opened to you and you can at once rejoin your family." Would there be one of these prisoners found to refuse such easy conditions? These prisoners are mankind, all debtors to the justice of God. The prison is

Purgatory. The sufferings of this life are as nothing to the sufferings of Purgatory. These we can shorten or escape altogether by gaining indulgences. Who can fail to see how salutary is the practice of trying to gain them?—*Gaume*.

801. S ZEPHYRINUS AND NATALIS.—Eusebius, in his history of the Church, relates the circumstances of an Indulgence granted at the commencement of the third century by the holy Pontiff, S. Zephyrinus, to a Bishop named Natalis, who had fallen into the grievous sin of apostasy. This unhappy man had at one time generously confessed the Faith before the persecutors, and shared in the sufferings of the martyrs, but in an evil moment he had allowed himself to be seduced by the artifices of certain heretics, who sacrilegiously consecrated him bishop of their sect. Almighty God, taking compassion on the unhappy man, strove to recall him to his duty by many heavenly visions, but as he continued obstinate in his error, being withheld from retracing his steps by pride and interest, He mingled justice with His mercy, and sent His Angels to him during the night to scourge him severely, as they had done to Heliodorus of old in the temple of Jerusalem. Upon the following day Natalis covered himself with sackcloth and ashes, and shedding abundance of tears, went and threw himself at the feet of Zephyrinus, showing him the marks of the stripes which he had received, and beseeching most earnestly that he might be received back into the Communion of the Faithful. In like manner he prostrated himself on the ground at the feet of the clergy and even of the laity, imploring their prayers, so that the whole assembly was moved with compassion. Whereupon S. Zephyrinus granted him an Indulgence, relaxing the rigour of the penitential canons in his regard, in consideration of the stripes he had received and his sincere compunction, and readmitting him to the Communion of the Church.—*Butler*.

802. THE FIRST CRUSADE.—In 1095, Pope Urban II. presided over the Council of Claremont. To induce the Faithful more efficaciously to take up the cross, he granted the remission of punishment due to sin to all who should join the Crusade for the deliverance of the Holy Land, and should die in Christian sentiments in the expedition. This is the first plenary indulgence we read of in Church history.—*Bouvier*.

803. THE PAIR OF SCALES.—Blessed Berthold had just preached a powerful sermon on almsdeeds, and at the conclusion, was giving

to the Faithful ten days' indulgence, by special power from the Pope. A lady of rank, having lost her wealth, and being reduced to want, came and made known her misery to the preacher. He said to her: "You have just gained ten days' indulgence; go to a certain banker, who doesn't much value spiritual goods, and offer him your merit in return for his alms. I think he will help you." The poor woman hastened to the banker, who received her well, and asked her how much she wished for her ten days' indulgence. "As much as they weigh," she replied. "Well, here's a pair of scales: write on paper the ten days' indulgence, and put it in one of the basins: in the other I will put some money." And the former weighs down the money! The astonished banker keeps adding and adding, without effecting any change, till at last he has put in as much as his visitor needs for her present wants, then the scales balance! A precious lesson for the banker, who was thereby taught the value of spiritual things in the scales of Divine mercy.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

804. THE BANK-NOTES.—A poor woman coming from confession found a packet on the floor and took it home. On opening it she found it contained a number of bank-notes. She was poor, her rent was not paid, and many of her little possessions had been pawned. The temptation must have been great: but she carefully laid aside the notes till her husband's return, and then the two, practical Catholics as they were, took them to their priest. The owner was not found for some time; but he did not fail to reward these honest people, strengthened by the Sacrament of Confession to walk in the path of strict justice.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

805. THE CAVALRY OFFICER.—A cavalry officer entered a Church where a mission was being given. The preacher was speaking of confession, and at the conclusion, the officer decided to go and make his. He did it with sincere repentance, and came away feeling as though an intolerable burden had been removed from his heart. In presence of several persons still waiting, he exclaimed: "Hear me, I beg of you: I assure you I have never tasted, in my whole life, a pleasure so great and sweet as what I now feel, since I am in the grace of God. I do not believe that the king, whom I have served for six-and-thirty years, can be more happy than I, now that I have cast off the dreadful burden of my sins."—*Carron.*

806. THE SINNER, AFTER CONFESSI^{ON}.—A great sinner, after recovering the grace of God in confession, said amid tears to his

confessor: "I could never have thought that so great and sweet is the abundance of peace with which God rewards those that sincerely repent. O great Sacrament, how I grieve to have known thee so late!"—*Melia*.

807. DR. BADEL.—This protestant physician, of Geneva, has printed a book, in which he shows that confession is a cure for diseases, on the consideration of the great influence which the moral state has upon the physical state of man. He recommends its practice, and says it is advantageous to all society. This principle should be borne in mind by Catholic doctors, that they may not through false pity delay recommending their patients to receive the last Sacraments and think of their souls in time.—*Melia*.

808. THE ACTRESS AND HER PURSE.—An actress in Paris was surprised one day to receive a note from a priest begging her to call upon him. On her arrival he said: "It is in your interest and to fulfil a duty that I have taken the liberty of asking you to call. I think you lost a purse some time ago, containing some five hundred francs. Yesterday a man brought them to me in confession, asking me to restore them to you, giving your name and address, and also the details of the theft. I now fulfil his request." The actress received the purse, but insisted on the priest accepting half the amount to be distributed among the poor.

809. RESTITUTION TO A MINISTER.—During an Eastertide, a priest remitted to a protestant minister, much accustomed to revile the Catholic practice of confession, a large sum of money as restitution through the confessional. This powerful argument changed the minister's views, and he said: "I must now admit, confession is a good thing."—*Catechisme en Exemples*.

810. READING A WILL.—At the death of a widow, in Belgium, the members of the family were gathered together for the reading of the will, when suddenly the priest of the place, uninvited, entered the room. "You may be surprised," he said, "to see me here, but reassure yourselves; I come not to make a claim, but to make a restitution." He then handed them a packet containing gold and bank-notes amounting to more than two hundred thousand francs. "This has been entrusted to me in the confessional, to be restored to you; I do not know the amount, nor do I need a receipt." He then saluted the company and withdrew.—*L'Univers*.

EXTREME UNCTION

811. THE DYING HERMIT.—S. John Climacus, a celebrated writer, and one worthy of credit, relates a remarkable example of how persons are assaulted by devils at the hour of death. There was one Stephen, a hermit, he says, who, after he had lived a great part of his life in solitude, fasting, watching, and praying, at last fell sick; and when he was at the point of death, the devil set upon him, and objected many things to him. Sometimes he cried out: "So it is indeed, I confess I did it; but I have fasted and prayed so many years for it." Other times he cried out: "Thou liest, I did not do it;" and again he said: "It is so indeed; but I have shed tears for it; yet notwithstanding," said he, "there is need of mercy." This example ought to make you wary in all your actions, and fly sin, and all the occasions of sin, since this holy man, who had lived nearly forty years a retired and holy life, was so hard pressed by the devil at the hour of his death.

812. THE YOUNG CHILD.—At the beginning of Lent, 1850, a priest in Paris was summoned to a young boy's bedside, given up by the doctors. The priest gave him Holy Communion and then administered Extreme Unction, which the child received with great fervour and devotion: he afterwards tried to console the heartbroken mother, and then took his leave, never for a moment expecting to see the boy again in this life. The following day the doctor was surprised to find him still alive, and what was his astonishment to see that all fever had gone, and all the symptoms of death of the previous day. He was bewildered! Three days later, the boy was up and playing with his brother, and his health continued to improve. Such was one of the results of Extreme Unction.—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

813. KING LOUIS AND HIS SERVANT.—The virtuous Dauphin, father of Louis XII., one day learned that an old servant of his house was in danger of death, and that he would not hear of regulating the affairs of his conscience. He was painfully affected, and thinking that he might do some good in behalf of a man who had spent his life in his service, he went to his house. "Well, my friend," said he, "I am coming to see you, to tell you how sorry I am on your account. I have not forgotten that you always served me with affection; think, on your side, that you would give

me, for the first time in your life, the greatest of all sorrows, if you did not employ the little while you have yet to live in preparing for death." The poor man, softened even to tears by this step of his good master, awakes from his fatal lethargy, prepares himself for the Sacraments, and receives them with great piety and devotion.—*Reyre.*

814. S. MALACHY AND THE MIRACLE.—S. Malachy, Archbishop of Armagh, having entered the house of a lady of quality who was dangerously ill, in order to administer to her the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, the people who were there were of opinion that he had better postpone the ceremony till next morning. The holy Bishop acceded to their wishes and retired; but this poor woman died a little while after. S. Malachy was the more grieved at this, that he took all the blame to himself for having allowed her to die without receiving the last Sacraments. He passed the whole night praying and weeping. Whilst he persevered in prayer with his disciples, the Lord rewarded his faith in a very extraordinary manner; the dead returned to life, like a person awakening from a deep sleep. She raised herself on her bed, recognized S. Malachy, who was praying, and saluted him respectfully. Immediately the sadness was changed into joy, and all who saw this miracle were amazed. But the holy Bishop thanked and blessed the Lord; he anointed the resuscitated woman, well knowing, says S. Bernard, who relates this story, *that sins are forgiven in that Sacrament, and that the prayer of faith saves the sick.* When the holy Archbishop had repaired what he called his fault, he withdrew. The patient continued to grow better, and even recovered her health. She lived so for several days, as if to give time for everyone to be convinced of the miracle. At length, she died a second time in the Lord.—*S. Bernard.*

815. AN OLD DOCTOR'S OPINION.—"It is now fifty years since I began to visit the hospitals and attend the dying. On my word of honour, I can declare before God and man, that I have never once seen any evil effect follow from announcing to the sick their approaching death and requesting them to receive the Sacraments. On the contrary, I have known them to receive it quite calmly, and to thank those who offered to send them the priest."—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

816. FUNERALS AND CEMETERIES.—The Church has ever shown great respect to the bodies of the dead. At interments, she em-

employs the solemn offices of the Dirge and *Requiem* Mass, with candles and flowers, incense and holy water. The cemetery, which really means a dormitory, she consecrates by the prayers of the Bishop. It has always been held that burial of excommunicates therein is unlawful. Cemeteries formerly enjoyed the same right and degree of asylum, in the case of criminals fleeing to them for shelter, as the Churches to which they were attached.—*Catholic Dictionary*.

HOLY ORDERS

817. S. NILAMMON'S PRAYER.—S. Nilammon had such a high idea of the priesthood that he could never bring himself to be ordained. But Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, declared his intention of ordaining him, and even making him Bishop. Nilammon, fearing to disobey his superior, asked for one day more for prayer and consideration; when at length the time for ordination had come, Nilammon again begged a few more minutes, that he might offer a final prayer to God. With Theophilus he knelt down, and the former rising up, made sign to Nilammon to follow him, but got no reply. God had heard the prayer of His humble servant, who begged that he might die rather than have the dignity and responsibility of the priesthood thrust upon him.—*Lasance*.

818. CELERINUS AND AURELIUS.—Celerinus, a young man of rank, who suffered for the Faith, was called by St. Cyprian to the office of Lector. Thinking himself unworthy of the dignity, it was only when Our Lord made known His will by a vision that he prevailed on to consent. Aurelius, his companion, showed a like reluctance, thus giving proof of the high esteem they had for Holy Orders.—*S. Cyprian*.

819. S. MARTIN AND THE EMPEROR.—S. Martin, the illustrious Bishop of Tours, being on a visit at the Court of the Emperor Maximus, was invited with the priest who accompanied him to sit down to dinner at the Emperor's table. During the repast a cup of wine was poured out and presented to Maximus, who, wishing to do honour to the holy Bishop, ordered it to be first handed to him, expecting that, when he had tasted, he would return it to him again. To his surprise, however, and that of the whole Court, S. Martin,

after he had drunk, passed the cup to his companion the priest, as being the most exalted person in the assembly. So far from being displeased, Maximus applauded this action of the Saint, acknowledging that, in the sight of God, who estimates things at their true value, the imperial is far inferior to the priestly dignity.—*Bulter.*

820. PRINCE TALLEYRAND.—Prince Talleyrand, who so afflicted the Church by his apostasy, but whose good death, in 1838, edified the Faithful, is a striking example of the evils of a forced vocation to the priesthood. Before he died, he said: "The respect I owe to my parents does not forbid me to say that all through my youth I was led to a state of life for which I was not born, and to which I was not called of God."—*Catéchisme en Exemples.*

821. THE PRIEST-HATER.—A man who had murdered many priests during the Revolution, had sworn that no priest should ever set foot in his house and go forth alive. He fell sick, and a priest, facing the danger he was fully aware of, ventured to appear before him. Seeing him, the sick man falls into a fury, and summoning up all his strength, exclaims: "What! a priest in my house! Bring me my pistols!" His pistols are refused to him; then drawing out his arm, he threatens the priest, and says: "This arm has slaughtered a dozen of your priests." "You are mistaken, my dear man," answers the priest mildly: "there is one less to be counted, the twelfth is not dead; I am he; see the marks of the wounds you gave me; God has preserved me to save you." At these words he embraces the sick man and helps him to die well.—*Gaume.*

MATRIMONY

822. EXAMPLE OF PAGAN AFFECTION.—Mausoleus, King of Caria, in Asia Minor, dying after the reign of twenty-four years, left the throne to Queen Artemisia, his wife. That princess employed all her power and riches only in signalizing the affection she had had for her husband. Wishing to immortalize her grief, she raised, in honour of her dear Mausoleus, a monument so magnificent, so splendid, so richly decorated, that it passed for one of the seven wonders of the world; hence it was that the name of *mausoleum* was subsequently given to all remarkable monuments

erected to the memory of the dead. That nothing might be wanting to the glory of her husband, that princess, a true model of wives and widows, founded a prize in favour of the orator who should best succeed in pronouncing the eulogy of the deceased monarch. Artemisia did not even content herself with these public proofs of her conjugal affection. She went so far as to gather carefully the ashes of Mausoleus, and have his bones pulverized, and, every day, she put a little of that powder into her drink, desirous of making her own body, so to say, the living tomb of her husband. She survived him but two years, and her love ended only with her life. She died in 351 before Christ.—*Filassier*.

823. S. MONICA AND PATRICIUS.—S. Monica may serve as a model for persons whom God calls to manage a household. Patricius, her husband, was a pagan, and gave himself up to all the impetuosity of his passions. Monica's great care was to gain him for God. For that she laboured by her submission, her mildness, her patience. She was most careful never to make him any hasty or unseasonable reproaches. She never complained of him; on the contrary, she hid his faults from all her acquaintances. By this truly Christian conduct she succeeded in gaining her husband's heart; he esteemed, he admired, and respected her. She often addressed fervent prayers to the Lord for his conversion; they were at length heard. Patricius allowed himself to be instructed in the Christian religion, and was converted. He received Baptism, and thenceforward he became chaste, modest, meek, worthy, in short, of having S. Monica for a wife.—*Godescard*.

824. THE PROTESTANT HUSBAND.—It was a bright sunshiny morning, when a marriage was performed between a Catholic young woman and a Protestant young man, but dark clouds were seen not very far off. The Protestant young man behaved pretty well to her for a few months. It is true he quarrelled with her sometimes, he forgot his promises, and beat her because she wanted to go to the Catholic Chapel on Sundays. He sometimes threw her Prayer-book into the fire, and spoke against the doctrines of the Catholic Church. She was silent and patient; she knew that it was a just punishment from God for marrying a Protestant. That marriage had been made, and it was too late to unmake it. At last the dark cloud came. The Protestant young man came home one day to dinner. He sat down to the table and began to eat. The meat was not to his liking. There was a sulky anger on his face. He was silent for a few moments. At length he stood

up on his feet, holding the knife clenched in his hand, fury and rage flashing from his eyes. He cursed his wife, and said: "You Popish beast, I will stick you with this knife, and take every drop of Popish blood out of you." The wife turned deadly pale; she fell off the chair; her senses were gone with the fright. She recovered them again, but it was only to live for a day or two. She died of the shock which the fright had given her!—*Furniss*.

825. EXAMPLE OF PRUDENCE.—In 1836, Miss S. B. was on the point of contracting a brilliant marriage, when she learned that her intended husband not only did not approach the Sacraments, but even allowed himself at times to ridicule religion. She turned to God for guidance, and then announced to her family that the marriage would not take place. She hastened to return the valuable presents she had received, and all the efforts of her friends to make her reconsider the matter were of no avail. After that, she married a man of little fortune but great virtue, and her marriage proved a most happy one.—*Guillois*.

826. S. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND.—S. Margaret was married and crowned Queen of Scotland in 1070, being then twenty-four years of age. The marriage was solemnized at King Malcolm's royal castle at Dunfermline, built in the midst of a beautiful plain, surrounded with woods, rocks, and rivers. Malcolm was rough and unpolished, but neither haughty nor capricious. Margaret, by the most tender complaisance, and the most condescending and engaging carriage, always full of respect, gained so great an ascendancy over him as to seem entirely mistress of his heart. She softened his temper, cultivated his mind, polished his manners, and inspired him with the most perfect sentiments of all Christian virtues, so that he became one of the most virtuous kings that had ever adorned the Scottish throne. And so much was the king charmed with her wisdom and piety, that he not only left to her the whole management of his domestic affairs, but followed her prudent advice in the government of his kingdom.—*Buller*.

VIRTUES AND VICES

827. FAITH OF THE VENDEAN.—A Vendean, named Repoche, who during the French Revolution served in the royal army, having been taken prisoner by the revolutionary party, was conducted by them to a place where a cross had been erected, and there he was thus accosted: "You have been taken with arms in your hands, and so your life is forfeited. There yonder is the cottage in which you were born; your father is still living there; now your life will be spared to you if you will do one thing. Take up that axe and at once cut down that cross." Repoche took up the axe; his fellow-prisoners turned aside their heads and trembled, for they thought that Repoche was about abjuring his God. Repoche, brandishing the axe over his head, sprung upon the pedestal of the cross, and uplifting his arm, cried out in tones loud enough to be heard by even those who were at a distance: "Death to him who shall insult the cross of Jesus Christ! I shall defend it from ignominy to my last breath!" With his back to the sacred wood, he swung the axe round his head, his eyes brilliant with a Divine fire, and his frame endued with supernatural strength. For some minutes he succeeded in warding off the sacrilegious soldiers, but soon he was overwhelmed by numbers, and though transfixed in every part of his body, he still clung fast to the cross, and in this position was put to death. What faith! What intrepidity!—*Power.*

828. CHARITY OF A PRIEST.—A young ecclesiastic, curate of a parish in the neighbourhood of Villeneuve, bequeathed to his country an example of one of the most heroic achievements. The Patron day of the place was being observed, and the entire population of the surrounding country were assembled to join in its celebration. The rains of the previous day had swollen the river, and it rushed madly onward in its course. As the priests were chanting vespers, piercing cries suddenly burst on their ears—"A boat has been upset! the men are floating down the river!" The young curate, without a moment's delay, hurries to the Church door, takes off his sacerdotal vestments, and without attending to the danger, surrenders himself up to the mercy of the waves, in order to save the wretched victims who were yet struggling to keep themselves above water. He wrestles with the flood; his efforts are crowned

with success, and he brings back the half-drowned men, one after the other, amidst the acclamations of the people, who were witnesses of the terrific scene. This heroic deed accomplished, the worthy and virtuous ecclesiastic quietly returned to the Church and resumed the office which had been for the time interrupted. This delightful act of heroism was not long without its reward, for he was presented by the Government with a gold medal.—*Guillois*.

829. ZELEUCUS AND HIS SON.—Zeleucus had enacted that whoever was guilty of adultery should lose his eyes. His favourite son being convicted of this crime, at once, without being stayed by claims of kindred, or giving ear to his affections, he condemned him to the terrible penalty established for all. But the whole people craved pardon for him. Zeleucus, however, giving heed rather to the claims of justice than to the people's entreaties, remained inexorable. Overcome at length by their lamentations, he bethought himself of a way of satisfying the claims of the law without condemning his son to total blindness. He ordered that his son should lose one eye and himself also one eye, showing in his own person, by this tempering of justice with mercy, a tender parent and an upright law-giver.—*Scaramelli*.

829A. S. JOHN THE BAPTIST, MODEL OF THE CARDINAL VIRTUES.—The great Precursor of Our Lord was guided from childhood by the spirit of *Prudence*, which led him into the desert, far from the temptations of the world, and taught him to subdue the desires of the flesh by the practices of penance and self-denial. He continually begged of God the gift of prudence, to fulfil faithfully the work committed to him, and his prayer, like that of Solomon, was heard of God, who inspired his words to touch the hearts of sinners, and prepare men for the Messiah.—The Baptist was likewise remarkable for his perfect *Justice*, sparing himself no labour, no sacrifice, to fulfil his duties to both God and man. See him as a missionary on the banks of the Jordan, exhorting sinners to repentance, patient with them, unsparing of himself. See him at the court of Herod, superior to all human respect, rebuking him with authority, and knowing that he spoke at the peril of his life. Truly S. John fulfilled all justice, that is his whole duty to God and man.—What shall we say of his *Fortitude*? In the desert he bore all the inclemency of the weather, had no other garment than one of camel hair, while his food consisted of locusts and wild honey. Then see the courage he displayed in his apostolic labours, in defence of God's Law, before the anger of a wicked tyrant, and

lastly his patience in imprisonment and martyrdom.—Finally, consider his *Temperance*, not merely his extraordinary abstinence, but also his moderation in all his acts. He regulated his whole conduct, not by impulse or passion, but by the rules of conscience and right reason. For instance, see him humbly protesting his unworthiness to baptize Our Lord. Precious though humility be, it may sometimes degenerate into obstinacy ; not so with S. John, who yielded to the word of Him whose Precursor he was called to be.—*Gibson*.

830. S. ANTHONY'S DECISION.—Many monks had come to S. Anthony from various parts, in order to discuss which was the virtue whereby one might climb with security to the heights of perfection. Some thought austerity of life, with watchings and fastings, to be the most necessary virtues ; others held perfect contempt of earthly things to be of still greater importance ; while others again thought solitude, charity, etc., each one exalting different virtues, according to his inclinations and graces, and giving reasons for the opinions he held. At length the great S. Anthony arose, and, while praising all the various virtues named by the others, said that Prudence seemed to him of all others the one virtue which best enabled man to reach perfection, for it controlled him in the practice of the others, keeping him from the two extremes of excess and defect. After developing the subject and explaining his reasons, S. Anthony found his brother monks agreed with him that Prudence is that virtue which leads most securely to God.—*Cassian*.

831. S. MARTIN AND THE FALSE MARTYR.—In a chapel near Tours, there were kept some relics which the Faithful round about used to venerate with great fervour. But S. Martin refused to honour them till he had verified the genuineness of these relics, and in this he gave proof of prudence. He inquired of the oldest of his clergy, and also among the laity : and all he heard only tended to increase his doubts. One day at length, he went to the Church with some of his clergy, and begged God to make known who he was that the Faithful were honouring with their devotions. And at once on his left he beheld a frightful spectre, who spoke, at the Saint's command, so that the latter understood it was a thief and criminal, put to death for his crimes, that the people were honouring as a false martyr. The Saint was the only one who saw and heard the spectre, and he immediately put an end to the superstition of the people.—*Sulp. Severus*.

832. S. JANE AND THE CALVINIST.—A young man of illustrious birth offered his hand to Jane Frances. He possessed great wealth, occupied an honourable position, enjoyed a wide reputation for his good qualities, in a word everything seemed in his favour, and all was being arranged, when Jane, to her horror, discovered that he was a Calvinist. This very thought was enough to make her cast aside the bright future that was before her, and she declared she would never unite her lot to one who was an enemy of the Church ; all efforts to the contrary, made by her family and friends, were of no avail : the engagement was broken off, and later on, as is known, she was joined to the Baron de Chantal.—*Her Life : Aug. 21.*

833. THE FOOLISH CHILD.—A little girl, whose name was Agnes, had just reached her fifth birthday, and her mother invited their friends to come and dine with them, in honour of the happy day. Agnes's godfather was there also ; and when the child ran to meet him, he put into her hand a sovereign in gold as his gift. Agnes, as may well be imagined, was full of joy when she saw the beautiful piece of money, and knew that it was her own. She showed it to everyone that came into the house. When her parents were at dinner, and when she had had her share of the good things upon the table, she left the room to amuse herself at the door of the cottage. Just at that moment a country woman was passing by, carrying a basket filled with fruit. Agnes ran towards her and cried out to her, " Look here ! look at the beautiful piece of money I have." The woman took the coin into her hand, and seeing that it was gold, said to the child, " Yes, it is indeed very beautiful ; but see ! here is an apple which is larger and still more beautiful. I will give you this large red-cheeked apple if you will give me your little piece of gold." The child looked at the apple ; it was indeed very pretty. " Yes," she said, " I will give you the money in exchange for the apple." When the woman received the money, she went away at once, and was seen no more. Agnes, after admiring the apple for a few moments, thought she would run and show it to her mother. " Look, mother !" she said, " look at this beautiful apple." " Where did you get that apple, my child ?" " Oh ! a good woman that was passing by, gave it to me for my little gold farthing ; is it not beautiful ?" When her mother heard this, she became very angry, and her father gave her a severe scolding. But her godfather said to them, " Do not find fault with the child for what she has done ; she did not know the value of the piece of money, and it was quite natural for her to give it away for that beautiful apple, which she

thought was much more valuable."—There are many who sell the endless joys of Heaven for the miserable things of this world ; and there are others who, for the pleasure of a moment, lose their souls in eternity. This child has given us a lesson which we should never forget.—*Schmid*.

834. HENRY DILSON, S. J.—When Hy. Dilson entered the Society of Jesus, he had so little intelligence and memory, that he was unable to learn or remember anything. One day, deeply afflicted at his state, he prostrated himself before a statue of Our Lady and vowed himself to her, body and soul, for the rest of his life. At once his memory became retentive, and he gained such a power of penetration into things spiritual, that the most learned of the Society thought he drew his admirable instructions from the most solid authors. But it was Our Lady's intercession that obtained for him the gift of understanding.—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

835. THE HERMIT BY THE RIVER.—A hermit took up his dwelling near a river, and whenever a traveller presented himself, he helped him to cross over. This life of obscure charity, so profitable to the soul, soon roused the jealousy of the devil, who persuaded the solitary to give himself up to fastings and austerities ; this he did, but in a few weeks he was worn out and exhausted. Then the Holy Spirit showed him the motive that had led him to such excessive penance ; after which he resumed his former life of simple charity and, to the great rage of the Evil One, made rapid progress in perfection.—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

836. THE BETTER PART.—When S. Maurus went into France to establish there the monastic life, he was kindly received by a rich and powerful nobleman named Florus. When the Saint asked him for a piece of ground, whereon he might build a monastery for himself and his monks, Florus gave it to him with the greatest joy ; and when the building was finished, he requested the holy Abbot to allow him to become a member of his happy family. But before renouncing the world, Florus went to the king, who had for him the greatest esteem and love, to tell him of his intention. The king was filled with great grief when he heard this request. At first he would on no account agree to it, for he did not want to lose one of his best and most trusty friends, but at length, overcome by his entreaties, he gave his consent. When the day came which had been fixed for Florus to receive the holy habit, the king went in person to the monastery, attended by all the

nobles and princes of his court ; and when the ceremony was ended, the king and his nobles dined with the monks, and partook with joy of their humble fare, and then returned to the palace, but the lesson they had that day received of the nothingness of the world, and the happiness of those who have chosen the better part, was never forgotten.—*Ribadeneira*.

837. S. ARSENIUS AND THE OLD MAN.—S. Arsenius having become acquainted with an old man of obscure birth and no learning, chose him to be his counsellor. “What,” said one of his brethren, “you, well versed in the learning of Athens and Rome, seeking the advice of that ignorant man !” “It may be,” replied Arsenius, “that I know something of literature, but I do not yet possess the alphabet of the knowledge of that old man.” And indeed, void as he was of human learning, this old man had a more sublime learning, the knowledge of salvation which comes from the Holy Spirit. He had the art of following the road to Heaven and of being able to show it to others ; it was this knowledge Arsenius wished to acquire.—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

838. THE BILLS OF EXCHANGE.—The following prayer fell from the book of a peasant in Rome, example of tender love and piety. “Eternal Father, I offer Thee two bills of exchange : one, the Passion of Thy Son dying for our sins : the other, the sorrows of His Holy Mother. From these two pay Thyself what I owe Thee, and, I pray, return me the balance.”—*Gaume*.

839. THE SOLDIER AND THE ORPHAN.—A poor orphan child had been adopted by a soldier whom she called her father. By her simple piety and affection, she gained over him a powerful influence : he called her his little Saint : never would he smoke in her presence, still less would he swear : he was even led to pray, a thing he had not done for years. One day he enters the Church, and to his surprise, near the altar, he finds his little girl, apparently in ecstasy. The thought comes to his mind that she is praying for his conversion, a tear falls from his eye, and his heart is changed ; shortly afterwards, the two made their Easter Communion together. Such is the power of true piety !—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

840. S. ISIDORE'S FEAR.—In spite of the many graces he received, S. Isidore was anxious and uneasy. When asked the reason, he replied : “He that expects a large inheritance and fears to lose it cannot be at peace : he who has a suit on which depends a large fortune or frightful poverty, cannot be at ease till the sentence is

given." The gift of fear dwelt in his soul and made him tremble at the thought of offending God and so losing his friendship.—*His Life*.

841. THE SNOW-WHITE DOVES.—When a certain pious girl was on the point of death, a great multitude of snow-white doves were seen hovering about her. And when her body was brought to the Church after her death, the doves flew to that part of the roof which was immediately above the corpse, and remained there till after the interment. The people ran to the Church to see this wonderful thing, and they were persuaded that God had sent His Angels, under the appearance of doves, to honour one whom they all esteemed and revered on account of her angelic modesty.—*Cardinal Baronius*.

842. LUTRETHU AND THE CRUCIFIX.—In 1721, before the Chinese tribunals, numbers of Christians were being condemned for their faith. A holy man, named Lutrethu, well advanced in years, was the first summoned to take the crucifix and trample it under foot. It was thought his example and influence would lead the younger ones to deny their faith after him. But taking the cross in his hands, and looking at it with love, he spoke a few words, declaring he loved God above all things, and that nothing would, with God's grace, lead him to be false to his religion. The mandarins had mistaken their man, and were even surprised by his courage: they therefore remanded him; but his martyrdom was only postponed a short while.—*Christ. Miss.*

843. THE JAPANESE CONVERTS.—When the Japanese first received the knowledge of God, they exclaimed: "How great, how good is the God of the Christians!" When they heard that God had given a commandment to love Him, they cried out: "Is it not the highest joy and privilege to love God? Are not the Christians always before the altar to adore Him?" But when they were told that many Christians not only did not love God, but even offended Him by sin, their indignation was roused: "O ungrateful hearts, barbarians, where do they live, those Christians without heart?" What a reproach! and how well merited! These converts will one day rise up in judgment against us!—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

844. THE SEVEN ANGELS.—A poor man lay dying, whom the thought of his past life filled with sadness, and he prayed that God would forgive him his many sins, and show him mercy when He called him to His Judgment-seat. Suddenly a beautiful sight met his eyes. Seven Angels, clad in garments of the brightest hues and

shining like the sun, stood around him. "Who are you, O beautiful spirits of God, and why do you come here?" he said. The first one made answer: "I was hungry, and you gave me to eat." The second one said: "I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink." The third continued: "I was naked, and you clothed me." The fourth: "I was a stranger, and you took me in." The fifth: "I was in prison, and you visited me." The sixth: "I was sick, and you came to comfort me." And the seventh: "When I was dead you buried me." The dying man now remembered the good works he had done to the poor, and the Heavens above him seemed to open, and Jesus Himself appeared surrounded by His holy Angels. With His gentle voice, which is the joy of the elect, He said: "Whatever you have done unto even the least of My brethren, you have done it unto Me. Come now and receive the reward which I have prepared for you." At these words the holy man breathed his last, and the seven Angels bore his soul with them to Heaven.—*Chisholm*.

845. S. JOHN THE ALMONER.—A stranger, hearing of the charity of S. John the Almoner, desired to put it to the test. Covering himself with rags, he waylaid the Saint and begged an alms, which was given him. Having received some money, the stranger withdrew, dressed himself up differently, and presented himself a second time, and again a third time, asking alms from the Saint. The attendant was ordered to give the alms each time, but discovering it was the same man that was being relieved, ventured to say so to S. John, who replied: "Let us not refuse him, lest it be Jesus Christ Himself we refuse." The stranger made known the means he had taken to test the Saint's patience and charity, and returned home greatly edified.—*Leontius*.

846. VISION OF CARPUS.—In the time of S. Dionysius there lived a certain Bishop, named Carpus, a pious and holy man, but over-zealous against sinners. Now it happened that an infidel seduced a Christian from the Faith, and Carpus, instead of praying for their conversion, was so much moved with zeal, that he prayed to God to take them both out of this life, that they might no longer offend Him. While thus he prayed, he saw the Heavens opened, and Jesus seated on His throne, surrounded by Angels. Casting his eyes again upon the earth, he beheld a deep abyss filled with serpents, on the slippery brink of which stood two men, pale and trembling, and apparently in a state of extreme misery. Then turning again to the heavens, he saw our Blessed Lord, with a look of profound pity, rise from His throne, and coming down, stretch out

His hand to help them. The Angels also came to assist them in their distress. Thereupon Jesus, turning to Carpus, said: "I am ready to suffer again for man's salvation, provided that he sin no more. And do *you* prefer that they should burn in the abyss, rather than enjoy the company of God and of the good and compassionate Angels?" Thus did Our Lord reprove the Bishop for his indiscreet zeal. S. Dionysius adds, "This vision I heard from Carpus himself, and I believe it to be a true one."

847. S. GREGORY AND THE HERMIT.—S. Gregory the Great was quite detached from the things of earth: for although he possessed wealth, his heart was not in it. A hermit in the desert prayed God to make known to him what reward he might expect for having given up the world to serve Him. And he heard a secret voice saying within him, that he might expect the same prize as Pope Gregory would have for his poverty. Greatly afflicted, he began to fear lest his poverty might not be pleasing to God, since he had no more to hope for, than one raised to the highest honour and possessing great treasures. But God spoke again to his conscience, and said it was not wealth but greed that made a man rich, and therefore he should not prefer his poverty to the magnificence of Gregory, since he had a greater affection for his cat than Gregory had for all his treasures. For instead of loving them, Gregory despised them in his heart, and gave frequent and abundant alms to the poor.—*Bollandists*.

848. THE YOUNG MARCHIONESS.—There was once a poor wretched woman who hated the rich, and especially ladies of high rank, to whom she gave the most odious names, and taught her children to do the same. The priest heard of this, and sent a young marchioness, virtuous and beloved by all, to try and tame this wild beast, and win her to God. The lady visited her, bore her insults with meekness, and finally succeeded in calming her ferocity. Having to leave home for a time, the marchioness came to say good-bye to her protégée, shook hands with her, saying she would visit her again on her return. The poor woman was stupefied, and burst into tears. Going to the priest, she told him all that had happened, praised God who had given such meekness and love to creatures, and from that day forward began to lead a good Christian life.—*Müller*.

849. FATHER FERNANDEZ UNDER INSULT.—When Father Fernandez, one of the companions of S. Francis Xavier, was preaching the Gospel to an assembled crowd in a certain city in the Indies, a man

out of the rabble came near as if to speak to him, and deliberately spat in his face. The holy missioner, without saying a word or manifesting the least emotion, took out his handkerchief, wiped his face, and continued his discourse as if nothing had happened. The people were filled with astonishment at his meekness, and those who at first laughed could not help admiring the patience with which he had received it. Among those who were present was a certain learned doctor, who, reflecting on what he had seen with his own eyes, said to himself, "Surely this stranger must be right in saying that the doctrine which he announces is a heavenly doctrine, for a law which inspires such greatness of soul, and which enables its disciples to gain so perfect a victory over themselves, can only come from God." The sermon ended, he acknowledged publicly that the virtue of the preacher had convinced him, and asked for Baptism, which was administered with all possible solemnity. This illustrious conversion was followed by many others, a convincing proof that "Example is the best sermon."—*Anecdotes Chrétiennes*.

850. FALSE HUMILITY.—A stranger monk having come to visit the holy Abbot Serapion, the latter, out of respect for his visitor, begged him to give out the prayer which they were accustomed to recite on such occasions. His visitor excused himself, saying that he was a poor sinner, and unworthy to wear the religious habit. Shortly after, the Saint offered to wash his feet, according to their pious custom, but he would by no means permit him, alleging his great unworthiness. S. Serapion accordingly entertained him with what his cell could afford, and then dismissed him with this charitable advice: "My son, if you wish to make progress in religion, return to your cell, and there, attending to God and yourself, employ yourself in working with your hands; for coming abroad in this manner is not so good for you as it would be to remain at home." At these words, marks of displeasure appeared on the face of the monk, his pride not being able to bear a rebuke. Upon which the Saint said: "A little time ago you said that you were a great sinner, unworthy to wear the religious habit, and now you are offended at the charitable warning I have given you." At these words the monk entered into himself, and acknowledging his fault, departed, much edified with the lesson he had received.—*Lives of the Fathers*.

851. THE BROKEN DISHES.—In a certain monastery of Egypt there lived a monk, named Eulalius, who was remarkable for the

perfect practice of the virtue of humility. Living in the same community were several negligent and lukewarm monks, who, finding that Eulalius was never in the habit of excusing himself, made it a practice, whenever they committed a fault or broke any of the kitchen utensils, to lay the blame on *him*, in order that the punishment might be shifted from their own shoulders. On these occasions the superiors often rebuked Eulalius severely; but he, instead of pleading his innocence, would cast himself at their feet and beg pardon for all his past negligence. Sometimes the penances laid upon him were so numerous, that he had to pass two or three days without eating. At length, fresh faults being continually laid to his charge, the elder religious represented to the Abbot that, as they found no amendment in Eulalius, it would be necessary to adopt severe measures, "otherwise," said they, "all the plates and dishes of the monastery will be broken, and there will be no keeping anything whole in the house." The Abbot requested time for deliberation, and while recommending the matter earnestly in prayer to God, he learnt by Divine inspiration the innocence and sanctity of Eulalius. The same was afterwards manifested to the brethren by a miracle which happened in sight of the whole community. The esteem in which Eulalius was now held became so painful to him that he withdrew from the monastery into a lonely cave in the desert, where he spent the remainder of his days in solitude, unknown to man, and far away from the dangers of human applause.—*Science of the Saints*.

852. THE MISER BURIED ALIVE.—It is related that a man, being possessed of the demon of avarice, thought only of heaping up goods upon goods, wealth on wealth. As he feared that his treasures might be taken from him, he had a subterranean place made under his cellar, with an iron door concealed so artfully that no one could perceive it. There, as soon as he had received any money, he went to hide it away, and contemplated at leisure his gold and silver, of which he made his god. One day when he had brought a considerable sum of money to this gloomy den, he forgot to take his key and keep it by him; he closed the door on himself and began to count up his treasures. When he had counted them over and over, he would have gone away; but the door could not be opened from within, so he found himself shut in and unable to get out; you may imagine the horrible situation in which he found himself at that fatal moment. It would seem that he shouted and knocked a long time; but who could hear him, or who would have thought

of looking for him in such a place? Meanwhile the man having disappeared, his family, as may be supposed, were terribly alarmed. They searched, and had others to search on every side, without being able to hear any tidings of him; he was supposed to have made away with himself, or been murdered, in a word he had perished by some fatal accident. In this interval of time, a locksmith, hearing of the event, remembered that this miser had once ordered him to make a secret iron door with a spring lock, and begun to think that it might have happened, by some mistake, that he had shut himself in. He made the thing known, and led the way to the spot where he had secretly placed this door. It was broken in. What was the astonishment, horror and fright of all when they saw the body of this man, putrified and eaten by worms! It was all plain then; the place was searched, and immense sums were found accumulated, real treasures of wrath and malediction, to appear before the dread tribunal of God.—*Baudrand*.

853. AVARICE AND DESPAIR.—A miser had hidden with care a large sum of money in the hollow of a rock. A father of a family, in despair at the poverty and want of his children, betook himself to that spot, with the intention of hanging himself with a rope he carried for that purpose. All of a sudden he felt the ground yielding beneath him, and he fell into the hollow which the miser had dug out. After recovering from his fall, he found the treasure hidden there, and took it off as a present from Heaven. Later on the miser came to contemplate his gold: finding it gone, he hanged himself with the rope the other had left behind him.—*Mansi*.

854. THE DOG AND HIS SHADOW.—A dog, crossing a stream, with a piece of meat in his mouth, saw his own shadow in the stream, and took it for that of another dog with another piece of meat. He therefore let go his own and fiercely attacked the other dog to get his piece from him. Thus he lost both: that which he grasped at, because it was a shadow, and his own, because the stream swept it away.—Thus did covetousness overreach itself.—*Æsop*.

855. THE CANNON BALL.—A cannon ball, borne on the wings of fire, will crush a rock, overthrow a tower, and shiver into fragments every hard body it meets with in its path. But if it strikes against a wool pack, the softness of the material at once stays its speed and violence.—So, too, if the rage and fury of an enemy assail us with reproaches or blows, and meet with meekness in our hearts

and gentleness in our reply, they will soon give way and lose all power to hurt us, as the Holy Ghost Himself assures us : *Prov. xv. 1.*
—*Scaramelli.*

856. THE WIND AND THE SUN.—The Wind and the Sun disputed which was the more powerful, and agreed that he should be declared the victor who should first strip a wayfaring man of his garments. The Wind first tried his power, and blew with all his might : but the keener his blast, the closer the traveller wrapped his cloak around him, till at last resigning all hope of victory, he called on the Sun to try his hand. The Sun then shone out with all his warmth, quietly and gently, and the traveller no sooner felt his genial rays than one after another he took off his garments, and was fairly overcome by the heat.—Persuasion is better than force.—*Æsop.*

857. AN ARABIAN MANUSCRIPT.—In an old Arabian manuscript there is an original description of the effects of wine taken to excess. “ When the vine had been planted, Satan came to water it with the blood of a peacock ; when it began to bud, he sprinkled on it the blood of a monkey ; when the grapes began to appear, with the blood of a lion ; and when the grapes were ripe, with the blood of a hog.—The vine, irrigated with the blood of these four animals, assumed their different characters. At the first glass of wine the drinker becomes more lively and fresh coloured, resembling the brightness of the peacock. As he goes on the fumes of wine rise into his head, and he becomes foolish like a monkey. Should drunkenness follow, he is a lion ; and if he become helpless, he is as the sow wallowing in the mire.” This description is not so far from the truth.—*Guillois.*

858. S. MACARIUS AND THE GRAPES.—S. Macarius one day received as a present a magnificent bunch of grapes. Instead of eating it, he hastened to carry it to one of his brethren, who dwelt in the same desert, thinking that he had more need of being refreshed by that beneficent fruit. The brother thanked him much for it, and appeared touched by this mark of attention ; but scarce had Macarius gone forth from his cell, when he hastened with it to another solitary, in order to give him an agreeable surprise. The grapes had not yet reached their final destination, for they passed on to a fourth religious, and successively to several others, so that they went through almost every cell in the desert. Finally, the last to whom it was given, not knowing that it had already passed

through the hands of Macarius, had a wish to offer it to him, and in fact brought it to him, pressing him very urgently to eat it. Macarius at once recognized the bunch of grapes, and learning, after some inquiries, how much it had travelled, thanked the Lord, in the depths of his heart, for the grace He had given his brethren of knowing thus how to profit by every occasion they met, to practise penance and charity one towards the other. He was so touched by this admirable trait that he preferred to let the grapes wither, rather than lose the merit he had had in depriving himself of them.—*Marin*.

859. S. MONICA AND HER MAID.—S. Monica was brought up under the care of a virtuous nurse, who endeavoured to train her in habits of self-denial, as well as other virtues. Thus, among other excellent practices, she would never allow the little Monica to drink between meals, saying to her, “*Now* you only want a drink of water; but when you grow up and are mistress of the cellar, you will not care for water, though the habit of drinking will still remain.” The very danger which the prudent servant had foreseen actually befell her, for as she grew older, her parents frequently entrusted her with the key of the cellar, and sent her to draw the wine for the use of the family. When so doing she would sometimes, out of curiosity, take a little sip, but by degrees the quantity increased, and she acquired at length such a liking for wine that she would drink whole cupfuls with the greatest relish. Thus did she sow the seeds of intemperance, and expose herself, by her self-indulgence, to the danger of grievous excess. Almighty God saw her trouble, and mercifully rescued her from the brink of the precipice in the following manner. It happened one day that the young Monica had some angry words with one of the servants. Now this was the very maid who had been in the habit of accompanying her young mistress to the cellar, and who had frequently noticed her fondness for the wine-cup. In her vexation she now reproached S. Monica with her failing, calling her *a young wine-bibber*. The expression made the deepest impression on her mistress, who, entering into herself, sincerely deplored her fault, and from that moment entirely corrected it. Thus did her humility, in profiting by the rebuke of a servant, lay the foundation of her true sanctity.—*Butler*.

860. CURED BY HIS ENEMY.—A man of high birth suffered horribly from a species of gout, which tortured his legs and feet. Having become the enemy of a countryman of his, by some offence he had

given him, the latter vowed vengeance against him. One fine morning in spring, as our invalid's pains were somewhat less than usual, he took a fancy to make a little excursion in the neighbourhood. But at the moment when he least expected it, he saw disguised men approaching, who laid hold of him roughly, dragged him away, and shut him up in a small chamber at the top of a very high tower. There, for three or four years, he received no other nourishment than dry bread and water. When his parents and friends, after searching everywhere, at length discovered the place of his retreat, they hastened to set him free. They found him in perfect health; not a trace remained of his former malady: his enemy, by making him observe a strict regimen, had been his best physician. A new proof that good living is more fatal to the body than penance and mortification.—*Schmid.*

861. JEALOUSY AGAINST M. ANGELO.—Michael Angelo, that celebrated painter and sculptor of Florence, having remarked, during his stay in Rome, the jealousy he had inspired in Raphael and several other artists, carved privately a *Bacchus playing with a Satyr*. He spared nothing to make this piece of sculpture worthy of his well-known skill; but he took care to conceal his name at the bottom, and to break off an arm of his statue; after these precautions he blackened it with soot, and buried it in a vineyard where he knew the foundations of a house were soon to be dug out. Nearly a year after, the workmen employed on these foundations, having actually discovered this unknown statue, carried it to the Pope. The artists all praised the magnificence of this work, and immediately agreed on its high antiquity. Michael Angelo alone seemed to be of a contrary opinion; he even began to point out numerous defects in this masterpiece. The question gave rise to warm discussion. Raphael maintained that the statue was perfection itself, and that it was impossible to estimate its price; "only," he added, "it is a great pity that its arm is broken off and lost." Then, in order to confound this jealous rival, Michael Angelo went in search of the arm he had kept, showed his name engraved on the base of the statue, and related its origin. His enemies went away quite confused for having fallen so completely into the snare adroitly laid for them by Michael Angelo. Those poor artists drew only shame from a fact which sheds imperishable glory on their rival.—*Schmid.*

862. THE TWO MERCHANTS.—Two merchants, who were neighbours, and jealous of each other's prosperity, lived in scandalous

enmity. At the end of some months, one of the two, entering at last into himself, heard the voice of religion, which condemned his conduct, and wished to be reconciled. For that he consulted a person of piety in whom he had full confidence, as to what he should do in order to bring about this reconciliation. "The best means," answered this prudent adviser, "is that which I am going to point out to you. When people come to buy of you, if you do not happen to have what suits them, instead of letting them go without saying anything, direct them to your neighbour's store." He did so for some time. And what was the consequence? The other merchant, apprised where all these buyers came from, was struck with the good offices of the man whom he considered as his enemy. He went to thank him, begged him to forgive him for the hatred he had borne him, and entreated him to receive him into the number of his best friends.—*Noël*.

863. THE TWO PLOUGHSHARES.—Two ploughshares had been made from the same piece of iron in the same workshop. The farmer who bought them, put one on his plough and the other he put away to be ready, should occasion require it. Six or eight months later, needing the second one, he took it from the corner he had left it in, and carried it, all covered with rust, to the field. "What," said it to the other, bright as a mirror, and more polished than when it left the blacksmith's: "we were both alike once! how is it then that you are so beautiful and I so ugly, though I have had some six months' repose?" "Ah!" replied the one that had been working: "it's just that very sloth that has made you what you are: labour and work have preserved me all my beauty and given me this advantage over you."

864. THE GENERAL AND THE ANT.—Tamerlane, a great conqueror of Central Asia, in the middle ages, in a moment of discouragement and low spirits, saw an ant climbing up the wall of his apartment. He threw it down several times, but each time it began again to climb; curious to see how far it would hold out and persevere, he threw it down eighty times without being able to discourage it, and he was tired out before it. As he reflected on this, he felt encouraged to face again the difficulty that had discouraged him.—*Lavedan*.

865. THE FOX AND THE CROW.—A crow, perched in a tree, held in her mouth a bit of flesh she had stolen. A fox, seeing the flesh, longed to possess himself of it, and by a wily stratagem succeeded.

“How handsome is the crow,” he exclaimed, “in the beauty of her shape and the fairness of her complexion. Oh! if only her voice were equal to her beauty, she would indeed be the Queen of Birds!” The crow in her vanity, anxious to refute this reflection on her voice, set up a loud caw, and of course dropped the flesh, and the fox quickly picked it up.—*Æsop*.

866. THE SENSITIVE PLANT.—This plant has leaves beautifully divided, with a number of small leaflets, the pairs of which close up immediately when touched: it is this peculiar phenomenon of irritability which has given to it its name, and makes it a not inapt figure of those whose touchiness or conceit makes them take offence at the least thing said or done, no matter how innocently, or by whom.

867. THE FOREST MONSTER.—A certain young man in crossing a forest was attacked by a frightful monster, which in shape resembled a lion, but had seven heads like those of a serpent. Rushing at him from beneath a bush where it had been lurking, it raised aloft its seven heads, from each of which darted forth a venomous tongue, which filled the air with horrible hissings. The youth, who was both brave and strong, was not disconcerted. Having no other weapon than a hatchet which he carried in his waist according to the custom of the country, he drew it forth, and rushed at the savage monster. At the first blow he cut off four of its heads, at the second he struck off another two, and at the third he would certainly have completed his victory by cutting off the remaining head, had not the hatchet unfortunately slipped from his hand and fallen upon the ground. At the same moment the beast, enraged by the wounds it had received, rushed furiously upon him, bit him, stung him, and seized him in its claws. In vain did the unhappy man struggle and call for help; his cries were unheard, and the savage beast, dragging him into its den, gave him as food to its young ones.—*History and Parables*.

868. A USELESS SICK CALL.—During the time of a mission in a large town, there was one man in particular who would not attend it, who refused to listen to the entreaties of his parish priest, or the threats and warnings of the missionaries. “He had no need of the mission: he would go to the Sacraments later, when it pleased him,” and so forth. The mission came to an end in due course. One evening about a fortnight later, this very man was taken suddenly ill, and the priest was sent for in all haste: he obeyed the

summons at once, but when he got to the house, the man was already dead and had appeared before his Judge, to answer for his abuse of grace and his presumption.

869. KING HENRY VIII.—Henry, who ascended the throne of England in 1509, had the advantage of a good Catholic education, under the pious Fisher, Bishop of Rochester. So great was the zeal which he manifested for the interest of the Church, that when the arch-heretic Luther began to spread abroad his impious doctrines, he himself published a book in defence of Catholic truth ; for which reason he received from the Pope the honourable title of “Defender of the Faith.” Lust and pride were the occasion of his fall. Led away by the impure love of a maid of honour, named Anne Boleyn, he sought permission from the Pope to put away his lawful queen Catherine, and marry the object of his guilty passion. Clement VII. firmly refused to sanction so grievous an outrage against justice and the sanctity of the married state ; whereupon Henry, whose wicked desires and whose haughty spirit could brook no refusal, took the matter into his own hands, renounced all obedience to the Holy See, declared himself head of the Church in England, and putting away the innocent Catherine, went through a mock-marriage ceremony with Anne Boleyn. Henry’s wilful *resistance of the known truth* closed his heart against the voice of Divine grace, and plunged him into fresh crimes, with each of which he became more hardened and *obstinate in sin*. His rebellion against the Holy See was followed by the plunder and suppression of the monasteries, and the cruel persecution of all who refused to sanction his enormous crimes. Among others who fell victims to the tyrant’s cruel rage, was the learned and pious Lord Chancellor of England, Sir Thomas More, who, after a long imprisonment, was beheaded for denying the king’s spiritual supremacy. A similar fate awaited the saintly and venerable Bishop Fisher, Henry’s former tutor, at the advanced age of nearly eighty years. Nor did the guilty partner of his crime, Anne Boleyn, escape the fury of the tyrant, being beheaded by his orders in a fit of jealousy. To her succeeded a third and fourth wife, the latter of whom was ignominiously dismissed by the lustful tyrant, as his first wife Catherine had been. His fifth queen, Catherine Howard, he soon caused to be beheaded, and he had actually married a sixth, when the Justice of God overtook him, and he is said to have perished miserably in a state of *final impenitence*, a prey to frightful agonies of body, and the still more bitter pangs of fruitless remorse.—*History of England*

870. THE CURE OF ARS.—In his young days the Curé of Ars had to take care of his father's flocks. There was one particular place where he delighted to lead them, a lovely little valley at some distance from the village where his father dwelt. His young companions, who all loved him, used to hail his approach as he appeared amongst them with a staff in one hand, and his little image of the Blessed Virgin in the other, pressed to his bosom. On a little hillock, by the side of an old willow which is still to be seen there, he placed his dear Madonna upon an altar of turf, and having knelt to pay his homage to her, he invited all the other shepherd boys to do the same. Never was he so happy as when he saw them kneeling around his beloved image. Then, having said a "Hail Mary" with fervent devotion, he would rise and gravely address his young companions, who listened with devout attention, upon the devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and the practice of the Christian virtues, doing his utmost to lead them to love God.—*Chisholm*.

871. S. PHILIP AND THE ANGEL.—Almsdeeds and charity were the characteristic virtues of S. Philip Neri, and one day they brought him a signal favour. Almsgiving is so pleasing to God, that He seems unable, as it were, to wait till the next life to reward it. The Saint was passing through a narrow street in Rome, when an angel, under the form of a beggar, presented himself and held out a suppliant hand. Without inquiring into his wants the Saint gave him what money he had. "Very good," said the recipient: "I only wished to test your charity," and he disappeared.—*His Life: May 26*.

872. MOZART'S REQUIEM.—One day a stranger presented himself before Mozart, and said to him: "Sir, I have been commissioned to ask a favour of you; it is to compose a *Requiem*, as soon as possible, for a person of distinction who does not wish to give his name. He desires that you will employ all your talent on this *Requiem*, for he is an excellent judge of music, and will pay you whatever you ask." Mozart went immediately to work, and worked day and night with so much ardour that he fell ill. But the most curious part of the story is that no one claimed the famous *Requiem*, which was finished at the very moment when the illustrious composer's strength was completely exhausted. His malady went on increasing, and at length he died in Vienna, on the 5th of December, 1791, being scarcely thirty-six years of age. But what is more singular still, his friends, desirous of making his obsequies worthy

of himself, found nothing grander or more suitable for that sad occasion than his *Requiem*, and it was executed for the first time at his own funeral service.—And that is what may any day happen to us; the things we do to gain a living are perhaps those that may hasten our death. Let us, then, be ever on our guard.—*Feller*.

THE RULE OF LIFE

873. THE CURÉ OF ARS AND THE BIRDS.—One day, in the spring-time, the Curé of Ars was going to see a sick person. The bushes were full of little birds that were singing with all their might. The good priest stood for a moment to listen to them, and then said, with a sigh: "Poor little birds, you were created to sing, and you sing. Man was created to love God, and he does not love Him."—O, my child, love God with your whole heart.—*Chisholm*.

874. S. PERPETUA AND HER FATHER.—During the persecution which raged against the Christian religion under the reign of the Emperor Severus, a lady of quality, named Perpetua, with an infant at her breast, was arrested and cast into a loathsome prison. Among other trials which she had to undergo, the babe that she was nursing was torn from her arms at an age when it most needed its mother's tender care; but though her heart was wrung with anguish, she generously made the sacrifice which God required from her, and committed it with confidence to the keeping of its Heavenly Father. But the greatest of all the trials which she had to bear was at the hands of her own father, who was still a pagan, and who loved her passionately. Being admitted to have access to his daughter, in order that his entreaties and the sight of his distress might overcome her constancy, he left nothing undone to try to shake her resolution. The affectionate heart of Perpetua was deeply moved at the sight of the tears and distress of her aged father; but her pain was redoubled when she beheld him beaten with a stick, by order of the judge, in order to drive him from her presence. Her constancy, however, and her fidelity to Jesus Christ continued unshaken; for she remembered the words of Our Lord, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." S. Perpetua having thus, by the power of Divine love, triumphed over the feelings of

nature, completed her glorious course in the amphitheatre, where she was first tossed by a furious bull, and afterwards beheaded.—*Butler.*

875. S. EDMUND AND THE HOLY CHILD.—While S. Edmund, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, was studying in Paris, he often used to walk in the fields by the river-side, in order to meditate on sacred subjects. One day he beheld before him a boy of exceeding beauty, whose countenance was white and ruddy, and who saluted him saying, "Hail, my beloved!" The stranger then asked Edmund if he did not know him. Edmund replied that he did not remember to have seen him. Upon which the boy exclaimed, "It is strange that you do not know me, for I sit by your side in the schools, and wherever you go, I am with you." He then told Edmund to look at his face, and see what was written on his forehead. Edmund looked and read, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." From that time the holy youth became more and more inflamed with the love of his Redeemer, and devoted himself more than ever to the meditation of His Sacred Passion.—*Cistercian Legends.*

876. "GOD KNOWS MY NAME."—A poor Irishwoman, some years ago, went to a priest in America, and asked him to forward to Ireland some help to those who were suffering from famine. "How much can you spare?" asked the priest. "I have a hundred dollars saved," she said, "and I can spare that sum." The priest began to reason with her, saying that the gift was too great for her slender means. But all he said could not make her change her mind. "It will do me good to know that I have been able to help a little," she said, "and I shall be able to rest happier when I think of the poor families I have saved from hunger and death." The priest then took the money she offered him, but as he did so his eyes filled with tears. "Now, what is your name?" he asked, "that I may have it published." "My name?" she exclaimed in surprise; "don't mind that, Father. Just send them the help. God knows my name, and that is quite enough for me."—*Chisholm.*

877. BROTHER GILES.—S. Bonaventure, General of the Franciscan Order, had among his religious a lay brother, named Giles, who had been one of the first companions of S. Francis, and was a man of extraordinary simplicity and innocence of life. Speaking one day to S. Bonaventure, Brother Giles asked him how it was possible for himself, ignorant as he was, to make a proper return to God for

the many marks of love which He had shown him. "It is easy to do so," said the Saint, "you have only to love God, and there is no one who cannot love Him with the help of His grace." "What," said Brother Giles, "can an ignorant man love God as much as a learned doctor?" "Certainly," replied S. Bonaventure, "and a good woman can love God even more than the cleverest theologian." At these words Brother Giles, transported with joy, ran into the garden, and out upon the high-road, crying aloud, "Come, simple, ignorant men, come, good women, come and love Our Lord. You can love Him as much and even more than Father Bonaventure or the cleverest theologian." Then falling into a profound meditation, he pondered on the reflection that all that God regards in us is the degree of love that we bear Him, a thought which overwhelmed his soul with joy and consolation.—*Anecdotes Chrétiennes.*

878. THE INVISIBLE HOST.—A young man at Mass, being unable to see the Sacred Host, drew nearer to the celebrant, and yet his efforts were fruitless, however near he got to the altar. This marvellous state of things lasted two years, after which, full of scruples and trouble, he consulted a discreet and learned priest on the subject. This Confessor discovered that his visitor bore hatred against a neighbour, and refused to be reconciled to him. He explained how it was, that being devoid of charity, Our Lord implied by this prodigy that the young man had no part in the Sacrifice, in spite of his bodily presence. After this advice, the young man repented: he pardoned his enemy, and promised to seek no further revenge. Making his peace with God in a good confession, he was henceforth able, like all the rest, to see the Sacred Host at Mass.—*A Kempis.*

879. THE BISHOP AND THE LEPER.—A Bishop in France was journeying across the country, when he fell in with a leper imploring help in mournful tones. The Bishop at once dismounted, and gave him an abundant alms. "It's not money I need," said the leper, "but I want you to remove the matter that covers my face." The Bishop at once began to comply with this request with his fingers and a soft silk handkerchief as gently as he could. But the leper complained of that even, as most painful, and asked for something softer still. "The touch of your tongue," he said, "is as much as I can bear." At so strange a request, the heart of the prelate was agitated with conflicting emotions: grace and nature were struggling within. Grace at length prevailed, and with the eyes of faith,

seeing in the leper Christ Himself, he did violence to his natural feelings and applied his tongue to the loathsome countenance, when, behold, instead of repulsive discharge, a gem of great value and beauty was inserted within the lips of the man before him, the leper being none other than Our Lord Himself, who assumed before the prelate's eyes the form of a comely youth.—*Cæsarius*.

880. S. FRANCIS AND THE LAWYER.—A lawyer in Geneva had sworn implacable hatred to S. Francis of Sales, and never ceased loading him with insults and injuries. One day the Saint, going up to him, took him by the hand, and with great gentleness said: "You are my enemy, I know: yet if you were to pluck out one of my eyes, I would still behold you with the other in all kindness." But this meekness was lost on that brazened heart, and later on, the man actually drew a revolver on the prelate; he missed his aim, but hit a priest beside him, in consequence of which he was condemned to death. The Saint, however, pleaded so effectually in his behalf, that the sentence was commuted. In spite of this, the hardened sinner spat the Saint in the face, to which the latter, terrified at the sight of such hardness of heart, merely said: "I have been able to save you from human justice: but unless you change your dispositions, you will fall into the hands of Divine justice, from which no power can save you."—*His Life: Jan. 29*.

881. THE STATUE OF CONSTANTINE.—In the excitement of a riot, the people went so far as one day to throw stones at the statue of the Emperor; his courtiers urged him to take signal revenge on such an insult, offered really to himself. But passing his hand over his face, the Emperor contented himself with replying: "The wound must be very slight, for I really feel nothing."—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

882. S. SABINUS AND HIS PERSECUTOR.—Volusian made S. Sabinus prisoner and cut off his two hands. Not long after, the tyrant became afflicted with a disease of the eyes, and as all medical skill proved useless, he begged the Saint to come to his help. Forgetting the sufferings he had endured by command of Volusian, he held out his mutilated arms, and by his prayer to God made the sickness to disappear. This miracle had a double effect: Volusian, full of gratitude, begged the Saint now to heal him of the more dangerous sickness of the soul, and he embraced the Christian religion.—*Sabell*.

883. GENERAL DAMESNE.—During the troublesome days of 1848, General Damesne was mortally wounded by one of the revo-

lutionaries. Seeing his end was near, he made to God the sacrifice of his life, and turning to the Sister of Charity that was nursing him, he said : " You must do me a favour : take these five francs and have two Masses said : one for my assassin, and one for myself."

884. THE CHINESE EUNUCH.—A certain eunuch who was attached to the Court of the Emperor of China, becoming afflicted with a loathsome disease, was driven from the palace, and having no friends who would receive him, was on the point of perishing from exposure and want. Seeing him in this pitiable state, two poor Christian widows took compassion on him, and though hardly able to provide for their own support, received him into their cottage, dressed his sores, and waited on him with the greatest tenderness. At the end of three months, seeing him partly recovered, they ventured to speak to him on the affairs of his soul, and to unfold to him some of the leading truths of the Christian religion. To their grief and astonishment he flew into a passion, loaded them with reproaches, and threatened to denounce them to the persecutors. In fact, he left the house and did not return for some time, leaving them for a whole month in a state of fear and trembling. At the end of that time, having exhausted all his means, he again had recourse to them for assistance. Forgetting the ingratitude and ill-treatment which they had met with at his hands, they received him with the same charity, and waited on him with the same tender care, redoubling, meanwhile, their prayers for his conversion; whereupon the heart of the pagan was softened. " A religion," said he, " which inspires such conduct cannot but come from God. Teach me to know and to love the God whom you serve, and to prepare for death, which cannot be far distant." The widows, hearing these words, were filled with joy and hastened to complete his instruction, after which he was baptized. Not long after, he expired in admirable sentiments of piety, glorifying God and blessing his charitable benefactresses.—*Anecdotes Chrétiennes.*

885. THE HERMIT AND THE TREES.—A certain hermit, being one day asked by his disciples in what manner they could best secure the victory over their passions, took them into a plantation of cypress trees, which were of different sizes, according to the length of time which they had been planted. Pointing to a very little one, he bade one of his disciples pull it up, which he did very easily with one hand, for it was only a few days since it had been placed in the ground. He then pointed to another somewhat bigger, which his disciple also pulled up, but he had to take both hands to

it, and to exert his strength, for, having been planted a few months its roots had already begun to take hold of the soil. A third, which had been a year in the ground, the youth found himself quite unable to uproot ; so his companions came to help him, and by their united strength they at length succeeded in extracting it. The hermit then pointed to a fourth, of some years' growth, but all their efforts to pull it out of the ground produced not the slightest effect, upon which the hermit said : " My children, so it is with our passions. When they are yet young and have not taken root, it is easy with a little care to overcome them ; but when by long habit they have become rooted in our souls, it is very difficult indeed to subdue them. Strive, then, now while you are young, to destroy these enemies, who otherwise will cause you severe conflicts when you grow older, and may even be the cause of your eternal ruin."—*Hist. Édif.*

886. THE BROOD OF VIPERS.—A countryman walking one day through the woods, fell in with a nest of vipers. At first sight of them he was afraid and started back, but at length summoning up courage, he returned and took the nest, which contained a brood of seven young vipers. For three weeks he kept this singular family in his house, feeding them meanwhile with bread and milk, till one day a friend came to see him. " You should not forget," said the visitor, " that if you do not destroy these vipers now while they are young, you may depend upon it that sooner or later they will fasten on you with their poisonous fangs, and you will fall a victim to your imprudence." " Oh, never fear," said the countryman, " they are only young. Besides, I take great precaution, and if ever I find them dangerous I can soon get rid of them." " Do not rely upon that," said his friend, " for in all probability they will take you by surprise." To this the owner of the vipers made no answer, and his friend took his leave. A few days after he returned, and found the countryman in dreadful torture, for he had just been bitten by the dangerous reptiles. His friends hastened to his assistance, but it was too late ; the poison had entered his blood, and he soon after expired.—*Mrs. Herbert.*

887. "GRASP IT FIRMLY."—A certain holy religious, having been tried by Almighty God with many severe afflictions, began to lose courage, and was tempted to think that God had abandoned her, and that she would never be able to support so heavy a cross. That same night as she lay on her bed, she seemed to see before her Our Blessed Lord Himself, His head crowned with thorns, His counte-

nance disfigured with wounds and blood, and a heavy cross upon His shoulders. He advanced to her bedside, and she then perceived that He carried in His hands another cross similar to His own, but smaller and of lighter make. "My daughter," He said to her, "take up your cross and follow Me." She accordingly rose from her bed, and placing the cross on her shoulders, followed Our Lord, as it seemed, up a steep hill, the surface of which was covered with thorns and briars. After she had taken a few steps, she began to lose courage, for the cross which she bore appeared to press heavily upon her shoulders, so as almost to weigh her to the ground ; while to add to her misery her feet, which were bare, were torn by the thorns and briars on which she was forced to tread. In her extreme distress, she called out for help to Our Blessed Lord ; upon which He turned and said to her : " If you would carry your cross with ease, grasp it firmly, and place your feet in My footsteps." She obeyed, and found that the more readily she embraced her cross, the lighter it grew, while in stepping on the footprints of Jesus she noticed that wherever He trod, the thorns disappeared, and soft and fragrant flowers sprang up in their place, so that she was able to follow Him henceforth with ease up the steep ascent. Upon reaching the summit, Our Lord gave her His blessing and disappeared, leaving her full of courage, and generously determined to embrace willingly the trials which He sent her.—*Gibson*.

888. **DIOGENES THE CYNIC.**—Diogenes lived in Pontus, in the fifth century B.C. His youth was spent in pleasure and debauchery, but coming to Athens in later years, he plunged into the opposite extreme of austerity and self-mortification. He would roll in hot sand in summer, and in winter would embrace a statue covered with snow. His permanent residence (if such it could be called) was a tub : his clothing was of the coarsest, and his food of the plainest. In spite of his eccentric life and manners, the Athenians admired his contempt for comfort, and respected him : he lived to the age of ninety.—*Chambers*.

889. " **BEGONE, SATAN.**"—The devil appeared one night to S. Vincent Ferrer, while at prayer, and said he was one of the fathers of the desert of old, and was come to offer some advice. " In my youth," he said, " I was very careless and sinful, but on reaching old age I began to reflect and prepare for death ; I repented, and am now in Heaven. I advise you to do as I did. You are yet a young man ; go, then, and enjoy the pleasures of the world ; and when you see the day of your death drawing near, it

will be time enough to begin a life of penance. God is so good, He will very readily pardon you ; and when you die He will take you to Heaven, to enjoy its pure delights in the company of the angels, and of so many others who were once sinners, as I was, and are now glorious Saints." S. Vincent immediately cried out : " Begone, Satan ! I have consecrated to God my youth as well as my old age, because I wish to give Him my whole life." Satan, seeing himself discovered and conquered, fled in confusion.—*Chisholm*.

890. THE DESERT AND THE CITY.—A hermit was one day transported into a monastery where there were about three hundred monks living. He saw a multitude of devils following these monks everywhere : into the garden, the cloister, and especially the Church : they seemed to be trying in every way to draw them into sin. The same hermit was then transported into a populous city, and was astonished to find there but one devil, at the city gate, having apparently but little to do. Then an Angel gave him to understand that the devils were very numerous and very busy in the monastery, because there the monks resisted them manfully, and were striving to serve God, while in the city the inhabitants of themselves followed evil.—*Lives of the Fathers*.

891. THE SKELETON ON THE WALL.—A boy wanted to frighten two other little boys. In the daytime he took some phosphorus, and marked with it the form of a skeleton on the wall of the room where the little boys always slept. In the daytime the mark of phosphorus is not seen ; in the dark it shines like fire. The two little boys went to bed, knowing nothing about it. Next morning they opened the door of the room where the two little boys had been sleeping. They found one boy sitting on his bed, staring at the wall, out of his senses. The other little boy was lying dead ! This was fright. So are the lost souls tormented with fright and fear.—*Furniss*.

892. A TERRIBLE APPARITION.—A young man once went to a priest in great haste, and cried out to him : " O Father, hear my confession immediately, I beseech thee." " Why are you in such a great hurry to make your confession ?" asked the priest. The young man answered : " I was along with a bad companion, and we committed a sin together. My companion died almost immediately after the sin was committed, and has just appeared to me, saying, ' I am in hell ; I am lost for ever, because of that sin which we have just committed.' O Father !" continued the poor young man, " hear my confession at once, that I may not go to hell."—*Chisholm*.

893. WORDS OF A CULPRIT.—A priest lent to a man condemned to death a good book, which he read with profit and pleasure. “Ah,” he said, in the end, “if I had always had books like this to read, I should not be where I now am.”—*Catéchisme en Exemples*.

894. S. BERNARD'S RULE.—To keep himself from being influenced by what the world would say of him, S. Bernard was accustomed to say to himself very often every day: “Bernard, if you were to die to-day, would you do what you are now going to do? and in what manner would you do it?” He thought only of how God would judge his actions, and not of what the world might say about them.

895. THE OLD MAN'S ANSWER.—A hermit who was very much tormented by temptations against the holy virtue of purity, went to an old man and asked him how he could best overcome them. “There is one way, my child, which can never fail. As soon as these thoughts come before your mind, think of the terrible punishment which God inflicts in hell on those who yield to impurity, and say to yourself: ‘O my soul, if you consent to yield to that temptation, you will have to endure those torments for ever.’” The hermit followed this advice and became a Saint.—*Chisholm*.

896. S. MARTINIAN, M.—A certain holy solitary, named S. Martinian, was one day visited by a wicked woman, named Zoe, who sought to seduce him into sin. When on the very point of yielding to the temptation, he was, by the grace of God, touched with remorse, and his eyes became opened to the precipice, on the brink of which he stood. Whereupon, returning to his cell, he kindled a large fire, and lying down, laid his feet upon it, keeping them there in the midst of the flames until the pain of the burning flesh caused him to cry aloud with anguish. Zoe, hearing the noise, ran to the spot, and found him with his face bathed with tears, and his feet half burnt. “Ah!” exclaimed he, “how shall I be able to support the fire of hell, if I cannot endure this earthly flame, which is, in comparison with it, but an empty shadow?” This generous act on the part of S. Martinian was not only the means of preserving his own soul unstained, but also of converting Zoe, who became from that time a most sincere penitent.—*His Life: Feb. 13*.

897. S. FRANCIS OF ASSISI.—It is related in the life of S. Francis of Assisi, that, when tempted with evil thoughts, he often cast himself into ditches full of ice and snow. On one occasion, being violently assaulted in his cell with impure imaginations, he hastened

to a bed of briars hard by, and casting himself therein, rolled among the thorns, until the fire of concupiscence was extinguished in the blood which streamed from his mangled flesh. The briars were, it is said, at the same moment converted into rose trees, which still flourish, and are shown to the numerous pilgrims who flock to the Church of the Portiuncula at Assisi, where the miracle took place.—*His Life : Oct. 4.*

THE DAILY EXERCISE

898. MASS DISARMS THE DEVIL.—A gentleman in one of the provinces of Germany, having lost the greater part of his fortune, became much depressed, and was tempted to put an end to his life. Fortunately he made known the state of his mind to a prudent confessor, who advised him never to pass a day without hearing Mass. The gentleman accordingly engaged a priest to say Mass for him every morning, and he always assisted at it with great devotion, deriving therefrom both courage and consolation. Now it happened one day that this chaplain went at an early hour to a neighbouring village to assist at the first Mass of a young priest, newly ordained. The gentleman, fearing that he might be deprived of the benefit of the holy Sacrifice, hastened after him, but on his way met with a peasant, who told him that he might as well return home, for that Mass was already over. On hearing this, he was much disturbed and began to shed tears, saying aloud, "Alas! what will become of me? To-day may, perhaps, be the last of my life." The countryman, amazed at seeing his agitation, and being himself careless of God's grace, exclaimed, "Do not be troubled. I have heard the Mass, and if you like, I will give you my share in it in exchange for the cloak which you wear on your shoulders." The gentleman at once accepted the offer, and went on his way much comforted. After visiting the village Church to offer up his prayers before the Blessed Sacrament, he set out on his return home. But what was his horror, on arriving at the spot where the bargain had been struck, at perceiving the body of the peasant, like that of the traitor Judas, suspended from a tree by the neck. In fact, the very same temptation which had troubled his own mind had passed into the soul of the countryman, who, by voluntarily depriving himself of

the grace which he had obtained by hearing Mass, became an easy prey to the tempter.—*Rodriguez.*

899. SERVATUS OF ROME.—There lived in Rome a poor man whose name was Servatus. He was afflicted with paralysis and could not walk, nor even turn his body from one side to the other, nor raise his hand to his mouth. He was carried daily by some charitable persons and laid at the gate of the Church, that he might receive an alms from those who went in and out of that Church. Of the alms that were given him he spent a little for his own support, and the rest he distributed among the pilgrims who came to visit the pious places in the city, many of whom found shelter in his humble home. He was accustomed to spend the entire day in meditation on spiritual things, and by hearing the Word of God read to him he was able to feed his soul with heavenly doctrine, and people who heard him speak were astonished at his great knowledge and the wisdom of his answers. But the principal fruit of his meditations was the high degree of holiness to which he attained. His patience under his heavy afflictions was invincible; he was continually heard thanking God for his infirmities, and was always singing hymns of praise to Him.—*S. Gregory the Great.*

900. THE DIVINE GUEST.—It is related of the Blessed Henry Suso, a holy Dominican friar, that when the hour of meals came round, he was wont to kneel in spirit at the feet of Jesus and beg of Him to come and be his guest and sit at table with him. Then, having taken his seat in the presence of Our Lord, whom he considered as placed opposite to him, he would cast towards Him from time to time a look of love, and holding in his hands the plate containing the portion of food served out to him, would beg of Jesus to bless it and vouchsafe to eat with him. And so likewise, before he took up the cup to drink, he would ask a blessing from Our Lord, and beg of Him to drink before him. It was his custom also to drink but five draughts in honour of the five Sacred Wounds of Jesus: he would likewise often divide his food into four portions, which he would take in honour of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity and of the Immaculate Mother of Jesus. Although particularly fond of fruit, he abstained from it entirely for the space of two years, in order to acquire a perfect victory over his appetite; but at the end of that time, to avoid singularity, he partook of it again, though always with extreme moderation. These pious practices were so pleasing to God, that once appearing, as is said, to a certain devout

person, our Blessed Saviour bade him, if he would learn how to conduct himself at table, to go to His servant Henry and beg of him to instruct him in all his ways.—*Life of Blessed Henry Suso.*

901. THE FRENCH OFFICER.—A French officer, accustomed to say grace at meals, was once advised to omit it, as the other officers only laughed at it. “They are free to eat like animals,” he replied; “for my part, I wish to do it as a Christian.” “Then do it secretly and in your heart.” I am Christian both in body and soul; must we be ashamed to do good?—*Life of Marceau.*

902. THE ANGEL AND THE FOOTSTEPS.—A certain hermit who had retired into the desert to do penance for his sins, was in the habit of going every day to a well at some distance in order to fetch water for his use. The journey was tiresome, but he made it cheerfully, with the intention of pleasing God, and he usually said his prayers as he went along. One very hot day, as he was carrying his can full of water under a broiling sun, the devil suggested to him that it was a very foolish thing to go daily such a distance for the water, when he might, if he pleased, build himself a cell close to the spring. This thought took such possession of his mind that he said to himself, “I declare I will set about it this very day, and not toil and weary myself any longer to no purpose.” While thus speaking, he was surprised to hear a voice behind him, saying, “One, two, three, four,” as if there were someone walking after him and counting his steps. The hermit looked round in astonishment and beheld a lovely youth, clad in a brilliant robe of light, whom he knew at once to be an angel. “Be not astonished,” the stranger said, “I am your Guardian Angel, and I am counting your steps, that not one may pass unrewarded.” With these words the beautiful vision disappeared, and the hermit, giving thanks to God, went on his way with joyful steps, resolved to increase rather than to lessen the distance between his hermitage and the well.—*Lives of the Fathers.*

903. WORDS OF A SAINT.—Jesus Christ one day gave S. Mechtildes a view of the glory of Heaven. And as she was gazing on it in rapture, and wishing that the happy day were come when she also would enjoy the happiness of the Saints, she heard a voice that seemed to come from the immense multitude of the blessed, saying: “O thrice happy you who still live in the world, because it is in your power to increase your glory and your merit for ever. If men did but know how much they might increase their merit every day,

they would never awake in the morning without their hearts being filled with gratitude to God for His goodness in giving them another day in which they might increase their glory for Heaven, their eternal home. This thought alone ought to be sufficient to strengthen them in all their difficulties and trials, and to give them courage to lead a mortified life, since each one of these things is of so much avail for them in eternity."—*Chisholm*.

904. S. ALPHONSUS IN OLD AGE.—S. Alphonsus, when an old man, and after having lived a life of heroic sanctity, had to suffer many terrible temptations. One day when speaking to one of the fathers, he said, "I am eighty-three years of age, and the fire of my youth is not yet extinct." Often was he heard to exclaim: "O my Jesus, grant that I may die rather than yield to temptation. O Mary, if thou dost not assist me, I shall sin even more than Judas did."—*His Life : Aug. 2.*

905. DELAY NOT.—It is related in the life of the holy abbot S. Paul, surnamed the Simple, that one day when the religious were entering the Church, he beheld them all go in with a bright and serene countenance, attended by their Guardian Angels, except one whose countenance was black and gloomy, and who was led by two devils who held him with a bridle, while his good Angel followed at a little distance sad and downcast. The man of God, on seeing this, spent the whole time he was in Church in weeping and praying for this soul which he understood to be in a state of sin. At length, the Office being concluded, they left the Church, and on looking again at the poor sinner he beheld him quite changed—his countenance now bright and beautiful, his good Angel rejoicing, and the devils standing at a distance grieving for having lost their prey. Whereupon the Saint, full of joy, earnestly entreated the monk to make known what had happened to him for the edification of the community. Upon this the religious related, that having unhappily fallen into sin, he had been much moved during the time of Divine Office by hearing the words of the prophet Isaias: "Cease to do perversely, learn to do well, and then if your sins be as scarlet they shall be made as white as snow." So great was the impression thereby produced upon his soul, that he had cast himself in spirit at the feet of our Blessed Lord, sincerely detesting his sin, and imploring His gracious pardon, being fully resolved at the same time to confess his sin as soon as possible and to amend his life. On hearing this recital the good Abbot and the assembled monks returned thanks

to God for the fatherly tenderness with which He is always ready to receive the prodigal son when he returns to Him by true repentance.—*Lives of the Fathers*.

906. S. TERESA AND HOLY WATER.—S. Teresa used to say she knew by experience how powerful holy water is to put the Devil to flight. “I used to drive him away,” she said, “by the sign of the Cross: but, it seems to me, it was only to return again; but when I used holy water also, he no longer dared to return.”—*Her Life: Oct. 15*.

907. THE FORTIETH MARTYR OF SEBASTE.—During the persecution waged against the Church by the Emperor Licinius, at the beginning of the fourth century, a noble band of soldiers, forty in number, refused to join in the idolatrous sacrifices which were to take place in the camp by the Emperor's orders, and declared not only that they were Christians, but that they were ready to die for their faith. Promises and threats having proved of no avail in shaking their resolutions, the judge condemned them to be stripped of their clothes and exposed naked, during a severe frost, upon a frozen pond. As an additional temptation he ordered a fire to be kindled and a warm bath prepared at a little distance, to which they might repair at any time when they were prepared to obey the Emperor's orders. On hearing their sentence, the martyrs ran joyfully to the place of their punishment, and, having undressed themselves, took their stand at once upon the ice. Then, raising their voices to God, they prayed with one accord, “Lord, there are forty of us engaged in this combat, grant that we may be forty crowned, and that not one may be wanting to this sacred number.” As night went on their sufferings became more intense, but they continued to pray fervently, nor did they show any disposition to yield, with the exception of one unhappy man, who, leaving the pond, passed to the bath, which he had no sooner entered than he expired. Meanwhile one of the sentinels suddenly beheld the pond lit up with a heavenly light, and a band of angels descending from above who distributed rich garments and crowns among the generous confessors. He at once understood that the God of the Christians had sent this blessed company to reward the constancy and fidelity of His generous servants. At the same time, he wondered why there were but thirty-nine crowns prepared, whereas the soldiers numbered forty. While thus the sentinel pondered within himself, it was revealed to him that the man who had entered

the bath had forfeited the fortieth crown by his base apostasy, whereupon he was moved by an interior grace, and filled with an ardent desire of gaining it in his stead. He accordingly arose, stripped himself of his garments, and loudly proclaiming himself a Christian, took his place upon the ice amid the band of martyrs. Thus did God hear their prayer, though in a different manner from what they had expected; and when morning came, and the bodies of all alike, both living and dead, were cast upon a burning pile to complete their sacrifice, not one was wanting to complete that glorious company.—*Butler*.

L. D. S.