ÆTHIOPUM SERVUS

M. D. PETRE

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A Study in Christian Altruism

BY

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PROLOGUE.

WE are all familiar with the sight that Hyde Park presents on some Sunday afternoon which has been selected for a mass meeting of the working classes. Through all the gates there enter long streams of men, carrying before them gaily-painted banners, and converging to the different platforms from which the popular speakers are to address their audience. And among those who make up the assembled crowds there is not a greater difference in physiognomy and

expression than there is in their internal opinions and sentiments on the subject for which they are convened.

Some are in earnest, and some are in paly; some have come because they chose, and others because they were told. Some are sickly, half-starved men, who deem it a bitter jest to follow a banner for three or four hours with an empty stomach and weary legs; and they are thinking, as they listen to the highly-coloured speeches, how little the brilliant future that is promised them to-morrow will avail their puny little ones, who are sobbing for their dinner to-day. Others, men of keener mind and more determined will, are swelling with exultation as they contemplate the coming day of well-paid labour and plentiful ease.

Nor is it among the listeners alone that we find this variety of thought and opinion; among the speakers also, on the different platforms, are men of very

opposite views. For it may be that the day of universal manhood suffrage is not far distant, and it behoves those who have made it their constant endeavour to stand well with the "powers that be," to turn their homage in good time to the powers that are to come, and to hail the rising sun lest they be afterwards scorched by his burning rays.

And hence while, among the leaders of this crowded assembly, there are men who, if born in any other age, would still have made the people's cause their own, and fought till death for the suffering and oppressed, there are others who love and revere the people most when extended franchise and organized co-operation have made of them a quantity which cannot be neglected. And, within these two larger divisions, how many lesser distinctions may we note, if, availing ourselves of the privilege of unfettered imagination, we pass through the serried crowds

from one platform to another, and listen in turn to the different speakers. Some will endeavour to move their hearers by reason and argument—others will flood the listening crowd with torrents of passionate invective. Some will appeal to right, others to might. Some will uphold the resistless advantages of brute force and numbers, others will advocate the safer remedies of constitutional co-operation and agitation.

But, after all, this diversity of opinion affects the means rather than the end for which all are come together. There is one point on which speakers and listeners are alike agreed ; one sentiment which is common to the moderate and the extreme, the prudent and the passionate ; one maxim to which they all adhere with a tenacity justified by the consciousness that it embraces the doctrines and aspirations of their entire cause.

And this principle, which unconsciously sways the words and actions of such a varied body of men, is "that they who mourn are *not* blessed"; that suffering and poverty of whatever kind are a curse; and that, if it is not possible absolutely to conquer the fate which condemns one class of society to suffer a certain amount of physical privation and discomfort, the only object that remains is to devote the entire life to passionate unceasing resistance.

What were the words which we heard, but a short time ago, from the lips of a well-known advocate of working-men's rights? He said that the "Labour Christ" was being crucified on the cross of machinery and inventive power, between the two modern thieves landlordism and capitalism; and that the "eight hour day" was the pincers which should "pull the nails out of his hands and feet, take his

cross down, break it in pieces, bind up his wounds and send him away." [1]

The parallel is not perfect; for the true Christ chose to remain on His Cross, though He was invited to descend; and the "Labour Christ," it would appear, is only awaiting the arrival of the pincers to free himself from so ignominious and painful a position. But both are acting according to their own teaching. The true Christ, the Divine Christ, had said once, and more than once: "Blessed are they who mourn; blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice sake"; and, having said this, was He not bound to give us an example that we might follow, and be true to the cross which He had Himself chosen and accepted?

But not so with this new Labour Christ! He never said that it was blessed to mourn and to suffer, nor did he take up his own

[1] Mr. John Burns. *Daily Chronicle*, May 8th, 1893.

cross, but was unwillingly attached to it. Hence what wonder that he should yearn for the moment of release, and long to escape from what he regards as futile misery and disgrace ?

. . . .

And now, having satiated ourselves with this spectacle of modern agitation, let us change the place and time, and imagine ourselves present at a very different scene, nearly three hundred years ago. We are at a port on the north coast of South America; Carthagena is its name. It was in those days rich and prosperous, for it possessed a large traffic in a commodity which we shall presently describe. It had an unequalled harbour, and many fine buildings ; it was surrounded by beautiful and fertile country, and the climate, though exceedingly hot and trying, was not, on the whole, injurious to inhabitants. In fact, notwithstanding

previous reverses, it was a great and important town, one of the chief centres of Spanish colonization.

But, in the scene which we are about to contemplate, prosperity plays no part; and, on that spot of the shore where we have taken our stand, the spectacle is one, not of poverty, but of utter destitution; not of mere suffering, but of downright misery and despair. A ship is at anchor in the harbour, and is just about to discharge its huge living cargo; not cattle, but human slaves.

In Hyde Park we beheld certainly numbers of squalid, half-clothed individuals; some faces were stamped with hunger, others, alas! bore the impression of that brutality and vice which are partly due to years and generations of want and misery. But, on the other hand, many, and indeed most, were by no means characterized by these marks of destitu-

tion. Some looked well dressed and better fed; our general impression was that these men had perhaps their grievances; that they wanted, in some cases, much; but that all still possessed enough to make life, even for itself, desirable.

"Look on that picture and on this!" What do we see? These poor creatures have just arrived from a long journey, during which they have been huddled together, we will not say like cattle, for no prosperous farmer would care to stow his beasts in such a fashion. They have been literally wedged into the smallest compass possible, without regard to health, decency or comfort. Some have contracted offensive diseases during the voyage, but they have not been removed from among their companions, to whom they have consequently been all the time sources of infection and disgust. Some have died during the crossing; others have only

lived to reach the shore. And the rest, who, unfortunately for some of them, have not been delivered from the burden of a miserable existence, have arrived in such a condition of disease and exhaustion that one wonders how it was worth while to bring them, and why, even on motives of economy, they were not tended with more regard to future profit.

But the mercantile spirit has in it sometimes more of passion than calculation, and the devouring greed of the slave-traders seems to have driven them to a waste and prodigality of human life which even motives of mere selfish prudence should have forbidden.

Be that as it may, their victims have now reached their destination, and stand crowded together in such a state of squalid and revolting wretchedness as has seldom been equalled and never surpassed.

This is the audience of our second picture, and now let us glance at the speaker.

We behold a man still young and vigorous, though pale and worn and emaciated. His features are of the severe Spanish type, but what rivets our attention in his face are the full, dark, sad eyes, which seem to have gazed on suffering and sin until they are filled with a settled expression of pity and reproach. Those eyes are full of compassion, but not compassion alone, for there is in them the look of a man who has not only wept over the sorrow he has beheld, but has likewise fought and grappled with it; he has not only pitied, he has also rebuked.

And now let us hear the words that he addresses to the crowded audience before him. Surely if ever agitator had an occasion for eloquent invective he has it now. The unfortunate beings, who listen

half stupidly to his words, have been torn from home, wife and family; they are starved and degraded and trodden down to the very dust. And remember that for them there is possible no such thing as constitutional agitation. The condition in which they find themselves is due, in most cases, to the most flagrant and arbitrary injustice; they have been brought to a strange land with no title to protection save that conferred by the laws of a country which they regard as their powerful and implacable oppressor; those laws may be, and indeed are, enlightened and humane on many points, but are not sufficient for the needs of the case, and are frequently over-ridden by rapacity and violence. Surely in this case, if in any, they might be urged to place all their hopes in their brute force and numbers, and to seize by might that which they could never hope to obtain by right.

Or, if such an attempt could only end in hopeless disaster, and in misery greater even than they had known before, they would be dissuaded from it by motives of expediency alone, and would be counselled to husband their forces for a more hopeful venture at some future date.

What did we hear in Hyde Park? Hints as to the strength of numbers ; the advisability of seizing what would not otherwise be conceded ; the necessity of co-operation, and the duty of insisting on grievances until they were rectified. And this to men who, poor as they might be, knew something of the joys and pleasures of life, and earned sufficient for a decent shelter and a scanty meal. Here, on the contrary, are men who have been robbed of all which can make life desirable, of liberty and possessions, home and family. If such words as we have just noted could be addressed to the former, what may not

be said to the latter by a warm-hearted man, capable of appreciating their sufferings, and devoted to their service for ever ?

At length, after first attending to their physical comfort, and giving them some little presents of fruit and sweet waters, the slave of the negroes opens his lips ; let us listen to the torrent of hot and indignant sympathy which will surely pour forth at the sight before him.

He speaks. His words are indeed full and deep, and so earnest as to be almost passionate in their warmth ; but how widely different from what we had looked for and expected ! We thought to have our sentiments of compassion kindled into very flames of indignation ; we thought to see the degraded wretches before us roused to a new and overwhelming sense of their wrongs and injuries. But instead of all this, he chills our enthusiasm and disappoints our hopes, he confounds us

with the contrast between the expectations we had cherished, and the fulfilment they receive. For his words are indeed a distant and powerful echo of those words which electrified the listening crowd more than eighteen hundred years ago, and which have been, ever since, a byword of hatred and scorn to one half of the world, and a motto of hope and consolation to the other; of those words which seem to contradict the first instincts of humanity: "Blessed are they who mourn!"

According to the principles of certain modern philanthropists, it is downright inhumanity to speak of spiritual comfort to those who are crushed with earthly misery; it is mockery to ask them to care for their souls until help has been provided for their bodies. The exercise of religion demands a body at ease, and a mind free from gnawing worldly cares.

"No one who clears his mind of illu-

sions can deny that physical health is the basis of moral and mental health, and that all talk of improvement for the masses is the cruellest hypocrisy until their material condition is altered." (Champion, from Arnold White's "Problems of a Great City.")

What would this advocate of the people have said to that other philanthropist on the shores of Carthagena? We have seen that the squalid and hopeless wretchedness of the negro slaves was far beyond anything we can behold in this century. Their bodies are starved and diseased, and their minds are filled with the most poignant terror and despair. And, further than this, the religion about which their teacher is to speak to them is that of their conquerors and oppressors, rendered hateful to some for that reason alone. And yet he has courage for the task before him; and, although he is

not able to remove in an instant the hideous abuses that meet his eyes, it still seems not to him the "cruellest hypocrisy" to speak of hopes beyond the grave to those who have none on this side of it; to speak of the glory of the soul to those whose bodies are debased by excessive privation and labour; to speak of the love of an invisible Father to those whose backs are sore and bleeding from the cruel lash of an earthly master; to strengthen those who are suffering in a cause which is not their own by the memory of the torments and agony of One who had "borne their iniquities and carried their sorrows"—who had been "wounded for their iniquities and bruised for their sins."

And so he who had proudly styled himself "the slave of the slaves for ever," proceeds to tell them that they have reason for joy instead of sorrow; that

though they endure bodily captivity, it will be to them the means of obtaining that spiritual liberty which they could never have possessed in their own country; that their sufferings may be great, but that they are not even as much as they deserve, and that they are but as a drop compared with the ocean of sorrow which was the price of their own souls. And then he speaks to them of sin, of that foul plague which had marred a beautiful creation; of that hideous cancer, more loathsome than all their sores and disease. He tells them that suffering is related to sin as medicine is related to sickness and that the law of sorrow is a necessary consequence of the reign of evil and vice.

Nor does he spare them, and say that, as to them, their sins are the result of their circumstances, and not their malice; and that their ignorance and misfortunes exempt them from all responsibility and

blame. On the contrary, with a severity which, in our days, would be termed downright inhumanity, he endeavours to arouse in them a sense of personal guilt. Hitherto they have wept for the loss of their home and their liberty, but now he would have them grieve, and mourn, and strike their breasts for the loss of a better land and a happier state. To him sin is sin, and guilt is guilt, and conscience can speak in the midst of sorrow as well as joy. He is not gifted with that fine modern susceptibility which makes us so realize the strength of temptation as to deny the power of free will. He can reckon their disadvantages, and make allowance for their circumstances, but he still holds that while they are men, they are responsible; and that, in even the worst condition of life, there is still a way that leads right and a way that leads wrong.

Did the unhappy slaves turn with bitterness from their instructor; and murmur to themselves that it was well for him to speak of the soul who was treated as though he possessed one; and that they would believe in future hopes when they had tasted a little present happiness, and trust in the love of an unseen God when they were freed from the brutal oppression of a savage earthly master? This is the answer we should now expect on a like occasion; but it seems to have been far from the minds of the benighted creatures before us, for they press more and more closely round the feet of their teacher, they listen greedily to every word that comes from his lips, and, the following day, they hail his return with child-like joy and exultation.

Some of us may have observed the extraordinary power of influence possessed by men who take a high view of those

with whom they come in contact. It seems as though human nature instantly responded to trust, and a man became noble and generous so soon as his neighbour believed him to be so. Did this apostle owe some of his power to his faith in the souls he was addressing; and was he, perhaps, able to win them to far higher sentiments than we should have deemed possible because he held so high an estimate of their capacities; so that, after all, old-fashioned charity had more reverence for its subjects than modern benevolence?

This may have been partly the secret of his success, but this alone could not account for it. Only in the whole of his mental attitude towards sorrow and pain can we find a sufficient explanation of the effects he wrought. He was dealing with suffering in great part hopeless and incurable. In future ages there might be

some redress for the grievances before him, but at present there was little or none. Had he then regarded earthly happiness as the one aim to be attained, poverty and pain as the one evil to be avoided, how could he have met the sorrowful gaze of his suffering flock? Would it not, indeed, have been, as Mr. Champion asserts, the "cruellest hypocrisy" to preach religion to beings so utterly destitute and degraded?

But he did not labour under this difficulty. He lived in an age when there were no idealistic projects of banishing sorrow from the face of the earth. Those who laboured to improve the condition of the poor had, themselves, requently chosen poverty as a state and profession; those who devoted their lives to feeding the hungry were, themselves, emaciated with fasting; those who poured forth their substance to clothe the naked

were, themselves, swathed in hair shirts and chains.

Men like Peter Claver had prepared during long years for the ministry they were to exercise, by the practice of penance and self-abnegation. They had learned to regard suffering as an important part of the Divine Plan; they had been formed for their mission by the contemplation of the Model of all sufferers. To be without all suffering was to them a state, not only impossible, but even undesirable.

St. Francis of Assisi bestowed his rich clothes on a beggar; he gave all he had for the relief of the needy; but he likewise spoke of poverty as his Lady and queen, and founded a society for its continual profession.

Modern philanthropy has for its one aim to remove the load; Christian charity seeks rather to sweeten it, at the same

time that it strengthens the bearer. The former would efface all obligations that weary and oppress; it would strike the burden from the back, and bid the emancipated enjoy the delights of ease and independence. The latter, on the contrary, would lessen the load, and comfort the bearer, but it would likewise add a burden to a burden, and a yoke to a yoke; in the faith that the first burden will become light when coupled with the second, and that the bitterness of the one yoke will be fused into the sweetness of the other.

We have here contrasted the Christian saint with the modern agitator. We have been told that the "Labour Christ" is to be freed from his cross; and we have learned that the true Christ preferred to remain on it. The followers must resemble their head, and hence we behold two widely different systems, both supported by men who make it their one

object to help their fellow-beings, but who have such different theories respecting the evils to be removed and the benefits to be gained, that it is sometimes hard to believe in any identity of end. The agitator is but a single type among the many which modern philanthropy offers. But, as regards the subject of suffering, he is at one with the greater number of his class; and, in the beatitude of the mourners we have the keynote of that difference between Christian charity and modern philanthropy which is to be further developed in the character of one lofty example of his kind.

CHAPTER I.

"TO BE A SAINT, AND A GREAT SAINT, AND TO SAVE MANY SOULS."

WE are standing before a large, solemn-looking building in the town of Tarragona in Spain; it is the middle of the summer of the year 1602. A young man, dressed in a poor travelling garb, approaches, and, knocking at the door, is admitted. The house is the Jesuit novitiate in the province of Aragon, and the young man is Peter Claver, then twenty-two years of age. He was born at Verdu, in the year 1580; and, being destined for the priesthood, was sent to Barcelona in 1596 to pass through the ordinary course of

studies. But he had been there moved by new desires, had renounced the prospect of ecclesiastical dignities, and asked to be received into the Society of Jesus, which was then already considerably extended. And now he had just arrived at their novitiate house, and was about to make the first step in his new career.

This is certainly a strange opening for the life of a philanthropist! We cannot help wondering, as we see him stand on the threshold of his new abode, whether he has yet any dim conception of his future work; whether he is yet conscious of those altruistic desires which are to shape all his future existence; and, if so, why he chooses a life such as that on which he is about to enter?

That he had no defined plan or conception of the labour to which he was afterwards to be devoted is more than probable, from the absence of all proof or

record to the contrary. But, if he had no formed designs, we cannot, therefore, doubt that there was already stirring in his heart that intense love for the suffering and abandoned which was afterwards to assume such heroic proportions. In his own words he desired, by entering religious life, "to become a saint and a great saint, and to save many souls." He desired to become holy himself, and to render many others holy also. That which he regarded as the greatest blessing for himself, he desired to obtain for others likewise; and he yearned to relieve those who were laden with what he himself regarded as the heaviest of burdens and the bitterest of afflictions.

To some it may appear, at the outset, that holiness is not the first thing which they would covet either for themselves or for others in a world full of so much temporal misery and destitution. But

this is not the place in which to enter on such a discussion. To the man absorbed by intellectual pursuits his altruistic ambition, if he have any, will be for the advance of general knowledge and cultivation; the man full of social and political aims will desire chiefly for others that ideal state and community which is the cherished object of his own longings. What Peter Claver himself regarded as the highest end attainable was what he intended likewise to propose to others. So far he differed in no way from all other philanthropists. What concerns us here is not so much the object of the two wishes as their order; for here is the point on which he was essentially distinct from the modern type. His ambition for others was grounded on his aspirations for self; the work done for others was to be preceded by laborious efforts for his own soul.

Had Claver considered only the second point of his ambition, we should not have beheld him standing before the novitiate house of Tarragona. Had he been altruistic in the manner of our contemporaries, we should not have found him prepared to give up years of youth and vigour to the training and cultivation of self. He might have been willing, certainly, to enter as an apprentice under those who had greater experience than himself of the ways of assisting the suffering and oppressed. But he did more than this. He spent long years in preparation with a view mainly to his own spiritual growth and advantage. During the period of his novitiate and training there was no word of the work which he was to do, nor the way in which he was to do it. For a considerable space of time his own soul was to be the field of his labours, and we may even say that, had he been told

that these years were to be his last, and that they were never to bear visible fruit in the lives of his fellow-beings, he would probably not have changed his plan of action, nor plunged any sooner into works of zeal and charity.

But modern altruism has no word of approval for such conduct. There reigns now a passion of disinterestedness, which engulfs all thought for self in ceaseless effort for the good of others. There prevails among the philanthropists of our day a rich generosity, an entire devotedness, which must always ennoble and beautify their labours. But they are too apt to forget that, all said and done, we cannot give to others what we do not ourselves possess, and that neglect of self is sometimes an injury to those whom we desire to serve.

This wisdom is now too easily forgotten. We care too much for the interests of our

neighbour to trouble about our own growth and sanctification. And hence we behold men, who are themselves in spiritual rags and destitution, hurrying about the world to help others whose state is not so pitiable as their own. We see men without happiness and, what is worse, without hope, striving to comfort the sorrowful; men who are devoured with gnawing questions and uncertainty, setting themselves to counsel the doubtful; men who have neglected that primary maxim, "Nosce teipsum," who have forgotten to echo the cry of the great Augustine: "Noverim me, noverim Te," and are ignorant of all that it most behoves them to know, setting themselves to instruct others whose darkness is sometimes less deep than their own.

Stranger still, we see that, in these days, the very fact that men have lost hope of obtaining any genuine peace or happiness

for themselves, seems to induce them to devote their lives to seeking it for others. Their convictions have not borne the strain of modern doubts and discussion, their confidence in that which was to them the end and aim of existence is shaken and destroyed; the best and fairest has faded from their sight, and there remains only the dull twilight of departed day. Taken at its best, this world can hardly make up to them for the loss of that other and better one which they had hoped for; whither then can they turn? Paradoxical as it may appear, these very men, who have lost faith in the existence of the highest joy, make a profession of seeking happiness for others. Their own wounds are open and bleeding, but they will bind up those of their neighbour. Their own steps are weak and uncertain, but they will support their faltering brethren. Happiness has become to them a distant dream, but

they seem to think that it will, by passing from one to another, attain the consistency of a substance. They must, if they cannot be happy themselves, rejoice at least that others are so.

Some, who have not had the opportunity of observing closely the conduct and motives of this class of men, may rashly assert that they are not seriously in earnest; that nobody, who really doubted in what happiness consisted, could make an end and profession of procuring it for others. But this would be a grave mistake. These men are in earnest; it is sufficiently evinced by the toils and sufferings they endure in their cause. But it is possible to be quite as earnest over a tournament as a battle; the difference between sportive and real contest is not in the earnestness of the combatants, but in the object for which they combat. And so, as it seems to us, these men are so intent

on the struggle before them, they are so absorbed in the difficulties of their undertaking, that their game becomes earnest, and they forget that they are striving to bestow on others a gift of whose nature they are ignorant, and whose very existence they sometimes doubt.

We see, then, that this question of personal sanctification involves another, which is important even on purely altruistic grounds. It is possible to work for what we consider to be the good of others, without meeting the question in what true happiness consists ; but we cannot do so in our own case. He who labours to improve others may become absorbed in the means to be employed ; but he whose work lies within his own immediate experience must face the results likewise. And so it comes about that the work of self-cultivation is an important preparation for a philanthropical career, in so far as we thus learn

the nature of a true benefit before adopting the profession of benefactor. This profession is a very solemn and sacred one, and as we should not praise a man who, in his eagerness to alleviate the sufferings of his fellow beings, set himself to practise medicine before he had taken the pains to acquire its true principles, so neither should we admire those who are hurrying half over the world to do good to their neighbours before they rightly know in what true good consists.

How many, who have toiled laboriously in after years to undo the work of their youth, might have been spared their pains if they had bestowed twelve months on the conquest and discipline of self, before they devoted themselves to unskilful experiments on others. They would have learned during that time many truths which cannot be acquired in the midst of a busy career of charitable zeal, and those truths would

have guided them often amidst the difficulties which beset such a life. They would have known better when to yield, and when to resist; when to compassionate, and when to rebuke.

The passion of pity is strong in these days, and almost universal. Pity for the suffering, pity for the criminal; pity for the victims of the sins of others, pity for those who are paying the just penalties of their own delinquencies; pity for those oppressed by unjust laws, pity for those unwillingly subjected to wise ones; pity for the honest working-man crushed by continual illness and misfortune; pity, tenderer still, for the besotted victim of self-indulgence and intemperance, who is paying the long account of his own vices by poverty and starvation; pity for the helpless babe, the innocent child, the ill-used wife and mother; and pity, louder and yet more clamorous, for the brute beast,

for the horse, the dog and the cat, whose sufferings matched with ours are "as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine."

It is to be feared that this intense development of the sympathetic temperament may lead to very disastrous results. A pity which confounds the deserving with the undeserving, and which struggles in hot haste to remove indiscriminately the suffering that is inevitable together with the grievances which have no right to exist, may work itself out to an extreme which will induce a reaction. One of two things may come to pass. For either it may happen that those who have broken their backs over an impossible task will turn with disgust from everything connected with it; or else those whom they have endeavoured to assist will turn from their would-be benefactors, when they find that they have been nourishing them on illusory hopes.

Now is it not possible that these excesses might have been avoided by a preliminary stage of self-discipline and training? After all, be we never so altruistic, self is our closest companion, and from self we must take our start. According to the manner of our love for self, will be the manner of our love for others; and hence if our love for self be too largely composed of self-pity and self-indulgence, so also will be our love for others.

In the course of such a training as Peter Claver was now about to undergo, he would learn all that is to be gained by courage and endurance. He would experience the advantages of certain kinds of suffering, and he would correct many delusions of cowardice and self-love. This is what so many have needed as a preparation for rendering true and not deceitful service to mankind. Because

they have omitted it, they have not been strong enough to resist a popular cry. It is true that they love their neighbour, and that they would not give him a stone when he asks for bread, nor a scorpion when he asks for an egg. But there is a law of charity higher than this; it is that which commands us to give bread to him who asks for a stone, and an egg to him who clamours for a scorpion. This is the God-like rule of charity, which is too often neglected by those who imitate the example of an over-fond and foolish mother, who will appease her weeping infant with the gift of a knife, or the promise of the moon.

Had Peter Claver gone out to his people fresh from a life of ease and independence, his method of treatment and action would probably have been very different from what it eventually became. But during his novitiate and religious training his

views concerning life and happiness were moulded in a way that proportionately influenced his charity for others. In these days we have examples of men sharing the lives of the poor in order to sympathize with their sufferings. But Claver aimed at more than this. By submitting to a life of privation and entire subjection, he learned indeed to compassionate the destitution and oppression of his future flock; but by his voluntary choice and acceptance of this lot, he learned also the secret that the true cure for many ills lies not in flight but in endurance. From severity towards self he acquired a wholesome firmness in his dealings with others, and he avoided the fault of some of our contemporaries, who, in their anxiety to deliver others from an outward evil, too often end by infecting them with their own internal disease, that abject, devouring horror of pain, which is at once the

characteristic and the poison of our times. And thus, while, hundreds of miles away, his future little ones are experiencing, with bitter hearts and angry spirits, the misery and degradation of slavery as it was exercised in those days, in Europe their future apostle is voluntarily subjecting himself to another form of slavery, truly a different one in many respects, but, in some ways, more complete than their own. They are deprived of their rights of property, so is he; they have forfeited the freedom of action, so has he; their toil is for another's profit, their domestic life is checked and limited, but he is likewise pledged to devote his time and energy to works that will be appointed him by others, while, as regards domestic life, he has absolutely renounced and abandoned it for ever. Nay, more than this, the slave, especially under Spanish rule, might hope for future emancipation and freedom; Claver

is about to deny himself the right even to desire it. True it is that his own state was voluntarily chosen and assumed, whereas that of the negroes was arbitrarily forced upon them. But though his bonds were, in the first instance, self-imposed, none the less tightly did they afterwards secure him. We shall see him then hereafter prepared, indeed, to weep with those who wept, to comfort those who mourned, to soften their lot, and relieve their misery as far as it lay in his power to do so. But we shall perceive likewise how his previous training influenced his mode of action, and made him a very different teacher from what he would otherwise have been.

CHAPTER II.

"IF THOU WILT BE PERFECT."

THERE are but few events to record during the next two years of the life of Peter Claver. He entered the novitiate in the August of 1602, and remained there over two years, making his vows in the year 1604. It would be a vain task to catalogue his words and actions during this period. To those who care something for the life he is about to follow, it would be, though admirable, yet monotonous; to those who know it only by exterior observation and criticism, our description would be simply wearisome and repellent. We should see him engaged in a constantly recurring

round of apparently insignificant duties. We should see him perform frequent acts of obedience and mortification; we should see him labour and pray in common with others, perhaps more perfectly, but still in the same manner. The picture presented might fill some with admiration for the life of an unusually holy Jesuit novice; but it would produce in many others a feeling of nausea and weariness at the sight of an existence so devoid, in their eyes, of individuality and personal initiative. For, as the fallen angel said,—

> "Who would lose,
> Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
> Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
> To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
> In the wide womb of uncreated night?"

Our own personality is dear to us, there is something terrible in the mere thought of losing our individuality; better, in the eyes of some, is spontaneity in crime than the dull level of common virtue.

But here, in the opinion of such, are men doing their best to stifle that originality which is the possession, in a greater or less degree, of almost every human intellect; who are rolling out living minds and hearts into lifeless though accurate machines; who are lopping from the tree of life those natural instincts which are its most beautiful fruit. Such an idea of sacrifice seems akin to that of the Eastern pagans, who cast themselves in front of their god Juggernaut, thinking to please him best by the wanton destruction of life and limb.

To many the sacrifice of religious life, though more spiritual and less revolting, will seem not less wanton and fanatical. The Religious, they maintain, preserves his limbs intact, and lives as long as God allows him; but he cramps his soul instead of destroying his body, and crushes his faculties instead of mutilating his limbs.

It is good, these men will say, to check the waves of unregulated passion, but it is bad to extinguish the most sacred instincts of the human heart; it is good to submit our freedom to the Eternal Law of God, but it is bad to forge our own chains as though it were better to be a slave than free.

The bare suggestion of these difficulties will show us how useless it would be to describe the mere outward life of Peter Claver during the period of his religious training; it would edify those who were disposed to be edified; it would weary those who were not. We must then do more than open the wooden door of the material building, we must raise the inner curtain which veils the spirit and motives of religious life. We must see why men adopt it, rather than what they do when they have adopted it; the motive will explain the life, which appears without it barren and aimless.

We find then that, from the beginning of Christianity, this life has existed in some shape or form, and has been embraced by the greatest variety of men and women. Some have sought it as a refuge from a world which might have proved too sweet; some as an expiation for a life of crime and indulgence. But others again, such as the man before us, have sought it neither as a safeguard nor a punishment; not stained by the evil of the world, but full of high ambition and holy aspirations, they have still found in this mode of life the best means of attaining the end they had in view. These are the vocations which will appear to many the most mysterious and contradictory. For though a monastery may be well enough as a refuge for those who are weak, or an asylum for those who are wounded, it is hard to perceive what advantage it can possess for those who

have the will and the power to do well.

And yet, on the whole, it is with these that it is mostly filled. Men who could have done much in the world have thought to do more under the yoke of religious life. Men like Francis Borgia have sacrificed the worldly independence and influence, of which they had made so excellent a use, for the sake of poverty and obedience; men like the great philanthropist Las Casas have not feared to commit the destiny of their future work to the judgment of fallible men whom they had chosen as their masters. Were they deluded fanatics, like the victims of the Indian Juggernaut? or were they inspired by a cowardly desire to escape from all responsibility and care? If not, why did they deliberately choose a condition so abject and slavish?

They would answer by relating the

history of what took place a great many years ago. There was a young man, upright and innocent, who had obeyed faithfully the law of God and man. He did not fear the temptations of the world, for he had passed through them unscathed, even during the fervour of youth and strength. He had doubtless assisted many poor in their distress, and was both willing and able to do it again. But his heart was full of restless and hungry aspirations. He knew that virtue hitherto had cost him but little, there had been nothing of heroism in his goodness. He had given from his abundance; he had sacrificed nothing which was dear to him. Something within him said that he could do more, he was possessed with the unsatisfied longing of generous souls. But he knew not what it was that was asked of him, all was dim and undefined. He went, in his uncertainty, to One Who could

guide him, Who could clear up the desires of his own heart, and tell him how he should follow them. And the answer he received was, "If thou wilt be perfect," that is to say, if you have a true and genuine desire for a virtue greater and more heroic than you have yet attained; "go sell what thou hast," free yourself from outward impediments, from all that can bind your affections to earthly and material joys; "and come and follow Me," give your whole self to My absolute service, walk in My steps, listen to My voice, yield all your inclinations to the least expression of My will, labour for My ends, abandon yourself entirely to My direction.

The young man turned away sorrowing, but others have heard the same call, and have not imitated his example. And it is these who have embraced religious life in the spirit of most perfect donation. Their sacrifice is not wanton,

for they give themselves up to be used and not destroyed; in the words of Montalembert, "se dompter d'abord, puis se dévouer, c'était là le fond de l'institut monastique;" they conquer themselves in order to become the more devoted servants of another.

And for their gifts, with that earnest, living faith which should be the characteristic of all Religious, they yield them up to Him Who knows best how to use them. In the words of the Apostle they say, "I know Whom I have believed, and I am certain that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him." They become thus the slaves of God's Providence; they have received all, they will give all. They commit to the direction of this Divine Providence the care of self, and, what is a yet greater test of confidence, the care of others also. For, to take the very instance before us,

we have already seen that Peter Claver was ambitious for others as well as himself. He had a great desire to devote himself to the saving of souls, and he cannot enter the monastery of Tarragona unless he be prepared to submit this desire to the direction of another will. And we shall see him later, in the full tide of his Apostolic labours, still practising the entire obedience of a Jesuit novice; prepared to sacrifice at the call of superiors even what may seem to him the essential interests of his little flock. And if asked why he risked the welfare of others for what might be the mistaken view of another man, he would have answered simply that he did not risk it. His love for his blacks, strong as it certainly was, did not cause him to take the curious view of some, who think that, because they love their fellow-creatures so much, the God Who made them cannot love them at all.

His was the spirit, rather, depicted in Browning's beautiful lines :—

"Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimat gift,
That I doubt His own love can compete with it? Here the parts shift?
Here the *creature surpass* the Creator,—the *end what began?*
Would I fain in my impotent yearning do all for this man,
And dare doubt He alone shall not help him, Who yet alone can?"

. . . .

If I wish them so much good, if I give my life and toil for their sakes, what will He not do for them Who has counted every hair of their heads, Who hears their every groan, and is waiting and longing to forgive their every sin? I have indeed delivered myself up for their service, but before I became their slave I made myself the slave of Him Who died for them. I swore to work under His guidance, to appoint my labours according to His Will. If, then, the rulings of

Providence come athwart my plans, shall I dare to measure my love against His, and to think that His creatures will suffer because I obey His Will? What after all is the part of an individual in such a work as this? I may devote my life to the negroes, but only God can save them in the end.

He who is deeply imbued with the supernatural believes that the same thing may be accomplished in many different ways; the end is not necessarily lost because the means have failed. And in the Gospels, which furnish the model of all religious life, there is nothing more marked than the spirit of submission to Divine rulings, which seemed at the time contrary to the general good. To stand silent, when a single word might transform the hearts of a multitude, is utterly inexplicable according to human wisdom. But supernatural work can only be accomplished by super-

natural means, and thus silence may sometimes do that which no words can effect. In the world there are as many opinions as men, and it is hard to calculate the final result of any line of conduct. In many cases a good which is visible and immediate may be followed by a harm which is lasting though at first imperceptible. What wonder, then, that some, seeing the strange outcome of many actions which seemed at first to portend so much good, have mistrusted their own wisdom, and chosen to be guided by the direction of a Higher Will.

But it may be asked here what grounds they have for supposing that they are following the direction of a Higher Will. To all outward appearance they are subject to a man as weak and fallible as themselves; why should they claim for a master whom they have voluntarily chosen, that he is the representative of God? With regard

to civil and natural authority the case is different, for we find ourselves born into a state of greater or less subjection, from which we could not escape even if we would.

The Religious would answer that the belief he holds in this respect is in accordance with the rest of his faith. He believes in the existence of a real living system of Divine government; in a spiritual Church from which all spiritual authority derives. "He who hears you hears Me;" it is in virtue of this delegated authority that superiors govern and subjects obey. And according to this doctrine religious obedience becomes a voluntary extension of the submission owing to the "powers that be"; it is a means offered to those who desire a more complete subjection to the Will of their Maker. To them God has promised guidance in small things as well as great; in counsels as well as commandments.

It is a characteristic of the monastic life that it has, in almost all ages, been specially opposed on some one point, to the reigning opinions of the day. Thus in times when war was considered the only profession worthy of a man, Religious proclaimed their independence of this principle by the deliberate adoption of a life of study and peaceful occupation. Much of their work was despised at the time they accomplished it, but it has survived to render succeeding generations their debtors for that without which civilization might still be in its cradle. In days when it was considered the chief prerogative of a man to abandon himself to the wild impulses of passion, cells and monasteries rose up in desert places, where the tumult of the world could not penetrate, and where silence and mortification were the guardians of chaste hearts and holy thoughts.

But now we have learned to value the blessings of peace, and the wild days are past in which the desert and the convent wall were the only protection for the weak and helpless. But, true to their past, the religious houses and monasteries now find themselves opposed on other points to the prevailing temper of the day. That their inmates are studious and peaceful is no longer a ground of offence; but there is a guiding principle in their lives which makes them as distasteful to their contemporaries as did their gentle avocations in the age when every man was a soldier. For we are living in days when every kind of obligation has grown burdensome; when objective law and government have become so distasteful that even the criminal will find those who excuse him for following his private inclinations; when dogma is hated because it demands submission on the part of the intellect,

and commandments because they exact obedience from the will. The idea of loyalty, in the sense of submission to a governor as such, is becoming effaced. To do what you do not like, or even what you like, because you are told to do it, is regarded as an effete superstition. We govern ourselves, holding the reins that guide our rulers; and we commit ourselves to nothing so irrevocably as not to possess a possible outlet in case we should desire it. Better to be moved by every wind of passion and caprice; to change our government every month, and our principles every week; to indulge each momentary freak whatever may be its future effects; than to be restrained for an instant by the will of another from following the bent of our own. To be free means now to have our lives absolutely at our own disposal; to have the power of changing home, friends, duties

and occupations just as often and as much as we please. Thousands prefer to squander their whole lives in a variety of new attempts rather than bind themselves to persevere for a day in a line of life which they find burdensome and distasteful.

With Religious the very opposite maxims prevail; obligation is the pith and marrow of their lives. Their name signifies "to be bound again," and they adopt a mode of life which binds them even where other laws do not extend, and demands submission of will and judgment in all the actions of life. Imitating the deeds of bold generals in the past, they burn their ships to cut off retreat; they bind themselves by irrevocable vows to persevere in the course they have undertaken, whatever may be its future trials and dangers.

We have already seen that they do not

claim to justify their action, and offer a complete apology for their conduct, on purely natural grounds. They are guided by principles not common to the world at large. They look on themselves, not as the craven subjects of man, but as the willing slaves of God. But it is, nevertheless, frequently their task to be likewise the guardians of truths in the natural order, which are in danger of perishing amidst the unreasoning prejudices of a particular age. And as they were thus the preservers of learning in days when ignorance was so rife that men were not even ashamed of their condition, so it may be now their part to uphold the defence of obedience and obligation in an age so enamoured of freedom that it is blind to the vacillation and instability which are the consequence of too complete emancipation. Change is the order of the day, but it is not by continual change that

great things are done. It is the determined adherence to a cause which calls forth deeds of bravery and heroism, for why should anyone make an irrevocable sacrifice for an uncertain end? The great works of the world are not accomplished by its free lances; and we attain to higher results under the influence of the imperative *must*, than of the conditional *may*.

Only when this entire freedom from the sense of obligation has worked itself out in a future age, shall we perceive its inherent weakness and evil. When complete liberty from objective law has weakened the force of contracts, has destroyed the rights of property, has dissolved the marriage tie, has shattered the relations between parent and child, has broken down the barriers between crime and order, we shall know what discipline and duty did for mankind. We

shall find that it is sometimes better to be restricted by rule, than to be whirled about and scattered by every breath of fancy and caprice. We shall see that men become more manly by bravely complying with the law of necessity than by freeing themselves from every irksome obligation. Furthermore, we shall remember then what is sometimes forgotten now, viz.: that the extent of duty and obligation is in proportion to the elevation of the moral nature, that more is expected of a civilized man than of a savage, of a saint than of a sinner; and that the highest are those from whom the most is demanded.

Probably when that day arrives religious life will already find itself in opposition to the reigning opinions on some other point; meanwhile it exists as the model of what can be accomplished by those who live under a system of stringent obligation and renounce their lawful goods

and liberty in days when many think it a tyranny to be denied the goods of others, and prefer to change their direction every hour rather than persevere for an instant under compulsion.

CHAPTER III.

"THE GOING FORTH."

AFTER completing his novitiate at Tarragona, Peter Claver spent a year at Gerona in classical studies, and was then sent for his philosophy to the College of Montesion in Majorca. This period marks an epoch in his life; for it was here that he met his greatest friend and teacher; the master at whose feet he learned the truths he most cared to know; the prophet who pointed out to him his future career.

This man was a Jesuit lay brother, named Alphonso Rodriguez; he was simply the college porter, but his fame was spread far beyond the place in which he lived.

Peter Claver sought him out eagerly on arriving; and there was soon formed between them that sympathy and union which is to be found among men sharing thoughts and ideals not common to the world at large. There is a certain loneliness which is the inevitable consequence of unusual gifts and aspirations. Men of ordinary aims are uncongenial companions to the heroes of life, and sanctity, like genius and other eminent gifts, deprives its possessors of the perfect sympathy of their kind.

In Browning's curious metaphysical study, the "Epistle of Karshish," he describes a man who has seen too much of the other life to be really suited to this one. This state is depicted as:

"Heaven open to a soul while yet on earth,
Earth forced on a soul's use while seeing heaven."

Or again—

"He holds on firmly to some thread of life—
Which runs across some vast distracting orb

Of glory, on either side that meagre thread,
Which, conscious of, he must not enter yet—
The spiritual life around the earthly life:
The law of that is known to him as this,
His heart and brain move there, his feet stay here.

The man here described has contemplated eternal results too nearly to be any more fitted for merely temporary interests. Saints are in somewhat the same position. They are men of one idea; they have a more than human perception of what is eternal; they see behind the veil, and apprehend a substance, where to others there is only an outline. The crowd do not dwell on the mountain tops, and the great ones of the earth live in that solitude which is a necessary consequence of the more rarefied atmosphere in which they think and move.

But Brother Alphonso Rodriguez found more than a friend and companion in Peter Claver. He was himself the apostle of desires; with a passion for helping and

saving others, his life was spent in domestic duties and retirement. But here was the son of his spiritual longings, the disciple who could preach to those for whom he had prayed; who could actually labour among those for whom he had wept and suffered.

Peter Claver in the latter days of his life told the brother who had been the faithful and constant companion of his labours, that Alphonso had distinctly foretold to him the very place where he was to spend his life; he was to work in the Indies, in the new kingdom of Granada; at Carthagena. His heart was broken at the thought of the neglected harvest on those distant shores, and he urged his disciple, in no mild terms, to devote himself once and for all to that far-off mission.

"What are the feelings of your heart," he asked him one day, "at thinking how God is ignored by the greater part of the world, and this because there are so few

who go to make Him known? Where shall we find tears to weep for those innumerable souls who can never profit by the Blood of Jesus Christ for want of ministers to make them partake of it? . . . The workers abound where the harvest is scarce, there are none to labour where it is abundant . . . how many who are idle in Europe might be apostles in America! . . . Are souls of less value than the riches which men seek in those lands? Wonderful indeed! that the love of God cannot cross those seas which have been navigated by human avarice! Spain rejoices in the fleets which reach her shores loaded with earthly treasure, and there is no one to bear the treasure of priceless souls to the harbour of everlasting glory. . . . Is the love of Christ to stir men less to seek for souls than the love of the world urges them to hunt for riches? . . . O brother of my soul! What a field is open

to your fervour! If the zeal of the House of God devour your entrails, go, go to the Indies, to save the souls that perish there! Fear not the labour, for he who knows not how to suffer knows not how to love . . . Manifest your desires; implore fervently; persist with determination; for such insistence is not contrary to obedience."

Up till now Peter Claver had been engaged chiefly in fulfilling the first point of his twofold ambition: he had been aiming at his own sanctification, though never forgetting the desires he had for others also. But now the time had come, and, at the words of his friend, his undefined longings took shape and consistency, and he saw before him the clearly marked outline of his future labours. He was now to satisfy the second wish of his heart; to save other souls as well as his own.

He complied fully with the injunctions of his master. He implored fervently,

persisted in his request, and was finally granted permission to devote himself to the Indian Missions.

He bade his last farewell to Spain, and started on his long journey in 1610. He landed first at Carthagena, the scene of his after work; went from there to Sante Fé, and afterwards to Tunja, and finally returned to Carthagena in 1615, when he was ordained priest, and immediately entered on his apostolic labours.

The town was a chief centre of the slave-trade. Large numbers of negroes were brought over every year and landed there, previous to being despatched to their various destinations. The work appointed Father Claver was the care and instruction of these unfortunate beings both on and after their arrival. When he came to Carthagena this work was already in the hands of a very remarkable man, who deserves greater notice than he has received

from posterity; this was F. Alonso de Sandoval. He had occupied the post in which St. Peter Claver was to succeed him for some years before the arrival of the latter, and had really founded and commenced the work in which he was afterwards to be eclipsed. He considered that his life had been, on one occasion, miraculously spared for this purpose; and he broke the ground and put the work into the shape and method which his successor adopted. During the course of his ministry he baptized more than thirty thousand negroes, and when we remember that he had to deal with many others already baptized, it will give us some idea of the extent of his labours. At one time a cry was raised, and it was represented to the ecclesiastical authorities, that he committed breaches of discipline, and acted too independently in the administration of the Sacraments. He had the wisdom to answer his judges by an

invitation to come and inspect his work, and after having done so, they promptly decided that he had better continue as before, for no one was likely to replace or even assist him in it. The details were so revolting that, even in those days, which were not squeamish, few cared to accompany the apostle of the negroes a second time to the field of his labours.

Under this master Peter Claver worked for the first year after his ordination. As we have already said, he followed the same lines as F. Sandoval, but the difference between the two men was in this, that, while the lustre of Claver's ministry quite eclipsed that of his predecessor, F. Sandoval is remarkable for having considered the question from a speculative as well as a practical point of view. He was somewhat of a reformer as well as a missionary ; he was very much perplexed regarding the general question of the

slave trade; and he uttered some strong truths about the iniquity and injustice of this horrible traffic. The book in which he expressed his views is of great value as containing the testimony of those days, and we shall have occasion to refer to it later on.

Father Claver, on the contrary, was an apostle, so consumed with the desire of raising and ennobling individual minds and hearts, that he thought little of the social question. He knew that, in their own country, the negroes lived in a condition of utter darkness and degradation, and he welcomed every means of bringing them to a higher state. Of the injustice of those means he knew little or nothing; of the result he knew that, from living like beasts, they could learn to live like men, and become partakers of that hope which could brighten a worse state than that of slavery.

Some men are called to work for a

cause, and others for the individuals concerned in the cause; and thus, with our apostle, slaves, and not slavery or slave trade, were properly the objects of his care. But we must not forget that the true work of a cause is generally begun by those who help the individual sufferers. Men, like Peter Claver, prepared in the truest sense for future emancipation, by raising those who were to be the object of it; by forcing their oppressors to regard them in the light of human beings and not animals. He was their friend in chains and degradation, before they had become objects of universal pity, and were surrounded by the consecrating halo of a generous cause. He commenced his labours in 1616; the slave trade was not abolished till more than 200 years later; the many thousands of blacks whom he converted and consoled during his lifetime would hardly have found a substitute for their father and

friend, in the person of one who merely predicted their future emancipation.

But, though not by profession a social reformer, St. Peter Claver's work was such as forced him at times to deal with certain general abuses. As soon as the essential spiritual or bodily welfare of his flock was in question, he was ready to come forward, and deal with the masters as well as the slaves. But we cannot read the history of those times without being struck by one remarkable difference between the methods of social reform as carried on in those days and our own; for then wrongs and grievances were remedied from above, whereas now they are approached from below. Men who advocated the cause of the oppressed and friendless in the Middle Ages were obliged to face the great ones of the earth, and to speak the truth in the very teeth of princes; whereas now we can adopt the easier method of appealing

to the feelings and resentment of the sufferers themselves.

Take two remarkable instances in the history of the Indies. In the early days of the Spanish conquest the Dominicans were grievously distressed at the treatment of the natives. They saw how they were made war upon, enslaved, and brutally over-worked without the faintest shadow of justice; and they resolved that such tyranny should be ended if it was in their power to do so. They announced accordingly that, on a certain Sunday, a sermon would be preached in S. Domingo, of great interest and importance. Father Antonio Montesino was selected for the purpose, and, on the appointed day he entered the pulpit, and, in the face of a crowded audience of Spaniards, all more or less implicated in the general evil, he loudly denounced the baseness and iniquity of their conduct. He spoke in Spanish,

the language of the oppressors and not the oppressed; the Indians heard and knew nothing of the friend who was pleading their cause; he was surrounded only by the lowering faces of angry men, who listened while their closest interests were attacked by a poor and unknown monk. There were no plaudits, no cheers for the champion of the people; he left the pulpit hated and feared, and if nothing worse betided him it was because those were days of faith, and the spiritual ideal was respected even by those who were furthest from attaining it.[1]

Our second instance is to be found in the "History of Paraguay," and we cannot do better than give it in the words of Father Charlevoix himself.

"Some Indians, who were settled on the banks of the Paraguay, and had been

[1] Anecdote given in "History of Spanish Conquests," by Sir Arthur Helps, vol. i.

subjected, rose up and massacred several Spaniards. The news of this having reached the capital in the governor's absence, the officer who commanded in his place set out with a party of soldiers to chastise them. But changing his mind on the road, for what reason we are not told, he fell upon some other Indians, whom he found unarmed, though they were allies to the Spaniards, and had always been faithful to them; treated them like enemies; loaded a great number of them with chains; led them, as it were in triumph, to the capital; and sold them for slaves to the highest bidder.

Father Lorençana (a Jesuit) thought himself bound not to pass over in silence so crying an act of injustice; and finding that his private remonstrances to the sellers and the buyers of the pretended captives made no impression on them, got into the pulpit, and openly threatened

them with the anger of Heaven, if they did not immediately set the poor Indians at liberty. Upon this the treasurer of the cathedral, who happened to be present, silenced him directly, and commanded him to leave the church. Father Lorençana obeyed without betraying the least concern; and this unexpected moderation struck the audience so much, that a buzz of indignation immediately arose among them against the treasurer, who, troubled and confounded at this mark of their disapprobation, could scarce compose himself enough to own publicly, that he had done wrong to insult an honest man, purely for being bold enough to do his duty." [1]

Contrast these two occasions with the very opposite work which falls to the lot of modern agitators. Their circumstances

[1] "History of Paraguay," from the French of F. Charlevoix, vol. i. page 234.

are widely different, and they feel no call to brave the anger of the wrong-doers, attacked on their most tender point. They have no need to defy the oppressor; their task is the more congenial one of rousing the oppressed. They speak not, like the Dominican and the Jesuit, to a frowning audience, but are cheered on by the tumultuous applause of a crowd that worships its hero. They have not to bear the bitter return of being hated by those whom they rebuke, and simply unknown to those for whom they plead; for they do but render into language the confused murmurings of their own listeners, and are rewarded by the sympathy of those whom they praise and pity.

Different ages need different remedies, and circumstances then were such that it would have been more than useless to appeal to the helpless multitude. But

there is something noble in those friends of the people now dead, which cannot but affect us deeply in days that call for less heroism of devotedness. We are now too apt to forget altogether the rights and the hardships of the ruler in our anxiety to remove all the grievances of the subject; but they, in their day, had compassion on the wrong-doer as well as his victim; they tried to heal those who sinned as well as those who were sinned against. Their pity was large enough to cover both, and, in their sacerdotal character, they were even more bound to rebuke him who did evil than to relieve him who suffered it. The master had a soul as well as his slave; if the latter was destroyed by oppression, the former was demoralized by his own acts of tyranny: of the two who were sick in different ways, the case of the master was more grave and critical. In their remedies, then, they looked to both

sides. They endeavoured to cure the oppressor as well as the oppressed, and they worked for the latter, through the former, content to labour thus for those who knew little of their efforts and may sometimes have mistaken them for the partisans of their tyrants.

CHAPTER IV.

"A SLAVE AND YET FREE."

WE have seen that Peter Claver entered on his work among the slaves at Carthagena without any view to general social reform; he worked for individuals, and left the question of slavery alone. But it is a question which cannot be passed over in silence, for it is impossible to study the philanthropy of those days without being anxious to ascertain the opinion of leading men on such a subject. St. Peter accomplished in his life a work which would fill many lives of ordinary men; but others were called to consider the speculative side of the question, and it is

important to know what were the general principles of the age.

We are struck, then, in the first place, by the fact that, even among the most famous philanthropists of the day, there is no positive condemnation of slavery as such. The most earnest champions of the oppressed and downtrodden both tolerated and practised it. Men the most upright, the most disinterested, the most unworldly, never questioned the right of its existence, never directly impugned it. We may take as an instance one great figure of the past, Las Casas, the Protector of the Indians. His is a reputation which can surely bear the full light of truth; as a brave man can decline a duel without fearing an imputation on his honour, so we may state the real principles of Las Casas without trembling for his name as a philanthropist.

This wonderful man devoted his life to

the preservation of an entire continent. Were it not for the untiring exertions of himself and his Dominican companions, the small existing remnant of the Indian race might have been entirely effaced and extinguished. And yet he, who so laboriously vindicated the rights of one race, advocated the enslavement of another. As is now well known from his own writings, he proposed that negroes should be imported from Africa to relieve the Indians from their condition of unjust servitude. He repented of this error in after life, but in the reasons which he gives for his change of opinion there is no word to condemn slavery as such. He tells us that he had rendered himself "guilty through inadvertence, because later on he saw and ascertained that the captivity of the negroes was as unjust as that of the Indians, and therefore he did wrong in advising that they should be enslaved in

their place; but, at the time, he thought that they were made captives justly." [1]

No ingenuity can draw from these words a condemnation of slavery as such, any more than words spoken against murder could be taken to involve the reprobation of just war and capital punishment. The question with him was not "Are they slaves?" but "Were they justly made slaves?" He held Indian slaves himself until this second question suggested itself to his mind.

Now, in the face of an example like this, of a giant heroism and devotion such as the world has seldom known, we must surely proceed cautiously when speaking of a custom which was then universally recognized. It may be that, in the future, some of our practices will be subjected to judgments even more severe than those we

[1] "Hist. de las Indias," Lib. iii., quoted by J. A. Saco.

pass on our forefathers; and that we shall stand arraigned as barbarians before posterity for customs which appear to us now not merely lawful, but even necessary and good. Such things have been, and such things will be again.

Finding then that men, as merciful as any our age can boast, were able to tolerate such an institution, it is important for us to know well in what sense they understood it, and in what manner they were able to conciliate it with those maxims of universal justice which they acknowledged in common with us. And there is more concerned in this matter than the reputation of individuals, for the Church of the Middle Ages has been alternately attacked and defended on the same score.

What then is the truth regarding Her connection with slavery? Did she protect it? or did she abolish it? Some

say one, some the other, and both parties contrive to bring weighty evidence on their own side.

We have canons and regulations to ensure the rights of the master, and others to protect the rights of the slave. The latter largely predominate, they were more needed and they were more in sympathy with the feelings of the Church, but the existence of the former contradicts the theory of an absolute condemnation of slavery as such.

Beginning with St. Paul, the great teachers of Christianity simultaneously exhort the masters to be merciful, and the slaves to obey. The Church, while manifesting great generosity on this point, nevertheless places some restriction on the power of Bishops to emancipate slaves belonging to their respective Churches.[1] She issues countless edicts to protect

[1] See Balmez—"European Civilization," p. 108.

the soul and body, the spiritual and material rights of the slave; but she clearly recognizes throughout that the master possesses a certain just claim. Thus, for example, she insisted on the right of the master to receive compensation for the loss of a slave who had been raised to the priesthood without his knowledge.[1] And we cannot open even a modern theological treatise, "De Justitia et Jure," without finding clearly defined principles regarding the rights of the master and the duties of the slave.

There is much in all this which seems difficult and contradictory, but we must distinguish in the first place between what the Church favoured, and what she merely tolerated; and, in the second place, as regards that which she tolerated, we must know clearly what kind of slavery it was.

It seems, then, that there are two con-

[1] See Allard—"Esclaves Chrétiens," p. 230.

ceptions of slavery, the pagan and the Christian, and that one, with all its many drawbacks, can be reconciled with the teaching of the Church, whereas the other is directly opposed to it. The pagan form was not confined to pagan times, but it was nevertheless always founded on pagan principles. In our own days it is this conception of slavery which is commonly understood; perhaps because it is the one which chiefly prevailed in our own colonies previous to emancipation.

Slavery of this kind may be defined as the absolute possession of one man by another, with complete dominion over his body, and almost, we might say, over his soul likewise. The master of slaves can according to this view, work, flog, mutilate, kill, corrupt his slave according to his own will and pleasure. The slave is a chattel, and he is its owner. His right of possession is for his own good alone, without

any reference to the good of the being he possesses; the latter is in complete dependence upon him as regards both natural and personal rights. The slave cannot practise his religion, cannot choose his wife, cannot fulfil his domestic duties, cannot take proper and necessary care of his own body, except in subjection to the will of his master. We cannot describe this state of things better than in the following words of a French writer who says: "Qu'est-ce que l'esclavage? C'est l'abus de la force. C'est la violation du droit à la liberté qui nous vient de la nature et de Dieu, comme le droit de respirer et de vivre. Le méconnaître, c'est abuser de son semblable et disposer, malgré lui, de son travail de ses biens, *de ses enfants et de sa vie.* Par la main mise du maître, l'esclave a cessé d'être une personne. Il devient une chose dont on trafiquera sans scrupule comme d'un

animal. . . . Priver un homme de sa liberté, de ses biens, *de sa famille* et de sa patrie, tels sont les faits immédiats de l'esclavage. Lui enlever par cela même toute volonté, toute ambition, toute affection, toute espérance, tels sont les faits secondaires."[1]

If this be the true and only definition of slavery then was it abolished by the simple introduction of Christianity, and condemned directly or indirectly by almost every one of its doctrines? For the great truth of individual responsibility, of the price and immortality of every human soul, at once limited the power of the master, and extended the rights of the slave. The former learned that no one could possess an absolute right over the person of another: with power came likewise obligations as to the manner of exercising it. Thus he found

[1] Tourmagne—"Hist. de l'esclavage." (The italics are mine.)

himself at once in new relations towards those that depended on him; he was dealing with souls for which Christ died; he had duties towards them as well as they towards him. They did not belong to him in nearly so entire a sense as both he and they belonged to a common Father.

And for the slave, he likewise found himself, whether his master willed it or no, in a totally new position; for besides the burden of slavery he bore now the burden of his own soul. He could not, even if he would, rid himself of this burden by pleading his dependent condition; he had obligations, from which there was no escape, to One higher than his earthly master, Whom he might and must obey even in defiance of the latter. Thus the simple fact of master or slave becoming Christian necessarily transformed their mutual relations, in such a way that slavery, according to the above definition

could no longer exist. A slave could not be regarded as both the child of God and the chattel of man.

And yet what was called slavery continued to exist, and the Church herself possessed slaves. How are we to explain this contradiction? Yes, it remained, but in that other form to which we have alluded. It became Christian, like every other institution of pagan days which was permitted to survive; and, in its Christian form, it was no longer a positive contradiction, whatever may have been its faults and disadvantages. Its conception does not necessarily involve all the evils we have enumerated. As tolerated by Christianity it was no longer the possession of one man by another, with consequent unlimited rights over either his soul or his body. In such a state of things the slave was a thing rather than a man; he was a chattel, a mere material object of

possession. But, according to the Christian view, the slave was a man as much as his master, no human being could possibly be reckoned as a thing. The rights of the master extended then not so much to the person of the slave, as to his time and labour. It was, in the language of canon law, not a "dominium directum," but a "dominium utile"; he possessed neither the body nor the soul of his slave, but was entitled to his work together with its fruits. As we are all born into circumstances of one kind or other, which must more or less bind our conduct and influence our lives, so the slave was born into a condition of compulsory servitude, differing from other forms in being more complete and permanent.

Those dealing with slavery are too apt to forget the great compelling force exercised over every one of us by the time, place and surroundings of our birth. It is

frequently said, in far too loose a sense, that "all men are born free." For my part I have never known a man who was born free in the unrestricted meaning sometimes attached to the words. As regards liberty of soul, and certain inalienable rights of the body, the maxim is true and universal; but as regards liberty of work and action it must be taken in a far more limited sense. What are we all doing the greater part of our lives, rich as well as poor, but shaping our actions according to the direction of other men and outward circumstances? Is the child free to choose his home and his duties? and is the man able to shake himself free from the innumerable claims and obligations which have grown up around him, will he or no, during his youth and childhood? There may be absolute freedom in the solitude of a forest, but in human society it is not to be found.

And if we take free service in particular, and contrast it with slavery, we find that, even as regards the involuntary element of the latter, they are not so entirely different as is commonly imagined. A slave was forced, by the circumstances of his birth, to obey a certain master, but many a poor drudge, in a crowded town, is forced to uncongenial toil under a merciless taskmaster by the equally inexorable fact that he or she would starve if they refused. It may be urged that any free servant can change his employer if the yoke be intolerable, but this is only true if he is sure of finding another and a better one. In any case, he is not free to serve or not to serve if starvation be the only alternative.

We may say, then, that slavery is truly and really distinguished from other service in the following points, viz.:—

1. By the absence of preliminary contract,

except in the rarer instance of a man selling himself; 2. By its irrevocable duration so far as the slave is concerned; 3. By its conferring on the master a far more extensive power of command; 4. By its invalidation of the ordinary rights of property, owing to the fact that the time and labour of the slave are no longer his own; 5. By its hereditary effects on the children.

As regards the first of these points, viz., the absence of preliminary contract, this must not be taken to mean that there is not obligation on the side of the master as well as the slave. The difference is that the price of a man's toil is the matter of free contract in the case of ordinary service; whereas in slavery the master binds himself, by the fact of his position, to provide for all the reasonable needs of his slave. And, as a servant would be free from his obligations if his employer

withheld the settled wage, so was a slave thereby emancipated if the master neglected his duty towards him. Thus De Lugo mentions, as one of the grounds of emancipation, if the master expose an infant slave, or abandon a sick one, and refuse him the necessary food.[1]

And, as regards the last distinction, viz., the inheriting of slavery from the mother; hard as such a condition is, we must still remember that hereditary effects are not confined to slavery alone. The character and circumstances of parents must tell heavily on their children in all conditions of life; and the child, for instance, of a drunken parent, may inherit a state of degradation even lower than that of slavery.

This, then, was the form of compulsory servitude which the Church found it possible

[1] De Justitia et Jure. Disp. vi. Lec. iv. De Lugo.

to tolerate; she positively rejected it in the sense of possession of one man by another, but permitted it in so far as it was simply a right to his time and labour.

This distinction cuts to the very root of the matter, for if the master's rights extended only to the work of the slave and not to either his body or his soul, then such a definition as we have given in the words of the French writer becomes unreal and fictitious. The master's power is then not over the man himself, but over what the man can do for him; while the slave continues to possess all the primary rights of human nature. Those rights cannot be described better than in the words of the great theologian De Lugo, who says:—

"It is certain, then, that the slave retains a right to his life, his body (or limbs), to his reputation and other like things; and that he can be truly and really injured in these things, not only by others, but likewise by

his own master, for in these respects he is not considered as a slave, but as a *man*, and hence his master will be as much bound to make restitution to him for any wrong on these points, as he would be bound by reason of a like injury done to a free man. . . . Thirdly, if a slave has good reason to fear death, unjust mutilation, or other like injury, he can lawfully fly . . . likewise if a slave or handmaid be solicited by their master to sin, or if they be in any danger of mortal sin. Fourthly, neither can slaves be prohibited by their master from marrying, for marriage is to be reckoned among the goods of the body." He goes on to say that though, in the early ages of the Church, there may have been some prohibition in this respect (these prohibitions must have arisen from difficulties and complications which seemed a greater evil than some restriction in the matter), there is no doubt that since those

days slaves have a right to marry, whether their masters will it or no. And further than this, the slaves possess those domestic rights which are consequent on matrimony, and the master is bound to take them into consideration in his use of his slaves.[1]

These, then, are the great inalienable rights of all men, life, integrity of body and limb, marriage, with its consequent domestic relations, spiritual freedom and good name.

The question of marriage is peculiarly a test question in the matter of slavery. The Church, in her beginnings, found no recognition of such an institution among slaves. She instantly raised them to a condition of equality with others in this respect, and although circumstances obliged her at first to require the master's consent to the contract, she abolished even this restriction as early as the twelfth century.

[1] De Lugo—De Just. et Jure. Disp. iii. Lec. ii.

This is the more remarkable as the year 1826 was the earliest in which we find any recognition of this sacred human right in our English Colony of Jamaica, for until that date such an institution was considered entirely superfluous for African slaves. Even then it was only granted subject to that restriction which the Church had removed for so many centuries. "And be it further enacted," so runs the clause, "that it shall and may be lawful for any slave or slaves, who has or have been baptized, who may be desirous of entering into the holy state of matrimony, to apply to any clergyman of the established Church to solemnize such marriage, who is hereby required to perform the same without any fee or reward, if such clergyman shall, upon examination of such slaves, consider them to have a proper and adequate knowledge of the nature and obligation of such a contract. Provided always, that such slave

shall produce to the clergyman a permission in writing from his owner, or from the legal representative of his owner, for that purpose." [1]

But it would be but a part of the truth to say that the slavery which the Church tolerated was compatible with the most essential rights of man. Besides the proofs we possess, in countless pages of moral theology and canon law, of her philosophy in this respect, we can see her detestation of even this modified form of slavery in the historical fact of its gradual disappearance in Europe under her influence. It broke out again, in a terrible form, after the exploration of Africa and the discovery of America, but this happened in new countries which were further removed from her influence; and it happened likewise, as we shall see, in spite of frequent protests on her part.

[1] Slave law proposed by Jamaica House of Assembly, 1826.

For the fact is that, though the natural and supernatural rights of a man may be respected even if he be a slave, it is in this case far more difficult to do so than in other conditions; and hence the Church gladly abolished a state which required so many checks and safeguards. She could not uphold the spiritual independence of all men without pointing out, at the same time, the difficulties in which a slave might find himself placed, by the imperious will of an impious master; she could not advocate the right of marriage without perceiving how much the paternal authority must sometimes suffer from the condition of the father. And hence her legislation on these subjects tended inevitably to undermine an artificial institution which was such a constant source of care and trouble. Apart from this, those instincts of heroic charity, which were so abundant in the Middle Ages, led to every kind of

device for the mitigation of this sad state; to the emancipation and ransoming of slaves, and even to the liberating them at the cost of their benefactor's own freedom. For how could men kneel together at one altar and not forget the relations of master and slave in the recollection of a common brotherhood?

But until the fact of universal emancipation was accomplished, it was the part of the Church to look to that which was, and not that which might be. It was her duty to secure for every one of her children liberty in the highest sense, and all those opportunities which were necessary for each man to fulfil his part in the world; but her object was rather to secure these things according to the circumstances of each one than to insist on privileges which were less essential. The slave had duties and obligations, but so had his master, and it was possible for both to possess true

freedom in the natural and spiritual order.

Neither could she, in her tenderness for her children who were slaves, overlook the welfare of her other children who were masters. In either condition a man might work out the end for which he had been created, and subjection without servility might be the road appointed for one, as superiority without tyranny was the way appointed for another. Few of us can choose our own master, but we can all obey our own conscience.

Let us remember that we have not reached Utopia by abolishing all permanent obligation between master and servant. Freedom and facility of change have not done much to promote mutual love. Is there not truth in the words of a great man, now gone, who said :—

" Happy is he who has found a master ; and now, further I will say, having found,

let him well keep him. In all human relations, *permanency* is what I advocate; *nomadism*, continual change, is what I perceive to be prohibitory of any good whatsoever. Two men that have got to co-operate will do well not to quarrel at the first cause of offence, and throw up the concern in disgust, hoping to suit themselves better elsewhere. For the most part such hope is fallacious; and they will, on the average, not suit themselves better, but only about as well, and have to begin again *bare*, which loss, often repeated, becomes immense, and is finally the loss of everything, and of their joint enterprise itself. For no mutual relation, while it continues 'bare,' is yet a human one, or can bring blessedness, but is only waiting to become such—mere new-piled crags which, if you leave them, *will* at last 'gather moss,' and yield some verdure and pasture." [1]

[1] "The Nigger Question," Thomas Carlyle.

And there was another reason, more sublime than any, why the Church could tolerate a certain form of slavery, and this was because true liberty was, in her eyes, something too lofty and secure to be touched by any earthly bonds. Thus she could exhort the slave in the words of the apostle, not to serve "to the eye, as it were pleasing men," but to act as a free, independent, spiritual being; "as the servant of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."[1] Or again, she could tell him, in the words of St. Chrysostom, "to serve as the slave of Christ and not of man, let that which thou doest be thy own work and not the fruits of compulsion."[2]

And if the bonds of slavery could not destroy spiritual independence, so neither did the freedom of the master exempt him

[1] Eph. vi. 6.

[2] Ad. Eph. Hom. xxii. cap. vi.

from spiritual bondage. The right of the master was to command in external matters, his duty was to respect the freedom of the slave in the spiritual order. The right of the slave was to be independent as regarded his conscience, his duty was to obey in things which were merely temporal. The slave was the freeman of Christ, the master was his bondman ; the one was rescued by the Gospel from the bondage of the soul, the other was brought by it under the yoke of Christ. "For he that is called in the Lord, being a bondman, is the freeman of the Lord. Likewise, he that is called, being free, is the bondman of Christ" (1 Cor. vii. 22).

CHAPTER V.

MIGHT AGAINST RIGHT.

IN the previous chapter we considered the ecclesiastical teaching regarding slavery, and did not enter into the separate question of the slave trade. To a certain extent this may be said to be but a development of the former, but it is a development which, though natural, is by no means necessary; and which inevitably drags the whole institution of slavery into vices which render it a standing violation of those human rights of which no man can be lawfully deprived.

This fact was not fully recognized in the days of which we write. As it was

admitted on all hands that the practice of slavery was not in itself sinful, whatever might be its disadvantages; that a man could really possess a right to the time and services of another; it followed that neither could anyone deny the power of a master to transfer those rights if it suited his purpose to do so. He was bound, in so doing, to respect the yet more sacred human rights of the slave, but he undoubtedly possessed the title to sell his slave as well as to use him. Hence on the face of it, the slave trade was but an extension of these generally recognized customs.

But, from the commencement, the African slave trade was carried on in such a manner that it could not possibly be compatible with sound theological teaching, and hence it very soon became a subject of anxious inquiry and discussion. Furthermore, there are cases in which a difference of degree leads necessarily to a difference of

kind, and it became evident, after a certain time, that wholesale commerce of human beings was essentially adverse to any recognition of true bodily and spiritual rights. As early as 1462 Pope Pius II. wrote in condemnation of this traffic; and, in theological treatises on slavery, it is generally regarded as a subject for special examination.

This villainous commerce may be said to have had its first faint beginnings in the days of Prince Henry of Portugal, surnamed the Navigator, the leader in African exploration. It is thought that there were negro slaves in Europe previous to that time, but, if so, they were certainly in very small numbers. But, simultaneously with the discoveries of Prince Henry, came the fatal inducement to prosecute those discoveries in order to obtain human labour, which was scarce in those days. Azurara gives a pathetic account of the

sale and division of a number of African slaves, captured and brought home by some of Prince Henry's captains.

But negro slavery would never have assumed such ghastly proportions had the supply been confined to Europe alone. But the excitement of African discovery had not subsided before another continent was groaning under the exactions of European rapacity. The Indians of America were never brought into such a condition of utter degradation as the African races; but by reason of their higher and more delicate organization, they succumbed to hardships which did not even shorten the lives of negroes. They were more fortunate than the latter in a twofold respect, for, in the first place, they were never subjected to wholesale slavery like the blacks; and, in the second place, even the oppressive system of "repartimientos," or allotting of Indians

for personal service, was closely watched by generous champions of their liberty, and was greatly hampered by countless legal restrictions. Thanks to the lofty and disinterested legislation of Ferdinand and Isabella, especially the latter, thanks to the brave and untiring exertions of the Dominicans and other religious orders, these races, whose history is so wrapped up in poetry and mystery, were preserved from utter extinction.

But they were preserved partly at the expense of their unfortunate black brothers. These latter had, on their own coasts, no father and protector; there is no towering figure of a Las Casas in the history of the negroes. Indeed, as we have already seen, this man himself proposed the enslavement of the lower race for the preservation of the higher; and though the importation of negroes to America was probably not even hastened or in-

creased by his suggestion, still every act passed for the good of the Indians cost some proportion of life and happiness to the Africans.

The importation of negroes to the Spanish possessions in America began after the year 1500, and, in a very short time, every Spanish colony contained a greater or less number. Darien was the first country of the Terra Firma which is known to have possessed them, and this must have been at least as early as 1513. The importation afterwards increased so rapidly that we soon find regulations for the government of the negroes, who were evidently rendered insolent by their numbers; and as early as 1522 there was an insurrection of slaves in S. Domingo. They were even at times the partners of the Spaniards in oppressing the native races.

But besides the need of labour in the

new colonies, there was a strong inducement to the promotion of this traffic, on the part of the Spanish court, in the system of "asientos," i.e. contracts or monopolies. These contracts were sold by Spain to different nations or individuals, as the case might be; and the contractor then possessed the right to import African slaves for a certain number of years, being bound to supply so many annually. The sale of the "asientos" produced a considerable revenue, and though a certain limitation was imposed thereby on the number of slaves who could be imported, still it systematized the evil, and likewise served to develop greater cruelty and oppression by giving rise to a contraband trade.

The first contract was sold to the Genoese in 1517; two Germans afterwards obtained one under the condition of introducing 4000 slaves in four years. There is a record of various other contracts

previous to the time of St. Peter Claver. During a great part of his ministry the Portuguese enjoyed all these contracts; thus from 1595 to 1639 they possessed the sole monopoly. In 1701 we find mention of a contract with the French Royal Guinea Company, for the importation of 4800 every year. One article of this contract, which sounds somewhat ominous, is that the Company was bound to pay duty on the negroes who died after landing, whether they had been sold or not. This might have constituted a great temptation to the traders to throw sick ones overboard before arriving.

In 1713, as a result of the peace of Utrecht, we come to the first "asiento" granted to our own country; it was, alas! the predecessor of many others, for from this time forth the English enjoyed the unenviable privilege of being chief factors in this shameful commerce. This first

contract was to last for thirty years; it was interrupted by war, but afterwards re-established, and did not finally expire until 1750, when it was succeeded by others, mostly in favour of Englishmen.

It happens, fortunately for us, that we possess very impartial and authentic testimony regarding the slave trade as it was practised in the days of St. Peter Claver. We have already mentioned his predecessor, F. Alonso de Sandoval, who had certainly every opportunity for procuring correct information. The second authority from whom we may safely quote was Father Thomas Mercado, a Dominican. They both wrote about the same date, Mercado at the end of the sixteenth, Sandoval at the beginning of the seventeenth century. They both write in the guarded manner of theologians, who cannot risk a principle in order to remedy a grievance; and they were both,

in their priestly character, able to obtain evidence which will be regarded by all as the most unimpeachable, viz., the testimony and acknowledgments of those who were most interested in remaining silent. There is indeed a marvellous proof of the truly spiritual power possessed by priests and Religious in those days in the humble avowals of wrong-doing which they received from the wrong-doers themselves. It is from the accounts of slave-traders that F. Sandoval drew most of his facts, which he gathered together in a book together with the theories which he formed thereon.

Neither of these writers was absolutely opposed to slavery as such, but they both apply to the question of African slave trade the principles which were generally recognized by theologians in those days. The four titles of lawful slavery were considered to be : 1. The right of just war ;

2. Condemnation for crime; 3. Sale of a man by himself, or, in certain restricted cases, of children by their father; 4. Birth of a slave-mother, which, of course, resolved itself finally into one of the former titles.

These titles might provoke nothing but angry contempt in our days, although, in fact, the two first are not, even now, entirely abrogated. A conquered race is still subjected to a form of service which is not always entirely for its own good; and a prisoner is undoubtedly a slave in the essential meaning of the word.

But, however this may be, our two writers accepted the principles which were common at their time; and we need not blush for them, since those principles sufficed, in their hands, to prove the iniquity of a traffic which found a majority in its favour even at the beginning of our century.

Regarding, then, the first of these titles,

Father Sandoval boldly demonstrates that the slave trade was a direct incitement to native wars in Africa. The negroes, acting the part of their own worst enemies, fought amongst each other to obtain captives for the Europeans.

The second title was abused in a yet more shocking manner, for the negroes followed the same custom of imposing slavery for certain offences, and the kings, who were the absolute masters of their people, did not blush to encourage crime even in their own families, in order to sell the offenders to the Portuguese.

F. Mercado mentions further the shameless ease with which negroes would sometimes part with their children for the love of gain.

But even these distortions of principle would not have been sufficient if the Portuguese had not further resorted to means of downright piracy. They had

black agents, called "Pumberos," who made inland excursions to procure slaves, carrying European wares in exchange; and if the numbers were still too low, then violent measures were likewise adopted. These accounts are not very different from those we obtain from Clarkson and others in later days. Thus Clarkson writes: "The grand mode of obtaining slaves in these countries is the great pillage, which is executed by the military at the command of their respective kings. . . . The pillages are practised as circumstances offer; either as the kings want money, or as they are tempted by the Europeans. . . . The other ways by which they are reduced to the same condition are these, either by private robbery, or by war, or by actual or supposed crimes." [1]

As these details were obtained by F. Sandoval from the lips of the traders

[1] Letters on the Slave Trade, etc. T. Clarkson.

themselves, we shall not be surprised when he tells us that these worthies were troubled with the disease of an unquiet conscience. "One," he says, "positively told me he could not rest, for his conscience was so uneasy respecting the methods he had employed in procuring slaves and getting possession of them on the coast of Guinea."[1] I fear that F. Sandoval did not pour much balm on these troubled spirits, for he gives us an account of another case, in which the conscientious slave-trader ingeniously suggested that the difficulties of the undertaking must surely have rectified its injustice. He replied by asking whether a sacrilegious thief could plead the same excuse if caught in the act of carrying off some precious article from a church.

The difficulties he experienced in dealing with the consciences of these men,

[1] "De la Naturaleza de todos Ethiopos," p. 70.

who, once they had consulted him, were as much entitled to his sympathy and justice as the most down-trodden of the negroes, led him to write to Father Brandaon, the rector of the Jesuit College of Loanda, on the African coast, in order to learn the rights of the case from one who was in a better position to judge. Father Brandaon's answer is not altogether satisfactory, being in substance that the complexity of the question was such that it was better to remain in judicious ignorance. We might be inclined to condemn this Father rather severely, did we not find, from another mention of him in the same work, that he did his duty very positively when it was clear to him, however much he may have hesitated in stirring muddy waters of his own accord. For another captain informed F. Sandoval that many negroes were liberated on the African coast on one occasion, owing to

the energetic remonstrances of this same rector, when he found that they had been captured in an unjust war, stirred up by European instigation.

It is a comfort to know that these evils did not go on entirely unnoticed. F. Mercado states that, at the time when he wrote, there were fewer acts of piracy on the part of the Portuguese, owing to the rigorous legislation of the Christian kings. Theologians were likewise busy with the question, for some anxious-minded persons wrote from Spain to Lisbon, saying that the theologians of Seville held grave doubts regarding the lawfulness of the traffic, and asking what was the opinion of Portuguese authorities. They were answered briefly that there were not two systems of justice and theology, and that what was taught in one place was taught in another, with the difference that the Portuguese theologians were even more

severe in their judgment of a practice with which they were more nearly concerned. F. Mercado sums up by the two following conclusions :—"(1) The purchase and sale of negroes in Cabo Verde is, in itself, lawful and just. (2) That granting the tales we hear, and likewise the truth and reality of them, it is a mortal sin to exercise this trade, and the merchants who traffic in bringing negroes from Cabo Verde live in a bad and dangerous state." [1]

It is well that we should remember such facts, for we are too apt to think that those questions were only opened in our own century.

Having enumerated the various methods of capture, F. Sandoval proceeds to give us an account of that terrible "middle passage," which has varied so little in its horrors from first to last. He reckons

[1] "Suma de tratos y contratos"—F. Thomas Mercado. p. 105.

that, during his time, from twelve to fourteen "armazones" entered the port every year, each one bearing from 300 to 600 slaves. These numbers had still further increased in the days of St. Peter Claver. We have seen that the contracts were not usually for the importation of more than 5000; but this number fixed the minimum amount, and also, it is not likely that America ever depended solely on the "asientos" for the importation of slaves; there was much evasion of the monopoly. The passage then lasted about two months, and F. Sandoval reckons that about one-third died on board of ill-treatment and low spirits. F. Mercado mentions that, on one occasion, of a cargo of 500 slaves, 120 died in a single night. We shall not be surprised at this proportion when we read the following account of the state of things on board.

"The very men," writes Sandoval, "who

bring them, have assured me that these miserable beings are fastened six together by means of rings on the neck, and are bound two and two with shackles on the feet, in such manner that they are fettered from head to foot. They are then wedged under a deck, into a space where neither sun nor moon can penetrate, and a Spaniard would not dare to put his head to the hatchway for fear of fainting, nor could he remain within for a single hour without grave risk, such is the stench, narrowness and misery of their shelter. Their only comfort and relief is to refresh themselves every twenty-four hours with a small dish of maize or raw millet, and a tiny jar of water, which is all they receive, unless indeed we reckon countless blows, lashes and cruel words. This is the most common treatment, although I willingly grant that some captains behave with more gentleness and mercy."

He then goes on to describe what happened after their arrival in port :—

"They reach our shores, then, thanks to this dainty and generous treatment, looking rather like skeletons than men ; and are at once landed and conducted to a great yard or court, which is immediately filled with a crowd of people, brought to the spot, some by greed, some by curiosity, some by compassion, and among these last are members of the Society of Jesus, who come to teach, baptize and confess those who are actually dying on their arrival."[1]

The good father omits to mention that he was himself one of those members of the Society of Jesus, though at the time his book was published St. Peter Claver had succeeded him in the labours of this seaside mission.

The yards to which he refers were at that time one of the most horrible

[1] "De la Naturaleza de todos Ethiopos," p. 72.

features of the slave-trade. Some idle gazers may, as F. Sandoval says, have been drawn thither by curiosity, but they certainly avoided close contact. The negro is naturally subject to very repulsive diseases; we may imagine then his condition after being wedged in among five hundred others for upwards of two months, in a place which was unfit to contain a quarter of their number. On reaching the shed they cast themselves down on all sides, too wretched to care for relief—the sound, the sick and the dying mingled together in one huge mass of putrid life and suffering. The sight and the smell were such that even priests shrank from ministering to them, and a friend who once accompanied Father Claver from curiosity to the scene of his work, could never muster courage to return. We read of F. Sandoval himself, who is spoken of, though not by name, in one of

the annual letters of the Jesuit province of New Granada, that "when he received notice of the arrival of a negro vessel in port he was covered instantly with a cold and death-like sweat, at the recollection of the indescribable fatigue, and unspeakable labour, he had endured on the last occasion; nor did the experience and practice of years ever accustom him to it."[1]

There were none to attend to the sick, nor to bury the dead; the corpses of those who died remained naked and uncared for in the place to which the poor sufferer had dragged himself. Nor was death always a purely natural result. F. Sandoval says of the blacks that they were extremely sensitive to unkind treatment, and that they felt a harsh word even more than a hard blow. Having had nothing else ever since leaving their native shores, and being further subject to a most aggravated form

[1] "Letras Anias, etc., 1638—1643."

of home-sickness, they often refused food, or resorted to the eating of dirt to hasten their end.

We have now reached the culminating point in the history of negro wretchedness. Their troubles did not end there, but the worst was over. They passed now into the hands of their Spanish masters, and, bad as their condition frequently was, we come now to the point on which Spaniards may claim some sorry pre-eminence over the slave-owners with whom our English reformers were acquainted before the days of abolition.

Things were bad enough, and probably even worse in Carthagena than in other places; for the constant arrival of these throngs of degraded savages, and the mercantile spirit, fostered at the expense of human life and suffering, must in itself have lowered the general tone. F. Sandoval mentions that one noble lady was

known to have murdered three of her slaves, and he enumerates the grievances with which we are familiar in later days—the over-work; the neglect of Sundays and holidays; the hindrances raised by masters to the marriages and spiritual rights of their slaves.

But still, their condition under Spanish rule, in those less civilized times, was higher and better than that of the negroes in our English colony of Jamaica at the beginning of the present century. For, in the first place, the Spanish colonists had always, in their very midst, that which the Jamaican House of Assembly so emphatically resisted, viz., an independent protector of the negroes. The Spaniards had one, not named by the law, but none the less recognized by popular faith, in the person of every true and zealous priest or theologian. They acted not by their merely individual power, but by the strength of

those ecclesiastical laws which none dared deny, however much they might attempt to evade them. Thus, for example, we have seen that in 1826 the Jamaican House of Assembly proposed, for the first time, that slaves should be granted the privileges of marriage, although then only with the master's consent. What could a minister of religion do either before or after such a regulation? He might see the slaves living around him in the most fearful state of moral degradation, but his hands were tied, he was bound to submit to the opinion of his countrymen, expressed in the words of a local doctor, namely, that every attempt to check these evils "by introducing the marriage ceremony amongst them would be utterly impracticable, and perhaps of dangerous consequence."[1]

[1] Testimony of a surgeon named Quier given in "Two reports, etc., on the island of Jamaica."

But among Spaniards the lawfulness and consequent obligations of slave marriage were never questioned, however much selfish and tyrannical masters may have endeavoured to impede it. St. Peter Claver is not known to have uttered a word against the slave trade itself, but, on this point, and on all spiritual matters, he stood forth as a lion for the rights of his flock. With perfect indifference to the consent or prohibition of their masters, he married those slaves who desired it or ought to desire it; and whatever may have been the fury of individual owners, he knew that he was supported by the laws of a land which recognized that what "God hath joined together no man can put asunder."

Nor were missionaries left to themselves in the enforcement of Church doctrine on these points. In 1527 and 1538 there were directions of the legislation for the

promotion of marriage; there was a law which ordained that married slaves should not be exported from Spain without their families; there were laws likewise for the protection of their liberty in cases of dishonest capture. It seems, in fact, as though just theories were always upheld by Spanish law, however much deviation there may have been in practice. And to say this is to say much, for, as long as true principles were acknowledged, there were always some who had the courage to apply them. And, further than that, so long as there were some to represent an ideal of mercy and kindness, there was hope that, among the masses, others would have the courage to correspond with it. And that this was what happened can be proved if only by the work of emancipation which was continually going forward. Thus in Cuba, in the year 1827, we find, out of a population of 393,436 blacks, there

were 106,494 free to 286,942 slaves, a proportion of more than one-third.[1] How many free negroes would have been found in Jamaica at that date? In the United States, as late as 1860, we find only 506,000 free negroes to 3,980,000 slaves.[2]

It is well to remember these things now that all is, happily, past. Sad as is the picture presented by a study of the state of Carthagena in the days of our apostle, we must not forget that there have been worse masters than the Spaniards. In physical cruelties they have been more than equalled; in their moral tyranny they have been far surpassed. A negro in Carthagena was, on the whole, credited with a human soul; our slave-owners of Jamaica talked lightly of their seraglios of "black cattle," and asked whether an ourang-outang husband was not a worthy

[1] "Encyclopædia Britannica."
[2] Mulhall's "Dictionary of Statistics."

partner for a Hottentot woman.[1] The accounts of this island remind us of slavery in pagan Rome; the degradation was so appalling that it was an unhappy day for an Englishman when he landed to make his fortune in the country. The accounts we obtain of it seem indeed to justify the writer of a pamphlet written in 1788, who compares the colony disadvantageously with the Spanish settlements, and says:—

"If a general emancipation of the slaves should not be effected, ought we to be less liberal than the French and Spaniards, who have planted Christianity in their islands, are by no means so severe in their discipline, and yet have experienced no bad effect from either?"[2]

It will, perhaps, ever remain a question of speculation rather than certainty what

[1] Long, quoted by Wilberforce.

[2] "An Account of Jamaica, etc.," p. 43.

might have been made of the negroes, if Europe had acted towards them the part of an elder brother instead of a tyrant. For many years must pass before the effects of an anti-Christian form of slavery can entirely disappear, and, meanwhile, they are undergoing the deteriorating effects of a civilization for which they were unprepared. They have suffered from false philanthropy as well as selfish tyranny, and they have not perhaps been more injured by the lash of their enemies than by the injudicious zeal of would-be friends, such as the French communists, who simultaneously emancipated and enfranchised a multitude of half savage people in the island of S. Domingo. That a limited and a properly exercised form of slavery or serfdom might have been beneficial in the commencement is more than probable, but such a thing is hard to find, and, in the case of negroes, slavery has

always implied slave trade. In Paraguay, amongst the Indians, great results were obtained by a fatherly form of government, which certainly resembled compulsory service; in Tuzulutlan, another land of spiritual conquest, where the Dominicans under Las Casas tamed a race which the Spanish adventurers had never been able to subdue, somewhat the same kind of government probably prevailed. But these are golden pages of history, they depict a condition of things which could seldom exist, and which could not long continue. Conquest, as a rule, is not undertaken for purely spiritual ends; and once men rule for their own interests, their subjects must infallibly fall victims to their own selfish ends, be those ends obtained by oppression or flattery. Had Africans never been slaves, they would still have been the tools of Europeans in some other way; unless indeed they had been quietly

exterminated by simple contact with the stronger race, as has been the case with many nations. Except in the rare instances to which we have referred, the meeting of civilized and uncivilized seem always to have brought about such union as between wolf and lamb. If the savage has not been destroyed by force, then he has been demoralized and effaced by having pressed on him customs and habits for which he was unfitted. Grown men have some pity for weak children; they do not expect them to conform to their own ways but develop their strength by a mode of life which is fitted to them. But when these men are gathered together in nations, they seem to have no collective sense of that which each one feels as an individual; they have no pity for a people that is young and feeble, and they ruin them by forced growth, or contaminate them by evil example.

Missionaries like F. Sandoval and Peter Claver have had hard work to make up for the wrongs done by their countrymen; and it is not wonderful that such men have been incited to give all their lives and strength for those who have been so grievously injured by so-called civilization. Sandoval's work was written as an appeal to all to come and help him in his labours. He asks that his own words may stand against him if, at any time, he should weary of his work; and he tells us how the sight before him has made "his eyes a fountain, and his heart an ocean of tears."

CHAPTER VI.

"THE SLAVE OF THE SLAVES."

"PETRUS CLAVER, Æthiopum semper servus;" these were the words with which Father Claver sealed his final profession. This was in 1622; he had then been occupied for six years with his work among the negroes, and he resolved to bind himself to it irrevocably, and for ever. It was to be the labour of his life, from which nothing was to draw him away. The slaves led a life of permanent obligation, without the power of change; it was fitting that their teacher should share their condition, and be bound to them as they were bound to their master.

Perhaps the hardest part of that formula, with which he closed his profession, is comprised in the little word *semper*—always. There is much in the accounts of his toil to fill us with admiration for deeds of lofty charity and self-conquest; but the noblest element of all was his patient and continual endurance. Hurrell Froude said that the height of his own ambition was to be a "humdrum;" and surely, for those who aspire to deeds of heroism, there is no truer test than that of courageous perseverance in sameness and monotony. The beginning of a great work attracts by its very difficulties, but familiarity is a terrible destroyer of enthusiasm, and leaves the worker no support but his own stubborn adherence to a cause which he knows to be great, in spite of all its apparent littleness and repulsiveness.

The life of a negro missioner was one of unexampled routine and drudgery.

Year after year new ships arrived laden with the same cargo, filled with the same disease, squalor and ignorance. Day after day the same catechism had to be repeated, the same questions asked, the same most elementary truths inculcated, the same stupidity and vice overcome. To an educated mind there was probably as much intellectual variety in a band of negroes as in a flock of sheep; it was a continual transition from questioning to teaching, from preparation to administration of the Sacraments.

We might divide our Saint's work under four heads, being, first and foremost, the teaching and conversion of slaves newly arrived; secondly, the care of those settled in Carthagena; thirdly, the constant visiting of hospitals and prisons; fourthly, the country missions.

To all these four branches of work he would probably have applied the maxims

of his predecessor, F. Sandoval, viz. :— (1) that the missionary must not wait to be summoned, but must trust to his own watchfulness alone; (2) that he must attend immediately to each case that arises, for every succeeding day is too full for anything to be left to the morrow; (3) that he must keep on the best terms with doctors, overseers and others, that they may send for him when occasion demands; (4) that he must do all for the love of God, and leave the result to Him.

The whole work of this apostleship was grievously complicated by various difficulties. One of these was the uncertainty regarding the valid baptism of those who called themselves Christians. There prevailed the most shameful carelessness in this matter on the African coast. Father Mercado, in enumerating the grievances of the negroes, speaks of the "otra barbaridad grandissima"—"other monstrous

cruelty,"—which was the indifferent and reckless manner with which this ceremony was performed. The apostle of Carthagena had to atone for the remissness of others by endless questioning of each new comer.

Another difficulty, which would alone have broken the backs of many men, was the multiplied variety of language and dialect among the different races. It was utterly impossible to learn all these languages, and hence it was necessary to make use of interpreters. It will give some idea of the complexity of the matter to learn that Father Claver possessed seven of these interpreters, one of whom spoke four languages; and that it was sometimes necessary to employ five interpreters for one case, as a chain of communication was formed by means of the different dialects. It was once noted that on a single ship there were slaves speaking forty different dialects.

But the difficulty of language was more than equalled by that arising from their stupidity. This want of capacity did not, F. Sandoval with great simplicity remarks, dispense their teacher from the duty of enlightening them (as was the opinion too common among other Spaniards), but only obliged him to take much more trouble about it. Each one had to be questioned out of hearing of the rest; or, sheep-like, they would all have answered alike.

A further complication arose, in some cases, from the bad will of the masters; though, on the other hand, there are many instances in the life of Peter Claver to show that all did not deserve this reproof, but that many took considerable pains for the conversion of their slaves.

The progress of the work then was somewhat after the following fashion. A slave ship arrived in port, and this was the

signal for a rush of Father Claver's friends to bring him the first news. We have seen what were the feelings of another very holy man every time he received this summons; how, in spite of his determined perseverance, he was almost overpowered with loathing and repugnance on every fresh occasion. Whatever may have been the nausea experienced by Peter Claver at the commencement of his mission, he certainly outlived it, and passed into that calmer atmosphere, where the end is so visible and so near, that the means are no longer painful. On receiving the tidings that he was called once more into the midst of one of these swarms of human wretchedness, he was positively transformed with delight. He set forth at once with his little cargo of delicacies, such as sweet water, fruit, brandy, tobacco, etc., and, going on board, welcomed each one individually, attended first to the dying,

and then washed, fed, and comforted the rest. Next morning, when he arrived, the poor slaves were watching eagerly for their new friend, and received him with child-like demonstrations of affection.

When the time came to disembark he was waiting on the shore to receive them, and to bid them welcome to the land where they were to receive the light of faith. He had all kinds of carts and conveyances, got ready by his own care, to bear them to the place of their destination; and, after the many weary months spent in an unhealthy cabin under the iron yoke of despotic masters, it must indeed have seemed to them like a coming home. For if Father Claver did much to comfort their bodies, he did still more to raise them to a sense of personal dignity, by impressing on them that they were exceedingly dear to him, that he had been waiting and wishing for their arrival, that it was an intense

joy to him to be amongst them. Perhaps this alone did more to encourage and raise those degraded beings than the most humane and liberal treatment could have done. For it was not only his own limited human love and pity that he offered them. He was not satisfied with speaking to them of a love which he and they could fathom. They were too precious for this. They were loved by One greater than himself, and his tenderness was to be but the channel of Infinite Charity and Compassion. And thus he comforted them in the most effectual manner, by giving them that sense of their own personal value of which they had been so cruelly robbed by months of ill-treatment and humiliation. In extreme cases of crime and degradation the first and most important step is to raise the criminal in his own opinion; this was the method Father Claver followed when he showered

proofs of affection on men who thought themselves doomed to be objects of everlasting contempt.

During their stay in the slave-sheds of Carthagena his attendance on them was continual. He went to them every day, the cross in his hand, and his shoulders laden with two baskets, of which one contained food and refreshing drinks, the other the necessaries for erecting an altar, together with rosaries, medals, etc. Then came the laborious work of catechism, followed by baptism. It is reckoned that he must have baptized nearly four hundred thousand during the entire course of his ministry.

The process of catechizing was monotonously the same. He repeated the principal truths again and again, questioning each individual separately, until they had all thoroughly mastered them, and could likewise recite certain prayers. He made use

of something akin to our modern kindergarten system, and employed both pictures and gestures largely in his instructions.

After the doctrine came the acts of faith, hope and charity, and, last but not least, the act of contrition. We must remember that Peter Claver had prepared for his apostolic career by long years of personal discipline and sanctification. He had endeavoured first to realize his own position and duties before speaking on the subject to others. He had come to feel his own hopeless indebtedness as the object of a love which was infinite and unfathomable, and by learning how much God loved his own soul he learned also how much He loved the souls of others. He acquired thereby a reverence for those souls, a belief in their possibilities, which emboldened him afterwards to ask of them what another would not have dared to ask. He called on them to share the rapture of

utter indebtedness, utter obligation; and he grasped the great truth that it is sometimes kinder to ask than to give, to tell men what is expected of them rather than what they have a right to expect, to lead them on to self-sacrifice rather than cushion them in ease and self-indulgence. We may *do* most for the man whom we merely pity; but we ask most and expect most of the man whom we reverence and love.

Only by bearing this in mind can we sympathize with his continual efforts to arouse in the minds of these degraded slaves a sense of deep shame and contrition. Not many would have the courage to face a crowd of such miserable beings and rebuke them for their sins instead of pitying them for their misfortunes. Nor are there many who would dare, as he did, to exhort criminals to prepare for death by the use of penance and disciplines. It

seemed as though no one could suffer so much but that he could exhort them to suffer a little more; that no one could be so wronged but that he could rouse in them a sense of the guilt of their own crimes stronger than their sense of injury from others. And yet in this, which so few would even attempt, he succeeded, and the slave-yards used to resound with the wailing and tears which accompanied the act of contrition as he held up the crucifix before their eyes.

For the time these deeply injured beings forgot the injustice with which they had been torn from home and country, forgot the hard blows and cruel words which had been heaped on them for no right cause, forgot all the wrongs done to them, and remembered only those which they had done. They woke suddenly to the knowledge that they had been loved far more deeply than they had ever been hated;

that they had themselves been sensual, false and cruel; that their darkness had not been so great but that there was light enough to see right and do wrong; and that all this had wounded One who had loved them more than His own life. Then from all together broke forth simultaneously the touching prayer which they had that morning learnt: "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Thou shalt be my father, my mother, and all my good. I love Thee much; my soul is grieved at having offended Thee. Lord, I love Thee much—much—much!"

And, as they uttered those words, they were greater than their masters, greater than if they were free men, for they were greater than fallen human nature. They had risen above their own vices, which were a more grievous degradation than their chains; and from the condition of poor suffering objects, deserving only of

pity and indulgence, they had passed to the nobler state of men who had duties as well as rights, who could do as well as suffer, give as well as receive. They knew themselves to be the objects of an Infinite Love, and to be bound by endless obligations. They were greater even in the much that was expected of them than in the much they had a right to expect. Because they were poor and unhappy they were not to be classed as a lower order of beings, so much the victims of their circumstances, that they were no longer responsible for doing right or wrong. Their master had succeeded in touching a nobler chord than those feelings of self-pity and self-love which are so easily reached; and their whole being responded gladly to the call which was made on them.

When the slaves that had newly arrived were divided according to their several

destinations, Father Claver continued to watch over those that remained in Carthagena; others, perhaps, he saw occasionally on his country missions; but to many he had to bid farewell for ever. He then lovingly repeated his injunctions for the last time; reminded them of their new dignity; charged the best instructed to watch over the others; and finally recommended them most earnestly to the kindness of the masters and overseers. Our Christian altruist had a wonderful faith in human nature; even the slave-drivers were not hopeless barbarians in his eyes; and by his belief in their still possessing human hearts we may trust that he sometimes succeeded in rousing human feelings.

After the departure of the slave-gangs he returned to his ordinary life at Carthagena. This consisted chiefly in the attendance of the confessional and the care of

the sick. He had a certain number of Spaniards who constantly adhered to him, and sought him for confession and advice. But these were few, for his negroes were always the first objects, and not many high-born Spaniards were inclined to wait for hours in the midst of a flock of his unkempt children. On feast-days he went to his confessional at three o'clock in the morning, and during Lent he spent fifteen hours there every day.

It was a great object of his care to seek out negroes who, being sick of offensive diseases, were either altogether abandoned, or were shoved into remote corners of a house or stable. Many are the tales, told by eye-witnesses, of his heroic and persevering devotion to these cases. He had to face what the negroes themselves could not endure, and even his generous and faithful companion, Brother Nicholas Gonzalez, sometimes faltered in following

him. On one occasion he attended a band of negroes, in such a loathsome condition from small-pox, that his interpretress fled at the sight; but he called her back, encouraging her by those words which must always have been at the bottom of his own heart: "Magdalen, these are souls redeemed by Christ."

A Spanish lady was induced, by his example alone, to attend to a sick slave, whose room she could not previously endure to enter. There were some whom he watched over continually for numbers of years; cleaning their rooms and carrying them the necessaries of life.

He did the work of a sick nurse, without the help of many appliances; and when he was not praying, preaching, or hearing confessions, he was washing wounds, making beds, and administering food and medicine. If some of his actions appear

to modern taste more revolting to nature than useful to the sick, we must remember that there was much in the conduct of his countrymen to atone for; and we shall not blame him if, in the exuberance of his pity, he appears to love even the sores and wounds of those who met with but little kindness when they were well and strong.

It adds reality to the portrait of this devoted man to know that human feelings of repugnance were not altogether dead within him. On one or two occasions he is known to have flinched at the appalling sights which he was obliged to witness. But squeamishness was not a quality which attracted him. He retired for a few minutes, scourged himself severely, and returned to help the "weak brother for whom Christ died."

After Easter he set forth on his country missions, travelling to the different settle-

ments, amidst all the difficulties of rough roads and wild weather. It was while on one of these expeditions that he contracted the seeds of his last illness. On reaching a station he chose the worst hut for his own abode. The evenings, after the slaves returned from work, were devoted to prayer and instruction; the mornings to the administration of the sacraments. On his departure he always left the settlement very different from what he had found it.

He was constantly summoned to condemned criminals, and not one died during his time without his assistance. When everyone else had failed in touching the heart of some stubborn offender, Father Claver was called in as a last resource. There must have been a marvellous power of influence in the man who could induce rough bad men to spend the short remainder of their lives in acts of self-inflicted penance. He attended one man to the scaffold, and,

through an accident, the cord broke, and the criminal fell, still living, into the arms of St. Peter Claver. He supported him, and continued speaking to him while the cord was again adjusted. Some by-standers told him he was incurring irregularity, but charity was to him the highest law, and he answered simply, "Be it so, if thereby I save a soul."

Besides the prisoners of the law, he had also to visit the slaves confined by their masters for some offence. The guilty were treated in such a manner as we should expect from knowing how the innocent fared. They were sometimes left in absolute solitude, with scarcely anything to eat; and he went to them frequently, to carry both food and consolation. He had a great dread of their being left too much alone, as the blacks easily fell into extreme dejection.

It seemed as though he were gifted with

a special faculty for appearing wherever he was needed; and the negroes were in constant fear of his arrival at one of their wild and disorderly meetings.

With all these works he still had time to bestow on the hospital of St. Sebastian and the Lazaretto. The latter was, as his biographer tells us, his "garden of delights." Ascetic as he was, he had a wonderful delicacy in pleasing his poor, and on feast-days, when he had collected alms to send them a banquet, he provided also a band of music to enliven them at their meal.

We might multiply endlessly the anecdotes of different cases with which he dealt; but the recital would be monotonous, and when we know one or two, we know many.

He met with the usual fate of men who excel their fellows—the masters abused him for taking up the time of the slaves; people of refinement and education com-

plained of his filling the church with those who made it unendurable for anyone else; his own brethren found fault with him for what they considered high-flown and exaggerated. He was told that the negroes were too low and vicious to be admitted to the sacraments; and yet, on the other hand, if they did wrong it was ascribed to him. Nor were they always themselves a great consolation to him. It took much labour to procure a small result; and if the majority were won by his kindness, still many were rendered simply insolent. But he held on his way; bowing to the storm, but making his way through it. He said humbly, "What sort of a man must I be, that I cannot do a little good without causing so much confusion?" but while submitting to the blame, he persevered in his course. The hardest trial was when he was once for a time forbidden to baptize, as false com-

plaints had been made of him. But he still did what he could ; worked patiently in the midst of contradictions ; and continued to plant and water, knowing that it was not he himself who could give the increase.

CHAPTER VII.

"IN HOC SIGNO VINCES."

WE almost shrink from disclosing the secrets of this chapter, for we have now reached that phase in the life of our apostle which will meet with least sympathy from modern taste and feeling. We could follow Peter Claver courageously during the day-time. We could watch, as it were with his eyes, the scenes of misery which he witnessed. We could think to ourselves that, had we been there, we should have been glad to share his toils, to ease his labours; even to receive in our own person some of the rebuffs with which his heroism was rewarded. But now we must suppose that, at last, his long day's

work is ended. He has been toiling for others since three in the morning ; he has trudged for hours along the hot streets, or stood teaching and exhorting under the broiling tropical sun. As evening drew on he has betaken himself to his confessional at the door of the church, and has remained for some hours in a close, reeking atmosphere, surrounded by his ordinary flock. But now the church is closed, the house is dark and silent, and he must at length retire to the loneliness of his own little room. Thither no companion follows him, for a few short hours he can refresh himself in solitude, and prepare for the labours of another day.

Through all his work for others we have seen that there was one thread, weaving itself in and out among the rest, and colouring the entire fabric. This was his doctrine regarding suffering. He had upheld, under circumstances that would have

quelled most men, the maxim that it was blessed to mourn; while endeavouring to lessen pain and sorrow, he had still urged the sufferer to endurance. Now, in these hours which he kept for himself, we have to see how his principles affected his own conduct. Men cannot incessantly spend themselves on others. For all there must be hours and days in which they take in that which they are afterwards to give out. And as there is truth in the old saying that "Charity begins at home," so there should be some correspondence between that which men seek for others, and that which they seek for self.

No sooner was Father Claver alone, in the stillness of the night, than he drew forth from hidden receptacles the implements of his own torture. During the day he had preached patience to slaves, and he now vied with their suffering by self-inflicted penance. He was already so

swathed in cords and chains and prickly instruments, that it took a considerable time to put them on or off. He now added to them a crown of thorns which he pressed on to his brow; a gag which he placed in his mouth; a cross with which he loaded his shoulders. Three times during his short night he scourged himself severely; only three hours were devoted to sleep, on the bare ground, and the rest of the time to prayer and suffering. He habitually ate so little that few men could have subsisted on it; and bodily comforts of all kinds were unknown to him.

When our saint took off his own cloak to cover a dead body, or when he gave up his bed to a sick negro, he was doing what we can all admire; he was practising altruism in its highest sense by taking from self to help another. But when he scourged himself in the solitude of the night, he did nothing thereby to lessen the

floggings inflicted on slaves; when he clothed himself in cords and chains, he did nothing to remove excessive burdens from the backs of the negroes. Actions such as these excite in our days horror rather than sympathy; for voluntary pain and suffering have been excluded from the category of that which is high and noble. To some the very existence of pain on the earth is an intolerable riddle and contradiction; but to others, who can see the beauty of suffering for the sake of another, or according to the general and inevitable dispensation of human life, it is still a vanity and superstition to suffer freely and of one's own accord. To accept meekly those pains which come to us from God and our neighbour; to submit to sickness and bereavement, or to live on bread and water that a starving man may have enough to eat; this is good. But to take on our own shoulders that which no

one lays on them ; to fast, wear a hair shirt, or scourge the body with a heavy chain ; this is mere delusion and fanaticism.

It is always a difficult and doubtful matter to compare the tendencies of different ages ; and thus it would be hard to ascertain what is our present mental attitude as regards suffering, when we contrast ourselves with our predecessors. But what cannot be doubted is that we are in a curiously complex state of mind on the subject. Never were men more occupied in the endeavour to remove it from the entire face of the earth ; and yet, at the same time, never was there more talk of self-sacrifice and renunciation, which necessarily implies suffering on the part of the victim. To some the first of these objects is all in all. They have formed what Carlyle terms a "Universal Abolition of Pain Association ;" the doctrines of their creed, the maxims of their conduct, are all

summed up in the single effort to lessen suffering and sorrow. Thus George Eliot writes of her heroine: "She had no innate taste for tending the sick, and clothing the ragged, like some women to whom the details of such work are welcome in themselves, simply as an occupation. . . . But they had come to be the one unshaken resting-place of her mind, the one narrow pathway on which the light fell clear . . . she had ceased to think that her own lot could be happy—had ceased to think of happiness at all; the one end of her life seemed to be the diminishing of sorrow." [1]

Others, on the contrary, are drawn less by the attractions of active benevolence than by the abstract beauty of self-abnegation and devotion. In their recoil from mere selfish epicureanism they are kindled with the desire of renouncing self for the

[1] "Romola," p. 336.

sake of a larger life. They have seen the gradual chastening and ennobling of characters under the influence of sorrow, and they know that it contains, in some way, a virtue which is in nothing else. Thus another of George Eliot's heroines lights on that chapter of the Imitation which speaks of the Royal Road of the Cross, and she finds in it a fulfilment of those aspirations which had never before found an outlet. The mere abstract notion of renunciation feeds her mind and strengthens her soul, till it crumbles from its very vagueness and impersonality. Thus Comte's disciple exclaims: "Quels plaisirs peuvent l'emporter sur ceux du dévouement?" and the dying monk in "Romola" says: "I felt that there was a life of perfect love and purity for the soul; in which there would be no uneasy hunger after pleasure, no tormenting questions, no fear of suffering. Before I knew the

history of the saints I had a foreshadowing of their ecstasy . . . and in visions I saw the meaning of the crucifix." [1]

"The crucifix." Not only the dying monk, and those who resemble him, but others widely different continue to wander round it; though their intentions are so distinct and various. The selfish and worldly look on it merely to shudder and execrate. The philanthropist comes near with the single ambition to draw out the nails, not to share the torments. Others, filled with the altruistic spirit of self-renunciation, seek to exalt the devotion by which one man died in order that others might be saved. But all three agree in their censure and condemnation when the Catholic saint retires to his cell, and strives actively to imitate the example of his Master, and fill up in his own body that which is wanting to the Passion of

[1] "Romola," p. 136.

Christ. It is here, they say, that the generosity of self-sacrifice ends, and fanaticism begins. Thus James Hinton writes: "When a man begins to seek goodness, then the effect of having his thought fixed upon self is seen; it falsifies the very nature of right, perverting it from being the simple following of service into a question of restraining ourselves from pleasure. So that any being who has succumbed to letting self stand first to him, has brought on himself a bondage which he does not suspect, a need for banishing pleasure which God lays on none of His creatures." [1]

And again, speaking from what was certainly a misapprehension, he says:—

"It was thus that asceticism arose, seeking pain as a good, self-denial as an end." [2]

[1] "Mystery of Pain," p. viii.
[2] Idem, p. 88.

According, then, to the doctrine of this school, suffering is to become our joy when, by enduring it, we can brighten the lot of others. But self-inflicted pain, such as the penances of St. Peter Claver, are to be classed with those of pagan devotees, who cut themselves in pieces before a wooden god, who delights in mere torture and bloodshed.

What, then, is the true position of suffering in human life? For St. Peter Claver was certainly not wanting in the highest spirit of altruism. He surely, as much as any disciple of modern schools, was glad to suffer in order that others might rejoice. He cheerfully renounced health, comfort and peace to enlighten and raise a suffering race. And yet, while he surpassed the teaching of philanthropy, he excelled likewise in the practice of asceticism; he suffered not only to relieve others, but also for the sake of his

own soul. Suffering possessed for him something more than merely altruistic advantages; it was, in some way, an important element in the battle and probation of life. It is curious how some fail to see that, in confining the use of suffering to the mere giving up for the sake of others, or submitting to an inevitable dispensation, they in reality shift the difficulty rather than solve it. For why is the world so constituted that happiness must be bought by pain, and that the meek and generous must purchase the joy of others by the sacrifice of their own? Why should "the law of sacrifice be the law of life," unless there be some true and real connection between life in this world, as at present constituted, and suffering, so that the latter is, in some way, the means to our end? In itself it would be a higher state if we attained a happy end through the employment of happy means, for why should the

path be so different from the goal? In truth, though it may seem a bold thing to say, unless we can find some philosophy of suffering which will cover voluntary penance in due order and proportion, it will be hard to justify the system of Providence, which depends on the will of God, and continually inflicts on mankind pains far more severe than any which are self-imposed. What is a hair shirt in comparison with a disease? What is the most rigorous fast to the loss of a dearly loved friend? Listen to the awful words of Mill:—

"Killing, the most criminal act recognized by human laws, nature does once to every being that lives; and in a large proportion of cases, after protracted tortures such as only the greatest monsters whom we read of ever purposely inflicted on their fellow creatures. . . . Nature impales men, breaks them as if on the

wheel, casts them to be devoured by wild beasts, burns them to death, crushes them with stones like the first Christian martyr, starves them with hunger, freezes them with cold, poisons them by the quick or slow venom of her exhalations, and has hundreds of other hideous deaths in reserve, such as the ingenious cruelty of a Nero or a Domitian never surpassed. All this nature does with the most supercilious disregard both of mercy and justice, emptying her shafts upon the best and noblest indifferently with the meanest and worst. . . . Such are nature's dealings with life. Even when she does not intend to kill, she inflicts the same tortures in apparent wantonness. In the clumsy provision which she has made for the perpetual renewal of animal life, rendered necessary by the prompt termination which she puts to it in every individual instance, no human being ever comes into the world

but another being is liberally stretched on the rack for hours or days—not infrequently issuing in death."[1]

It will be urged, and with truth, that these sufferings come as part of an universal scheme, that, as Hinton says, "we are sacrificed, unwilling, for others' good, unseen." But God is the Master of the system, and why need He fashion it so that one man must always suffer that another may rejoice, unless indeed there be some positive fitness of suffering to human life? But if there be this need of suffering for the perfection of man, so great that God almost tempts His own children by its severe and continual infliction, then why may they not help on the work by their own efforts, and inflict on themselves a tenth part of the suffering which comes to them by His order? For those who believe in a supreme Providence, as

[1] "Essay on Nature," pp. 28-30.

for those who do not, there is nothing left but rank hopelessness and despair unless they can fix the true position and rights of suffering in this life. What is it that makes it so high and holy at the same time that it is so distasteful and terrible? Suffering, nobly borne, is the highest form of heroism which this world can show. Without it no man can reach the loftiest summit of virtue, and be among the great ones of this life. And yet, more perfect still is the state where it cannot exist; the state of Heaven where duties are a joy, so much holier than the state of earth where they are a pain. It cannot then be the best thing in itself, but only the best thing in a world which needs it, the best thing in an imperfect state. For it is in really *giving*, giving what costs us; and the simple fact of the giver suffering pain in his offering would be no additional satisfaction to the one who receives, unless the

pain were, in some way, the highest test of his love. That it is the highest test comes from the sin and selfishness that have crept into life; once these are for ever removed there will remain the love of the sufferer, but not the pain of the lover. It is never true, as Hinton says, that Christian asceticism seeks "pain as good, self-denial as an end." Saints loved the Cross, but it was the Cross which led to a kingdom. They suffered in battle, not in torture-chambers; they suffered to show their love for the God Who redeemed them, not to pacify a monster who hated them; they suffered for the sake of growth and not destruction.

The Christian doctrine of asceticism is, in fact, a corollary of the Christian doctrine regarding both sin and sinful tendencies. If human nature tended always to good, there would be no reason for self-restricted penance to restrain it

from evil; but neither would there be any reason for the general system of suffering and privation which has been established by the Order of Providence. For those who believe that human nature can do no wrong; that men, especially those who are poor and suffering, can commit no sin; that the cause, and not the cure of wrong-doing, is pain; there is evidently no apology possible for the state of things in life; and we can only wonder at the hopefulness with which they approach such a tangled maze of injustice and oppression.

But for those who believe in the faith that, in the words of the poet,—

> "Launched point-blank her dart
> At the head of a lie—taught Original Sin
> The corruption of man's heart,"[1]

who see on the earth a condition of things which makes it possible to attain physical

[1] "Gold Hair."—Robert Browning.

well-being at the expense of moral good; suffering must always appear under a widely different aspect. It becomes then necessary as the preventive and cure of evil, and as embodying in itself the highest form of love. Had suffering no place in life, love could be as high and holy without it; but, once pain and difficulties exist, it is in their endurance that the noblest hearts can prove their devotion. Their own happiness, in a lower sense, is an obstacle to their highest good and complete self-devotion. And thus they can understand why God inflicts suffering and sorrow, they can believe that it is a necessary part of a loving dispensation; that it is part of God's work for their redemption.

And why then should one, whose whole end and object is to aid in God's own work, not presume to assist in the task? If there is one prominent idea in the

minds of saints, it is that their interests are identical with those of their Maker. They know that they work for Him, but they know still more clearly that He works for them. If Father Claver was continually labouring for those souls for which Christ died, he knew that his own was equally precious in the sight of God; if he was always striving to mount higher and higher in the path of holiness, he knew that he was not alone, that every step was even more precious to the One for Whom he made it than it was to himself. And so to him it seemed that his own sanctification was the common work of himself and his God, that they were to share the same means in order to arrive at the same end. As, in the order of God's Providence, pain was attached to all his labours, in that every soul he helped caused him some proportion of physical and mental suffering, so he thought it no fanaticism or delusion to help

on in his own person the work which God had commenced. In his secret communings with God, during the lonely hours of the night, he was invited to help on the task which had been begun. When a sickness came he thought it was because he had been too easy and indulgent with himself, and he blushed that God should have to supplement the work by compulsion. For the love of saints is strong and robust. They consider not so much "the gift of the lover, as the love of the giver;" they know that "the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to come;" and they joyfully leave to the good will of the One, Who has prepared these glories for them, the appointment of that tribulation through which they must enter the kingdom of Heaven.

This life is so constituted that it is possible to have a certain amount of

happiness and enjoyment apart from its true end. There is in this world a sweetness, a beauty, which is not all of God. St. Ignatius, while gazing on a starlit sky, would exclaim, "Quam sordet mihi terra dum cœlum aspicio," and St. Austin could not look on a beautiful scene without crying out, "If this be the prison what must the palace be?" But not all are like this. For, in truth, the prison is beautiful, to some intoxicatingly beautiful; and to these it may seem that no palace could be desirable in comparison.

As the poet says:—

"Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a mother's mind
And no unworthy aim,
The homely nurse doth all she can
To make her foster child, her inmate man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came."

For those, then, for whom the glory of

[1] "Ode on Immortality."—Wordsworth.

nature, the glow of intellectual activity, the joys of friendship, are so entrancing that the prison walls disappear, and the whole world seems wrapped in brightness and beauty, what recollection would remain of a more spiritual palace unless their transports were checked by pain? Were nature pure and sinless there would be no such necessity, for then the prison would be no prison, but would be illumined by the majesty of a God Who, once known to His creatures, could fear no rival. But now rivals can and do exist, and for those to whom the palace seems pale in comparison with the prison, there remains no help unless that prison is in some sense a painful one.

For "our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;" there is a veil between man and his end, and that veil serves even more effectually to conceal what is beyond if it be dazzling in texture, than if it be of

a dark and sorrowful hue. The saints could not but hate that which hid the sight of God from their eyes, and was always causing themselves or others to offend Him. They willingly deprived themselves of the lesser good in order to seek the higher ; as, in a somewhat similar manner, we should put away objects of a lower art, even if they had an attraction for us, in order to acquire a taste for that which is higher, knowing that, once that taste is acquired, it will fully compensate us for a temporary deprivation. We must not spend our lives in the Doré Gallery if we wish to appreciate Giotto and Fra Angelico. And thus, while saints may still rejoice in many delights of this earth, they never allow themselves to forget that it is a prison, and that to find their happiness in it would be to accustom themselves to it until, like caged birds, they no longer craved for liberty.

Even here below there are occasions on which we would rather feel pain than not; simply because it is a sign of higher life. In times of bereavement who has not felt, though unexpressed, those sentiments of "In Memoriam"—

"Let love clasp grief lest both be drowned,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss:
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor hours should scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
'Behold the man that loved and lost,
But all he was is overworn.'"

("In Mem." I.)

And sorrow is cherished in these cases not because it is sorrow, but because without it comes forgetfulness. To the minds of saints there is present a constant dread of forgetfulness, and the joy of life is a kind of sacrilege in the presence of another world. And, as the Imitation says, "the higher a man is advanced in spirit, the heavier crosses shall he fre-

quently find, for the pain of his banishment increases with his love." As the objects of another world grow more clear, more distinct, so does the chosen soul long the more to strip off the veil that still continues to shroud them. Only by death can this unveiling be finally accomplished, and so only by death to many pleasures and to many joys can it be accomplished in some sort in this life. With growing realization comes the knowledge of how much deprivation may be caused by mere pleasure; for unless we sacrifice the lower joys we cannot attain the higher.

But suffering, such as that of St. Peter Claver, must always partake largely of the personal element; the vision of Calvary was always before him. If sacrifice was the law of life, there was in front of him a living example of the highest and the most utter self-sacrifice. Some may find pleasure in purely impersonal devotion; in

renouncing, for the sake of an abstraction, those joys to which the man who renounces them is as much entitled as they for whom he renounces. But ardent, living souls need more than this. They cannot sacrifice themselves to a dumb god, who will never know nor understand their suffering. They have before them a living Model for imitation, One Who has suffered like themselves, and Who thirsts for the love which is best shown in the midst of pain.

"We often," writes a modern student of this great mystery, "see a large apartment filled with the beautiful and softened light that comes from the lamp with its coloured shade upon it. Even so from Calvary, under its veil of darkness, there is spread over the Christian world a mellow and softened and hallowed light; sad, if you will, and mournful, but so beautiful, so consoling, so full of loveliness and heavenly grace, that it has sufficed to draw away the

hearts of men from all that this world can offer. Calvary is become the home of the Christian heart." [1]

It is this personal and loving element which serves, more than any other, to render possible such penances as those adopted by St. Peter Claver; for unless the love dominated the pain no one could have endured them. They could never have been inflicted in cold blood and calm self-possession. The Roman and the Carthaginian soldiers fighting in the battle at Lake Thrasymene were utterly unconscious of an earthquake which took place at the time; certain strong emotions render our external senses numb to pain or pleasure. But with the saints it was more than numbness; their very suffering became a part of their joy. St. Theresa speaks sometimes of the pain so delightful

[1] "Watches of the Passion," F. Gallwey, S.J. Vol. i. p. 8.

that she would not part with it for any pleasure; she speaks of the soul whose desire of penance is so great that she does not "suffer much in performing it, for the power of love makes her scarcely feel whatever she does." [1]

In the words of à Kempis—"If thou carry the cross willingly, it will carry thee"—Christian penance is more full of sweetness than the sufferings of a mother for the love of her child, of a friend for the sake of his friend.

"Bear the anguish and the smart," says the Christian teacher to the suffering soul; "the iron is sharp, I know, I know—it rends the tender flesh. But there is rapture in the cup—there is the vision which makes all life below it dross for ever." [2]

The follower of Christ resigns himself joyfully into His Hands, prepared for the

[1] "Interior Castle," translated by J. Dalton p. 122.

[2] "Romola," p. 316.

pains of suffering as well as the joys of love; knowing that the former can never so far prevail but that the latter will dominate and absorb them, even in this life.

"O Beauty," exclaims St. Theresa, "thou exceedest all other beauties.

"Thou strikest not, yet inflictest pain.

"Thou painest not, yet uprootest the love of all other creatures.

"In a knot thou bindest two things the most unequal;

"For pain joined in Thee becomes pleasure, and sorrow joy." [1]

[1] "O hermosura, que excedeis
A todas las hermosuras!
Sin herir dolor haceis,
Y sin dolor deshaceis.
Con amor de las creaturas.

"O nudo que ansi juntais
Dos cosas tan desiguales!
No sé porque os desatais:
Pues atado fuerza dais
A tener por bien los males.

CHAPTER VIII.

"EUGE, EUGE, SERVE BONE ET FIDELIS!"

DURING one of the illnesses of St. Peter Claver, someone in attendance on him perceived the hair-shirt under his other clothes, and exclaimed in surprise: "Father, how long is the poor ass to be kept in harness?" "Till death," was the instant reply.

"Rest," said Carlyle's hero, "have I not eternity to rest in?"

And so if, during the last four years of his life, Father Claver was condemned to stillness and inaction, it was a kind of inaction which brought no bodily peace and rest. He lay still and solitary in his

room for many long days before his final release, but it was the loneliness of one suffering and forgotten, not the calm and refreshment of one who, having worked well for his people, is tended by them at the last as he has cared for others in his day.

In 1650 a jubilee was proclaimed in Carthagena. This was always the signal for a great concourse of people in the churches, and Peter Claver, having worked indefatigably in the town, afterwards set off for the country missions, to attend to those who had less opportunity of approaching the Sacraments.

He was already exhausted, and the hardships of weather and rough journeys, added to his continual penance, reduced him to such a condition of weakness, that his superiors, hearing of it, suddenly ordered him to return.

He came back to the college in the most alarming state of exhaustion; but it

was to face a greater danger than he had avoided. The plague, though hidden and unacknowledged, had appeared in the town; and two religious had died in the very house of the Jesuits. Father Claver was immediately attacked by it, and was not expected to live. To the surprise of all he recovered to a certain point, but it left him utterly prostrated in strength, with continual and acute inward pains, and a most distressing shaking of all the limbs, which rendered him incapable of saying Mass, and often of taking his food unaided. This state lasted till the end of his life. He was able occasionally to do a little of his former work; thus he went sometimes to his confessional after hearing Mass; he had himself carried from time to time to a sick person or a prisoner; he went every week to hear the confession of Donna Isabel de Urbina, who had been his faithful almoner during

the whole of his ministry; he was once even carried to some negroes called Arares, a tribe which had not appeared at Carthagena for thirty years. But the greater part of his last sickness was spent in loneliness and inaction; abandoned almost entirely to the care of a rough and brutal negro.

It was a strange and mysterious dispensation. It is true that he had outlived his working powers, and that men are more mindful of the rising than the setting sun. But it is rare that anyone should be so entirely forgotten in life as he was. There are generally a good number of faithful hearts, who cling the more closely as the one they love is passing from them. But it was not so in his case. Donna Isabel was faithful to her spiritual father; Brother Nicholas Gonzalez never forgot him, and came to his room when he could to give him a little help and comfort. But other-

wise the forgetfulness was complete. It was a time of general confusion and dismay. The plague was raging on all sides, and those who were not absorbed in their own fears were driven from morning till night by the necessities of others. It disappeared for a time, but only to return the following autumn. The religious of the house were so reduced in numbers by the disease, and so crushed with work for others, that even they also were forced to abandon him. He was left in the charge of the negro to whom we have already referred; no one had time to see if that charge was properly fulfilled; and the consequence was that Father Claver reaped the return his own heart would have desired from the representative of that race to whom his life had been devoted.

That poor negro little thought he would live for ever in the remembrance of

the world for those acts of cruelty and neglect which seemed so natural and trivial to his coarse mind.

The noble cannot be recognized but by those who have in them some strain of nobility, and to his poor ignorant eyes Peter Claver was not a saint and apostle, but only an infirm old man, who was somewhat of a burden to look after, but would not grumble if he were neglected. A man who allowed himself to be abused and ill-treated by a slave, could not possibly be of much worth or consequence, or deserve better than he got. And so "the slave of the blacks" became, during his last years, the victim of the base instincts of one of those in whom it had been his constant endeavour to rouse high and holy feelings. The time was past in which he could actively help and instruct them; all he could now do was to suffer meekly at their hands the return for his past efforts.

Among his spiritual notes was the following: "It behoves me in all things to imitate the example of the ass, who when he is spoken evil of, is dumb; when he is starved, is dumb; when he is loaded till he sinks to the earth, is dumb; when he is forgotten and despised, is still dumb. He never complains, whatever may be said or done, or whatever ill-treatment he may receive, for he is but an ass. So must the servant of God be: 'Ut jumentum factus sum apud te!'"

Thus following his own maxims, he remained dumb and silent when he was left without food or drink; when his room remained for weeks unswept and filthy; when his coarse guardian refused to help him to rise and dress or descend to the chapel; when he tortured his weak and suffering limbs by his rough handling and treatment.

A little while before his death there was great excitement in the town at the arrival

of a certain Father Farina, who was to succeed Father Claver in the negro ministry. The noise of his arrival penetrated to the little cell where the former apostle lay dying and forgotten. It was one of his last acts to drag himself from his room and salute his successor; rejoicing that his place was so quickly filled.

Shortly after this event he went one Saturday, as usual, to hear the confession of Donna Isabel, and told her that he should return no more. On the morning of September 6th, he communicated in the church and said to Brother Nicholas Gonzalez, as he returned through the sacristy: "Voyme a morir"—"I am going to die." On the following morning he was found lying unconscious, and remained so the whole of the day.

And now, when the ass was indeed so dumb that he could never speak again, with a sudden rush it dawned on men's

minds that something was slipping from their grasp whose value they had learned too late. A clock may be continuously ticking in our room, and its presence be unnoticed, until by the sudden silence which succeeds we become aware that there was a sound. Father Claver lay silent and unconscious, he never spoke or looked again, and then those around him remembered in a flash all he had said and done in the past. With those wringing pains of remorse, which we all know too well, they recalled to their minds that long career of patient devotion. They thought of the many slights meekly borne; of the many little services so mercifully rendered and so unthankfully received; of the many, many occasions on which one or other might have helped and comforted him and failed to do so. And, thinking of these things, they now began to shower marks of love and reverence on the poor

frame from which the soul had well nigh departed.

The last rites were administered, and then the news flew through the house that the saint was dying, and from the house spread itself through the whole town. Instantly throngs besieged his room. Nobles, prelates, rich and poor, succeeded each other in a continuous stream, jostling each other for one little look at that unconscious form which they might have beheld so easily a short time before. His room had not been overcrowded during the four years of his illness; he might at times have been better for a little more company and attention than he enjoyed. But the visitors, who might have spread themselves over more than a thousand days, crowded themselves into the last twenty-four hours. They scrambled now for a last glimpse, and stripped his poor little cell of everything which could be

carried away, sparing only his bed, and the picture of St. Alphonso Rodriguez, which was kept near him to the last.

The negroes too suddenly realized that their father was leaving them, and flocked in their turn for a last look. They were to have other friends in the future, some wise and some foolish ; but perhaps never did they have one who, knowing them as he did, exactly for what they were, loved them so truly to the end.

And so through the day the crowds succeeded each other, while he lay still and unconscious ; unheeding their praise, as he had been unresentful of their neglect. He would not have asked for it to be otherwise. His work for others had never been of that popular kind which earns cheers and applause at the moment of performance. While giving what immediate consolation he could, he had been looking all the time for a distant good,

and had been labouring for invisible as well as visible results. He had not always uttered the word which was most gratifying to his hearers at the moment he said it; he had appealed to the nobler elements at the risk of irritating the lower instincts; and so he had not sought gratitude in his own day, and was content to be overlooked and forgotten.

And now that he was to leave his little flock, he had no fear that they would remain helpless and unprotected. He was not like the father whose death-bed is racked by the thought that his children will have no one to earn their bread. He had been working all the time as the emissary of One stronger and more merciful than himself. Once more, he might have spoken those words, so full of loving confidence:—

"Would I fain, in my impotent yearning, do all for this man,
And doubt He alone will not help him, Who yet alone can?"

The One Who had sent him could send another; his own efforts were not the measure of infinite love and goodness.

When the night came on the doors were barred, but it was impossible to prevent a certain number from remaining in the house to wait for the last moment. It was in the early morning of September 8th, between one and two, that the end came. It was known by no movement and no sound; but only by a sudden brightening and transparency of the countenance; that transformation which is not unfrequently to be seen at the hour of death.

The work and the suffering were over, the ass had been loaded and harnessed to the end; but now the veil was withdrawn, the prison melted into the palace, and the patient labourer heard those words so justly earned: "Well done, well done, thou good and faithful servant!"

It is no abstract reward, no pale human remembrance, that gives a sudden brightness to those worn features; it is a living, personal love, which embraces and fills and transports; which makes all pains, all pleasures, which have gone before seem mere shadows and phantoms.

He was human, and the gratitude of his kind might have been sweet to him. But what if, in his earthly life, he had cared for this love and gratitude alone, and had awoke to find that all the time he was ignoring another love which had been the life of his own? What if he had laboured that men might weep and suffer a little less during a short span of years, and then had suddenly learned that the final solution of the sad problem was not there where he had been, but here where he was; that he had soothed himself and others with narcotics, when true consolation was to be had?

But now, with a thrill of ecstasy every act and thought comes before him, for the identity of interests is now complete. He has trusted the "larger hope," he has believed in the larger love, and now faith and hope can give place to realization, for—

"We needs must love the highest when we see it,
Not Lancelot nor another."

EPILOGUE.

"FIFTY years ago," writes a contemporary periodical, "if you heard that a man was an active philanthropist, the chances were five to one that he was either an 'Evangelical,' that is, a man of avowed piety within the Church of England, or a Quaker, or a member of one of the older and richer dissenting families. . . . An unbeliever who was a philanthropist was almost unknown. . . . The religious benevolent founded most of the philanthropic societies existing. They gave the first direction to the humanitarian effort which since their time has hardly been relaxed." [1]

[1] "Spectator," Nov. 12th, 1892.

That, which is thus truly said of a period only half a century back, may be asserted with equal truth of the times in which the "slave of the blacks" lived and worked. In the days of the apostle of the negroes, motives of the other world were the spring of kindly acts in this one; the love of God was the chief source and origin of the love of man. There were undoubtedly, then as now, deeds of devotion and brotherly love, inspired by natural and human affection; but widely spread schemes of philanthropy such as we now behold, of this earth, and for this earth, are peculiar to our own day; altruism, in its strictly modern sense, is of recent growth. Love of country led men of olden days to the self-immolation of Curtius; love of glory inspired heroism such as that of the Spartans at Thermopylæ; but love of man in general, until our own days, has been chiefly confined to those who loved the creature for the Creator,

and sought for their fellow beings a good which was not to be fully realized in this world.

But now all this is changed. As the same article continues—"At least half the atheists in England are philanthropists, and we doubt not a large section of them are entirely sincere." On all sides of us we see men, who have cast off the old motives, but who carry on the old endeavours; who believe in no future, but who continue their work in the living present. As regards the intensity of their efforts they need not fear comparison with their forerunners. Altruists, both Christian and philosophical, endure hard labours and dull monotony for the achievement of their unselfish aims. The difference is in the goal rather than the course; in the motives that inspire them, rather than the efforts which are the result of the inspiration.

The Christian works for an end which

he believes to be, in many cases, invisible and distant, but both attainable and eternal. The philanthropist has an aim which is more immediate and comprehensible, but which he himself confesses to be limited both as to quality and duration. Peter Claver sought for his people perfect happiness in everlasting life; the end of our modern reformers is an alleviation of each man's suffering during his short span of sixty or seventy years, and an indefinite progress of the human race in the future.

To a certain extent the difference is beyond the reach of settlement. The combatants are fighting it out on separate ground; their premises are absolutely diverse, and their deductions cannot therefore afford substance for logical discussion.

But I think the question which it interests us to raise, is as to whether both find in their own beliefs the legitimate

source of their respective action; have Christians and philanthropists alike proper altruistic stimulus in their special creeds? or is it possible that either are really drawing nourishment from elements of the other, which exist in their own minds unknown to themselves?

As regards the Christian his claims are generally granted. Even those who profess the greatest contempt for his creed usually admit that his action is in accordance with it. If he think, rightly or wrongly, that there is a future of eternal joy or sorrow; that perfect happiness is attainable, though not in this life; then he has surely a sufficient inducement to devote himself to the welfare of his kind. He can be stimulated not only by feelings of passing compassion; not only by the desire to alleviate those sufferings which are immediately before him; but by the higher ambition of achieving a result

which is both certain and endless. His principles may be criticized, but his action can be justified.

But as regards the philanthropist, his Christian brother is inclined to dispute that he can find in his principles sufficient logical grounds for the unselfish course of action which he has adopted. For, in the first place, his end is, to a great extent, unattainable. So long as disease and death exist; so long as storms, earthquakes, and pestilence continue to visit the earth; it must, at all times, be more or less a scene of sorrow and suffering, mitigated by however much of joy. Every illness, every bereavement, every pain, whether physical or mental, are a blow struck at the endeavours and hopes of those who work only for the happiness of their fellow-beings in this life.

In the second place, the very efforts of the altruist are always, in some degree, an

obstacle to their own end; for what means all the talk about self-sacrifice except that the alleviation of one man's pain is accomplished ordinarily at the price of the suffering of another. And, if altruistic principles were to become generally prevalent, the sufferer would be as unwilling to accept the self-imposed pain of those who sacrificed themselves for him, as they to leave him unaided in his distress.

And, lastly, will there not always be many who experience a certain indifference to suffering which they regard as merely temporary in character and results? and who think it better to snatch what happiness they can in the immediate present, rather than work for a future which will be equally fleeting?

This difficulty has been touched on by George Eliot, who writes to remonstrate with a friend on the subject.

"Have you," she says, "quite fairly represented yourself in saying that you have ceased to pity your suffering fellow-men because you can no longer think of them as individualities of immortal duration, in some other state of existence than this, of which you know the pains and pleasures? that you feel less for them now that you regard them as more miserable?"

"As to duration," she continues, "and the way in which it affects your view of human history, what is really the difference to your imagination between infinitude and billions when you have to consider the value of human experience? Will you say that since your life has a term of three score years and ten it was really a matter of indifference whether you were a cripple with a wretched skin disease, or an active creature with a mind at large for the enjoyment of knowledge, and with a

nature which has attracted others to you?"[1]

But many will still shake their heads, and reply that the belief in eternity is not necessary, assuredly, to induce us to remove the evils which immediately press on ourselves, or others with whom we have direct communication; those which meet us in daily life, force themselves on our attention, cry to us for instant redress.

The instincts of nature prompt us to eat when we are hungry, to sleep when we are weary; and that instinct of pity, which is a part of our nature, urges us to cast a rope to a drowning man, and to bind up the wounds that are bleeding under our very eyes.

But it is one thing to alleviate present pain and suffering, and another to seek out that which is hidden and remote. It is

[1] Letter to Hon Mrs. Ponsonby. ("Life," vol. iii. p. 245.)

one thing to help those whom we know and love, and another to cast away our own ease and enjoyment for the sake of those who may exist at some future date, unless this planet comes to an untimely end; but who, whether they exist or not, will never either know or be known by us; who will have joys and pleasures as passing as our own; and will spend their lives also in the pursuit of a treasure which can never be realized.

There are natures so full of love and compassion that they will expend themselves on an inadequate object, if they cannot find one deserving of their affections. They love because their nature needs to love; not because they have found anything which satisfies their aspirations. May it not be that modern altruists are in somewhat this state? Their efforts are noble and disinterested, but is the end always worthy of their devotedness? With

the Christian it may always be said that his endeavours are unequal to his aim. His object, as he proposes it to himself, is such that no self-sacrifice could be deemed excessive. Can the philanthropist assert the same of his own labours? If the end be truly worthy of his desires and efforts, then its attainment should be their full satisfaction. But would he in truth be entirely contented if all at once his aspirations were fulfilled? Suppose him placed in a world where poverty no longer existed, where every man had his fair chance in life, and disease was reduced to the lowest proportion possible. Would he be perfectly, absolutely, contented when his endeavours were thus crowned with success? or would he experience some of the weariness of Alexander of Macedon, who sat down to weep because there were no more worlds to conquer?

Time alone can sufficiently enlighten us

on the subject. Christian charity has held its way for almost 1900 years; altruism cannot yet boast a century of existence. In the course of some years we shall perhaps be able to judge whether the end of modern philanthropy is such as to justify and sustain its labours; whether its conquests will recompense it for its combats; or whether its ambition and aspirations are higher and nobler than its aim.

THE END.

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