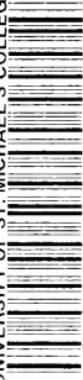
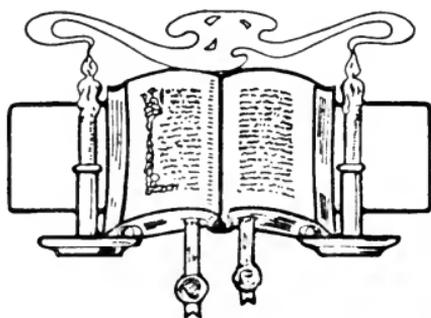


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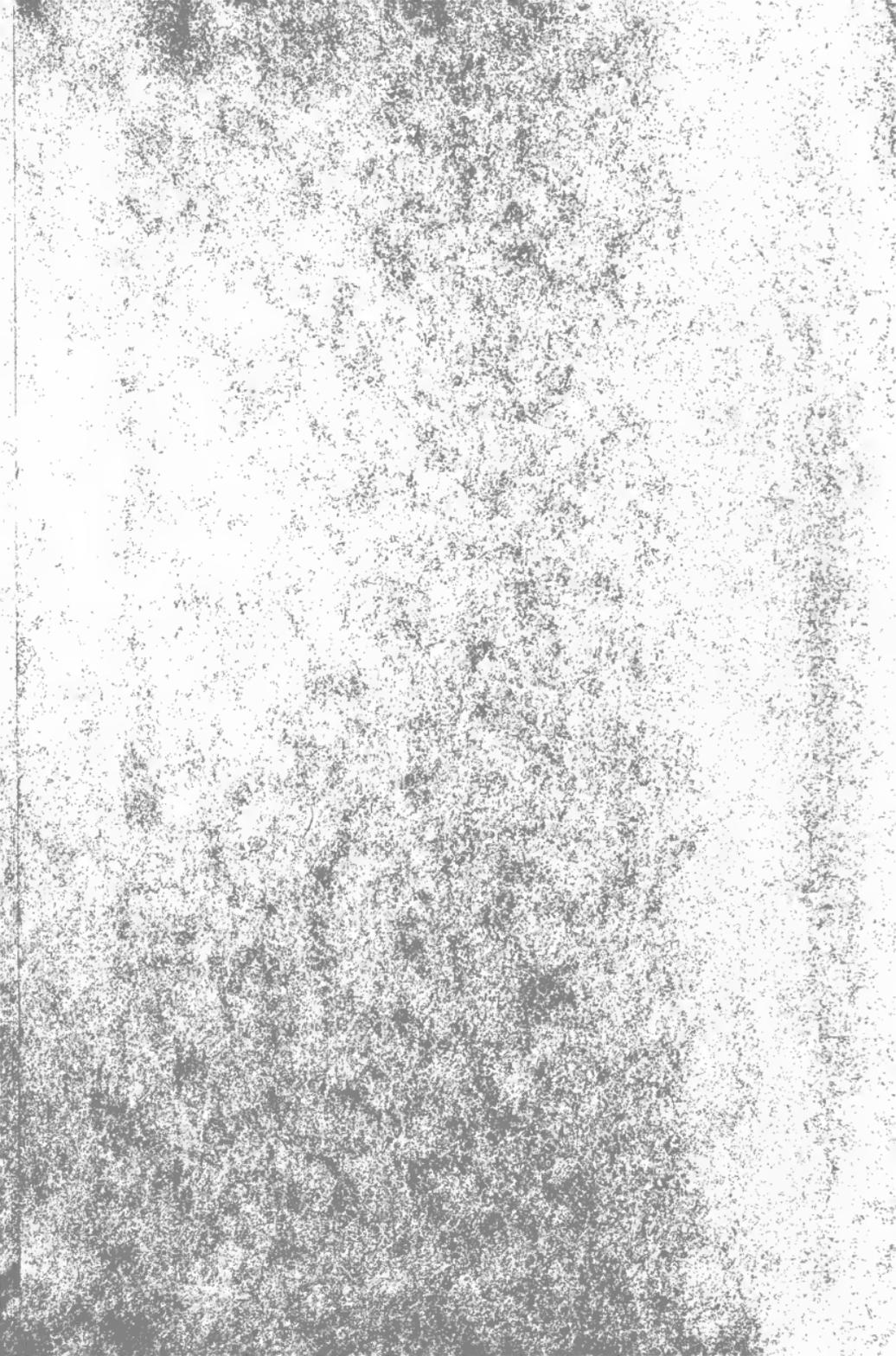


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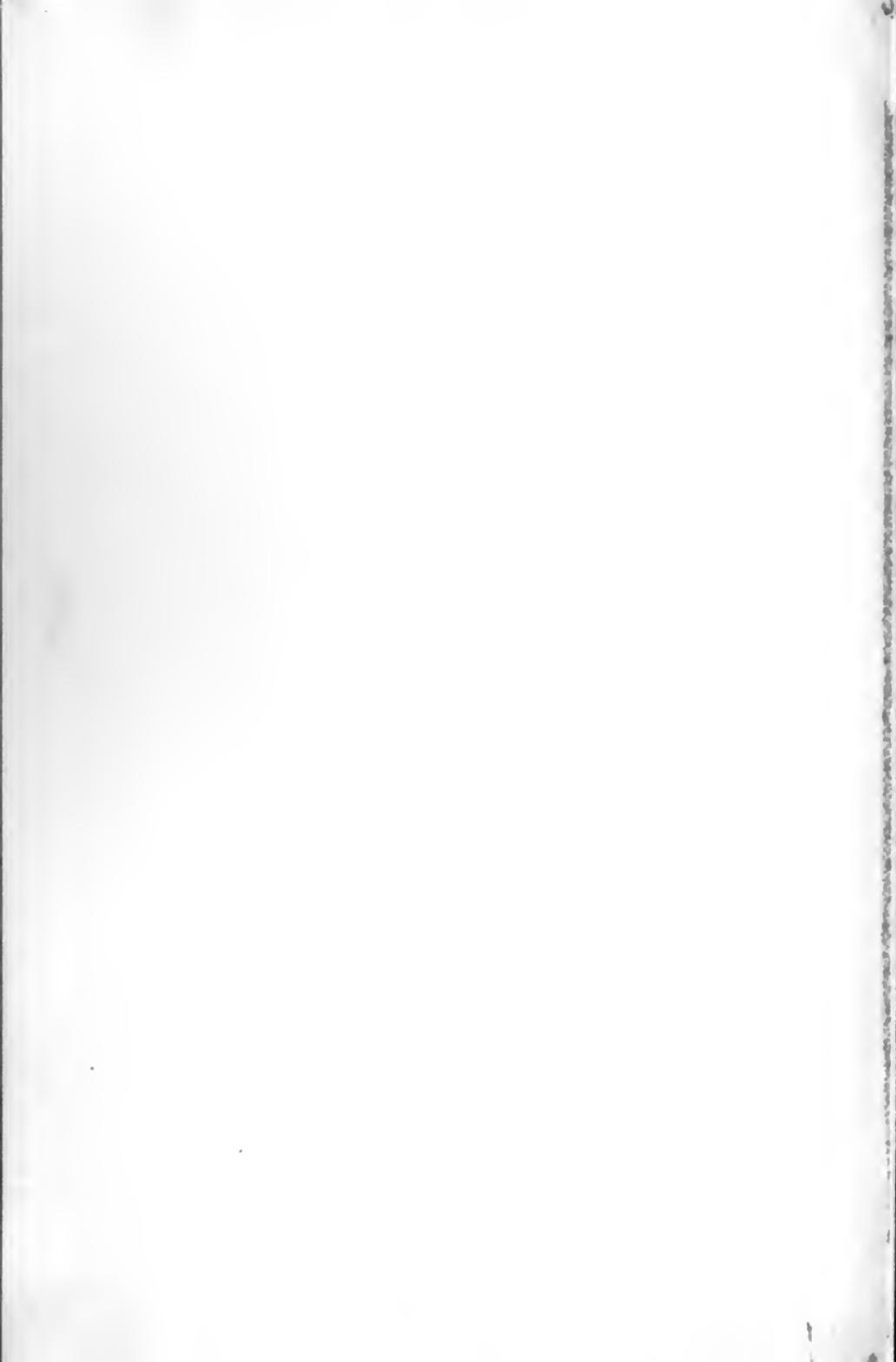


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LIFE

OF

MRS. ELIZA A. SETON,

FOUNDRESS AND FIRST SUPERIOR

OF THE

Sisters or Daughters of Charity

IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA;

WITH

COPIOUS EXTRACTS FROM HER WRITINGS, AND AN HISTORICAL
SKETCH OF THE SISTERHOOD FROM ITS FOUNDATION
TO THE TIME OF HER DEATH.

BY

CHARLES I. WHITE, D.D.

TO WHICH IS ADDED AN APPENDIX CONTAINING A SUMMARY
OF THE HISTORY OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY
TO THE YEAR 1879.

"Her children rose up and called her blessed."—Prov. xxxi, 28.

TENTH EDITION.

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TO

The Daughters of Charity

IN

THE UNITED STATES,

WHO WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THEIR

Distinguished Foundress,

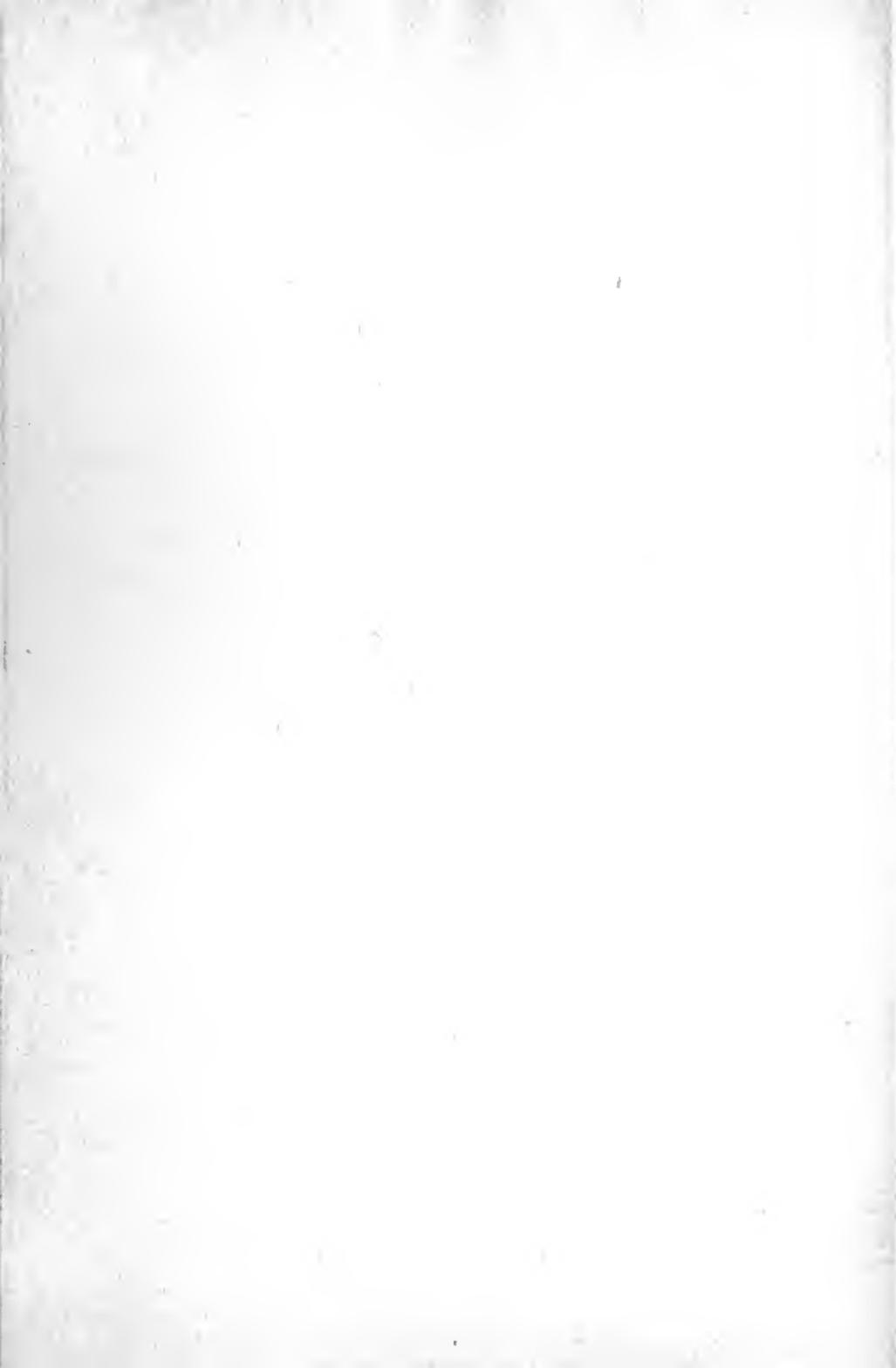
IMITATORS OF HER VIRTUES,

AND CONTINUATORS OF THE HOLY WORK WHICH SHE COMMENCED,

This Volume

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE

TO THE THIRD EDITION.

THIS volume originally appeared in the year 1853. It met with such a cordial reception that the first edition was soon exhausted.

In compliance with the repeated solicitations of friends, the author revised his work, and omitted some passages for the purpose chiefly of reducing its bulk and bringing it more generally within the reach of purchasers. The second edition, thus improved, was published in 1856, and sold so rapidly that it has been out of print for some time.

The demand for the book continues, but the author is no longer here to prepare the third edition. On the 1st of April, 1878, he was called to his reward, leaving behind him the memory of a learned, virtuous and zealous priest.

Besides what was in the second edition, the present volume contains, in an appendix, a summary of the history of the Sisters of Charity since the death of the venerated Foundress of the Order, and the general statistics of the Province of the United States for the year 1878. Thus supplemented, the "Life of Mother Seton" is again presented to the public.

THE PUBLISHERS.

FEAST OF THE PURIFICATION.



EXTRACT

FROM THE

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

It cannot be denied that the memory of Mrs. Seton is justly deserving of public record. The eminent qualities with which nature had endowed her, enhanced as they were by study and reflection,—her peculiarly religious temperament and strict fidelity in discharging the various duties of social and domestic life, although living amid the distracting and enervating influences of the *beau monde*,—the remarkable circumstance of her conversion to the Catholic faith, in defiance of the most formidable obstacles that could be thrown in the way,—lastly, the extraordinary design of Providence, by which she became the institutrix and first superior of a society whose members are now spread over every portion of the United States, for the honor of religion, the instruction of youth, and the relief of suffering humanity,—are considerations which appeared long since to require a more extended notice of her than had yet been given to the public. There are few stations in life affording an opportunity for the exercise of female usefulness that she did not adorn by her virtues. In the various relations of daughter, wife, and mother, she may be advantageously proposed as a model. In the ordeal which she was forced to encounter for the successful investigation of religious truth, and in the subsequent practice of the duties which it imposed, she displays an example which may not be unprofitable to those who are engaged in ex-

▼

aming the doctrines of Catholicism, as well as to those who already believe them. In the third place, her renunciation of the world for Christ's sake, and her zealous efforts to form and mature the admirable institution whose benevolent and heavenly influence is now so widely felt, offer a variety of edifying incidents interesting to all who rejoice at the triumphs of Christian faith, but especially to her spiritual daughters, who are the inheritors of her virtue and reap the blessings of her generous piety.

The information embodied in this volume relative to Mrs. Seton has been collected altogether from original and cotemporary papers, embracing the autograph letters and other writings of herself and those who corresponded with her, and from the manuscript of verbal statements respecting her and her family, and the Institution of the Sisters of Charity, furnished by numerous individuals who were intimately acquainted with her, and some of whom have witnessed the progress of the society which she founded from its origin to the present day.

In the construction of this narrative, I have quoted, whenever it was practicable, Mrs. Seton's own words, in order to render it as much as possible an autobiography, and thus present a more lifelike portraiture of her character.

In conclusion, I offer this volume to the public, with the hope that in rescuing from further oblivion or destruction the memorials of a personage who has rendered such important services to religion and society as Mrs. Seton, I may have contributed in some degree to the stock of useful literature, and done something toward promoting the cause of piety and general edification. These considerations, I trust, will claim for the imperfections of the work the indulgent criticism of the reader.

THE AUTHOR.

PIKESVILLE, MD., *November 1, 1852.*

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THE LIFE
OF
MRS. E. A. SETON.

BOOK I.

Birth and family of Miss Bayley—Her mother's death—Left to the care of her father—Her filial piety—Mental endowments—Education and religious views—Habits of self-control—Personal appearance—Marriage with Mr. Seton—His family—Her prospects in life—Submission to the decrees of Providence—Spiritual reflection and reading—Danger from infidel writings—Her cheerful disposition—Fortitude under trials—Her children—Mode of training and instructing them—Counsels to others—Her charity to the poor—Devotion at the *Lord's Supper*—On the occasion of a baptism—Self-improvement—Professional eminence of Dr. Bayley—Pleasure in the society of his daughter—Their correspondence—His laborious duties—Mrs. Seton's generous compassion for the poor sick—Her devotions—Dr. Bayley's illness—Mrs. Seton's offering in his behalf—His death and character—Religious spirit of Mrs. Seton.

ELIZA ANN BAYLEY was born in the city of New York, on the 28th of August, 1774, nearly two years before the declaration of American independence. She was the younger of two daughters, the only children of Dr. Richard Bayley, by his first marriage with Catharine Charlton. Her parents were both Americans by birth, and of respectable standing in society. As the sequel will show, her father was a man of strong mind and liberal education, and rose by his genius and industry to an eminent rank in the medical pro-

fession.⁽¹⁾ Her mother was the daughter of an Episcopalian clergyman, and a sister of Dr. Charlton, a much respected physician of the day. Miss Bayley had not yet completed her third year, when death deprived her of her maternal parent, whose vigilant and affectionate care was so desirable a protection at that tender age. She suffered this bereavement, however, too early to estimate the extent of her loss; and all her affections as she advanced in life became centred in her father. Upon him devolved entirely the guardianship of her youth and the subsequent care of her education—duties which engaged his earnest and unceasing attention. Though compelled, by the tender age of his daughter, to depend, in a great measure, on the fidelity of others for the attentions which her situation required, he never ceased to exercise an immediate and watchful superintendence over her welfare, and to evince at all times that affectionate solicitude which, however imperatively demanded by the absence of maternal care, was peculiarly congenial to his elevated and benevolent nature. The political troubles which at this period agitated the country, in its violent struggle for independence, was another consideration which tended to strengthen the bond between the parent and the child. Great Britain and the colonies were now at open war with each other, and the city of New York participated largely in the danger and confusion which such events naturally produce. The English troops having entered the town in 1776, retained possession of it for the space of seven years; soon after which the political horizon began to wear a brighter aspect. During this period of uncertainty and alarm, and until the cessation of hostilities, when the glorious star of freedom arose upon the American Confederacy, Miss Bayley was almost continually under the eye of her father, and conceived for him all the affection that a child can entertain for a parent. This unbounded

attachment she manifested in various ways. Frequently, when at school, she would learn her task quickly, repeat it, and then watch a favorable opportunity of eluding the vigilance of her preceptress, in order to run down the street to meet her father, who passed that way, embrace him, and then hasten back before the old lady could notice her absence. She not only regarded him as her protector, but, with that generous disposition which knows how to appreciate a benefit, she repaid his anxiety and kindness with the practice of every virtue that could gratify the paternal heart. Filial piety was the spring of all her actions—the incentive to all her exertions. Though incapable of understanding the importance of study at her tender age, she valued her scholastic exercises because prescribed by her father. “French and music must have their hours,” said he. This was sufficient to recommend them, and to excite her diligent application. Such was the veneration and affection which she entertained for him, that on no one occasion was she ever known to oppose his will or disobey him in the slightest particular. Nor was this virtue unrewarded by Him who has promised a rich blessing to the dutiful and obedient child. Her future career will exhibit a striking verification of those words in the book of Ecclesiasticus:—“Honor thy father in work and word, and all patience, that a blessing may come upon thee from him, and his blessing may remain in the latter end.”*

With amiable qualities of heart Miss Bayley united talents of a superior order. Nature had endowed her with a quick and comprehensive mind, a sound judgment, and fertile imagination; and she was not inactive in availing herself of the best opportunities for the cultivation of her mental powers. At this time, America offered but slender

resources for education in comparison with the facilities which are now enjoyed. The few seminaries of learning that had been established afforded but a very limited course of instruction, and even these were closed for several years during the stormy period of the Revolution. Under these circumstances, Miss Bayley was compelled to depend principally upon domestic tuition and study for the acquirement of the knowledge suited to her sex.

Happily she possessed, in the abilities of her father, a means of supplying the deficiency in the usual methods of instruction; and, under his direction, with a natural disposition for self-improvement, she applied herself, with considerable success, to the various branches of female education. Dr. Bayley, in the training of his children, looked much more to the formation of habits which would result in honorable usefulness in after-life, than to attainments of a less solid though more brilliant kind. His penetrating and observant mind easily perceived, as he remarks in one of his letters, that the American youth were naturally given to a spirit of independence, which, impatient of control, must become, for many, a by-way to certain vexation and disappointment. Convinced that a "brilliant character is not always a solid character," he diligently impressed upon the minds of those under his charge the necessity of self-restraint, reflection, and curtailment of pleasure, as the only means, however disagreeable at first, of reaping the sweet fruits of happiness in maturer years. These lessons of wisdom were carefully reduced to practice by his younger daughter; and to the due and assiduous exercise of self-restraint may be attributed, in a great measure, her subsequent triumph over the series of trials and difficulties which she had to encounter in pursuing the course marked out for her by divine Providence.

While this disposition contributed vastly to preserve her

mind and heart from the contamination of worldly maxims, it encouraged that inclination to piety which was observable in her from her earliest youth.* Following the example of those around her, she frequented the Protestant Episcopal Church, in which she had been baptized and admitted to what the members of that denomination term the ordinance of confirmation. The religion of Miss Bayley, however, did not partake of that ultra Protestant spirit which rejects every practice that savors in the least of Catholic piety. She wore on her person a small crucifix—the emblem of man's redemption—and was often heard to express her astonishment that this custom was not more prevalent among persons of her own communion. Bigotry and prejudice seem to have found no admittance into her mind. Conscientiously attached to her own religious views, she knew how to respect the convictions of her neighbor, and even to admire among them the existence of certain institutions which were unknown among the professors of her own particular creed.† One of the principal occupations that afforded her pleasure was the reading of the Holy Scrip-

* When we speak of the piety or religious spirit of Miss Bayley, we mean simply that she was a devout worshipper of God according to her views of religion; but we do not pretend to say whether, or how far, her interior dispositions were acceptable to him. Though piety, in the proper acceptation of the term, can be found, in its full and explicit form, only among those who belong to the external communion of the Church, it is not impossible for it to exist implicitly, in some cases, out of that external communion; for instance, among young persons who, though born of heterodox parents, have been validly baptized, and have never renounced the disposition then received to be governed by the teaching of their legitimate pastors. See Catholic theologians *passim*.

† In the course of her reading she occasionally met with descriptions of convents, and regretted that such establishments were not to be found among Protestants. It is a curious fact, that the early admiration of this youthful Episcopalian for the conventual life resulted in her becoming herself, at a later period, the foundress of a similar institution.

tures. From the sublime instructions imparted by the sacred penmen, she derived the most salutary knowledge for the regulation of her sentiments and actions. The papers which she has left afford ample evidence that she took delight in transcribing comments and reflections upon different portions of the sacred volume, and that she had become familiar with its contents, especially the Book of Psalms. The fervent effusions of the inspired bard were peculiarly congenial to her naturally ardent temperament; and she frequently quoted passages from them in her letters and other writings. To this practice, and to her natural rectitude and strength of mind, we may attribute the remarkable self-control which she exhibited in her intercourse with society. Surrounded by all the charms of gay and fashionable life, Miss Bayley did not allow herself to be dazzled by brilliant appearances. From a written exposition of her thoughts and dispositions, as they manifested themselves to her on a Sunday evening, when she reviewed the manner in which the day had been passed, it is plain that she scrutinized her actions with a singular penetration, and according to a standard of excellence which is rarely held in view by young ladies who possess every facility for mingling in the amusements and dissipation of the world. After tracing the vagaries of her mind during the course of the day, and the distractions which she had met with at her devotions, which were partly caused by the attentions of a gentleman who at that time had a prospect of her hand in marriage, she examines in what manner her time should have been distributed; reflecting that she might have turned it to greater profit, if it had been devoted more particularly to retirement and prayer. "The consequence would have been," she adds, "I would have been pleased with myself; M—— would have been pleased with me; even they to whom the sacrifice was made would have liked

me better; and, the heavenly consideration, my God would have blessed me."

We shall furnish another extract from this self-examination, written at the age of eighteen, which will show how much importance she attached to the proper disciplining of her mind and actions, not merely with a view to follow the dictates of reason, but from motives of religion. Considering that she possessed a very lively disposition, we shall be inclined to think that the imperfection of which she speaks was comparatively of little moment, though she deemed it worthy of serious attention. "There is a certain temper I am sometimes subject to—it is not sullenness or absolute discontent, 'tis a kind of melancholy; still, I like it better than those effusions of cheerfulness, that hilarity of spirits, which a good night's rest and a fine morning often inspire. I prefer the sadness, because I know it may be removed; it may change to cheerfulness. The gayety, I am sure, will change to sadness before the day ends, and perhaps to sorrow; 'tis not the natural temper, but the influence of situation. I trust the day will come when I may show a more regular and Christian disposition. Perhaps it may; it may not. Those passions must be governed. I have a most unaccountable wish to see E—— this morning, but I will not go a step out of my way. If fortune should so direct, I think I should be very grateful; if not, I will try and think that 'tis best."

With this command over herself, and a constant eye to the cultivation of the most elevated principles of conduct, Miss Bayley had shielded herself effectually against a danger which is too often incurred before its consequences are foreseen,—that of forming injudiciously a matrimonial alliance. A matter bearing so closely upon her happiness, and involving so much responsibility, received from her virtuous and penetrating mind all the consideration which it merited.

On the other hand, the excellence of character which she aimed at could not fail to be appreciated by virtuous and discerning minds, and to aid materially in effecting a union which would contribute to her earthly happiness. In her personal appearance, Miss Bayley was of rather low stature, but her figure was well proportioned and her movements graceful. A perfect symmetry was displayed in her features, which, with the sparkling yet mild expression of her eye, rendered her countenance the mirror of a noble and intelligent soul. Possessing an uncommon degree of vivacity and cheerfulness, she used it with tact and moderation, for the charm of those around her. In the twentieth year of her age, she accepted the hand of Mr. William Seton, a highly respectable merchant in the city of New York. He was a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and a gentleman of amiable disposition and engaging manners. His family enjoyed the highest character and standing.⁽²⁾ A portion of his early life he had spent in a mercantile house at Leghorn—a circumstance which the subsequent history of his wife will show to have been a dispensation of divine Providence for the spiritual benefit of herself, her family, and the innumerable souls who would be led by her example into the way of salvation. At this period, however, she little imagined that her religious views would ever be exchanged for the doctrines of the Catholic Church. Her early education, and the recent connection she had formed with a strictly Episcopalian family, both wedded her to the Protestant system, and it may be truly said that she was a rigid observer of its principles and forms.

At the time of her marriage, Mrs. Seton beheld a prospect of the most flattering description before her. Her husband's affairs were in a flourishing condition, and, surrounded as she was by a numerous circle of admiring friends, she had

reason to expect, from the new alliance she had formed, every temporal happiness that can be realized on this side of the grave. Divine Providence, however, did not permit her to be dazzled by the fair scenes of enjoyment around her. The ordeal which he had in reserve for her at a later period of life demanded a thorough training of her mind and heart, and could be met successfully only by one who had learned the practice of patience and resignation under the trying dispensations of Heaven, and had the moral energy to set aside the vain considerations of this earth whenever conflicting with the higher interests of an immortal life. We accordingly find her on all occasions deeply impressed with the truth of an all-wise and overruling Providence, and possessing a lively sense of the duty of submission to the afflictions of life. The first year of her marriage, in the summer of 1794, Mr. Seton's business having called him to Philadelphia, where the yellow fever had made its appearance, she writes to him in a strain of affectionate solicitude, not a little increased by the apprehension of the danger to which he was exposed; but her fears do not degenerate into excess; she moderates them, and sustains her fortitude by the reflection that "patience and submission are the only way to gain the blessings of Heaven." In a letter to one of her relations, to whom she was united by the closest ties of friendship, she furnishes another evidence of the supernatural view which she was accustomed to take of passing occurrences, while she exhibits, at the same time, the self-control and wisdom which she exercised in the correspondence with her friends. "I received your letter of the 22d September. Although I make it a rule never to answer letters while under the influence of the first impressions I receive from them, I cannot refrain from immediately replying to it—and it is not a very easy task to preserve my usual sincerity with you; but

I believe even that is best, for my mind is in a state of anxiety and distress which does not admit of any calculations respecting the enjoyments of this life. In one short week, sisters, friends, and the whole world, may be nothing to me. There never passes a day but some family is deprived of its support, children of their parents, and the wife of her husband, even in the number of my acquaintance. My William goes every day to town,* and is more exposed than many who have lost their lives; that he should escape depends on that mercy which has never yet failed, and which I have reason to bless every hour of my life." On another occasion, addressing the same friend, whose society she loved to enjoy, she displayed a spirit of faith and resignation which is seldom witnessed in the intercourse of persons blessed with every worldly comfort. She observes, "We are not always to have what we like best in this world, thank Heaven! for, if we had, how soon we should forget the other, the place of endless peace, where they who were united by virtue and affection here will surely enjoy that union so often interrupted while on their journey home!" The expression of these sentiments was not a casual thing with Mrs. Seton, or the effect of circumstances that awakened in her bosom an occasional outburst of religious feeling; it was at all times the image of her mind and heart, the result of an habitual attention to the cultivation of the highest principles of moral conduct. Hers was one of those favored souls that are borne up by their own natural impulses to the love and pursuit of what is right; and this disposition, aided by study and reflection, gave to her sentiments and aspirations a tone of uncommon purity and virtue, which manifested itself in all her writings Her

* She writes from Craigdon, a seat in the country, October, 1799, the yellow fever prevailing at the time in New York City and causing the ravages which she describes.

mind was of a superior order, but it was not less prone to the indulgence of pious meditation than it was active and intelligent. Those hours which she could snatch from her domestic and social duties were frequently employed in communing with God, in the perusal of the Holy Scriptures, and in meditating upon the sublime truths of the Christian religion. Hence her invariable practice of throwing into her letters and notes some allusion to the great maxims of evangelical morality. If she adverted to the prosperous and joyful scenes of life, they caused her heart to expand in gratitude, and reminded her of more perfect and more lasting enjoyments in a future world. If adversity was the theme of her remarks, it turned her thoughts upon the only true remedy of earthly trials, the happy exchange of transient suffering for eternal felicity. The following extract from her devotions, in the year 1798, may serve as a specimen of the prayers which she addressed to God:—

“Almighty Giver of all mercies! Father of all, who knowest my heart and pitiest its weakness and errors, thou knowest the desire of my soul is to do thy will; it struggles to wing its flight to thee, its Creator, and sinks again in sorrow for that imperfection which draws it back again to earth. How long shall I contend with sin and mortality? When will that hour arrive which will free the troubled spirit from its prison, and change the shadows of this life for immortality and endless happiness? I bow to thee, my God! in cheerful hope that, confiding in thy infinite mercy and assisted by thy powerful grace, I shall soon arrive to that hour of unspeakable joy. But if it is thy will the spirit shall yet contend with its dust, assist me to conduct myself through this life as not to render it an enemy, but a conductor to that happy state where all mortal contentions are done away, and where thy eternal presence will bestow eternal felicity.”

In the subjoined prayer she pours forth her gratitude to God for the protection vouchsafed to her and hers while so many others were carried off by the stroke of death. She most probably alludes to the ravages of the yellow fever. The noblest return is made for the favors of Heaven, in an increased determination to walk in the path of the divine commandments.

“With pity, O Lord, look down upon thy servant. Thy mercy is boundless; thou hast preserved our souls from death while thousands fall around us. Thou hast given us every good while others are visited with sorrows and afflictions; and shall not my soul praise thee for this unmerited goodness? Shall it now fall into sin and neglect of thee, its preserver? Will it rather suffer the bondage of sin than be thy servant? Oh, how it pants, it longs to fit itself for thy acceptance; but, chained in the service of the enemy, it falls from its native glory and grovels in the dust. Let thy mercy assist the endeavor of thy servant; grant but the smallest portion of thy grace, and I shall be free. O Almighty Father! O Blessed Spirit, comforter of the sick and sorrowing soul! O Saviour eternal, Redeemer of sinners, who gavest thy life to save us, assist a miserable sinner who strives with corruption of sin, and desires above all things to break the snares of the enemy. I am, O Lord! like one in the net of the fowler; set me now at liberty; cleanse me and fit me for thy presence, and the soul that now sorrows shall rejoice.”

Mrs. Seton had so assiduously cultivated the sentiments contained in the foregoing addresses to the Throne of Grace, that she seems never to have laid them aside for other convictions, though it must be admitted that her Christian principles were at one time much exposed to be shaken by the familiar acquaintance which she had formed with the works of the French philosopher, Jean Jacques Rousseau

In the year 1799 she became so enamored of his writings, that, as she expresses it herself, every half hour she could catch went to Emilius. She was particularly pleased with his religious views. Voltaire's writings were also partially known to her; and it may be safely affirmed that without the special protection of divine Providence her mind would have become deeply infected with the fatal errors of those pestilential authors, who insinuate the poison of irreligion with a brilliancy of thought and charm of language that have too often unhappily seduced the incautious reader. But Mrs. Seton's admiration of Rousseau appears to have extended chiefly, if not altogether, to those parts of his works which pay a forced but not less eloquent tribute to revealed truth. At all events, if her religious views were in any degree affected by the withering opinions of infidelity, she must have remained in this state of mind for a very short time; as her writings, subsequent to the period of which we speak, breathe a spirit of Christian piety equal to, if not more fervent than, that of her previous life. On the 31st of December, in the same year, we find her indulging in a religious meditation, of which she has left us a succinct but beautiful account. She thus describes the situation of her body and mind on the last day of the expiring year: "Sitting on a little bench before the fire, the head resting on the hand, the body perfectly easy, the eyes closed, the mind serene, contemplating and tracing boundless mercy and the source of all excellence and perfection—how pure the enjoyment, and sweet the transition of every thought! The soul expands, all earthly interests recede, and heavenly hopes become anxious wishes. Might not these mortal bonds be gently severed—loosed more easily than untying the fastening of a fine thread—at this moment, without any perceptible change, to find the soul at liberty, Heavenly Mercy! in thy presence? And would it

not tremble, or rather is it not forever under thy inspection? Can it be concealed from thee? No; thou now perceivest it oppressed, weighed, sinking under its mortal burden; and also thou seest it can patiently submit to thy will, adoring in surest confidence of thy mercy. Preserve me but this heavenly peace; continue to me this privilege, beyond all mortal computation, of resting in thee and adoring thee, my Father, Friend, and never-failing support. For this alone I implore: let all other concerns, with their consequences, be entirely and wholly submitted to thee.”*

It might be supposed, from the religious tone which Mrs. Seton introduced into her letters, that she had fallen into the use of that disagreeable cant and rigid formalism that almost invariably distinguish the devotee who is not enlightened by the true faith. This, however, was far from being the case. The religion of Mrs. Seton was not of an obtrusive or sullen nature. Possessing a singular vivacity of disposition, and an equal sense of propriety, she knew how to accommodate herself to circumstances. If, on suitable occasions, in corresponding with her friends, she deemed it advisable to indulge a strain of serious thought, or to mingle with commonplace matters a well-turned allusion to maxims of moral guidance, at other times she pursued a different course, adopting the vein of humor to which she was particularly inclined. She thus writes to her father, who was at Albany, in February, 1799: “Should you be, in your retirement, unoccupied by the cares and solitudes that generally accompany you, a letter from your daughter will be very acceptable; if otherwise, it will be read in haste, and the idea, ‘Bett is a goose,’ will pass your mind. I send it to take its chance, hoping, as the children say, it may find

* In looking over this manuscript, after she had become a Catholic when her piety was the result of better light and knowledge, she exclaimed, “Oh, how different now! Oh, praise and eternal gratitude

you well, as I am the same. It is currently reported that you are gone to New London to inquire into the origin of the fever, and that you are to proceed to Boston to see your children. But I hope you will very soon return, and convince the ladies who chatter on the subject that the origin is not the object of your pursuit, but the remedy."

Some months later, she addresses her father in the following language, which exhibits the sprightliness of her disposition, and, at the same time, establishes her claim to considerable merit in the epistolary style: "My very dear Mr. Monitor: That you are in the enjoyment of health in the midst of dangers, toil, and death, is a subject of high exultation to me; and if the prayers of a good, quiet little female are supposed to be of any avail, it will be long continued to you, with the hope that the visual rays of our fellow-citizens will in time be brightened by your labors, and their attention awakened by the voice of truth and conscience. I had the pleasure to hear a Mr. Delmas, a French physician, refer a number of strangers, both French and English, to a publication, called the *Monitor*,* as the best thing written on the subject of yellow fever, and as the only one that points out its true cause and origin. He said he did not know who was the author, but he must be the best friend of humanity, and should be considered by the Americans as their best adviser. I imagine my eyes were larger and blacker at that moment than usual. If you would sometimes direct Helen's† pen to Bloomingdale, it would be a most grateful substitute for your own, which I cannot expect to claim in this season of occupation."

The cheerfulness of Mrs. Seton's disposition, united with a profoundly religious sentiment, contributed much to sup

* Written by Dr. Bayley, father of Mrs. Seton. For this reason she addresses him at the commencement of this letter as "Mr. Monitor."

† A step-sister of Mrs. Seton.

port her under the trials which are the general attendants of domestic life, as well as those which may be termed the particular dispensations of Providence. About the beginning of the year 1800, her husband's temporal affairs had become very much embarrassed, owing to the French spoliations and the usual vicissitudes of mercantile life, and it seemed as if the tide of prosperity was soon to stop for him and his family. In the midst of these difficulties Mrs. Seton proved herself the devoted wife, by sharing the trials of her husband and exerting herself as far as she could to diminish the unhappy influence which such a situation is apt to exercise upon the mind. During an entire week, she spent most of the night in assisting her husband in arranging his papers. But the fortitude and resignation which she evinced under this dispensation of Providence are equally worthy of remark. She observed to a friend that it would never do for hearts and fortunes to sink together. When things had assumed the most unfavorable aspect, and one loss appeared only to be the harbinger of additional misfortunes, she knew how to possess her soul in patience and to trust in Him who directs all the events of life for the wisest ends. She did not suffer her mind to dwell on these topics, so far as they tended to disturb the peace of her soul, for she always found a source of consolation in the sentiments awakened by the practice of the Christian virtues. She thus speaks, in a letter to her sister-in-law, of Mr. Seton's difficulties: "How I wish I could write you a long letter, without saying one word of affairs, for in their present state they are too melancholy to think about, and that not from any impression I have received from my William, for never did a mortal bear misfortune and all the aggravated distress of it with so much firmness and patience as he does. I say aggravated, for vessel after vessel arrives, and correspondents in London and Hamburg notify him that his bills are refused, and his pro-

perty detained there, and not one line of explanation either good or bad; and here we are, with funds detained on one side the water and transferred the other, for he is obliged to make over every thing in trust to his friends, nothing coming in, and one suit already against him gives but too much reason to expect more; but it is all in vain to think about it: patience is the only choice."

The following prayer, which seems to relate to the same embarrassments, shows the strength of mind which she exhibited under the trials of her situation: "The cup that our Father has given us, shall we not drink it? O blessed Saviour! by the bitterness of thy pains we may estimate the force of thy love: we are sure of thy kindness and compassion: thou wouldst not willingly call on us to suffer: thou hast declared unto us that all things shall work together for our good, if we are faithful to thee, and therefore, if thou so ordainest it, welcome disappointment and poverty, welcome sickness and pain, welcome even shame and contempt and calumny. If this be a rough and thorny path, it is one which thou hast gone before us. Where we see thy footsteps, we cannot repine. Meanwhile, thou wilt support us with the consolation of thy grace, and even here thou canst more than compensate us for any temporal sufferings, by the possession of that peace which the world can neither give nor take away." July 25, 1801. While Mrs. Seton bowed with an humble submission to the trials she experienced, she did not neglect to turn the thoughts of her husband upon objects of greater moment than the things of this world. In a letter to him, after alluding to his business, she adds: "Excuse your saucy wife, who is too busy with your mercantile affairs. If I could have an influence in those I am really anxiously interested in, which relate to another cause, I should be too happy ever to vex you with what are the trifles of a day in comparison "

They who have ever felt the pressure of adversity will readily understand the happiness of a family that possessed a guiding spirit like Mrs. Seton, whose words were invariably those of comfort, and who never failed to discover in the higher considerations of religious truth a solace and compensation for the passing evils of life. In this way the burden of affliction was lightened, and every bosom became animated with brighter hopes.

At the period of which we are speaking, Mrs. Seton was the mother of four children:—Anna Maria, William, Richard, and Catharine Josephine. In the midst of this infant group, which presented to the parent's eye all that the fondest affection could desire, she found opportunities of exercising virtues which are equally essential and ornamental in the domestic circle. No love could exceed that of Mrs. Seton for the children whom Providence had confided to her care; but it was a love elevated and enhanced by the reflection that they constituted an important charge, for which she would be accountable to God. Hence, while she carefully watched over their temporal welfare, she was still more solicitous for the formation of their minds and hearts to the knowledge and esteem of virtuous principles. Not only did she teach their youthful lips to praise God and invoke his blessings; she availed herself of every opportunity to impress upon them this obligation, as well as the other duties of which they were capable. Sometimes she would send them little notes, in which the assurance of maternal affection would invariably be mingled with the words of salutary instruction, but conveyed in a form at once so natural and attractive that they could not fail to produce a most happy and lasting impression. Her tact in this respect was remarkable. In a note to her two boys on a certain occasion, after expressing her fond attachment for them, she wins them still more to her bosom, and to a regard for her wishes, by re-

joicing at the good news she has heard of them respecting their correct deportment and their attention to school; and, after having thus secured their favorable disposition to receive advice, she exhorts them to perseverance in good, to pray for their parents, to obey their superiors, and lastly urges them to the performance of their duties by proposing the highest motives of conduct, the prospect of enjoying the good-will of their parents and obtaining the blessing of the Almighty. On the birthday of her eldest daughter, she thus addresses her:—

“MY DEAR ANNA MARIA:

“This is your birthday, the day that I first held you in my arms. May God Almighty bless you, my child, and make you his child forever. Your mother’s soul prays to him to lead you through this world, so that we may come to his heavenly kingdom in peace, through the merits of our blessed Saviour.

“May 3, 1803.”

No opportunity was neglected of imparting to her offspring the knowledge and the fear of God. The subjoined letter will show the ardent desire of Mrs. Seton for their virtuous training, as well as her peculiar skill in explaining to them the morality of the gospel:—

“My dearest Anna must remember that our blessed Lord gave us the parable of the wise and foolish virgins to make us careful to choose our part with the wise ones, and to keep in readiness for his coming, which will be in an hour we know not of; and should he find us, dear child, out of the road of our duty, like sheep gone astray from their shepherd, where shall we hide from his presence who can see through the darkest shades and bring us from the farthest ends of

the world? If we would please him, and be found among his children, we must learn what our duty is, pray to him for grace to do it, and then set our whole heart and soul to perform it. And what is your duty, my dear child? You know it, and I pray God to keep you in it, that, in that blessed day when he shall come to call us to our heavenly home, we may see our dear Anna in the number of those dear children to whom he will say, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father.'

Your own dear Mother."

From what has been said, we may readily infer that the affection of Mrs. Seton for her children, although ardent, was of that pure and elevated character which never allowed it to degenerate into weak condescension. Convinced of what the wise man teaches, that "the rod and reproof give wisdom, but the child that is left to his own will bringeth his mother to shame,"* she did not fail in the important duty of correction, whenever circumstances seemed to require it. But this duty on her part was not the effect of excitement, which too often governs the parent on such occasions and destroys the efficacy of reproof. It was the dictate of reason and religion, which aimed only at the reformation of evil, and adopted the most effectual measures for the attainment of this end. From one of her letters to her sister-in-law, we learn a circumstance which indicates no ordinary degree of wisdom in the mother of a family. "I was busy," she says, "with poor Anna, in the garret closet, and afterward took her to the highest step of the ladder that leads to the top of the house, to make her feel that the promise she made to be good was before God, who knows all we say and do." Her experience had taught her that a solemn thought is greatly heightened by viewing the

* Prov. xxix. 15.

heavens in open space without an intervening object. By such means did the lessons of truth sink deeply into the hearts of her children, and strengthen, from day to day, their love and veneration for a parent who was so devoted to their real happiness.

Virtue, firm and enlightened as hers, could not but spread its perfume on every side. All within the sphere of her acquaintance felt its beneficial influence, while to some she was even a mother and instructress. She thus writes to one of her youthful relatives:—"Let your chief study be to acquaint yourself with God, because there is nothing greater than God, and because it is the only knowledge that can fill the heart with a peace and joy which nothing can disturb. Father of all beings, how extensive are thy mercies!—how great, how inexpressible! It is in thee we live, and move, and have our being. The lot of mortals is in thy hand; they are only happy through thee. Thy paternal cares are over all mankind. Thy impartial goodness causes the sun to shine and constant blessings to descend on those even who offend and disobey thee. By thy command the dew refreshes the earth and the zephyr cools and revives us; thy gifts are proportioned to the wants of thy creatures, but the righteous alone feel the sweet and salutary effects of thy peace. O thou who possessest sovereign power, and givest life and enjoyment to the poorest insect, which could not exist a moment but by thy will, permit thy creature to praise and bless thee, and let me forever adore thy goodness and give my soul to thy service. Blessed Saviour, who gavest thy life for us, and hast done every thing to engage our love and gratitude, oh let me never be so unhappy as to offend or disobey thee wilfully. Blessed Shepherd of them that seek thee, oh keep me in thy fold—lead me in thy paths; let me always hear and love thy voice, and follow thee as a meek and quiet lamb, making it the care of my life to keep near to my

blessed Master; and if ever I should lose my way, or for a moment be so unhappy as to disobey thy commands, oh, call thy wanderer *home*."

She furnished the same individual with a method of morning and evening prayer. In the former, thanks are returned to God for the favors of the night, and his blessing is implored for the day; in the latter, the graces of Heaven are again acknowledged, and the divine mercy invoked upon herself, her friends, and relations.

One of her sisters-in-law, having received some prayers from her on her birthday, which were sent by Mrs. Seton as a friendly counsel to prepare herself for a happy death, seemed to misunderstand the act of kindness, imagining that it required her to indulge in a train of melancholy thought. Mrs. Seton very justly remarked to her that these reflections tended to tranquillize the mind of a Christian. "Should we make a practice," she says, "of considering, with calm and dispassionate meditation, that that hour must come to all, whether they reflect or not—its uncertainty with respect to time—the pains, weakness, and often extreme anguish our parting nature must experience, and, what is still worse, the possibility that we may be summoned without any warning at all,—it would be taking no more precaution than we would allow to the commonest events of life, if we were to allow our souls a few minutes every day, to beg for mercy and grace in that momentous hour. . . . I have observed that any good resolutions or exercises begun on the period of our birth are more seriously impressed; and I chose this for you at this time, as reflecting on a birthday on earth more easily transfers our thoughts to the birthday of our future existence; and it is very useful to make use of that day, from year to year, to examine our soul's *account in full*—on the progress we have made in approaching that heavenly example of perfection," &c. This extract from Mrs. Seton's

letters displays a degree of wisdom rarely met with in the world, and shows how she availed herself of certain occasions to diffuse among others that virtue which she practised herself. In the following advice to another relative we have an equally remarkable instance of the store she set upon firmness of principle. She tells her "not to leave home, on any persuasion, on Sacrament Sunday, and to say openly, whoever may request it, 'that it is her rule.' It can never," she continues, "be a breach of civility, or seem unkind, even to a sister or the dearest friend, if you say it with the firmness of one who has been at *His table* who refreshes and strengthens the soul in well-doing. I have often asked myself the question,—why should any one be more earnest in prevailing with me for a trifle, or a thing of no consequence in itself, than *I* in maintaining the thing I know to be right and that touches the interest of my soul's peace?" Such was her unflinching adherence to rules of moral guidance, which she could the more confidently recommend to others as she observed it faithfully herself.

Mrs. Seton did not confine her charity to the administering of good advice; she went abroad to dispense comfort and relief among the victims of misfortune. She was an active member of the "Widows' Society in New York,"—the benevolent object of which is indicated by its name; and such was her devotedness to the service of the poor, that she and one of her relatives, who was commonly associated with her on errands of mercy, were called Protestant Sisters of Charity. They not only visited those who were in want, but labored with their hands to increase their means of rendering assistance. Her benevolent efforts in behalf of the afflicted are thus described by one who was intimately acquainted with her at the time:—"Not satisfied with a formal profession without the love of God in her soul, she considered no sacrifice too great to promote the glory of her

heavenly Parent, and add to the felicity and happiness of her fellow-creatures. How often and with what delight has she explored the abodes of wretchedness, to administer temporal and spiritual comfort! How many tears of joy has she caused to flow! How many prayers have been raised to Heaven for her welfare! How often have the widow and the fatherless blessed her!"

A strict member of the Episcopal Church, she united in the ceremony of the Lord's Supper, as it is called, as often as she had an opportunity, and with an ardor and enthusiasm not frequently witnessed among Protestants. She thus describes the sentiments with which she communicated at the bedside of a dying friend, Sept. 13, 1802:—"Was called on by a sufferer, to help her in preparing her soul, which seemed on the point of departure to answer the call of its Creator. Her body, which had been long in the struggles of nature, now relieved from pain, had the foretaste of its rest, and left her soul at liberty to seek the strength of the Redeemer, and to desire the refreshment he has provided for sick and troubled spirits. These hands prepared the blessed table, while my soul and that of my soul's sister united with hers in joyful praise for our precious privilege—the purchase of redeeming love. The chosen, blessed, ministering servant bids us to the feast, gives it to the departing soul as its passport to its home—to me as the seal of that covenant which I trust will not be broken in life nor in death, in time nor eternity. Sweet, sweet communion of souls! Gracious Lord, may it be endless as thy mercy! may it be perfected in thee, sustained in thy truth, and sanctified by thy Spirit, that, growing in thy likeness and raised up in thine image, we shall be one with thee eternally!" Alluding to the same circumstance, she says:—"This day, I trust, is noted for me in the book of life, and oh that the blessings received, and the precious privileges I have

enjoyed in it, may be the incitement to a faithful discharge, through divine grace, of every duty which my dear and gracious Master may give me to perform, that it may make me his own, in thought, word, and deed, forever—leading me to the Supreme Good—the blessing of losing myself and all things in him.” It is related of Mrs. Seton, that such was the profound awe awakened in her by the communion, that in receiving it her teeth clattered against the cup which contained the elements. Her whole mind was intently riveted upon the act she was performing, endeavoring to think of our Saviour’s presence. Such was her fervor in complying with this rite, that after the service she would obtain from the sexton a further portion of the elements, and even go from one church to another, in order to repeat this religious act. She envied the happiness of the Catholic who believed in a real presence. The rite of baptism also inspired her with an extraordinary devotion. Her fifth child, born on the 20th of August, 1802, was presented at the regenerating font on the feast of St. Michael, and received the name of Rebecca. On the same day, Mrs. Seton committed to paper the sentiments that arose in her mind on the occasion, and we place them before the reader as a model for the Christian parent.

“*Wednesday, St. Michael’s day, 1802.*—This day my little Rebecca is received into the ark of our Lord. She has been blessed by the prayer of faith, that she may receive the fulness of his grace, and remain in the number of his faithful children; that, being steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, she may pass through the waves of this troublesome world, that finally she may enter the land of everlasting life. Glory! glory! glory be to Him, who has obtained for his servant these inestimable privileges—to enter into covenant with him—to commune

with his Spirit—to receive the blessing of our reconciled Father—inheritors in his kingdom of blessedness. Blessed Lord, can we be forgetful of our duty to thee—to thee who hast purchased all for us? Oh strengthen us, pity our weakness, be merciful to us, and, as thy holy angels always do thee service in heaven, give us grace to serve thee so faithfully while on earth that we may hereafter be received into their blessed society, and join their everlasting alleluiahs in thy eternal kingdom. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen.”

The letters and other writings of Mrs. Seton afford many other evidences of the zeal with which she pursued the religion in which she had been educated; but we have said enough to render it unquestionable that she was a fervent and practical advocate of piety, according to her own understanding of the subject, and inculcated both by word and example those high principles of morality which made her a shining member of the church to which she belonged and a bright ornament in the social and domestic circle. To acquire this character was the object which she continually proposed to herself; and we cannot better describe than in her own words the efforts which she made to improve herself in all the qualities that constitute an honorable character and useful life. In a letter to a distant friend, she says—“Nor can I ever lament the season of youth, for that of middle age is much more desirable, and lasts much longer, particularly if it prepares the way to honorable old age, and accumulates such materials as will make that happy. All my leisure hours have that aim; and if the point anticipated

is never reached, it certainly fulfils the present moments to the best advantage, and if their memory remains, it will be a source of the greatest pleasure."

The preceding part of Mrs. Seton's history embraces particularly those facts which exhibit her personal worth as a wife, the mother of a family, and a member of society in general; but the close relations which she continued to maintain with her father, and the virtues which they called into action, are worthy of special remark, inasmuch as they contribute more fully to the portrayal of her character. The private worth and professional distinction of Dr. Bayley concurred to merit for him the warmest affection and profoundest respect of his children, while the valuable services which he rendered to the cause of science and humanity won for him a deserved celebrity in Europe as well as in America.

Having completed his studies in England, he commenced the practice of medicine in New York, and soon acquired distinction by his successful treatment of diseases and his skill in surgery. He was the first to discover the inflammatory nature of the croup,—on which he published a work,—was a member of the Medical Faculty of Columbia College from its commencement, and was one of the earliest promoters of the New York Dispensary. Having devoted particular attention to the investigation of yellow fever and its causes, during repeated ravages of this fearful scourge, he wrote a work on the subject, which is distinguished for its practical and sound observations. Appointed health-physician to the port of New York, he became chiefly instrumental in procuring the enactment of the state quarantine laws, and successfully contributed to obtain similar regulations from the general government.*

* For other details respecting Dr. Bayley, see Thacher's *American Medical Biography*.

While Dr Bayley was pursuing a profession which, with his energetic mind and active habits, subjected him to the most arduous labors and exposed his life to the most imminent danger, he found some relief from his daily toils in the affectionate regard and accomplished society of his daughter. He had impressed upon the minds of his children, from their earliest youth, that the happiness of their father depended upon them; and the lesson was acted upon to his entire satisfaction by Mrs. Seton. We have seen how fondly she was attached to him in childhood. At a later period, when his occupations became more arduous and incessant, it was her constant aim to please him by evidences of filial attachment. Although he had married a second time—a circumstance often resulting in the disturbance of the harmonious relations between parent and child—she lost nothing of that fond affection which she had always entertained for him. In this she only corresponded to the tender love and solicitude which he evinced for her. Writing to her a short time before her marriage, he says: “Solicitous always, and on all occasions, to hear from you or to correspond with you, you find I do not omit any opportunity to promote that pleasure. Most of us are tinctured with a little of the selfish—yours is of that kind that you correspond chiefly with yourself. Now, I approve of that mode of correspondence, if you add a new stock of information and useful knowledge to your former acquisitions. In this case you have my permission to persevere. In such a case, and in all instances, believe me your affectionate friend and father.”

Whether at home or abroad, Dr. Bayley possessed in the devotedness of his daughter a source of unmingled pleasure and most grateful relaxation. His humane and indefatigable attentions to the victims of disease were interrupted during the day only to seek a brief repose near the piano

where she presided with skilful hand; and when absent from home, in the prosecution of professional business, he was delighted with the intercourse which her letters enabled him to enjoy. The following extracts from their correspondence will show the affectionate regard, frankness of heart, and playful spirit, which contributed so much to the mutual gratification of the parent and the child. Suffering from indisposition, he thus writes to her at the commencement of the year:—"I must smile, although I cannot swallow but with difficulty. Confinement is so unusual a thing for me, that the novelty affords me the most solid satisfaction. No bustle—no feeling of pulses—no scolding nor being scolded at—thus retired as it were within myself, I have neither care, thought, or wish—not even to see you. Now, let us see how the matter stands. Suppose me entering your room, exclaiming, 'My dear daughter, I wish you a happy new year; Seton, how are you? I wish you a happy year.' 'Thank you, sir; I wish you a great many.' I assert, the foregoing is better transacted in idea, for the very reason that a pantomime is a more rational exhibition for an active mind to contemplate than the dull, commonplace, *viva voce* representation of a play. Thus I am situated; removed from the necessity of acting on the stage of the world, my mind furnishes me with all that is necessary. An inflammation in the throat, although troublesome to a degree, is not so painful as a swelling at the side of the face, with a tender tooth; but, as I am really confined, I would take that too, if it would rid your friend of it. Guard against the sudden changes of weather; never dwell on trifles; be mistress of yourself; then I am convinced you will always have the credit of acting well."

When on a visit to Albany, in the year 1800, Dr. Bayley received from his daughter the following expressions of her regard:—"New York, March 4.—My father, a little

faithful heart has been conversing with you this hour past, and I have engaged to copy from it a part of its contents—that it regrets your absence, is extremely anxious for your present safety, and will rejoice when you return. The post goes to-morrow; therefore there is no time to wait till the brain is in the humor of invention, and therefore you must receive the present communication from that source which is always ready when you are the person in question; and it has also a peculiar pleasure in conveying to you the intelligence that its friend, who was yesterday a sufferer, is well to-day.”

“*March 12.*—The heart of your Betty jumped for joy at sight of the letter that was to tell her of your safe arrival, that you were well, and in the midst of friends; and can it be that there is any charm in the visit to Albany to compensate for your absence from New York? Dear sir, indeed you mistook: it was but a momentary impression, which, I am sure, is before this time changed into the recollections of those *douceurs* without which every other gratification loses its charm with its novelty. That ever you should observe the distance of the belt from the chin * It is true that very conspicuous points must attract attention: so far it is easy to imagine,—more so than that your mind should be in that pliant, happy mood to admit of amusement from transient objects. I wish it may long remain in the desirable state your letter left you in, like holiday to the child that has long been kept in school and harassed by the severity of its teacher. . . . I have been copying so many English letters, French letters, &c., that one eye is open, the other shut; therefore, dear Mr. Papa, I wish you a night of rest and myself the same Your most dear daughter,

E. A. SETON.”

* An allusion to some remark of her father.

The amiable qualities here depicted could not fail to secure a corresponding feeling in a parent of so generous a nature as Dr. Bayley. But, enhanced as they were by the noblest sentiments of virtue, they rendered his daughter an object of unbounded admiration in his eyes. Writing to him on one occasion, after indulging her usual vein of hilarity, she concludes her letter in the following beautiful strain:—"I have been reading of the High and Holy One who inhabits eternity, and selecting such passages as I wish to transmit to my daughter. How the world lessens and recedes! How calm and peaceable are hours spent in such solitude! They are marked down for useful purposes, and their memory remains. I close my evening employment with 'orisons for thee.' Peace be with my father." To this elevation of soul and practical wisdom Mrs. Seton joined a degree of respectful submission to the wishes of her father, which was not less attractive in the eyes of a parent. Though circumstances would sometimes place him at a distance from her, she regarded him as present, and observed his counsels with the same exactitude as if he were a witness of her conduct. "Your spirit," she tells him, "surrounds your child, who checks each word you would prevent and pursues every action that you would approve." It is easy to conceive how truly such virtue was appreciated by Dr. Bayley, and how refreshing must have been its effects amid the laborious duties in which he was so actively engaged. In the discharge of his office as health physician to the port of New York, he passed much of his time at Staten Island, where vessels were detained at quarantine. Here the scenes of distress and suffering which occurred among the emigrants, who frequently arrived in considerable numbers, and which almost defy description, called into constant action the energetic benevolence of Dr. Bayley. While the yellow fever was raging on board of the infected

vessels, hurrying to the grave hundreds of unfortunate beings who had scarcely seen the light of day since they had embarked from home, and little infants were dying by scores as soon as admitted into the fresh air, or famishing at the mother's breast, unable to receive other nourishment or to find it, Dr. Bayley was everywhere seen among the sick and the dying—sometimes carrying the almost lifeless babes in his own arms, to place them in comfortable beds. To the countless numbers that came from foreign countries, and were suffering from the pestilence, he was a real father. In offices of humanity he never wearied, and every rising sun found him already two or three hours engaged in the work of charity. Although Mrs. Seton could not participate in the active philanthropy of her father, she did not lack the disposition to do all that she possibly could to assuage the sufferings of her fellow-beings. The language in which she alludes to their pitiable condition exhibits a heart filled with the most tender commiseration. Writing to her sister-in-law on this subject, she says:—"Rebecca, I cannot sleep; the dying and the dead possess my mind—babies perishing at the empty breast of the expiring mother. And this is not fancy, but the scene that surrounds me. Father says such was never known before; that there are actually twelve children that must die for mere want of sustenance, unable to take more than the breast, and, from the wretchedness of their parents, deprived of it, as they have lain ill for many days in the ship, without food, air, or changing. Merciful Father! oh, how readily would I give them each a turn of my child's treasure, if in my choice! But, Rebecca, they have a provider in heaven who will soothe the pangs of the suffering innocent." Such was the heartfelt sympathy with which she contemplated the misery of those around her, that she was tempted to wean her own child, in order to become a mother to the little ones whom sickness had deprived of

all parental assistance. But this her father would not permit, as her first duty regarded those who were more immediately under her charge. Her obligations in this respect allowed her comparative leisure in her retirement at Staten Island; and she did not fail to employ to the best advantage the moments which were left from her domestic avocations. One hour of the day was devoted to the gratification of her father, who found no more effectual relaxation from his arduous and perilous office than to listen to the sweet music of the piano; but to prayer and the reading of the holy Scriptures she appropriated much more time, and she experienced the purest joy in these exercises of Christian piety.* The following effusion, written at a season when the ravages of death were actively going on around her, will show the peace of mind which, under these circumstances, she derived from religious meditation, and her grateful sense for the favors vouchsafed to her and her family:—" 'Consider the blessings that are at His right hand for them that love him.' I was awoke from my sleep this morning with these sweet words still sounding in my ears—a bright sun and every blessing surrounding me. Often does the perishing body enjoy this happiness, while the soul is still imprisoned in the shades of darkness. This day it flies to Him, the merciful giver of these unspeakable blessings, without a fear or one drawback but the dread of that frailty returning which has so often sunk it in the depths of sorrow. Merciful Father, graciously save it from the worst of all misery,—that of offending its adored benefactor and friend. Praise the Lord,

* As an evidence of Mrs. Seton's admiration of piety, we will mention here that she was struck with the religious demeanor of the Irish emigrants who landed on Staten Island for the purpose of receiving medical aid. "The first thing these poor people did when they got their tents was to assemble on the grass, and all, kneeling, adored our Maker for the mercy; and every morning sun finds them repeating their praises."

oh my soul! Praise him, that the blessed impulse of grace may redound to thy own happiness and glory, for to him thy praise can add nothing; to thyself it is now the means of grace and comfort, and hereafter will be thy pleasure and joy through eternity."

But the period had arrived when Mrs. Seton was to experience one of the severest trials that could fall to her lot. Dr. Bayley, her father, was about to end a life of active usefulness, on the very spot and in the very cause where his labors had been so extensively beneficial to the medical profession and to humanity. In the discharge of his duty as health physician, in August, 1801, he directed the passengers and crew of an Irish emigrant vessel with ship fever to go on shore to the rooms and tents appointed for them, leaving their baggage behind. This was in the evening. Early the following morning, upon going to the hospital, he found that his orders had been disobeyed, and crew and passengers, men, women, and children, well, sick, and dying, with all their baggage, were huddled together in one apartment, where they had passed the night. Into this apartment, before it had been ventilated, he imprudently entered, and remained but a moment, being compelled to retire by the most deadly sickness at the stomach and intense pain in the head, which seized him immediately upon entering the room.* Returning home, he retired to his bed, from which he never rose. The anguish of his affectionate and devoted daughter, at this crisis, may be better imagined than described. All that the tenderest solicitude could suggest was done by her to relieve his sufferings. She watched continually at his side, and poured forth her fervent prayers to God for his welfare. In fact, the mercy of God was her only resource in these moments of deep affliction, and she invoked it in-

* Thacher, *ibid.*

essantly in behalf of her beloved parent. She thus expresses her sentiments on this occasion in a letter to a sister-in-law. "My own Rebecca's heart aches for me—but all in vain. The chance is so small, that hope is folly, except as we refer it to Him who can renew both body and soul in an instant. He cannot retain any nourishment or get rest for any length of time; knows his dear Betty, so as to express by his looks his pleasure at seeing her, and sometimes puts out his hand. Your poor sister's only refuge is the *Father that cannot be removed*. Oh! how sweet is such refuge in this hour!" Such was Mrs. Seton's trust in God, not only for the bodily relief of her father, but principally for the welfare of his soul. She knew that his religious ideas were too conformable to the principles of the then prevalent philosophy, and she feared, notwithstanding his great moral virtues, lest his salvation might be in danger. In the ardor of her love, and with full confidence in the infinite goodness of God, she endeavored to think of some sacrifice which could be offered to the Almighty as a pledge for the eternal happiness of her father's soul. At length she adopted the following expedient. Leaving her dying parent for a few moments, she went to the cradle where her infant child was sleeping, clasped it in her arms, and, going out on the piazza of the building, she there raised the little innocent babe toward heaven, and appealed to the divine compassion, saying, "O Jesus, my merciful Father and God! take this little innocent offering; I give it to thee with all my heart; take it, my Lord, but save my father's soul." It pleased divine Providence, however, not to deprive her of the child which she bore in her arms. It was reserved, with her other children, to be reared in the knowledge of the true faith, after she herself had been introduced into the one fold under one shepherd. On the seventh day of his sickness, about the 16th of August, Dr. Bayley expired, leaving be-

hind him a high character as a clinically-instructed physician, "an excellent and bold operator, a prompt practitioner, of rapid diagnosis and unhesitating decision. In demeanor a perfect gentleman, honest and chivalrously honorable; of perfect integrity, and little tolerant of obliquity in others; ever ready to serve the cause of his profession; inflexible in his attachments, invincible in his dislikes, and unbrooking of insult; in temper fiery, yet suddenly cool—a fault which he knew and regretted; thoroughly fearless; somewhat too strongly partial to certain patients, but withal charitable to a fault."*(3) He was one of those characters that make warm friends and bitter enemies. His servants and dependants were much attached to him, and for several years after his death they were known to shed tears at the mention of his name.

With the ardent temperament of Mrs. Seton and her fond devotedness to her father, the bereavement which she suffered by his death would have produced the most disastrous results for her happiness, had she not been strengthened against all the vicissitudes of life by the steady cultivation of a spirit of submission to the decrees of Providence. This disposition enabled her to moderate her grief; and although she ever recalled the memory of Dr. Bayley with the profoundest sentiments of love and veneration, she did not forget that the Almighty had reserved for her, in the family around her, an ample field for the immediate exercise of her affectionate solicitude. It was her only remaining wish, after the interment of her distinguished parent, that she might be permitted after death to repose by his side. But this prayer was not granted: it was ordained in the counsels of Heaven that she herself should become a nucleus around which would be gathered the precious remains of her chil-

* Thacher, *loc. cit.*

dren and her spiritual daughters, who will not be separated from her in death after having been united in the bonds of charity during life.

After the demise of her father, Mrs. Seton seemed to grow more fervent in the practice of her religion. The extracts already furnished from her papers, some of which were posterior in date to the event just mentioned, clearly show that as she advanced in years the practice of piety engaged her deep and constant attention. We will here furnish one or two additional passages from her writings at this period, with a view to indicate the sentiments which animated her previously to the increased affliction which an all-wise Providence was preparing for her. On Sunday, the 23d of May, 1802, on which most probably she had communed, she thus expresses herself:—"This blessed day, my soul was first sensibly convinced of the blessing and practicability of an entire surrender of itself and all its faculties to God. It has been the *Lord's day* indeed to me—though many, many temptations to forget my heavenly possession, in his constant presence, have pressed upon me. But, blessed be my gracious Shepherd, in this last hour of his day I am at rest within his fold, sweetly refreshed with the waters of comfort which have flowed through the soul of his ministering servant." In the month of August, the same year, she formed the following resolutions, which evince a serious attention to the practice of the Christian maxims. "Solemnly in the presence of my Judge, I resolve, through his grace, to remember my infirmity and my sin; to keep the door of my lips; to consider the cause of sorrow for sin in myself and them whose souls are as dear to me as my own; to check and restrain all useless words; to deny myself and exercise that severity that I know is due to my sin; to judge myself thereby, trusting through mercy that I shall not be severely judged by my Lord." The following year, on the 9th of

March, she penned a beautiful act of thanksgiving to God, in which she alludes to the happy exchange of this life's shadows and pains for the glory and felicity of the next. "Oh let our souls praise thee, and our all be devoted to thy service; then at the last we shall praise thee, day without night, rejoicing in thy eternal courts—by the light of thy celestial glories all our darkness, pains, and sorrows, will be forever dispersed—those clouds and griefs which now oppress and weigh down the souls of thy poor, erring creatures will be gone and remembered no more. Those thorns which now obstruct our path—those shades which now obscure the light of thy heavenly truth—all, all shall be done away, and give place to thy cheering presence, to the eternal, unchanging joys which thou hast in store for the souls of thy faithful servants." Thus did the good providence of God permit her to cherish the most fervent sentiments of religion, even in communion with the sect in which she had been educated, that her mind might be fortified against the influence of approaching tribulation, and particularly that her subsequent abjuration of error might be invested with a greater eclat, and exhibit more strikingly the riches of that mercy which calls the wandering sheep into the pastures of truth and eternal life. In the following book it will be seen how the Almighty prepared the way for this signal exercise of his infinite goodness.

BOOK II.

Mr. Seton's ill-health—Voyage to Italy, accompanied by his wife and eldest daughter—Mrs. Seton's sentiments—Her journal—Incidents on arriving at Leghorn—Description of the Lazaretto—Mrs. Seton's resignation and fortitude—The *Capitano*—Mr. Seton grows weaker—Quarantine precautions—Mrs. Seton's confidence in God—Comfort to her husband—His sufferings—The *Capitano's* religion—Sentiments of Mr. Seton—Visitors at the Lazaretto—Incident of Mrs. Seton's youth—Reflections—Communion with home—Attentions to her husband—Devotions—Journey to Pisa—Devotedness of Mrs. Seton—Her husband's dispositions—His death—Energy and fortitude of his wife—What strangers thought of her—Attentions and sympathy from friends—Visit to Florence—Impressions.

EARLY in the spring of 1803, Mr. Seton's health, which had always been extremely delicate, seemed to be rapidly declining, and he was advised by his physicians to try the experiment of a sea-voyage for the purpose of reviving his sinking frame. A commercial intercourse had made him long and favorably known to the Messrs. Filicchi, distinguished merchants at Leghorn, which determined him to visit the genial clime of that country, and to renew an acquaintance which he had formed with it in his earlier years. With a view to afford her suffering husband every attention that his situation required, Mrs. Seton resolved to accompany him, and immediately set about the necessary preparations for the voyage, confiding to her relatives the care of her younger children, and selecting her eldest daughter, Anna Maria, then in her ninth year, as a companion during her travels. The severe trial which carried Mrs. Seton from home, and the fearful uncertainty which yet hung over the issue of the journey, were well calculated to plunge her into the deepest sorrow; but her confidence in God and resigna-

tion to his divine will sustained her courage and composed her mind for every affair that demanded attention. We may form some idea of her sentiments at this period from the following lines written to one of her nearest friends:—
“My dear, dear Eliza, your tenderness and affection call me back; for often, often, with all I have to do, I forget I am here. The cloud that would overpower can only be borne by striving to get above it. Seton has had new and severe suffering since I saw you; all say it is presumption, and next to madness, to undertake our voyage; but you know we reason differently. Saturday is now the day; every thing is ready and on board. We will, dear Eliza, rest upon Him, our only strength, and my soul is thankful, for surely, with all the many calls we have to resign our hopes in this life, we naturally without one lingering pain must seek our rest above. Can it be that we will be there to separate no more? With the strong and ardent faith with which I receive and dwell on this promise, all is well and resting on the mercy of God. May he bless you as my soul blesses you, and raise you above the sorrows and pains with which your soul has so long struggled! Dear, dear Eliza, my heart trembles within me, and I can only say, take my darlings often in your arms, and do not let the remembrance of any thing I have ever done that has vexed you come twice to your thoughts. I know it will not; but it seems now to me like my last hour with all that I love.”

To a youthful and beloved relative, in whose welfare she took a particular interest, Mrs. Seton addressed the following parting advice:—“Although I leave you in the hands of your dearest friends, and under the protecting care of our dear and Heavenly Father, still my heart would dictate to you many anxious requests respecting your habitual observance of that heavenly Christian life you have so early begun; and in order to persevere in this, your first atten-

tion must be to make to yourself a few particular rules, which you must not suffer any thing on earth to divert you from, as they relate immediately to your sacred duty to your God; and, if you find that there are any obstacles in your way—and doubtless you will find many, as every Christian does in the fulfilment of their duty,—still persevere with yet more earnestness, and rejoice to bear your share in the cross, which is our passport and seal to the kingdom of our Redeemer. Nor will your steadiness of conduct ever injure you even in the minds of those who act differently from you, for all who love you will respect and esteem you the more for persevering in what you know to be your duty. And may the Divine Spirit strengthen your soul in his service, and make your way plain before you, that whatever are the changes in this our mortal life, we may find our rest in that blessed fold, where dear friends will no more be separated, but perfect the virtues and affections which have united them here, by the crown of immortal life and glory.”

The day after writing this note, October 2d, the voyagers had reached the quarantine port of New York on their way to Italy. Mr. Seton already experienced the salutary effects of a change of air, and as to his wife, she thus expressed her feelings on leaving home:—“My heart is lifted, feels its treasure, and the little cabin and my cross are objects of peace and sweet comfort. He is with me, and what can I fear?” Although the parting from home drew tears from her eyes, she was resigned to the circumstances that compelled it. On the following day, the vessel having neared the light-house, Mr. Seton’s symptoms continued to be favorable. From this position, Mrs. Seton addressed a note to her sister-in-law, Rebecca, in which she says:—“I feel so satisfied in my hidden treasure, that you might think me an old rock. Mr. and Mrs. O’Brien (the captain and his wife) are really kind friends to us. The steward seems as anxious

to please me as even our Mary* could be, and a dear little child, about eighteen months old, makes me sigh for Tatté;† but, as I told my Bayley, I neither look behind nor before—*only up*,—there is my rest, and I want nothing. They threaten a storm, but I fear not *with Him*.” With this calm temper of mind, which Mrs. Seton uniformly preserved, a voyage across the Atlantic could not fail to be a source of abundant enjoyment, whether resulting from the contemplation of the natural wonders which it presented, or from the spiritual associations which it so readily suggests to a religious soul. About midway between America and Italy she thus wrote to a friend at home:—“We are now past the Western Isles, which are exactly half-way between New York and Leghorn, and hourly expect to meet some vessel that may take our letters home—as I am sure my very dear friend will be among the first inquirers of news from us. I write, though sure there can be little to interest you after saying that Mr. Seton is daily getting better and that little Ann and myself are well. If I dared indulge my enthusiasm, and describe, as far as I could give them words, my extravagant enjoyments in gazing on the ocean, and the rising and setting sun, and the moonlight evenings, a quire of paper would not contain what I should tell you; but one subject you will share with me, which engages my whole soul,—the dear, the tender, the gracious love with which every moment has been marked in these my heavy hours of trial. You will believe, because you know, how blessed they are who rest on our Heavenly Father. Not one struggle nor desponding thought to contend with—confiding hope and consoling peace has attended my way through storms and dangers that must have terrified a soul whose rock is not Christ.”

* A servant, probably, at home. † Her youngest child, an infant.

During the voyage nothing of particular interest transpired except the sickness of Mrs. Seton's daughter, who caught the whooping-cough from the captain's child, which was laboring under the same complaint. Mr. Seton's health was apparently improving, though he was much annoyed by the coughing and crying of the children around him. His wife divided her time between her devotions and the attentions which she bestowed upon him and her suffering child. Her sentiments and resolutions are thus recorded by herself, on the 11th of November:—"My dear little Anna shed many tears on her prayer-book, over the 92d psalm, in consequence of my telling her that we offended God every day. Our conversation began by her asking me if God put down our bad actions in his book as well as our good ones. She said she wondered how any one could be sorry to see a dear infant die; she thought there was more cause to cry when they were born. Considering the infirmity and corrupt nature which would overpower the spirit of grace, and the enormity of the offence to which the least indulgence of them would lead me—in the anguish of my soul, shuddering to offend my adored Lord, I have this day solemnly engaged that, through the strength of his Holy Spirit, I will not again expose that corrupt and infirm nature to the smallest temptation I can avoid; and, therefore, if my Heavenly Father will once more reunite us all, that I will make a daily sacrifice of every wish, even the most innocent, lest they should betray me to deviation from the solemn and sacred vow I have now made. O my God! imprint it on my soul with the strength of the Holy Spirit, that, by his grace supported and defended, I may never more forget that thou art my all, and that I cannot be received in thy heavenly kingdom without a pure and faithful heart, supremely devoted to thy holy will. Oh, keep me for the sake of Jesus Christ!"

She thus notes the incidents of November 16:—"A heavy storm of thunder and lightning at midnight. My soul, assured and strong in its Almighty Protector, encouraged itself in him, while the knees trembled as they bent to him—the worm of the dust shaking at the terrors of its Almighty Judge—a helpless child clinging to the mercy of its tender Father—a redeemed soul strong in the strength of its adored Saviour! After reading a great deal, and long and earnest prayer, went to bed, but could not rest. A little voice, (my own Anna, who I thought was asleep,) in a soft whisper said, 'Come hither, all ye weary souls.' I changed my place to her arms; the rocking of the vessel and the breaking of the waves were forgot; the heavy sighs and restless pains were lost in a sweet refreshing sleep. Adored Redeemer! it was thy word, by the voice of one of thy little ones, who promises indeed to be one of thy angels." On the 18th of the same month, while the *Ave Maria* bells were ringing, the vessel arrived in the mole of Leghorn. The events which followed between this period and that of her husband's death were all recorded by Mrs. Seton in a journal, which, although not possessing the strict connection and phraseology of a narrative, will perhaps be found more interesting by the reader than if presented in another form, as it is a lifelike picture of the author's character, drawn by herself, at moments when she poured forth her sentiments and emotions to a bosom friend with the utmost simplicity of manner, and with all the ardor which an entire freedom from restraint would permit. This journal was written at the lazaretto of Leghorn, where Mr. Seton, with his wife and child, was detained during four weeks on account of his sickness, and his having come from New York, where the yellow fever had made its appearance.

"19th Nov., 1803—10 o'clock at night.—How eagerly would you listen to the voice that should offer to tell you

where your dear sister is now—your soul's sister. Yet you could not rest in your bed if you saw her as she is, sitting in one corner of an immense prison, bolted in—a single window, double-grated with iron, through which, if I should want any thing, I am to call a sentinel with a cocked hat and long rifled gun—that is, that he may not receive the dreadful infection we are supposed to have brought with us from New York.

“To commence from where I left off last night: I went to sleep and dreamed I was in the middle aisle of Trinity Church, singing with all my soul the hymn at our dear sacrament. So much comfort made me more than satisfied, and when I heard in the morning a boat was alongside of our ship, I flew on deck and would have thrown myself in the arms of dear Carlton;* but he retired from me, and a guard, whom I saw for the first time, said, ‘Don’t touch.’ It was now explained that our ship was the first to bring the news of the yellow fever in New York, which our want of a bill of health discovered; our ship must go out in the roads, and my poor William, being sick, must go with his baggage to the lazaretto. At this moment the band of music that always welcomes strangers came under our cabin window, playing ‘Hail Columbia,’ and those little tunes that set the darlings singing and dancing at home. Mrs. O’Brien and the rest were almost wild with joy, while I was glad to hide in my berth the full heart of sorrow, which seemed as if it must break. You cannot have an idea of the looks of my poor William, who seemed as if he could not live over the day. Presently appeared a boat with fourteen oars, and we entered into another fastened to it. The lazaretto being some miles from town, we were rowed out to sea again, and, after an hour’s ride over the waves, the chains which cross

* Dr. Guy Carlton Bayley, of New York, her step-brother, at that time in the counting-house of the Messrs. Filicchi.

the entrance of the canal which leads to this place were let down at the signal of several successive bells, and, after another rowing between walls as high as our second-story windows, and the quarrelling and hallooing of the watermen where we should be landed, the boat stopped. Another succession of bells brought down one guard after another, and in about half an hour Monsieur le Capitano, who, after much consultation and whispering with his lieutenant, said we might come out, upon which every one retreated, and a guard pointed with his bayonet the way which we were to go. An order from the commandant was sent from our boat to the Capitano, which was received on the end of a stick, and they were obliged to light a fire to smoke it before it could be read. My books always go with me, and they were carefully put up, but must all be looked over and the pages and the little secretary examined. The person who did this, and examined our mattresses, must perform as long a quarantine as ourselves. Poor little Anna! how she trembled! and William tottered along as if every moment he must fall, which had he done, no one for their lives dared to touch him. We were directed to go opposite to the window of the Capitano's house, in which sat Mrs. Philip Filicchi—compliments and kind looks without number; a fence was between us, but, I fear, did not hide my fatigue both of soul and body: first we had chairs handed, or rather placed for us, for, after we had touched them, they could not go back to the house. At length we were shown the door we were to enter—No. 6, up twenty stone steps—a room with high arched ceilings, like St. Paul's, brick floor, and naked walls. The Capitano sent three warm eggs, a bottle of wine, and some slices of bread. William's mattress was soon spread, and he upon it; he could not touch wine or eggs. Our little syrups, currant jelly, drinks, &c., which he must have every half hour on board ship—where were they? I had

heard the lazaretto was the very place for comfort for the sick, and brought nothing; soon found there was a little closet, on which my knees found rest, and, after emptying my heart, and washing the bricks with my tears, returned to my poor William, and found him and Ann both in want of a preacher. Dear puss, she soon found a rope that had tied her box, began jumping away to warm herself, for the coldness of the walls and bricks made us shiver. At sunset, dinner came from the kind Filicchis, with other necessaries; we went to the grate again to see them. And now, on the ship-mattresses spread on this cool floor, my William and Anna are sound asleep, and I trust that God, who has given him strength to go through a day of such exertion, will carry us on. He is our all indeed. My eyes smart so much with crying, wind, and fatigue, that I must close them and lift up my heart; sleep won't come very easily. If you had seen little Anna's arms clasped around my neck, at her prayers, while the tears rolled a stream, how you would love her! I read her to sleep, little pieces of trust in God; she said, 'Mamma, if papa should die here—but God will be with us.' God is with us, and if sufferings abound in us, his consolations also greatly abound, and far exceed an utterance. If the wind (for it is said there were never such storms at this season) that now almost puts out my light and blows on my William at every crevice, and over our chimney like loud thunder, could come from any but his command,—or if the circumstances that have placed us in so forlorn a situation were not guided by his hand,—miserable indeed would be our case. Within this hour he has had a violent fit of coughing, so as to bring up blood, which agitates and distresses him through all his endeavors to hide it. What shall we say? This is the hour of trial; the Lord support and strengthen us in it! Retrospections bring anguish. 'press forward toward the mark and prize.'

"20th, *Sunday morning*.—The matin bells awakened my soul to its most painful regrets, and filled it with an agony of sorrow which would not at first find relief even in prayer. In the little closet, from whence there is a view of the open sea and the beatings of the waves against the high rocks at the entrance of this prison, which throws them violently back and raises the white foam as high as its walls, I first came to my senses, and reflected that I was offending my only Friend and resource in my misery, and voluntarily shutting from my soul the only consolation it could receive. Pleading for mercy and strength brought peace, and, with a cheerful countenance, I asked William what we should do for breakfast. The doors were unbarred, and a bottle of milk set down in the entrance of the room, poor Philip fearing to come too near. Little Anna and William ate it with bread, and I walked the floor with a crust and a glass of wine. William could not sit up. His ague came on, and my soul's agony with it. My husband on the cold bricks without fire, shivering and groaning, lifting his dim and sorrowful eyes with a fixed gaze in my face, while his tears ran on his pillow without one word. Anna rubbed one hand, I the other, till his fever came on. The Capitano brought us news that our time was lessened five days—told me to be satisfied with the dispensations of God, &c., and was answered by such a succession of sobs that he soon departed. Mr. Filicchi now came to comfort my William, and when he went away we said as much of our blessed service as William could go through. I then was obliged to lay my head down. Dinner was sent from town, and a servant to stay with us during our quarantine,—Louis, an old man, very little, with gray hairs and blue eyes, which changed their expression from joy to sorrow, as if they would console and still enliven. My face was covered with a handkerchief when he came in, and, tired of the sight of men with

cocked hats, cockades, and bayonets, I did not look up Poor Louis! how long shall I remember his voice of sorrow and tenderness when refusing the dinner! He looked up with lifted hands in some prayer that God would comfort me, and so I was comforted when I did not look at my poor William; but to see him as he then was was worse than to see him dead. And now the bolts of another door were hammered open, and Louis, who was become an object of equal terror, having entered our room and touched what we had touched, had an apartment allotted him. How many times did the poor old man run up and down the nearly-perpendicular twenty steps to get things necessary for our comfort next morning! When all was done, I handed him a chair that he might rest. He jumped almost over it, and danced around me like a madman, declaring he would work all night to serve us. My William, wearied out, was soon asleep. Ann, with a flood of tears, said her prayers and soon forgot her sorrows, and it seemed as if opening my prayer-book and bending my knees was the signal for my soul to find rest. It was nine o'clock with us—three at home. I imagined what I had so often enjoyed, and consoled myself with the thought that, though separated in the body six thousand miles, my soul and the souls that I love were at the throne of grace at the same time in the same prayers to one Almighty Father, accepted through our adored Redeemer and enlightened by one blessed Spirit. Then did it rejoice indeed in the Lord, and triumph in the God of its salvation. After prayers, read my little book of sermons, and became far more happy than I had been wretched. Went to bed at twelve; got up twice to prayers and to help my poor William.

“*Monday.*—Awoke with the same rest and comfort with which I had laid down. Gave my William his warm milk, and began to consider our situation, though so unfavorable

to his complaint, as one of the steps in the dispensations of that Almighty will which could alone choose right for us; and therefore set Ann to work, and myself to the dear Scriptures, as usual, lying close behind the poor shiverer to keep him from the ague. Our Capitano came with his guards and put up a very neat bed and curtains, sent by Filicchi, and fixed the benches on which Ann and I were to lie; took down our names—Signore Gulielmo, Signora Elizabeth, and Signora Anna Maria. The voice of kindness which again entreated me to look up to *le bon Dieu* made me look up to the speaker; and in our Capitano I found every expression of a benevolent heart. His great cocked hat being off, I found it had hid his gray hairs and a kind and affectionate countenance. ‘I had a wife; I loved her—I loved her. Oh! she gave me a daughter which she commended to my care, and died.’ He clasped his hands and looked up, and then at my William. ‘If God calls, what can we do? *et que voulez-vous, Signora?*’ I began to love my Capitano. Read, and jumped the rope to warm me; looked around our prison and found that our situation was beautiful; comforted my William all I could, rubbing his hands, and wiping his tears, and giving words to his soul, which was too weak to pray for itself; heard Ann read, while I watched the setting sun in a cloud. After both were asleep, read, prayed, wept, and prayed again, until eleven; at no loss to know the hours night and day; four bells strike every hour and ring every quarter.

“*Tuesday.*—My William was better, and very much encouraged by his doctor, Tutilli, who was very kind to him; also our Capitano, who now seemed to understand me a little, again repeated, ‘I loved my wife—I loved her, and she died, *et que voulez-vous, Signora?*’ Talked with the Filicchis at the grate, and with great difficulty got my William up the stairs again; nursed him, read to him, and

heard Ann read, and made the most of our troubles. Our Louis brought us an elegant bouquet—jessamines, geraniums, pinks, &c.; he makes excellent soup; cooks all with charcoal in a little pot. No sunset; heavy gale, which, if any thing could move our walls, would certainly bring them down; the roaring of the sea sounds like thunder; passed my evening as the last, quite reconciled to the sentinel's watch and bolts and bars; not afraid of my candle, as the window-shutter is the only piece of wood about us.

“*Wednesday*.—Not only willing to take my cross, but kissed it too; and while glorying in our consolations, my poor William was taken with an ague which was almost too much for him. He told me, as he had often done before, that it was too late; his strength was going from him every hour, and he should go gradually, but not long. This to me: to his friends quite cheerful; he was not able to go to them; they were admitted to our door; must not touch the least thing near us; and a point of our Capitano's stick warded my William off, when in eager conversation he would go too near. It reminded me of going to see *the lions*. One of the guards brought a pot of incense also to purify our air. A quiet half hour at sunset; Ann and I sang advent hymns with a low voice. Oh! after all was asleep, said our dear service alone—William had not been able in the day; found heavenly consolation, forgot prisons, bolts, and sorrows, and would have rejoiced to have sung with St Paul and Silas.

“*Thursday*.—I find my present opportunity a treasure, and my confinement of body a liberty of soul, which I may never again enjoy while they are united. Every moment not spent with my dear books, or in my nursing duty, is a loss. Ann is so happy with her rag-baby and little presents, it is a pleasure to see her. Our Capitano brought us news that other five days were granted, and the 19th of December

we were free. Poor William says with a groan, 'I believe before then.' We pray and cry together, till fatigue overpowers him, and then he says he is willing to go. Cheering up is useless; he seems easier after venting his sorrow, and always gets quiet sleep after his struggle. A heavy storm of wind, which drives the spray from the sea against our window, adds to his melancholy. If I could forget my God one moment at these times, I should go mad; but *He* hushes all. 'Be still, and know that I am God your Father.' Dear home, dearest sisters, my little ones—well—either protected by God in this world or in heaven. It is a sweet thought to dwell on, that all those I most tenderly love love God, and if we do not meet again here, there we shall be separated no more. If I have lost them now, their gain is infinite and eternal. How often I tell my William, 'when you awake in that world you will find nothing could tempt you to return to this; you will see that your care over your wife and little ones was like a hand, only to hold the cup, which God himself will give if he takes you.' Heavenly Father, pity the weak and burdened souls of thy poor creatures who have not strength to look to thee, and lift us from the dust for his sake, our resurrection and our life, Jesus Christ, our adored Redeemer.

"*Friday*.—A day of bodily pain, but peace with God. Kneeled on our mats round 'e table and said our dear service; the storm of wind so great. Carlton was admitted at the foot of the stairs, and from the top I conversed with him, which is always a great pleasure, as he seems to me next to an angel. Ventured to remind my poor William that it was our darling William's birthday, which cost him many tears; he also cried over our dear Harriet's profile—indeed he is so weak that even a thought of home makes him shed tears. How gracious is our Lord who strengthens my poor soul! Consider my husband, who left his all to

seek a milder climate, confined in this place of high and damp walls, exposed to cold and wind, which penetrates to the very bones, without fire except the kitchen charcoal, which oppresses his breast so much as to nearly convulse him; no little syrups, nor softener of the cough; milk and bark, Iceland moss, and opium pills, (which he takes quietly as a duty, without seeming even to hope,) is all I can offer him from day to day. When nature fails, and I can no longer look up with cheerfulness, I hide my head on the chair by his bedside, and he thinks I am praying; and pray I do, for prayer is all my comfort—without it I should be of little service to him; night and day he calls me ‘his life, his soul, his dearest, his all.’ Our Capitano came this afternoon, and seeing poor William in a high fever, said, ‘In this room what sufferings have I seen! There lay an Armenian begging a knife to end the struggle of death; there where the Signora’s bed is, in the frenzy of fever, a Frenchman insisted on shooting himself, and died in agonies.’ Little billets of paper pasted on the doors mark how many days different persons have stayed, and the shutter is all over notched—10, 20, 30, 40 days. I do not mark ours, trusting they are marked above. He only knows best. Dear, dear William, I can sometimes inspire him for a few moments to feel that it would be sweet to die; he always says, ‘My Father and my God, thy will be done.’ Our Father in pity and compassion, our God in power, to succor and to save, who promises to pardon and save us through our adored Redeemer, who will not let those perish for whom he has shed his precious blood. Only to reflect, if we did not know and love God—if we did not feel the consolations and embrace the cheering hope he has set before us, and find our delight in the study of his blessed word and truth, what would become of us?

Though torn from nature's most endearing ties,
The heart's warm hope, and love's maternal glow,

* * * * *

Though sorrows still affecting ills prepare,
And o'er each passing day her presence lowers,
And darkened fancy shades with many cares,

With many trials crowds the future hours:

Still in the Lord I will rejoice,

Still to my God I lift my voice,

Father of mercies! still my grateful lays

Shall hymn thy name, exulting in thy praise.

J. H. H

“Capitano says, ‘all religions are good; it is good to keep one’s own, but yours is not as good as mine—to do to others as you would wish them to do to you—that is all religion and the only point.’ Tell me, dear Capitano, do you take this as a good principle only, or also as a command? ‘I reverence the command, Signora.’ Well, Mons. Capitano, he who commands your excellent rule also commanded in the first place: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your soul,’ and do you not give that the first place, Capitano? ‘Ah, Signora, it is excellent, *mais il y a tant de choses.*’ Poor Capitano, sixty years of age, and yet to find that to give God the soul interferes with so many things! Dear little Ann,—‘the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be—lost!’

“*Tuesday, 29th Nov.*—Was obliged to go to bed at ten last night, to get warm in little Ann’s arms; awoke this morning while the moon was setting opposite our window, but could not enjoy its brightness, as the spray from the sea keeps the glass always thick; laid in bed till nine with little Ann, to explain to her our *Te Deum*. She said, ‘One thing always troubles me, mamma; our Saviour says, They who would reign with him must suffer with him, and if I was now cut off, where should I go, for I have not yet suf-

ferred?' She coughs very much, with a great deal of pain in the breast. She said, 'Sometimes I think, when this pain comes in my breast, that God will call me soon, and take me from this world, where I am always offending him; and how good would that be, if he gives me a sickness that I may bear patiently, that I may try and please him!' My Anna, you please him every day when you help me through my troubles. 'Oh, do I, mamma? thank God, thank God!' After breakfast, read our psalms and the 35th chapter of Isaiah to my William, with so much delight, that it made us all merry; he read, at little Ann's request, the last chapter of Revelations, but the tones of his voice no heart can stand. A storm of wind still, and very cold. William, with a blanket over his shoulders, creeps to the old man's fire; Ann jumps the rope, and Matty hops on one foot five or six times the length of the room without stopping—laugh at me, my sister, but it is very good exercise, and warms sooner than a fire when there is a warm heart to set it in motion. Sang hymns and read promises to William, shivering under the bed-clothes, and felt that God is with us, and that he is our all. The fever comes hot, the bed shakes even with his breathing—my God, my Father!

"*St. Andrews, 30th Nov.*—William again by the kitchen fire. Last night, thirty or forty poor souls of all nations, Greeks, Turks, Spaniards, and Frenchmen, arrived here from a shipwreck—no mattresses, no clothes or food—great-coats without shirts—shirts without coats—these sent all to one room with naked walls and the jug of water, until the commandant should find leisure to supply them. Our Capitano says he can do nothing without orders. '*Patience, que voulez-vous, Signora?*' Anna says, 'for all we are so cold and in this prison, mamma, how happy we are compared with them, and we have peace too; they quarrel, fight, and halloo all the time; the Capitano sends us even chestnuts and fruits

from his own table; these have not bread.' Dear Ann, you will see many more such mysteries. At William's bedside, we have said our daily service; he thought it would stop his shiverings. My William's soul is so humble, it will hardly embrace that faith, its only resource. At any time, whom have we but our Redeemer? but when the spirit is on the brink of departure, it must cling to him with increased force, or where is it? Dear William, it is not from the impulse of terror you turn to your God; you tried and wished to serve him, long before this trial came; why, then, will you not consider him as the Father who knows all the different means and dispositions of his children, and will graciously receive those who come to him by that way which he has appointed? You say your only hope is in Christ; what other hope do we need? He says that the first effects he ever felt from the calls of the gospel he experienced from our dear Hobart's pressing the question in one of his sermons:— 'What avails gaining the whole world and losing your own soul?*' The reflections he made when he returned home were, 'I toil and toil, and what is it? what I gain destroys me daily, soul and body; I live without God in the world, and shall die miserably.' Mr. F. D., with whom he had not been in habits of business, offered to join him in an adventure; it succeeded far beyond their expectation. Mr. F. D. said, when they wound it up, 'One thing you know, I have been long in business,—began with very little—have built a house, and have enough to build another. I have generally succeeded in my undertakings, and attribute all to this,—that, whether they are great or small, I always ask a blessing of God, and look to that blessing for success.' William says, 'I was struck with shame and sorrow that I had been a heathen be-

* Rev. John Henry Hobart was an Episcopalian minister of New York, whose church Mrs. Seton frequented.

fore God.' These he calls his two warnings which awakened his soul, and speaks of them always with tears. Oh, the promises he makes if it please God to spare him!

"Have had our mate to see us from Captain O'Brien—talked out of the window to him; and one of the sailors, who seemed to love us as his own soul, always flying to serve and trying to please us while on board, came with him. Poor Charles! he turned pale when he saw my head out of the iron bars, and called out, 'Why, Mrs. Seton, are you in a prison?' He looked behind all the way as he went, and shook his head at Ann as long as he could see her. Charles had lived at the quarantine at Staten Island, and that, without his good and affectionate heart, would make me love him. I shall never hear a sailor's yo! yo! without thinking of his melancholy song. He is the captain's and everybody's favorite. How gracious is my adored Master, who gives even to the countenance of the stranger the look of kindness and pity! From the time we first landed here, one of the guards of our room looked always with sorrow and sympathy upon us, and, though I cannot understand him nor he me, we talk away very fast. He showed me yesterday he was very sick, by pointing to his breast and throat. When the Capitano came, I told him how sorry I was for poor Philippo. 'Oh, Signora, he is very well off; he has been two years married to a very handsome young woman of sixteen, has two children, and receives 3s. 6d. per day: to be sure, he is obliged to sleep in the lazaretto, but in the morning goes home to his wife for an hour or two; it is not possible to spare him longer from his duty. *Et que voulez-vous, Signora?*' Good and merciful Father, who gives content to a cheerful heart with 3s. 6d. per day; a wife and two children to maintain with such a pittance! Often let me think of Philippo, when I have not enough, or think I

have not He is twenty-two, his wife eighteen. Thought goes to two at home most dear—H. and B.

“Went to the railings with little Anna, to receive from our Capitano’s daughter a baby she had been making for her. She has a kind, good countenance, and hangs on her father’s arm; has refused an offer of marriage, that she may take care of him. Such a sight awakened my recollections.

“*Dec. 1.*—Arose between six and seven, before the day had dawned—the light of the moon opposite our window was still the strongest—not a breath of wind—the sea, which before I had always seen in violent commotion, now gently seemed to creep to the rocks it had so long been beating over—every thing around us at rest except two little white gulls flying to the westward toward my home, toward my loves,—that thought did not do,—flying toward heaven, where I tried to send my soul—the angel of peace met it, and poured over the oil of love and praise, driving off every vain imagination, and led it to its Saviour and its God. *We praise thee, O God!* the dear strain of praise in which I always seem to meet the souls I love, and *Our Father*—these two prayers are the union of love and praise, and in them the soul meets all. At ten o’clock read with William and Anna—at twelve he was at rest, Ann playing in the next room. Alone to all the world—one of those sweet pauses in spirit, when the body seems to me forgotten, came over me. In the year 1789, when my father was in England, one morning in May, in the lightness of a cheerful heart I jumped in the wagon that was driving to the woods for brush, about a mile from home; the boy who drove it began to cut, and I set off in the woods, soon found an outlet in a meadow, and a chestnut-tree, with several young ones growing around it. attracted my attention as a seat; but when I came to it, found rich moss under it and a warm sun. Here, then, was a sweet bed—the air still, a clear blue vault above—the num

berless sounds of spring-melody and joy—the sweet clovers and wild-flowers I had got by the way, and a heart as innocent as human heart could be, filled even with enthusiastic love to God and admiration of his works. Still I can feel every sensation that passed through my soul; I thought at that time my father did not care for me. Well, God was my Father, my all. I prayed, sang hymns, cried, laughed, talking to myself of how far He could place me above all sorrow. Then I laid still to enjoy the heavenly peace that came over my soul, and I am sure, in the two hours so enjoyed, grew ten years in my spiritual life; told cousin Joe to go home with his wood, not to mind me, and walked a mile round to see the roof of the parsonage. There I made another hearty prayer, then sang all the way home, with a good appetite for the samp and fat pork. Well, all this came strong in my head this morning, when, as I tell you, the body let the spirit alone. I had prayed and cried heartily, which is my daily and hourly comfort, and, closing my eyes with my head upon the table, lived all those sweet hours over again—made believe I was under the chestnut-tree—felt so peaceable a heart, so full of love to God—such confidence and hope in him. The wintry storms of time shall be over, and the unclouded spring enjoyed forever. So you see, as you know, with God for our portion, there is no prison in high walls and bolts; no sorrow in the soul that waits on him, though beset with present cares and gloomy prospects. For this freedom I can never be sufficiently thankful, as in my William's case it keeps alive what in his weak state of body would naturally fail; and often when he hears me repeat the psalms of triumph in God, and read St. Paul's faith in Christ, with my whole soul, it so enlivens his spirit that he makes them also his own, and all our sorrows are turned into joy. Oh, well may I love God, well may my whole soul strive to please him, for what but the

pen of an angel can ever express what he has done and is constantly doing for me? While I live, while I have my being in time and through eternity, let me sing praises to my God.

“Dec. 2.—Enjoyed the morn and daybreak; read the commentary on the 104th psalm, and sang hymns in bed till ten; a hard frost in the night; endeavored to make a fire in my room with brush, but was smoked out; the poor strangers, almost mad with cold and hunger, quarrelled battled, and at last sat down in companies on the grass with cards, which made them as noisy as their anger. Patience! Anna sick, William tired out! A clear sunset, which cheered my heart, though it was all the time singing *De profundis*, from the lowest depth of wo; the *Ave Marie* bell rings, while the sun sets, on one side of us, and the bells ‘for the dead’ on the other; the latter sometimes continue a long while; in the morning always call again to pray for the ‘souls in purgatory.’ Our Capitano said a great deal on the pleasure I should enjoy on Christmas at Pisa, in seeing all the ceremonies. The enjoyments of Christmas! Heavenly Father, who knows my inmost soul, he knows how it would enjoy, and will also pity while it is cut off from what it so much longs for. One thing is in my power—though communion with those my soul loves is not within my reach in one sense, in the other what can deprive me of it?—still in spirit we may meet. At five o’clock here it will be twelve there. At five, then, in some corner on my knees I may spend the time they are at the altar; and if the cup of salvation cannot be received in the strange land evidently, virtually it may, with the blessing of Christ, and the cup of thanksgiving supply in a degree that which, if I could obtain it, would be my strongest desire. Oh, my soul! what can shut us out from the love of Him who will even dwell within us through love?

"Dec. 4.—Our Captain O'Brien and his wife found their way to us—'must not touch Signora,' says Philippo, dividing us with his stick. Kind and affectionate captain, when I ran down to meet him, the tears danced in his eyes, while poor William and Ann peeped through the grates. Mrs. O'Brien began to cry; we could not see them but a few minutes for the cold. Our lazaretto captain had sent us andirons, small wood, &c., and I have doctored the chimney with a curtain, so as to make the smoke bearable; have had an anxious day between father and Ann. She was very ill for some hours; when the cause of her sufferings was removed, we went on our knees together. Oh, may her dear soul long send forth such precious tears! Dear, dear Rebecca, how often have we nursed up the fire together, as I do now alone!—alone? recall the word—my Bible, commentaries, Kempis,—visible and continual enjoyment,—when I cannot get hours, I take minutes. Invisible! Oh, the company is numberless. Sometimes I feel so assured that the Guardian Angel is immediately present that I look from my book, and can hardly be persuaded I was not touched. 'Poor soul!' John Henry Hobart would say, 'she will lose her reason in that prison.' But the enjoyments only come when all is quiet and I have passed an hour or two with King David or the prophet Isaiah. Those hours, I often think, I shall hereafter esteem the most precious in my life. My Father and my God, who by the consoling voice of his word builds up the soul in hope, so as to free it even for hours of its encumbrance, confirming and strengthening it by constant experience of his indulgent goodness, giving it a new life in him, even while in the midst of pains and sufferings sustaining, directing, consoling, and blessing, through every changing scene of its pilgrimage, making his will its guide to temporal comfort and eternal glory,—how shall the most unwearied diligence,

the most cheerful compliance, the most humble resignation, ever enough express my love, my joy, thanksgiving, and praise?

“Dec. 12.—A week has passed, my dear sister, without even one little memorandum of the pen. The first day of it, (Sunday,) that dear day in which I always find my blessing, was passed in uninterrupted prayers, anxiety, and watching. On the 5th, (Monday,) was early awakened by my poor William in great suffering; sent for the doctor Tutilli, who, as soon as he saw him, told him he was not wanted, but I must send for him who would minister to his soul. In this moment I stood alone as to the world; my William looked in silent agony at me, and I at him, each fearing to weaken the other's strength; at the moment he drew himself toward me, and said, ‘I breathe out my soul with you.’ The exertion he made assisted nature's remaining strength, and he threw a quantity from his lungs, which had threatened to stop their motion, and, so doing, experienced so great a revolution that in a few hours afterward he seemed nearly the same as when we entered the lazaretto. Oh, that day! it was spent close by his bedside on my little mat—he slumbered the most of every hour; and did I not pray, and did I not praise? No inquiring visitor disturbed the solemn silence—no breakfast or dinner to interrupt the rest. Carlton came at sunset; Mrs. F., they thought, was dying—he thought his poor brother so—and then came our Capitano with so much offered kindness. He was shocked at the tranquillity of my William, and distressed at the thought that I was alone with him, for the doctor had told him that, notwithstanding his present relief, if the expectoration from the lungs did not return he might be gone in a few hours. Would I have some one in the room? Oh no! what had I to fear? And what *had* I to fear? I lay down as if to rest, that he might not be uneasy; listened all

night—sometimes by the fire, sometimes lying down, sometimes thought the breathing stopped, and sometimes, alarmed by its heaviness, kissed his poor face to see if it was cold. Well, I was alone; dear, indulgent Father! could I be alone while clinging fast to thee in continual prayer or thanksgiving, prayer for him, and joy, wonder, and delight to feel assured that what I had so fondly hoped and confidently asserted really proved, in the hour of trial, to be more than I could hope, more than I could conceive? that my God could and would bear me through the most severe trials, with that strength, confidence, and affiance, which, if every circumstance of the case was considered, seemed more than a human being would expect or hope? But his consolations, who shall speak them? How can utterance be given to that which only his spirit can feel? At daylight, the wished-for change took place. Mr Hall* came in the morning with Mr. Filicchi and the Capitano; went away with a promise to come again, and the intervening days and evenings have been spent in constant attention to the main concern, but, from a singularity of disposition which rather delights in going on than in retrospecting sorrow, have rather (when I could only keep awake by writing, according to the old custom) busied myself in writing the *first sermon* for my dear little Dick. William goes on gently, but keeps me busy. Ann is a treasure. She was reading yesterday that John was imprisoned. 'Yes, papa, Herod imprisoned him, and Miss Herodias gave him liberty.' 'No, my dear; she had him beheaded.' 'Well, papa, she released him from prison and sent him to God.' Child after my own heart!

"Dec. 13.—Five days more, and our quarantine is ended. Lodgings are engaged at Pisa, on the borders of the Arno

* Protestant Chaplain of the British Factory at Leghorn.

My heart used to be full of poetical visions about this famous river, but it has no room for visions now; one only vision is before it. No one ever saw my William without giving him the quality of an amiable man; but to see that character exalted to the peaceful, humble Christian, waiting the will of God with a patience that seemed more than human, and a firm faith which would do honor to the most distinguished piety, is a happiness that is allowed only to the poor little mother who is separated from all other happiness connected with this scene of things. No sufferings, nor weakness, nor distress, (and from these he is never free in any degree,) can prevent his following me daily in prayer, the psalms, and generally large readings of the Scriptures. If he is a little better, he enlarges his attention; if worse, he is more eager not to lose a moment; and, except the day which we thought his last, he has never failed one day in this course since our entrance in these stone walls, the 19th of November. He very often says, this is the period of his life which, if he live or die, he will always consider as blessed, the only time which he has not lost. Not the smallest murmur—oh! and lifting up of the eyes is the strongest expression I have yet heard from him in the rapid progress of his complaint, which has reduced him almost to nothing, and from its very nature gives him no release from irritation in violent coughing, chills, oppression, weakness, and even in the weight of his own limbs seems more than a mortal could bear. ‘Why art thou so heavy, O my soul?’ is the only comfort he seems to find in words; often talks of his darlings, but most of meeting *one family* in heaven; talks of those we have left behind, as if it was but yesterday, and of dear Henry Hobart, whose visits and society he misses most, as they would be his greatest consolation in these hours of sorrow. When I thank God for my creation and preservation, it is with a warmth of feeling I never could

know until now: to wait on him in my William's soul and body; to console and soothe these hours of affliction and pain, watching and weariness, which next to God I alone could do; to strike up the cheerful notes of hope and Christian triumph, which from his partial love he hears with the more enjoyment from me, because to me he attributes the greatest share of them; to hear him, in pronouncing the name of his Redeemer, declare that I first taught him the sweetness of the sound—oh, if I was in the dungeon of this lazaretto, I should bless and praise my God for these days of retirement and abstraction from the world, which have afforded leisure and opportunity for so blessed a work.

“*Dec. 14.*—Said my dear prayers alone while William was asleep; did not dare to remind him of them, for weakness and pain quite overpower him. Rain and storm, as indeed we have had almost every day of the twenty-six we have been here. The dampness about us would be thought dangerous for a person in health—and my William's sufferings—oh! well I know that God is above. Capitano, you need not always point your silent look and finger there; if I thought our condition the providence of *man*, instead of the weeping Magdalen, as you so graciously call me, you would find me a lioness, willing to burn your lazaretto about your ears, if it was possible, that I might carry off my poor prisoner to breathe the air of heaven in some more seasonable place. To keep a poor soul, who comes to your country for his life, thirty days shut up in damp walls, smoke and wind from all quarters, blowing even the curtain round his bed, (and his bones almost through,) and now the shadow of death, trembling if he only stands a few minutes! He is to go to Pisa for his health—this day his prospects are very far from Pisa—but oh, my heavenly Father! I know that these contradictory events are permitted and guided by thy wisdom, which only is light. We are in darkness, and must be

thankful that our knowledge is not wanted to perfect thy work—and also keep in mind that infinite mercy which, in permitting the sufferings of the perishing body, has provided for our souls so large an opportunity of comfort and nourishment for an eternal life, where we shall assuredly find that all things have worked together for our good, for our sure trust in thee.

“*Dec. 15.*—Finished reading the Testament through, which we began the 6th of October, and my Bible as far as Ezekiel, which I have always read to myself in rotation, but the lessons appointed in the prayer-book to my William. To-day, read him several passages in Isaiah, which he enjoyed so much that he was carried for a while out of his troubles—indeed, our reading is an unfailing comfort. William says he feels like a person brought to the light after many years of darkness, when he heard the Scriptures as the law of God, and therefore sacred, but not discerning what part he had in them or feeling that they were the fountain of eternal life.

“*Dec. 16.*—A heavy day; part of our service together, part alone. They have bolted us in to-night, expecting to find my William gone to-morrow, but he rests quietly, and God is with us.

“*Dec. 17 and 18.*—Melancholy days of combat with nature’s weakness, and the courage of hope which pictured our removal from the lazaretto to Pisa.

“*Dec. 19.*—Arose with the light, and had every thing prepared for the anxious hour; at ten, all in readiness, and at eleven held the hand of my William, while he was seated on the arms of two men and conducted from the lazaretto to Filicchi’s coach, surrounded by a multitude of gazers, all sighing out, ‘O poverino,’ while my heart beat almost to fainting, lest he should die in the exertion; but the air revived him; his spirits were cheerful; and through fifteen

miles of heavy roads he was supported, and appeared stronger than when he set out. My Father and my God! was all my full heart of thankfulness could utter.

"*Dec. 20.*—Let me stop and ask myself if I can go through the remainder of my memorandum with that sincerity and exactness which has so far been adhered to; whether, in the crowd of anxieties and sorrows which are pressed in so small a compass of time, the overflowing of feeling can be suppressed, and my soul stand singly before my God. Yes, every moment of it speaks his praise, and therefore it shall be followed. My William was composed the greater part of the day, on a sofa, delighted with his change of situation, taste and elegance of every thing around him; every necessary comfort within his reach. We read, compared past and present, talked of heavenly hopes, and with our dear Carlton, (who was to stay with us four days,) and then went to rest in hopes of a good night; but I had scarcely fixed the pillows of the sofa, which I made my bed, before he called me to help him, and from that moment, the last complaint, which Dr. Tutilli told me must be decisive, came on.

"*Dec. 21.*—A kind of languid weakness seized the mind as well as overpowered the body; he must and would ride. The physician, Dr. Cartelach, whispered me he might die in the attempt; but there was no possibility of refusal, and it was concluded that opposition was worse than any risk—and, carried down in a chair, and supported in my trembling arms with pillows, we rode. Oh, my Father, well did you strengthen me in that hour! In five minutes we were forced to return, and to get him out of the coach, and in the chair up the stairs, and on the bed—words can never tell—

"*Dec. 22.*—A cloudy day and quiet.

"*Dec. 23.*—The complaint seemed lessened, and ride

again we must; took Madame De Tot (the lady of the house) with us, and returned in better spirits, and more able to help himself, than when we went out; and I really began to think riding must be good; but that was the last.

“*Dec. 24.*—Constant suffering, and for the first day confined in bed; the disorder of the bowels so violent that he said he could not last till morning; talked with cheerfulness about his darlings, thanked God that he had given him time to reflect and such consolation in his word and prayers; and, with the help of a small portion of laudanum, rested until midnight. He then awoke, and observed I had not laid down. I said, ‘No, love, for the sweetest reflections keep me awake. Christmas day is begun; the day of our dear Redeemer’s birth here, you know, is the day that opened to us the door of everlasting life.’ ‘Yes,’ he said, ‘and how I wish we could have the sacrament! well, we must do all we can;’ and, putting a little wine in a glass, I said different parts of psalms and prayers which I had marked, hoping for a happy moment, and we took the cup of thanksgiving, setting aside the sorrow of time in the view of eternity. Oh, so happy to find its joys were strongly painted to him! On Sunday, O’Brien came, and my William gave me in his charge to take me home, with a composure and serenity that made us cold. Did not pass a mouthful through my lips that day, which was spent on my knees by his bedside, every moment I could look off my William; he anxiously prayed to be released that day, and followed me in prayer whenever he had the least cessation from extreme suffering.

“*Dec. 26.*—Was so impatient to be gone that I could scarcely persuade him to wet his lips, but continued calling his Redeemer to pardon and release him. As he always would have his door shut, I had no interruption. Carlton kept Anna out of the way; and every promise in the Scripture and prayer I could remember I continually repeated

to him, which seemed to be his only relief. When I stopped to give him any thing, 'Why do you do it? what do I want? I want to be in heaven—pray, pray for my soul. He said he felt so comfortable an assurance that his Redeemer would receive him that he saw his dear little Rebecca smiling before him; and told little Anna, 'Oh, if your father could take you with him!' And at midnight, when the cold sweat came on, he would reach out both his arms, and said repeatedly, 'You promised me you would go; come, come, fly!' At four, the hard struggle ceased: nature sank into a settled sob—'My dear wife and little ones,' and 'My Christ Jesus, have mercy and receive me,' was all I could distinguish; and again repeated, 'My Christ Jesus,' until a quarter past seven, when the dear soul took its flight to the blessed exchange it so much longed for.

—'I often asked him, when he could not speak, 'You feel, my love, that you are going to your Redeemer?' and he motioned, 'Yes,' with a look of peace. At a quarter past seven on Tuesday morning, December 27, his soul was released—and mine from a struggle next to death. And how will my dear sister understand, except you could conceive the scene of suffering my poor William passed through—that I took my little Anna in my arms, and made her kneel again with me by the dear body, and thank our Heavenly Father for relieving him from his misery—for the joyful assurance that, through our blessed Redeemer, he had entered into life eternal, and implored his protecting care and pity for us who have yet to finish our course? Now, opening the door to let the people know it was finished, servants and landlady all were at a loss to know what should be done; and, finding every one afraid of catching the complaint, as we should be of the yellow fever, I took two women who had washed and sometimes assisted me, and, again shutting the door, with their assistance did the last duties, and felt I had done

all—all that tenderest love and duty could do. My head had not rested for a week; three days and nights the fatigue had been incessant, and one meal in twenty-four hours; still I must wash, dress, pack up, and in one hour be in Mrs. Filicchi's carriage, and ride fifteen miles to Leghorn. Carlton and our old Louis stayed to watch; and my William was brought in the afternoon, and deposited in the house appointed, in the Protestant burying-ground. Oh! oh! oh! what a day!—close his eyes, lay him out, ride a journey, be obliged to see a dozen people in my room till night, and at night crowded with the whole sense of my situation. Oh, my Father and my God! The next morning at eleven, all the English and Americans in Leghorn met at the grave-house, and all was done. In all this, it is not necessary to dwell on the mercy and consoling presence of my dear Lord, for no mortal strength could support what I experienced. My William often asked me if I felt assured he would be accepted and pardoned; and I always tried to convince him that where the soul was so sincere as his, and submission to God's will so uniform as his had been throughout his trial, it became sinful to doubt one moment of his reception through the merits of his Redeemer. The night before his death, praying earnestly for him that his pardon might be sealed in heaven and his transgressions blotted out, after praying, I continued on my knees, laid my head on the chair by which I knelt, and insensibly lost myself. I saw in my slumber a little angel, with a pen in one hand and a sheet of white paper in the other; he looked at me, holding out the paper, and wrote in large letters—'JESUS.' This, though a vision of sleep, was a great comfort. He was very much affected when I told him, and said, a few hours before he died, 'The angel wrote, Jesus: he has opened the door of eternal life for me, and will cover me with his merits.' I had a similar dream the same night. The heavens appeared

▲ very bright blue; a little angel at some distance held open a division in the sky. A large black bird, like an eagle, flew toward me, and flapped its wings round and made every thing dark. The angel looked as if it held up the division waiting for something the bird came for. And so, alone from every friend on earth, walking the 'valley of the shadow of death,' we had sweet comfort even in our dreams, while faith convinced us they were realities."

Thus terminated for Mrs. Seton one of the severest trials that human infirmity is destined to encounter—the death of her husband in a land of strangers, all her relatives and friends separated from her by the wide ocean, and unable to afford that solace which her bereavement so naturally called for. But her own relation of this painful event is quite sufficient to show that her fortitude was equal to the ordeal to which she was subjected, and that she exhibited in her affliction a strength of mind and a moral energy as rare as they are worthy of admiration. On the very day that her husband breathed his last, when she was on the way from the melancholy spot to the residence of Mr. Filicchi in Leghorn, such was her entire resignation to the dispensations of Heaven, that "in her perpetual look upward she could enjoy in her silence of peace and deadly calmness the view of the beautiful country around."

On her arrival at Leghorn, she was received in the Filicchi family with every mark of the sincerest sympathy and the most unbounded generosity; "but," as she says, "my poor, high heart was in the clouds, soaring after my William's scul, and repeating, 'My God, you are my God, and so I am now alone in the world with you and my little ones; but you are my Father, and doubly theirs.'" The same day in the evening, she was kindly visited by the Rev. Mr. Hall, who officiated at the interment of Mr. Seton. His first words to her were, "As the tree falls, madam, there is

lies." Among those who called upon her, she makes particular mention of the good old Capitano, who "came," she says, "with a black crape on the hat and arm, and such a look of sorrow at his poor Signora—all his kindness in the lazaretto was present. Dearest Anna melted his heart again, and he ours"

The impression which Mrs. Seton made upon the minds of those who had attended at the lazaretto and at Pisa, where her husband expired, and upon all indeed who formed her acquaintance, was of the most favorable character. We have seen already how cheerfully the officers and servants at the quarantine ministered to the wants of herself and her suffering husband; but subsequently, when the vain fear of contagion prevented others from laying out the corpse of Mr. Seton, and she herself, with the assistance of her wash-woman, undertook this sad duty, the people around gazed at her with astonishment, admiring her courage and fortitude, and exclaiming, with more of good feeling than judgment, "If she was not a heretic she would be a saint." All, however, according to their circumstances, performed the part of friendship, which met with a corresponding gratitude on the part of Mrs. Seton.

"The Filicchis," she says in a letter to her sister-in-law, "do all they can to ease my situation, and seem, indeed, that they cannot do enough. Indeed, from the day we left home, we have met with nothing but kindness, even in servants and strangers." A few days after, she wrote to the same friend that her husband's sufferings and death had interested so many persons in Leghorn, that she was as kindly treated and as much attended to, in regard to her health and the consolations which she needed, as if she were at home. "Indeed," she adds, "when I look forward to my unprovided situation, as it relates to the affairs of this life, I must often smile at their tenderness and precautions. Anna says, 'Oh,

mamma, how many friends God has provided for us in this strange land! for they are our friends before they know us;’ and who can tell how great a comfort he provided for me when he gave her to me?” To divert her mind from its melancholy musings, and afford her an opportunity, during her brief stay in Italy, of extending her acquaintance with a country which abounded in so many curiosities of nature and of art, some of her friends induced her to accompany them to Florence. How she enjoyed the contemplation of the beautiful scenery around her, and the wonderful productions of human genius in that city of elegance and taste, will be seen from the following description of her visit in her own words :*

“Four days I have been at Florence, lodged in the famous palace of Medici, which fronts the Arno and presents a view of the high mountains of Morelli, covered with elegant country-seats, and five bridges across the river, which are always thronged with people and carriages. On Sunday, January 8, at 11 o’clock, I went with Mrs. Amabilia† to the chapel La Santissima Anunziata. Passing through a curtain, my eye was struck with hundreds of persons kneeling; but the gloom of the chapel, which is lighted only by the wax tapers on the altar, and a small window at the top darkened with green silk, made every object at first appear very indistinct, while that kind of soft and distant music which lifts the mind to a foretaste of heavenly pleasures called up in an instant every dear and tender idea of my soul, and, forgetting Mrs. A.’s company and all the surrounding scene, I sank on my knees in the first place I found vacant, and shed a torrent of tears at the recollection of how long I had been a stranger in the house of my God, and the

* This description is a journal which she prepared for the gratification of a beloved relative in America.

† The wife of Mr. Anthony Filicchi, of Leghorn.

accumulated sorrow that had separated me from it. I need not tell you that I said our dear service with my whole soul, as far as in its agitation I could recollect. When the organ ceased, and mass was over, we walked around the chapel. The elegance of the ceiling in carved gold, altars loaded with gold and silver and other precious ornaments; pictures of every sacred subject, and the dome a continued representation of different parts of Scripture: all this can never be conceived by description, nor my delight in seeing old men and old women, young women, and all sorts of people, kneeling promiscuously about the altar, as inattentive to us and other passers-by as if we were not there. On the other side of the church, another chapel presented a similar scene, but as another mass had begun, I passed on tip-toe behind Mrs. Filicchi, unable to look around, though every one is so intent upon their prayers and rosary that it is very immaterial what a stranger does.

“While Mrs. Filicchi went to make visits, I visited the church of St. Firenze, and saw two more elegant chapels, but in a more simple style, and had the pleasure of treading the sacred place with two of its inhabitants, as a convent is also part of the building. I saw a young priest unlock his little chapel, with that composed and equal eye as if his soul had entered before him. My heart would willingly have followed after; here was to be the best music, but at night, and no female could be admitted.

“I rode to the queen’s gardens, where I saw elms and firs, with hedges of yew and ivy in beautiful verdure, and cultivated fields, appearing like our advanced spring. Indeed, it was not possible to look without thinking, or to think without my soul’s crying out for those it loves in heaven or on earth. Therefore I was forced to close my eyes and lean against the carriage as if asleep; which the mild softness of the air and warmth of the sun seemed easily to

excuse. We stopped at the queen's country palace, and passed through such innumerable suites of apartments, so elegant that each was a new object of wonder; but Solomon's vanity and vexation of spirit was all the while in my head. Saw the queen twice; but, as little Anna says, she would not be known from any other woman but by the number of her attendants.*

"*Sunday evening.*—Mr. T—— C—— and Mrs. F. went to the opera. I had a good fire in my room, locked the door, and, with my dear Anna, books and pens, passed a happy evening for this world. When we said our dear service together, she burst into tears, as she has always done since we say it alone. She says, 'My dear papa is praising God in heaven, and I ought not to cry for him; but I believe it is human nature; is it not, mamma?' I think of what David said: 'I shall go to him, he cannot return to me.' Her conversation is dearer to me, and preferable to any I can have this side of the grave. It is one of the greatest mercies that I was permitted to bring her, for many reasons.

"*Monday morning, Jan. 9.*—Visited the gallery; but as my curiosity had been greatly excited by my Seton's descriptions, and the French having made great depredations, it did not equal my expectations. The chef-d'œuvre of D., a head scarcely to be distinguished from life, the Redeemer about twelve years of age—a Madonna—and the Baptist very young, were those that attracted me most. The statues in bronze were beautiful; but I, being only an American, could not look very straight at them. Innumerable curiosities and antiquities surrounded us on all sides. The

* By the treaty of Luneville, in 1801, Tuscany became a kingdom under the Prince of Parma, who was styled King of Etruria. Upon his death, in 1803, his widow, Maria Louisa, assumed the government, as queen-regent during the minority of her son.

sacred representations were sufficient to engage and interest all my attention, and, as the French had not been covetous of those, I had the advantage of seeing them; but felt the void of him who would have pointed out the beauties of every object too much to enjoy any perfectly—‘alone but half enjoyed.’ My God! Went to the church of San Lorenzo, where a sensation of delight struck me so forcibly that I approached the great altar, formed all of the most precious stones and marbles that could be produced. ‘My soul doth magnify the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,’ came into my mind with a fervor which absorbed every other feeling. It recalled the ideas of the offerings of David and Solomon to the Lord, when the rich and valuable productions of nature and art were devoted to his holy temple and sanctified to his service. Annexed to this is the chapel of marble, the beauty and work and richness of which might be supposed the production of more than mortal means, if its unfinished dome did not discover its imperfections. It is the tomb of the Medici princes. Monuments of granite, golden crowns set with precious stones, the polish of the whole which reflects the different monuments as a mirror, and the awful black Cosmos who are represented on the top of the monuments as large as life, with their crowns and sceptres, made my poor weak head turn, and I believe, if it had been possible that I should have been alone there, it would never have turned back again. I passed my evening again in my room with dear Anna. At half-past nine, Mr. C. took the trouble to come for me, to attend the opera, that I might hear some wonderful trio, in which the celebrated David was to show all his excellence; and as it would be over at ten, and Mrs. F. so much desired it, I went with hat and veil, instead of the masks they all wore. The opera-house is so dark that you can hardly distinguish the person next to you

Anna thought the singers would go mad, and I could not find the least gratification in their quavers; felt the full conviction that those who could find pleasure in such a scene must be unacquainted with real pleasure. My William had so much desired that I should hear this David, that I tried to be pleased; but not one note touched my heart. At ten, I was relieved from the most unwilling exertion I had yet made, and returned with redoubled delight to my pleasures, which were as the joys of heaven in comparison.

"Tuesday, Jan. 10.—I saw the church Santa Maria, and the queen's palace in which she resides. Every beauty that gold, damask of every variety, and India tapestry, can devise, embellished with fine statues, ceilings embossed with gold, elegant pictures, carpets, and floors inlaid with the most costly satin-woods, in beautiful patterns, tables inlaid with most precious orders of stone,—all combined to make the palace of Pitti a pattern of elegance and taste. So say the connoisseurs. For me, I am no judge, as O—— says. A picture of the descent from the cross, nearly as large as life, engaged my whole soul; Mary at the foot of it expressed well that the iron had entered into hers, and the shades of death over her agonized countenance so strongly contrasted the heavenly peace of the dear Redeemer that it seemed as if his pains had fallen on her. How hard it was to leave that picture, and how often, in the few hours' interval since I have seen it, I shut my eyes, and recall it in imagination! Abraham and Isaac are also represented in so expressive a manner that you feel the whole convulsion of that patriarch's breast; and well for me that, in viewing those two pictures, my companions were engaged with other subjects—the dropping tears could be hid, but the shaking of the whole frame not so easily. Dear sister,

you had your sigh, in reflecting how truly you would enjoy them.

“*Wednesday, Jan. 11.*—This morning I have indeed enjoyed, in the anatomical museum and cabinet of natural history. The work of the almighty hand in every object—the anatomical rooms displaying nature in every division of the human frame—is almost too much for human nature to support. Mine shrank from it; but, recalling the idea of my God in all I saw, though so humiliating and painful to the view, still it was congenial to every feeling of my soul; and as my companion T. has an intelligent mind and excellent heart, which for the time entered into my feelings, I passed through most of the rooms uninterrupted in the sacred reflections they inspired. The pleasures to be enjoyed in the cabinet of natural history would require the attention of at least a month. In the short time I was allowed, I enjoyed more than I could have obtained in years out of my own cabinet of precious things. If I was allowed to choose an enjoyment from the whole theatre of human nature, it would be to go over those two hours again, with my dear brother Post as my companion. I visited the gardens called Boboli, belonging to the queen’s residence; was well exercised in running up flights of steps in the style of hanging gardens, and sufficiently repaid by the view of the environs of Florence and the many varieties of beautiful evergreens with which this country abounds, and which prevent the possibility of reflecting that it is winter, except the cold and damp of their buildings remind you of it. If the Tuscans are to be judged by their taste, they are a happy people, for every thing without is very shabby, and within elegant. The exterior of their best buildings is, to appearance, in a state of ruin. I saw also the Academy of Sculpture and the Botanical Garden.”

From these memoranda of Mrs. Seton’s visit to Florence,

it is plain that she found in the curiosities of that city not only a source of rational enjoyment, but a subject of religious meditation. The sacred places inspired her with reverence, and raised her heart to God; the gorgeous decorations of his temples reminded her of that infinite grandeur and excellence to which every thing should be consecrated; the scriptural paintings carried her soul back with the liveliest emotions to the very scenes which they commemorated; even the productions of a purely secular art elevated her thoughts above the world. With a mind so intelligent, and so directed to spiritual reflection, she was prepared to receive the happiest impressions from the Catholic associations she had formed in Italy.

BOOK III.

Mrs. Seton's inquiry on the subject of religion—Efforts to enlighten her—Her sentiments and impressions—Departure for America—Disappointment and sickness—Her admiration of Catholicity—Visit to her husband's grave—The Messrs. Filicchi—Mrs. Seton leaves Italy—Sentiments during the voyage—Arrival in New York—Death of Miss Rebecca Seton—Mrs. Seton opposed in her religious views—The main point insisted on by Mr. Filicchi—Combated by Dr. Hobart—His abilities and standing—Arguments—Situation of Mrs. Seton's mind—Danger of her faith—Efforts of Mr. Anthony Filicchi—Consults Bishop Carroll—Mrs. Seton's interior struggles—Counsel and instruction of Mr. P. Filicchi—Mrs. Seton's trials and sentiments—Her resolution—Letter of Bishop Carroll—The final determination—Abjuration of Protestantism—Fervor in approaching the sacraments.

It is but natural to infer from the excellent qualities of Mrs. Seton, and particularly from her religious spirit and sincerity of heart, that she would become an object of charitable zeal among her new friends, and would herself be

inclined to seek information respecting a church the observances of which were now so prominently brought to her attention. The Catholic family whose generous hospitality she enjoyed did not hesitate to avail themselves of every favorable opportunity to enlighten her on so important a subject. To some question which she proposed to Mr. Filicchi, respecting the difference of religions, he replied that there was but one true religion, and without a right faith no one could be acceptable to God. "Oh my, sir," replied Mrs. Seton, "if there is but one faith, and nobody pleases God without it, where are all the good people who die out of it?" "I don't know," answered her friend; "that depends on what light of faith they had received; but I know where people go, *who can know the right faith, if they pray and inquire for it, and yet do neither.*" "Much as to say, sir, you want me to pray and inquire, and be of your faith?" said Mrs. Seton, laughing. "Pray and inquire," he added; "that is all I ask of you." While she was at Florence, Mr. Anthony Filicchi urged upon her the duty of investigating the question in the following words:—

"Your dear William was the early friend of my youth. You are now come in his room. Your soul is even dearer to Antonio, and will be so forever. May the good, Almighty God enlighten your mind and strengthen your heart, to see and follow in religion the surest, true way to the eternal blessings. I shall call for you. I must meet you in paradise, if it is decreed that the vast plains of the ocean shall soon be betwixt us. Don't discontinue, in the meanwhile, to pray; to knock at the door." In order the more effectually to remove the erroneous views of Christianity which she had derived from education, her friends placed in her hands suitable books for her instruction, and made her acquainted with a learned Jesuit of Leghorn, who took a lively interest in her welfare. In a letter to one of her relatives, she thus

amiably alludes to this circumstance:—"I am hard pushed by these charitable Romans, who wish that so much goodness should be improved by a conversion, which to effect they have even taken the trouble to bring me their best-informed priest, Abbé Plunkett, who is an Irishman; but they find me so willing to hear their enlightened conversation, that consequently, as learned people like to hear themselves best, I have but little to say, and as yet keep friends with all, as the best comment on my profession." At first, Mrs. Seton little imagined that there was a more secure way to heaven than that which she had been taught to follow; but to a person of her intelligence and uprightness the crudeness of Protestantism could not but suggest its character of uncertainty, and she therefore prayed to God that, if she had not the happiness of being in the way that was pleasing to him, he would graciously lead her into the right path. She daily implored the divine light and assistance, repeating, in the words of Pope:—

"If I am right, thy grace impart
Still in the right to stay;
If I am wrong, oh, teach my heart
To find the better way!"

The grace of God was not wanting. It gradually unfolded to her view the superior claims of Catholicity, the truth and consolations of its faith. In entering a Catholic church, she felt an impression of awe that she had never experienced in a Protestant place of worship; and the following incident will show how her mind, under the influence of a heavenly light, began to penetrate through the mists which had clouded her religious views. Having accompanied her friends to the church of Montanero, in a lovely part of the country where Mr. Filicchi had been once concealed by the inmates of the convent during some political revolution,

they were invited to hear mass in their chapel. During the service, at the very moment of the elevation of the sacred Host, a young Englishman who was present observed to Mrs. Seton:—"This is what they call their real presence." "My very heart," she says, "trembled with pain and sorrow for his unfeeling interruption of their sacred adoration; for all around was dead silence, and many were prostrated. Involuntarily I bent from him to the pavement, and thought secretly on the words of St. Paul, with starting tears, 'they discern not the Lord's body;' and the next thought was, how should they eat and drink their own damnation for not discerning it, if indeed it is not there? And how did he breathe my soul into me? and how, and how a hundred other things I know nothing about? I am a mother; so the mother's thought came also. How was my God a little babe in the first stage of his mortal existence in Mary? But I lost these thoughts in my babes at home, which I daily longed for more and more."

By the dispensation of Providence, the ardent desire of Mrs. Seton to be reunited to her family in America was not to be realized as soon as she expected. On the 3d of February, she and her daughter embarked for their native country in the same vessel which had conveyed them to Italy. "We had parted," she says, "with our most kind friends, loaded with their blessings and presents; I with gold and passports and recommendations, for fear of Algerines or necessity to put in any of the Mediterranean ports; but all that in vain. A driving storm at night struck the vessel against another, and in the morning, instead of hoisting sail for America, we were obliged to return on shore; most kindly, indeed, welcomed by the Filicchie, but heart down enough at the disappointment; and imagine the rest, when our sweetest Anna, unable to hide her suffering, was found in high fever, covered with eruptions, which the doctor pro-

nounced scarlet." Notwithstanding the illness of her child, Mrs. Seton would have ventured upon the voyage with the first fair wind, and trusted the issue to God; but as the prospects of the vessel would have been injured by sickness among the passengers, she was obliged to remain at Leghorn. On returning from the vessel, she and her daughter had been conducted by Mr. Anthony Filicchi to his residence, where they were welcomed with unbounded kindness and hospitality, and invited to remain until their departure for America. After the recovery of Miss Anna Seton from her illness, which lasted three weeks, her mother was seized with the same complaint, which confined her for the same period to her room. During all this time, the most devoted attentions were bestowed upon them by their Italian friends, who displayed, in their regard, a brilliant example of Christian charity. "Oh, the patience," exclaims Mrs. Seton, "and more than human kindness of these dear Filicchis for us! You would say it was our Saviour himself they received in his poor and sick strangers." Thus detained in the midst of a family equally pious and enlightened, she possessed every facility of becoming intimately acquainted with the doctrines and consolations of the Catholic faith, and her letters show that she did not neglect this valuable opportunity. "How happy would we be," she writes to a friend, "if we believed what these dear souls believe—that they possess God in the sacrament, and that he remains in their churches, and is carried to them when they are sick! Oh, my! when they carry the blessed sacrament under my window, while I feel the full loneliness and sadness of my case, I cannot stop the tears at the thought. My God! how happy I would be, even so far away from all so dear, if I could find you in the church as they do, (for there is a chapel in the very house of Mr. Filicchi,) how many things I would say to you of the sorrows of my heart and the sins of my life! The other day,

in a moment of excessive distress, I fell on my knees, without thinking, when the blessed sacrament passed by, and cried in an agony to God to bless me if he was there; that my whole soul desired only him. A little prayer-book of Mrs. Filicchi's was on the table, and I opened a little prayer of St. Bernard to the Blessed Virgin, begging her to be our mother; and I said it to her, with such a certainty that God would refuse nothing to his mother, and that she could not help loving and pitying the poor souls he died for, that I felt really I had a mother; which you know my foolish heart so often lamented to have lost in early days. From the first remembrance of infancy, I have always looked, in all the plays of childhood and wildness of youth, to the clouds for my mother; and at that moment it seemed as if I had found more than her, even in tenderness and pity of a mother. So I cried myself to sleep on her heart." On another occasion she writes to the same relative, exhibiting the progress of her mind in the knowledge of religious truth:—"This evening, standing by the window, the moon shining full on Filicchi's countenance, he raised his eyes to heaven, and showed me how to make the sign of the cross. Dearest Rebecca, I was cold with the awful impression my first making it gave me. The sign of the cross of Christ on me! Deepest thoughts came with it of I know not what earnest desires to be closely united with him who died on it—of that last day when he is to bear it in triumph; and, did you notice, my dear one, the letter T, with which the angel is to mark us on the forehead, is a cross. All the Catholic religion is full of those meanings, which interest me so. Why, Rebecca, they believe all we do and suffer, if we offer it for our sins, serves to expiate them. You may remember, when I asked Mr Hobart what was meant by fasting, in our prayer-book,—as I found myself on Ash-Wednesday morning saying so foolishly to God, I turn to you in fasting, weeping, and mourn

ing,' and I had come to church with a hearty breakfast of buckwheat-cakes and coffee, and full of life and spirits, with little thought of my sins,—you may remember what he said about its being old customs, &c. Well, the dear Mrs. Filicchi, who I am with, never eats, this season of Lent, till after the clock strikes three. Then the family assemble, and she says, she offers her weakness and pain of fasting for her sins, united with her Saviour's sufferings. I like that very much; but, what I like better, dearest Rebecca,—only think what a comfort,—they go to mass here every morning. Ah! how often you and I used to give the sigh, and you would press your arm in mine, of a Sunday evening, and say, 'No more until next Sunday,' as we turned from the church door which closed on us, (unless a prayer day was given out in the week.) Well, here they go to church at four every morning, if they please. And you know how we were laughed at for running from one church to another, sacrament Sundays, that we might receive as often as we could; well, here people that love God and lead a good, regular life, can go (though many do not do it—yet they *can* go) every day. Oh, my! I don't know how anybody can have any trouble in this world who believes all these dear souls believe. If *I* don't believe it, it shall not be for want of praying. Why, they must be as happy as angels, almost." Such was the lofty and just appreciation which Mrs. Seton formed of Catholic truth. In her new acquaintances at Leghorn she found not only the most generous friends, who did all that the most tender affection could devise to render her situation agreeable, but most intelligent and edifying members of the Church, whose conversation and example inspired her with the highest admiration for its faith and observances. In their company she would visit the sacred places, where she united with devotion in the different ceremonies of the Church, and poured forth her soul in fervent prayer. The

grace vouchsafed to her by the Spirit of truth would have led her at once to a formal retraction of Protestantism, had not her immediate departure from Italy prevented her from taking this step. In these sentiments she was about to embark for her native land. She could not, however, bid adieu to the country where the remains of her husband reposed without having paid a last tribute of affection to his memory. On the other hand, her heart expanded with joy at the prospect of being soon reunited to her family across the Atlantic. She thus expresses her feelings on this subject in a letter to her sister-in-law:—"Once more shall I hold my dear ones in my arms! Heavenly Father! what an hour will that be, my dear, fatherless children—fatherless to the world, but rich in God, their Father, for he will never leave us or forsake us. I have been to my dear Seton's grave, and wept plentifully over it, with the unrestrained affection which the last sufferings of his life, added to remembrance of former years, had made almost more than human. When you read my daily memorandums since I left home, you will feel what my love has been, and acknowledge that God alone could support it by his assistance through such proofs as have been required of it." As the time of her departure for home drew near, the more lively was the joy she experienced. The following sentiments were written by her a few days before she left Italy:—"Oh! joy, joy! Capt. B—— will take us to America: and only think of Mr. Filicchi's goodness. As this captain is a very young man and a stranger, and many things of war or danger might happen on the voyage, Mr. Filicchi will make it with us. Anna is wild with joy; yet often she whispers me:—"Ma, are there no Catholics in America? Ma, wont we go to the Catholic church when we go home?" Sweet darling, she is now out, visiting some of the blessed places with Mr. Filicchi's children and their governess. Would you believe, whenever we go to walk,

we go first in some church or convent-chapel as we pass, which we always foresee by a large cross before it, and say some little prayers before we go farther. Men do it as well as women. You know with us a man would be ashamed to be seen kneeling, especially of a week-day. Oh, my! but I shall be with you again: two days more and we start for home! This mild heavenly evening puts me in mind when so often you and I stood, or rather leaned on each other, looking at the setting sun; sometimes silent tears and sighs for that home where sorrow cannot come. Alas! how may I perhaps find mine?—sorrow plenty. I was speaking of it the other evening to Filicchi, and he said, in his dry English, ‘My little sister, God the Almighty is laughing at you. He takes care of little birds and makes the lilies grow, and you fear he will not take care of you. I tell you he will take care of you.’ So I hope, dearest Rebecca; you know that we used to envy them that were poor, because they had nothing to do with the world.”

To crown all his acts of kindness to Mrs. Seton, and through regard for her husband, whom he had numbered among his cherished friends, Mr. Anthony Filicchi resolved to accompany her to the United States. A desire to see the country, and to attend personally to certain matters of business, had long made a visit to the New World an object of interest to him; but he was decided to undertake the voyage by the opportunity now presented of becoming a protector to Mrs. Seton. We will here remark that the Messrs. Filicchi, of Leghorn, were gentlemen of the highest standing in mercantile life, accomplished members of society, and ornaments of the religion they professed; and they deserve honorable mention in the biography of Mrs. Seton, not only for the generous friendship which they extended to her and her husband, but also on account of the important part which they bore in her conversion. They were men of noble im-

pulses and cultivated minds; and, although actively and extensively engaged in commercial pursuits, were not less the practical advocates of religion. The elder brother was remarkable for his sound judgment and extensive knowledge, and had enjoyed the especial confidence of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who consulted him on all questions of commerce. Christians in the full sense of the word, they felt a lively interest in the spiritual enlightenment of Mrs. Seton, who had become an object of their care, while they possessed the ability to guide her in the investigation of religious truth, and to remove much of the difficulty that was thrown in the way of her conversion. To aid her in this important work, Mr. Philip Filicchi had furnished her with books, and also with a manuscript from his own pen, containing a summary of Catholic faith and a brief exposition of the grounds on which it rests. This document, to which we shall refer more particularly in the sequel, may compare, in point of method and solidity, with the writings of our eminent controversialists, and reflects the highest honor upon his talents, learning, and zeal for religion.

Mrs. Seton having left us, in the form of a journal, the particulars of her departure from Leghorn, we will give the relation of those incidents in her own words:—

“The 8th of April, at half past four in the morning, my dear brother came to my room to awaken my soul to all its dearest hopes and anticipations. The heaven was bright with stars, the wind fair, and the Pianningo’s signal expected to call us on board; meanwhile the tolling of the bell called us to mass, and in a few minutes we were prostrate in the presence of God. Oh, my soul, how solemn was that offering! for a blessing on our voyage—for my dear ones, my sisters, and all so dear to me—and, more than all, for the souls of my dear husband and father—earnestly our desires ascended with the blessed sacrifice, that they might find

acceptance through Him who gave himself for us; earnestly we desired to be united with Him, and would gladly encounter all the sorrows before us to be partakers of that blessed body and blood. Oh, my God, spare and pity me.

“We returned home with hearts full of many sensations; on my part, sorrow at parting with the friends who had been so kind to me and the dear little angels I tenderly love struggled with the joy of once more embarking for home; while I gave dear Amabilia a farewell embrace in the balcony the sun rose bright and glorious, and called our thoughts to that hour when the Sun of Righteousness would rise and reunite us forever.

“The signal had been given, the waterman waited for us, and my dear brother passed the struggle like a man and a Christian; dear, manly soul, it indeed appeared to me in the ‘image of God.’

“Philip Filicchi and Carlton waited for us at the Health Office, and letters for America.

“Filicchi’s last blessing to me was as his whole conduct had been—that of the truest friend. Oh, Filicchi, you shall not *witness against me*. May God bless you forever, and may you shine as the ‘stars in glory’ for what you have done for me!

“At eight o’clock, was quietly seated with little Ann and dear Antonio, on the quarter-deck. The anchor weighed, sails hoisted, and dear ‘yo, yo!’ resounding on all sides, brought to remembrance the 2d of October, 1803, with a force as strong as could be borne: most dear Seton, where are you now? I lose sight of the shore that contains your dear ashes, and your soul is in that region of immensity where I cannot find you. My Father and my God! and yet I must always love to retrospect thy wonderful dispensations: to be sent so many thousand miles on so hopeless an errand; to be constantly supported and accompanied by thy consoling

mercy through scenes of trial which nature alone must have sunk under; to be brought to the light of thy truth, notwithstanding every affection of my heart and power of my will was opposed to it; to be succored and cherished by the tenderest friendship, while separated and far from those that I loved: my Father and my God, while I live let me praise —while I have my being let me serve and adore thee.⁽⁴⁾

During the voyage to America, which occupied fifty-six days, Mrs. Seton conversed frequently with Mr. Filicchi on the superiority of Catholicity over Protestantism, and found manifest pleasure in uniting with him in the exterior practices of religion, as prayer, fasting, and the observance of the festivals. A portion of her time was daily allotted to the reading of the lives of the saints. By these holy exercises did she endeavor to obtain an increase of divine grace, and to fortify herself for the conflict she was about to endure. If she looked forward with joy to the happiness of again embracing her children, her soul shuddered at the prospect of the opposition which her newly-acquired sentiments on religion were about to excite against her. It was plain, however, that, although she dreaded the contest, she was not disheartened, because she knew that in the event of her joining the Catholic church she would be richly compensated for any loss of worldly friends by the peace and comfort which the consciousness of duty would impart. Her chief source of anxiety in this respect seems to have proceeded from the intimate friendship that existed between her and the Rev John Henry Hobart, her Protestant pastor, who subsequently was made bishop of the Episcopal Church in the State of New York. While on her way home, the anticipation of losing his esteem and severing the tie that had so long united her to him presented itself with a saddening influence to her mind "As I approach to you," she

says, "I tremble; and while the dashing of the waves and their incessant motion picture to me the allotment which God has given me, the tears fall fast through my fingers at the insupportable thought of being separated from you; and yet, my dear H., you will not be severe; you will respect sincerity, and though you will think me in error, and even reprehensible, in changing my religion, I know that heavenly Christian charity will plead for me in your affections. You have certainly, without my knowing it, been dearer to me than God, for whom my reason, my judgment, and my conviction, used their combined force against the value of your esteem. The combat was in vain, until I considered that yourself would no longer oppose, or desire so severe a struggle which was destroying my mortal life, and, more than that, my peace with God. Still, if you will not be my brother—if your dear friendship and esteem must be the price of my fidelity to what I believe to be the truth,—I cannot doubt the merey of God, who, by depriving me of my dearest tie on earth, will certainly draw me nearer to him; and this I feel confidently from the experience of the past, and the truth of his promise, which can never fail."

While Mrs. Seton thus prepared herself for the opposition which she had reason to expect in consequence of the change in her religious sentiments, another severe trial awaited her on her arrival in America. She landed at New York, in company with her daughter and Mr. Filicchi, on the 4th of June, when she discovered that Miss Rebecca Seton, her sister-in-law, whose virtues had rendered her an object of unbounded admiration, was on the verge of the grave. She thus expresses the mingled feelings of joy and sadness which she experienced in being again united to her family:—

"June 4, 1804.—Do I hold again my dear ones in my bosom?—has God restored all my treasure, even the little soul I have so long contemplated an angel in heaven? Nature

cries out they are fatherless, while God himself replies, 'I am the Father of the fatherless and the helper of the helpless.' My God, well may I cling to thee, for whom have I in heaven but thee, and whom upon earth beside thee? My heart and flesh fail, but thou art the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

"My soul's sister came not out to meet me. She too had been journeying fast to her heavenly home; her spirit now seemed only to await the consoling love and tenderness of her beloved sister to accompany it in its passage to eternity; to meet her who had been the dear companion of all the pains and all the comforts, of songs of praise and notes of sorrow; the dear, faithful, tender friend of my soul through every varied scene of many years of trial, gone—only the shadow remaining, and that in a few days must pass away! The home of plenty and comfort, the society of sisters united by prayers and divine affections, the evening hymns, the daily readings, the sunset contemplations, the service of holydays together, the kiss of peace, the widow's visits—all, all gone forever! And is poverty and sorrow the only exchange? My husband, my sister, my home, my comforts—poverty and sorrow. Well, with God's blessing, you too shall be changed into dearest friends. To the world you show your outward garments, but through them you discover to my soul the palm of victory, the triumph of faith, and the sweet footsteps of my Redeemer, leading direct to his kingdom; then let me gently meet you, be received in your bosom, and be daily conducted by your counsels through the remainder of my destined journey. I know that many divine graces accompany your faith, and change the stings of penance for ease of conscience, and the solitude of the desert for the society of angels. The angels of God accompanied the faithful when the light of his truth only dawned in the world. And now that the day-spring from on high has

visited and exalted our nature to a union with the Divinity, will these beneficent beings be less associated or delighted to dwell with the soul that is panting for heavenly joys and longing to join in their eternal alleluias? Oh, no! I will imagine them always surrounding me, and in every moment will sing with them, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts' heaven and earth are full of thy glory.'"

On the 18th of the following month, death deprived Mrs. Seton of this cherished friend. Speaking of the event, she says:—"This is my Rebecca's birthday in heaven. No more watching now, my darling sister—no more agonizing sufferings. The hourly prayers, interrupted by pains and tears, are now exchanged for the eternal alleluiah. The blessed angels, who have so often witnessed our feeble efforts, now teach your soul the songs of Sion. Dear, dear soul, we shall no more watch the setting sun on our knees, and sigh our soul to the Sun of Righteousness, for he has received you to his everlasting light; no more sing praises gazing on the moon, for you have wakened to eternal day; that dear voice, that soothed the widow's heart, admonished the forgetful soul, inspired the love of God, and only uttered sounds of love and peace to all, shall now be heard no more among us; but the reward of those who lead others to righteousness now crowns his promise who has said, 'They shall shine as the stars forever.'"

Indoctrinated as Mrs. Seton was in the principles of the Catholic faith, she could not witness the death of one even so beloved and so remarkable for her religious spirit as her sister-in-law, without being struck with the contrast between the empty resources of Protestantism, and the superior advantages of Catholicity, in soothing the last and most trying hour of existence. In a letter to a friend at Leghorn,* after

* Mrs. Amabilia Filicchi, wife of the gentleman who had accompanied Mrs. Seton from Italy.

mentioning the demise of Miss Rebecca Seton, she adds: —
“Not to stop on all that, which at last is all in order, since it is the will of our God, I will tell you what I know you have at heart to know, that the impressions of your example, and the different scenes I passed through in Léghorn, are far from being effaced from my mind,—which indeed could not, even in the most painful moments of attendance on my beloved Rebecca, help the strong comparison of a sick and dying bed in your happy country, where the poor sufferer is soothed and strengthened at once by every help of religion, —where the one you call the father of your soul attends and watches it in the weakness and trials of parting nature, with the same care you and I watch our little infant’s body in its first struggles and wants on its entrance into life. Dearest Rebecca, how many looks of silent distress have we exchanged about this last passage—this exchange of time for eternity! To be sure, her uncommon piety and innocence, and sweet confidence in God, are my full consolation; but I mean to say, that a departing soul has so many trials and temptations, that, for my part, I go through a sort of agony never to be described, even while to keep up their hope and courage I appear to them most cheerful. Oh my! forgive these melancholy words; they were here before I knew it. Your day and mine will come too—if we are but ready! The children all asleep—this my time of many thoughts.”

Though the loss of relatives and friends, endeared to her by the strongest ties of affection, was a severe affliction to the heart of Mrs. Seton, she had to pass through an ordeal far more painful to nature. The time had now arrived for a long and difficult struggle between the artifices of error on the one hand and the inspirations of divine grace on the other.

On her leaving Leghorn, Mr. Philip Filicchi gave her a letter of introduction to the Rt. Rev. Dr. Carroll, then

Bishop of Baltimore, whose acquaintance he had formed in America, hoping that, by the advice and instruction of that distinguished prelate, the religious impressions she had received in Italy would be brought to a happy maturity. He thus speaks of Mrs. Seton:—"Having remarked that she added to all her other good qualities a very pious and religious disposition, in a degree far superior to what I ever had observed in people of her persuasion,—having considered the exactness with which she fulfilled the duties of wife and mother,—and having been led to presume in her character an uncommon docility,—I was struck with the idea that Providence had arranged the plan of her voyage to Italy for the particular purpose of giving her an opportunity of rectifying the prejudices entertained against our religion, of enlightening her mind, and of granting her the blessing of discovering the true Church and being made a member of it. While I indulged this hope and considered in discreet silence all these things, she discovered to me that I was not deceived." After stating that she requested him to give her every information on the subject, he adds:—"I seconded her views with pleasure and awe—with pleasure for the good I hoped from it, and awe for my unworthiness in executing such an office; for want of ability and learning I was encouraged by the consideration that Providence often employs feeble instruments, that its own power and glory may shine the more. I gave her all the information I could; my words seemed to conquer her natural prejudices and enlighten her understanding. To supply the defects of my knowledge, I procured for her the best books I could find, and particularly Bossuet's Exposition of the Catholic Doctrine. I recommended her to pray and to consult those who had a mission to instruct. I promised her to solicit your charity for affording her the instructions I was not able to give, for regulating her conduct and conciliating with her

duty as a Christian that regard which the particular circumstances of her situation may require. All this I solicit from your goodness in her favor, and for the honor of Him who has called you to feed part of his sheep."

Had Mrs. Seton consulted without delay the distinguished prelate who then presided over the Catholic Church in the United States, she would probably have been spared much of the doubt and perplexity which soon took possession of her mind. But, unfortunately, she had been advised by Mr. Filicchi to inform her Protestant pastor and friends of her objection to their communion; and her observance of this advice, although prompted by the best motives, necessarily excited against her better views of religion a storm of opposition calculated to shake her firmness, if not altogether to withdraw her from the path on which she had entered. She had been justly led, by the instructions of Mr. Filicchi and the books which she had perused, to consider the Protestant religion as the offspring of human passion, and possessing no power or ministry from Christ. It had been the aim of her friends in Italy to impress chiefly on her mind that fundamental article of Christianity, that the Church alone is the depository of revealed truth, and commissioned by her Divine Founder to guide man in the way of salvation. In the manuscript which Mr. Filicchi placed in her hands, as we have already stated, he dwells principally on this important point. After stating the doctrine of the Church, as contained in the creed of Pope Pius IV., he observes:—"The above profession contains all our belief. I do not decline making appropriate observations upon its various parts, though, if one point were well understood, the discussion of all the others would be unnecessary;—I mean the authority of the Church to interpret the sense of the Scriptures. I shall therefore begin with this; and, after some brief remarks on the remaining points, will refer you for a better explanation of them to the books

I have given you. Truth does not fear discussion; but truth can only be made manifest by the grace of God, which is only granted to the humble of heart, to those who seek it sincerely, who do not depend on their own light and knowledge for the finding of it, who pray to obtain it, and who do not seek it through a vain curiosity. Herod was curious to see a miracle wrought by Jesus Christ; but his curiosity was not gratified.* ‘Ask, and it shall be given unto you,’ says our Lord.† ‘Wo unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!’ exclaims Isaias.‡ After this short exhortation respecting the means you must adopt to be made worthy of knowing the truth and the dangers you are to avoid in the search of it, I come to the point in question.” After remarking that Protestants and Catholics both agree in asserting the obligation of believing whatever is contained in the Old and New Testament, he continues his argument in this form. “If we are bound to believe, we must know what is entitled to our belief. Who will teach us this science? The Bible, without an authorized interpreter, cannot do it, since they who appeal only to this source are divided into a thousand jarring sects. The Bible must be legitimately expounded. Hence, our Saviour not only imposed the obligation of believing, but established a Church, for the purpose of guarding and transmitting his holy faith. Protestants themselves admit this. But where is that Church that Christ established, as the pillar and ground of truth? It is not the Protestant Episcopal Church, for this dates its commencement only from the sixteenth century, whereas the Church of Christ is coeval with the apostolic age. It is indeed pretended that the reformers merely rejected the errors that had been introduced into the Church; but, in this case, it is plain that either St. Paul and Christ

* Luke iii. 8.

† Luke xi. 9.

‡ Isaiah v. 21.

himself were deceived when they pronounced the Church to be the pillar of truth and unwavering in its faith to the end of time, or the Protestant Episcopal sect is in error." This reasoning, which leads to the conclusion that the Catholic Church is the authority established by Christ, as the herald of his doctrine, is lucidly developed, and followed by a brief vindication of the several points contained in the creed of Pius IV.

Mrs. Seton having been led to abandon her early views of religion by her conviction of the unfounded pretensions of the Protestant Episcopal Church, all the efforts of her friends at home were directed to the removal of this impression, and every possible influence was exerted to effect a change in her sentiments. The Rev. Mr. Hobart, already mentioned, was the most active in endeavoring to move her from the position she had taken; and, if we consider the talents and address which he had at his command, she could not have met with a more formidable opponent. He was a man of amiable character and practical ability, active and unwearied in the duties of his profession, and enjoyed a high reputation as a preacher. "He had all the mental and moral qualities which make men leaders of their fellows. Undaunted, ready, and sagacious, he never abandoned a principle, deserted a friend, or quailed before an enemy. 'The Church needs no abler representative,' remarked a lawyer, who had heard him in debate; 'he has all the talents of a leader; he is the most parliamentary speaker I ever met with; he is equally prompt, logical, and practical. I never saw that man thrown off his centre.'"^{*} From these qualities of Mr. Hobart we may infer that all the resources that Protestantism could command, were brought to bear against Mrs. Seton's preferences for Catholicity. Add to

* Wilberforce, *Hist. of Prot. Episc. Church in America*, ch. ix.

this, that the most intimate friendship, as we have seen, had existed between her and the popular, talented minister of Trinity Church. In order to wean her from her newly-acquired sentiments on religion, he undertook to refute the doctrinal treatise of Mr. Filicchi; and in a long letter which he addressed to her, he made an elaborate attempt to vindicate the claims of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and to prove that the Catholic Church had fallen into error, and was unworthy of obedience.⁽⁵⁾

In the conflict of mind which this discussion produced, she at first determined, in accordance with the advice of Mr. Filicchi, to apply for instruction to Bishop Carroll; and with this view she penned the following communication, which forms a succinct history of the matter up to that period:—

“REV. SIR:—

“The enclosed letter from Mr. Filicchi will acquaint you with the motive which leads me to take the liberty of addressing you. He has indeed most kindly befriended me, in endeavoring to enlighten and instruct my mind. The first impression I received from him, that I was in error and in a church founded on error, startled my soul, and decided me to make every inquiry on the subject. The books he put into my hands gave me an entire conviction that the Protestant Episcopal Church was founded only on the principles and passions of Luther, and consequently that it was separated from the church founded by our Lord and his apostles, and its ministers without a regular succession from them. Shocked at the idea of being so far from the truth, a determination of quitting their communion and uniting myself with yours became the earnest desire of my soul, which, accustomed to rely supremely on divine grace, was easily satisfied on those points of difference and pecu-

liarity in your Church, when it was once persuaded that it was the true one. Under these impressions it remained until my arrival in New York. It was my friend Filicchi's wish, and a respect due to those pastors and friends from whom I had received my first principles and affections, to state my objections to their communion; but I assure you that in the belief of those first objects I mentioned, (that they proceeded from Luther, and were without a regular succession from Christ and his apostles,) I felt my soul so determined that it appeared a wicked insincerity to give them any hope of changing me; when to my great astonishment they give me the most positive testimony that I have been deceived in those points. You will naturally observe to me, that I must have expected an opposition where parties are opposed. Certainly; and had the opposition rested on transubstantiation or any point of faith, be assured that my faith would not have stopped at any point that your Church has yet proposed to me. But in the decided testimonies that are given me by the clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church, that they are a true church, I acknowledge that the foundation of my Catholic principles is destroyed, and I cannot see the necessity for my making a change. It is necessary to inform you that I have felt my situation in the most awful manner, and, as the mother and sole parent of five children, have certainly pleaded with God earnestly, and, I may strictly say, incessantly, as it has been the only and supreme desire of my soul to know the truth. I know that I have, besides the errors of a corrupt nature, added many sins to the account he has with me: indeed, often, in the struggles of my soul, I should have thought myself deservedly forsaken by him, had I dared to impeach his mercy to one who desires above all things to please him and has the greatest sorrow for having offended him. Indeed, all other sorrow is joy to me, and in the many severe

trials he has been pleased to send me, I have feared nothing but the evil of losing his favor. With the sincerity with which I lay my heart before him, I must declare to you that I feel my mind decided in its original sentiments respecting my religion. Mr. Filicchi, who has accompanied me to America, has requested me to make this statement to you; and I have promised him to defer every further step until you will favor me with an answer, and must entreat you to consider that my present divided situation from every communion is almost more than I can bear, and that it will be an act of the greatest charity to forward your sentiments as soon as your leisure will permit."

At the time that Mrs. Seton prepared this communication to Bishop Carroll, Mr. Anthony Filicchi also wrote to the bishop, enclosing a letter of introduction from his brother, both with a view to make himself known to him, and to solicit his co-operation in the difficulties which impeded Mrs. Seton's progress in the way of truth. He says:—
 "Your good advice in so important a matter is anxiously expected, and I doubt not of your earnest attention to it, and of an invincible direct reply to the different statements and observations contained in the papers of one of these Protestant ministers (Mr. Hobart) against those delivered by my brother to Mrs. Seton, which both I think proper to convey to you in their original, to be returned after perusal. By the advice of Rev. Mr. O'Brien,* I have meanwhile put into the hands of Mrs. Seton the book, 'England's Conversion and Reformation,' composed and printed in Dublin, which she will certainly read with the requisite attention,—her only wish, her only intent, being to know and act right for herself and for her children, independent of whatever

* Assistant pastor of the Catholic Church in the city of New York.

worldly considerations." Such was the state of things at the date of this letter, July 26, 1804. But before it was sent to Bishop Carroll, Mrs. Seton's Protestant friends had prevailed upon her not to perplex her mind with further controversy. At the instance of Mr. Filicchi, she had determined at first to await the answer of the bishop; but it appears that she afterward concluded to hasten the decision of the question, as in the same letter of Mr. Filicchi, mentioned above, he says, in the postscript:—"I have left with Rev. Mr. O'Brien the manuscripts in question, who has promised me that he will be able for this same evening to have them perused and answered."* This was unquestionably a critical moment for Mrs. Seton, her mind being in an agony of suspense, urged by the call of divine truth on the one hand, and trammelled and fettered on the other by the influence of those around her. Her happiness, as a child of the Church, now rested upon the uncertain issue of a controversy, which was the more doubtful in its result, as it was hurried to its close at a period when her mind was in a state of the greatest obscurity and agitation. Mr. Filicchi forwarded, in his letter to Dr. Carroll, the communication written by Mrs. Seton; but it is plain, from the circumstances just alluded to, that he enclosed it to the bishop merely to furnish him with a history of the whole affair, and not as a letter from Mrs. Seton. On the same day, July 26, he wrote to her as follows:—

"MY DEAR SISTER:—

"I have been, and always, wheresoever, before whomsoever, and before St. Peter himself, whose primacy it appears you are so decidedly prevailed upon to deny, shall be, ready to render justice from the bottom of my oppressed soul, to

* That is, the manuscript of Mr. Hohart.

the sincerity of your heart in the course you are about to follow in regard to your religion; but it will always, at the same time, stand clear above my eyes as a *fact*, that your mind is over-influenced by an unaccountable awe toward the friends of your old communion. Only intent to know the truth, you were ready to write, you had written yourself to Bishop Carroll, as the proper person to enlighten your mind, and you saw the propriety of conveying to him the original manuscript that had operated the change of your mind; but your old friends (they are surely not the best for it) come forward, do not think proper, do not choose to enter in any dispute, do not wish that your mind should be exposed to any more light, and immediately you are prevailed upon to give up your soul, your wishes, to their solicitations. Your new, neglected friends, you know, have followed the very opposite system, as it becomes the followers of truth. They have not urged, they have not limited you in any way, in any thing; and yet, if it was true—what your old pretended friends tried to insinuate to you—that our Church forbids investigation and commands an unreasonable faith, they could have been easily excused if they had acted differently; but that your priests, who call loudly for investigation,—who do not acknowledge any authority above the private reason of any human being,—should persuade you, as a sacred duty, to decline examination, is certainly above my comprehension. But she has, your pretended friends say, given up her mind; she is easy about what she was in doubt of before; that is enough for her conscience. I wish it could be so, for the sake of your soul, my dear sister: I share most cordially the struggles of your situation; but certainly it cannot be so for the conscience of your advisers. Your distracted mind and bleeding heart were equally made easy at Leghorn in a quite different way. Your own experience does not point you (to) the probable false security in which they would insist that

you should remain. My virtuous friend, you repeatedly and solemnly promised me to wait for the result of my application to Bishop Carroli. I have this morning explained to him the anxiety of my soul and yours, and I cannot doubt of his best attention to both. Confirm me by your own handwriting, and you will better recollect the promise. This is the object of my present unusual address by letter to you.* It grieves me profoundly to keep your anxiety so awakened; but, according to my sacred principles and my most solid affection, how can I spare you, my worthy sister? I renew here in writing my solemn promise that I shall be in any event your most affectionate and sincere friend till my last breath, ready to do every thing in my power in your favor, for the best comfort of this mortal and unhappy life. In my absence from New York, or from America, my purest friendship will remain with you as long as I shall live, to be your unshaken support; and, to that effect, an honorable person will be pointed out to you, to whom you will be pleased you shall apply, in my name, in every emergency, without any compass or control but the extent of my sufficiency and your wants; and should I die before you, my brother, you know, will be happy to perform my wishes on his account. But as your own most dear existence, according to my principles as well as yours, ought to be readily sacrificed to the safety of your soul, you will, I am confident, beloved friend, pardon me if, on every occasion, I renew the fight to your most inward feelings, in hopes that it will please the most merciful Almighty God, at least in the last moment of your abode in this vale of tears, to send his Holy Spirit to you, and reunite us all in his heavenly king-

* Mrs. Seton and Mr. Filicchi were then both at New York, and had personal interviews with each other. On this occasion he departed from what was usual, and wrote to her.

dom. You ought otherwise to positively forbid me to see or address you any more."

Whether it was this appeal to Mrs. Seton's better judgment, or a reply from the Rev. Mr. O'Brien to the manuscript of Mr. Hobart, that produced a more favorable impression on her mind, we are unable to say; perhaps both contributed to fortify her against the conclusive step which was suggested by her Protestant friends. Certain it is that she did not return professedly to her former communion with the Protestant Episcopal Church. She continued to investigate the subject and to pray for increased light and grace from heaven. In the mean time, Mr. Filicchi awaited with anxious interest the reply of Bishop Carroll; but, several weeks having passed away without any intelligence from Baltimore, he addressed the bishop a second letter, in which he urged him to comply with the request already made to assist Mrs. Seton with his advice, representing to him that this request regarded an affair of no smaller moment than the eternal salvation of a parent and her five children. At length, on the 22nd of August, Bishop Carroll's answer reached Mr. Filicchi at New York, who immediately communicated it to Mrs. Seton. He thus informs Dr. Carroll of the circumstance, in a letter dated Boston, 4th of October, 1804:—

"SIR:—

"Just the day before my long-delayed departure from New York, I was made happy with the honor of your kind letter of the 20th of August, and I went immediately out of town to communicate and leave it for perusal to the worthy lady who still labors under doubts and anxieties in her most sincere wish for truth. Behold how she expresses herself in her first letter to me, dated the 30th of August:—'This day

completes one week since my dear brother left me. I have thought of him incessantly: indeed, I cannot think of my soul without remembering you; and as certainly the greatest part of my days and nights are occupied in solitude and watching over that poor soul, consequently you are the constant companion of my thoughts and prayers. When I began the Litany of Jesus this afternoon, the plural number put it in my mind to say it for you also; and praying heartily for you made me resolve to write to my dear brother. The bishop's letter has been held to my heart, on my knees beseeching God to enlighten me to see the truth, unmixed with doubts and hesitations. I read the promises given to St. Peter and the sixth chapter every day, and then ask God can I offend him by believing those express words. I read my dear St. Francis, and ask, is it possible that I shall dare to think differently from him, or seek heaven any other way? I have read your *England's Reformation*, and find its evidence too conclusive to admit of any reply. God will not forsake me, Antonio: I know that he will unite me to his flock; and, although my faith is unsettled, I am assured that he will not disappoint my hope, which is fixed in his own word, that he will not despise the humble, contrite heart, which would esteem all the losses of this world as greatest gain, if it can be so happy as to please him. *September 2.*—I was willing to embrace an excuse for not going to town last Sunday, in compliance with your advice, and my brother Post came to visit me. Our conversation turned accidentally on the subject that engrosses my soul, and led me to an explanation with him, very interesting, and, I believe, surprising to him, as I fixed my argument on *literal words* rather than *human fancy*. His cool and quiet judgment could not follow the flight of my faith; but he was so candid as to admit that, if before God I believed the doctrine of the Church to be true, the errors or imperfections of its members could

not justify a separation from its communion. But still the hideous objects will present themselves which disturb my soul and unsettle my faith; and, though God is so gracious as to give me the fullest assurance that through the name of Jesus my prayers shall finally be answered, yet there seems now a cloud before my way that keeps me always asking him which is the right path. Indeed, my brother, when the remembrance of my sins and unholiness before God strikes my memory with their fullest convictions, I only wonder how I can expect from him so great a favor as the light of his truth, until the sorrow and penance of my remaining life shall invite his pitying mercy to grant it. Remember to pray for me. *Sept. 8.*—This is the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, and I have tried to sanctify it, begging God to look on my soul and see how gladly I would kiss her feet, because she was his mother, and joyfully show every expression of reverence that even my Antonio would desire, if I could do it with freedom of soul which followed from knowledge of his will. Mr. Hobart was here for the first time yesterday, since your absence, and was so entirely out of all patience that it was in vain to show the letter. He says, "The Church is corrupt; we have returned to the primitive doctrine, and what more would you have when you act according to your best judgment?" I tell him, that would be enough for this world, but I fear for the next to meet another question. His visit was short, and painful on both sides. God direct me, for I see it is in vain to look for help from any one but him. *Sept. 12.*—Three of my children have the whooping-cough, and, as I watch them the greater part of the night, my prayers are often repeated. But oh, Antonio, when will my poor soul be worthy to be heard, and make its direct applications with that liberty of spirit which the light of truth alone can give to it? I repeat to you, pray for me. It will benefit us both; and, when you wish

to add a cordial drop of sweetness to my cup, write some of the thoughts of your soul.'

"Last week I received another letter from her, and to-day I receive a third, which both I take the liberty of enclosing to you in their originals, to give you an accurate idea of her merit and struggles. The earnest acknowledgment expressed in the beginning of her last letter of the 27th September relates to my proposal of sending her back with her children to Italy, in search of the lost quiet of her soul and mind. Sensible of my incapacity, particularly in a foreign language, in which I hardly can make myself intelligible, I suggested to her to address you herself with her doubts and questions. Your wise, holy instructions, in such a delicate and interesting case, direct or through me, are certainly the only adequate ones, and would most deeply gratify, sir, your most humble servant,

"ANTHONY FILICCHI."

We will here present at length the two letters of Mrs. Seton alluded to by her friend, exhibiting as they do a faithful picture of her soul at this time, her yearnings for the truth, and her struggles with the interior blindness which it pleased Divine Providence to send her, and with the outward difficulties which she met with from the efforts of her Protestant friends:—

"Sept. 19, 1804.

"MY MOST DEAR BROTHER:—

"You say you must know all my concerns, interior and exterior. As for the latter, they are easily related. I have seen no one since I wrote to you but my Philadelphia friend, Mrs. Scott, whose tenderness to me is unremitted; Mrs. Sadler, who cannot enter into the spirit of our cause; and Captain Blagg, who came to offer his services, if I had

any commands in Leghorn or Paris. Mr. Hobart, and all the other *misters*, have left me to my contemplations, or rather to my 'best judgment,' I suppose,—but, I rather hope,—to God. So much for exterior, to which I only add, I am very well, though quite oppressed with fatigue occasioned by my poor little children's whooping-cough. In order to disclose to you the interior, I must speak to you as to God. To him I say, 'When shall my darkness be made light?' for really it would seem that the evil spirit has taken his place so near my soul that nothing good can enter in it without being mixed with his suggestions. In the life of St. Augustine I read that 'where he is most active, and obstacles seem greatest in the divine service, there we have reason to conclude that success will be most glorious.' The hope of this glorious success is all my comfort; for indeed my spirit is sometimes so severely tried it is ready to sink. This morning I fell on my face before God, (remember, I tell you all,) and appealed to him as my righteous Judge, if hardness of heart or unwillingness to be taught, or any human reasons, stood between me and the truth,—if I would not rejoice to cast my sorrows on the bosom of the Blessed Mary, to entertain the influence of all his blessed saints and angels, to pray for precious souls even more than for myself, and account myself happy in dying for his sacred truth, if once my soul could know it was pleasing to him. I remembered how much these exercises had comforted and delighted me at Leghorn, and recalled all the reasons which had there convinced me of their truth, and immediately a cloud of doubts and replies raised a contest in this poor soul, and I could only again cry out for mercy to a sinner, and implore His pity who is the source of life, light, and truth, to enlighten my eyes that I sleep not in death—that death of sin and error which with every power of my soul I endeavor to escape.

“After reading the life of St. Mary Magdalen, I thought, Come, my soul, let us turn from all these suggestions of one side or the other, and quietly resolve to go to that church which has at least the multitude of the wise and good on its side; and began to consider the first steps I must take. The first step—is it not to declare I believe all that is taught by the Council of Trent? and if I said that, would not the Searcher of Hearts know my falsehood and insincerity? Could you say that you would be satisfied with his bread, and believe the cup, which he equally commanded, unnecessary? Could you believe that the prayers and litanies addressed to our Blessed Lady are acceptable to God, though not commanded in Scripture, &c. &c.? By all which I find, and you, my Antonio, will be out of patience to find, that the *tradition* of the Church has not the true weight of authority in my mind. Do not be angry. Pity me. Remember the mixtures of truth and error which have been pressed upon my soul, and rather pray for me, than reproach me; for indeed I make every endeavor to think as you wish me, and it is only the most obstinate resistance of my mind that prevents my immediately doing also as you wish me; and all I can do is to renew my promise that I will pray incessantly, and strive to wash out with tears and penance the sins which, I fear, oppose my way to God. Again I repeat, pray for me.”

On the 27th of September Mrs. Seton again wrote to Mr. Filicchi, as follows:—

“It is necessary to lay the restraint of discretion on my pen, while I thank you for your letter of the 20th, which, though but two hours ago received, has been already read over many times. The pen is restrained, but the heart, which is before God, blesses and adores him in unbounded thanksgiving for such a friend. Your goodness to me he only can reward. To answer you fully now would not be

proper in any way, especially as you see my poor soul is still more unsettled and perplexed from day to day, not from any failure in its prayers or entreaties to God, which are rather redoubled than neglected, but, like a bird struggling in a net, it cannot escape its fears and tremblings.

“This afternoon, after dismissing the children to play, I went to my knees in my little closet, to consider what I should do and how my sacred duty would direct. Should I again read those books I first received from Mr. Hobart? My heart revolted, for I know there are all the *black accusations*, and the sum of them too sensibly torments my soul. Should I again go over those of the Catholic doctrine, though every page I read is familiar to me, and my memory represents in rotation the different instructions and replies? Since your absence I have read the book your brother first gave me, and the one you also gave, with the most careful attention,—not only with attention, but always with prayer,—and now must look up to that as my only refuge, prayer at all times, in all places. Really, Antonio, my most dear brother, to whom I can speak every secret of my soul, I have prayed, and do pray so much, that it seems every thought is prayer; and when I awake from my short sleeps my mind seems to have been praying, and the poor eyes are really almost blind with incessant tears,—for can I pray for such a favor without a beating heart and torrents of tears? My children say, ‘Poor mamma,’ continually, and really are better than they were, that they may not add to my sorrow. Yet sweet are these tears, and sweet are the sorrows; great is my comfort, that, though the almighty Source of Light does not visit me with his blessed light, yet he does not leave me contented and insensible in my darkness.

“Sept. 29.—This day has been a feast-day to the children and a holiday from school, that I might give the greatest portion of the hours to God. You would have been pleased

to hear their questions about *St. Michael*, and how eagerly they listened to the history of the good offices done to us by the blessed angels, and of *St. Michael* driving *Lucifer* out of heaven, &c. They always wait on their knees after prayers till I bless them each with the sign of the cross, and I look up to God with an humble hope that he will not forsake us. I could tell you many things, my brother, but must wait for the much wished-for hour when we shall be seated with our big book at the table. I could cry out now as my poor *Seton* used to do, Antonio, Antonio, Antonio; but call back the thought, and my soul cries out, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus; there it finds rest and heavenly peace, and is hushed by that dear sound, as my little babe is quieted by my cradle-song. The *Jesus Psalter*, in the little book you gave me, is my favorite office, because it so often repeats that name; and when thought goes to you, Antonio, and imagines you in the promiscuous company you must meet, without any solid gratification, fatigued by your excursions, wandering in your fancy, &c. &c., oh, how I pray that the Holy Spirit may not leave you, and that your dear angel may even pinch you at the hour of prayers rather than suffer you to neglect them! You charge me not to neglect the lives of the Saints, which I could not, if I would, for they interest me so much that the little time I can catch for reading is all given to them: indeed, they are a relaxation to my mind, for they lessen all my troubles and make them as nothing by comparison. When I read that *St. Austin* was long in a fluctuating state of mind between error and truth, I say to myself, Be patient, God will bring you home at last; and as for the lessons of self-denial and poverty, if *St. Francis de Sales* and the life of our dear Master had not before pointed out to me the many virtues and graces that accompany them, I should even wish for them, to be like those dear, dear saints, in any respect. Antonio, Antonio, why cannot my poor soul be satis-

fied that your religion is now the same that theirs then was? How can it hesitate?—why must it struggle?—the Almighty only can decide.”

After expressing her solicitude to hear from him, she continues:—

“I am ashamed of my own letters—they are all egotism but my soul is so entirely engrossed by one subject, that I cannot speak with freedom on any other. Day after day passes, and I see no one; indeed, I can say with perfect truth at all times, I prefer my solitude to the company of any human being, except that of my most dear Antonio. You know my heart, you know my thoughts, my pains and sorrows, hopes and fears. Jonathan loved David as his own soul, and if I was your brother, Antonio, I would never leave you for one hour; but as it is, I try rather to turn every affection to God, well knowing that there alone their utmost exercise cannot be misapplied and most ardent hopes can never be disappointed. The idea you suggested to me of writing to Bishop Carroll was suggested by a good or an evil angel, immediately after your departure. The Protestants say I am in a state of *temptation*; you must naturally think the same. The Almighty is my defence in either case, not from any claim of mine, but through the name of Jesus Christ. Is it possible I can do wrong in writing to him, sanctioned by your direction? At least I will have a letter prepared by the time you come.”

It is plain, from the tenor of the preceding letters, that Mrs. Seton's mind was in a painful state of uncertainty, which continued to disturb and agitate her soul, although she possessed the most conclusive evidences in favor of the Catholic religion; and it seemed that Divine Providence permitted her to be thus the sport of conflicting sentiments, in order to render her ultimate triumph over error the more signal, and to disengage her affections the more perfectly

from creatures. The letter of Bishop Carroll to Mr. Filicchi, relative to her situation, was a source of great comfort to her under these circumstances. She was also very much encouraged and supported in her trials by the advice and exhortations which she received from Mr. Philip Filicchi, of Leghorn, brother of the gentleman just mentioned. After having been kindly instructed by him in Italy on the various points of Catholic doctrine, so far as to be convinced of their truth, she deemed it but proper to inform him of the subsequent trouble which had come over her mind and prevented her from declaring herself a member of the Church. The answer of her friend is equally indicative of his learning, piety, and wisdom; and, while it shows the valuable helps which the Almighty sent her at this critical period, may suggest to others those prudent counsels which will always be found useful in a situation like hers:—

“LEGHORN, Oct. 17, 1804.

“DEAR MADAM:—

“I received yesterday by the *Mercury* yours of the 27th of July. I assure you, my dear Mrs. Seton, that in reading it I did not feel the slightest emotion of indignation, but my heart was deeply affected by the consideration of your danger. I wish I had been with you. My endeavors would have been devoted entirely to calm your anxiety. ‘Why art thou sorrowful, my soul? Trust in God,’—I would have taught you to repeat, with the royal prophet. You could not fail to meet with contradictions. I expected them. An imagination like yours, rendered so sensible by constant stretch, if I may use the expression, a great propensity to melancholy, are natural affections, which I dreaded might throw you in trouble. I was, however, in hopes to have furnished you with a remedy, by giving you that excellent treatise of the ‘Consolation of a Christian.’ I trusted

you would have learned that, as we cannot do a single good thing, not even form a good thought, of ourselves, we must throw ourselves entirely on the mercy of God; that he has the power and the will to help us, that we can do every thing with his succor, and that he will not suffer us to be tempted above our strength, as St. Paul assures us. I was in hopes that you would have retained the maxim that our Saviour wishes our salvation more than we can wish it ourselves. Your anxiety, therefore, is unreasonable, and your trouble a temptation. You pray to your Father, to your Creator, and to your Saviour, and you tremble. You do not know his goodness. These were not the sentiments that accompanied the prodigal child, nor Mary Magdalen. St. Paul, fallen from his horse and called by Him whom he knew not, did not trouble himself. He calmly said, 'What will you have me to do?' It is only in calm and tranquillity that we may do some good. It is only our enemy who delights in trouble, as trouble is his element. He knows that he cannot catch fish in clear water. You are perplexed—uncertain. Pray constantly and with fervor, but calmly. If you trouble yourself for being troubled, you will never find peace.

"The objections started by your divines have consoled me, because I have not seen any thing new in them; nothing I did not know before. It is the old cant masterly combatted in all ages. I shall have no difficulty to encounter in answering it to your satisfaction. I shall not need to study much. You must, however, be sensible that, as I answer your letter immediately after its receipt, I cannot do it now. I shall clear all your doubts by the return of the *Mercury*.

"I shall only say a few words on the most essential point, or the basis of the edifice. You say that your divines disclaim Luther and Calvin as their patriarchs—as the

authors of their Reformation, as they call it. Have they named you the man? But names are nothing to our purpose. Let us condemn them to oblivion. They deserve it. Do they deny that the Protestant Church, the Reformed Church, or the Church of England, began in the sixteenth century? If they do, have recourse to the history of England. I refer you to their own writers—to writers of their own profession. Can I be more generous or liberal? They add, that their church comes directly and uninterruptedly from Jesus Christ and the apostles, having had a constant succession of priests; but are they able to name you a number of them, a congregation of faithful, who, ten or twelve years before the Reformation, professed openly the same tenets they do now—who, for instance, had declared confession an abominable imposition, the invocation of saints idolatry, the sacrifice of the mass an abomination? They cannot. All their priests a few days before had said mass, had heard confessions, had invoked the saints. If these are errors, they did not belong to the true Church, because the Church of Christ could not err. Their succession, therefore, is of no use to their cause. Do not hastily trust them. Apply to me with that confidence you show for me, for which I thank you. I shall never betray it. Mark the difference between their conduct and mine, and you will judge who is led by the purest motives. They endeavor to frighten you, to force you to a hasty declaration; they threaten to make a public business of a private concern. Violence was never the characteristic of charity. Was this my conduct? Did I ever propose you any temporal benefit as an allurements? Did I take advantage of your docility to listen to my instructions, to hasten your decision? Did I not, on the contrary, restrain your ardor, that you might prove yourself? All this I have done, and not through a sentiment of indifference, because I am as zealous in the

cause as they may be; but surprise, threats, violence, are instruments I despise.

“I must warn you against an error I see you are subject to. You have suffered your poor brain to be distracted by controversies on the real presence and the invocation of saints. Do you expect to understand all the subaltern questions that may arise? If you are sick, you send for a doctor. Do you pretend to question him on every point of his medical science before you submit yourself to his prescriptions? You are satisfied to know that he is one of the best doctors in the place. Our prudence in temporal concerns may well be followed in our spiritual ones. The study of religion cannot, ought not to be complicated. You know that Jesus Christ has established a Church that cannot err, cannot fall, and of course cannot be subject to variation, nor begin at a period distant from that in which he lived among us. Seek therefore this Church. If you find it, submit yourself to her decisions without further inquiries. If God has a right over our actions and our desires, he must have an equal one over our understanding. Your submission will be reconcilable, even in those points you may not understand, because it is reasonable to trust in the word of a Church which is the column of firmness and truth. If we were obliged to extend our inquiries further, few of us would have leisure for it, and none the talents.

“Pray be sincere in your desire of knowing the truth; do not listen to secondary and worldly considerations, and you will be enlightened.

“Have you ever made a reflection? It may tend to calm your apprehensions, though it is insufficient to make a good Catholic. All your divines admit that a Roman Catholic may be saved. What risk do you run, therefore, in the change? To put one's self on the safer side is certainly prudence. I shall write to you fully at leisure. Do not de-

prive me of your confidence. Open your heart. This will relieve you. You cannot displease me. I may help you, or pity you. I shall never cease to pray for you.

“Your affectionate and sincere friend,

“PHILIP FILICCHI.”

It is impossible to imagine any thing more admirably adapted to the object in view than the wise instructions contained in the preceding remarks. In reading them we fancy ourselves listening rather to the exact and well-timed explications of the learned and pious divine, than to the friendly advices given by a layman actively engaged in secular pursuits. The following letters from the same gentleman are filled with the same wisdom, which may be profitably read by all:—

“LEGHORN, Oct. 22, 1804.

“DEAR MADAM:—

“Enclosed is the duplicate of the letter I wrote you, the 17th inst., in answer to yours of the 27th July. I am become very uneasy, both for you and for myself, and I lament much more your imprudence and mine: yours, for having resisted the light that has shown you the precipice you have before your feet; mine, for having exposed you to it by restraining your first zeal. When you left us, no doubt remained in your mind. How imprudent was it, then, to submit your determination to the censure of people who could not be expected to do otherwise than oppose it, and introduce trouble and disquiet in your conscience, to deter you from it! In a spiritual concern you have followed only worldly prudence, which the gospel calls folly. You have acted as if you had thought that God was not to be obeyed without the consent and advice of your friends. You have met with the punishment you deserved. In lieu of that serenity you had acquired from the knowledge of truth, anxiety and trouble have taken possession of your mind.

Your heart is become weak and your resolutions fallen to nothing. Your understanding is clouded, and your intellect is full of darkness. Remember the answer that Jesus Christ gave to a man who acted like you:—‘And another said, I will follow thee, Lord; but let me first take my leave of them that are at my house. Jesus said to him, No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.’ (St. Luke, at the close of the 9th chapter.) If in those people who had taken care to instruct you you had found any symptom of interested views, of duplicity, and of a desire to surprise you, your conduct might be justifiable; but you never saw any thing of it. You had clearly seen the contradictions that rendered your former persuasion very suspicious, and you had acknowledged them, viz.: first, The difficulty that is met with by all those who pretend to find a succession in the Protestant Church from the primitive Church under the apostles. All the Reformers having been first Roman Catholics, no Protestant Church having existed between the fifth century, from which they date our corruption, and the sixteenth, from which their reform is dated in all histories, they meet with an interruption that baffles all their efforts to fill up. Secondly, Their refusal to acknowledge the necessity of confession, and their directions to the ministers attending the sick to advise such a confession, and give absolution in consequence of it. Thirdly, To fancy a place of perfect tranquillity, where every soul must go and remain till the day of judgment, in spite of the declaration made by Jesus Christ to the converted thief, that he would be that very day in heaven with him; and several others which we examined together. After all this, you should have informed your friends that you had embraced another persuasion; but you should never have consulted them whether you were to do it. Your inquiry is reduced to this:—‘Do you advise me to continue in that which I am

convinced is wrong, or very suspicious?" I tremble for you, but I tremble also for myself. I fear that an imprudent confidence in your apparent firmness may be placed to my account. Perhaps a secret pride made me trust in the power of my persuasions. The vanity of giving a proof to your friends that your change of religion could not be imputed to surprise made me prefer your delaying your act of retractation. I consider myself guilty of all this, and can only plead a sort of good intention.

"I had already told you that, while all your divines admit that a Roman Catholic may be saved, you need not trouble yourself; you were at any rate equally safe. But you know that our doctrine does not admit of reciprocity. As I have explained to you the motives, I need not repeat them. This only I say, that, independent of that infallibility which must be the characteristic of the Church of Jesus Christ, if we allow any to exist, the decisions of the Catholic Church as a mere civil body cannot be despised. Consider the number of its members, their reputation in all ages for talents and sanctity, the conformity of their sentiments, the antiquity of its establishment, and compare to it the youth of the Protestant world, the infinite variety of the doctrine preached by its greatest men, the contracted number of its followers, their acknowledgment of being subject to error, (though they pretend not to err in fact;) and decide if you can be tranquil on this most important point. Every man who tells me that the Church he advises me to become a member of is not infallible tells me in substance that I may be led into error. With this declaration I have not even his word for security. By his declaration that his Church is not infallible he has warned me of the danger. Can you be tranquil in such a persuasion? I should not believe you, if you were to answer in the affirmative.

Should you propose these difficulties to your divines, (as

you have such a propensity to prefer their advice to the light you have received,) and they should for convenience sake say that they do not admit that a Catholic may be saved, or that they confess that the Protestant Church is infallible, I shall give you proofs to the contrary.

“As examples are sometimes more persuasive than reasoning, I enclose you a copy of the declaration of the Duchess of York. She was in your same situation, but she was more faithful to grace.

“‘What must I do, my dear Filicchi?’ I hear you say Pray,—pray incessantly, pray with fervor, and with confidence. Be sincere in your wish to know the truth and firm in your resolution to follow it. Never think of the consequences for what relates to your situation and family affairs. There is a Providence. Let therefore prayer be your only adviser. Abandon all others, if you believe me. You cannot ask without something being given you; you cannot knock and find the door always shut; you cannot seek, never to find. Sincerity, confidence, and perseverance in prayer, calmness and tranquillity in mind, courage and resolution in heart, a perfect resignation to Providence,—you cannot fail to succeed. Avoid the labyrinth of controversies. They will not make you wiser.

“In the paper I gave you, I only set down what was necessary for you to know. I did not pretend to answer all the difficulties started at different times by Protestants. I know them, and could have answered them, but my work would have been swelled to an immense size, and I had no time for it. Had I explained the futility of the objections you point out, I would not have improved much, because they would have started many others. It is easy to create difficulties when you lose sight of the main point. Is there any thing more certain than the existence of God? Still an atheist will tire out the patience of the most learned, by

the difficulties he can start in pretending to support his opinion. It is impossible to follow any man in the discussion of separate controversies. The sectaries of all denominations will always avoid discussing the main point. They will constantly lose sight of it to introduce other questions.

“May you be wise enough to see the snares and avoid them! I will say no more. God bless you.

“Your affectionate friend,

“PHILIP FILICCHI.”

“LEGHORN, Dec. 18, 1804.

“DEAR MADAM:—

“The moment I received your letter of the 29th July, I wrote you a few hasty lines, endeavoring to ease your mind and to set aright your conscience. I promised you that by the return of the *Mercury* I would have cleared all your doubts, or rather shown you the falsehood of the arguments made use of by our opponents to disturb you from the determination of embracing the Catholic faith. Little I thought then that the yellow fever, which has visited us, would rob me of the moments I intended to devote to this task. This sickness, which alarmed our people and made almost a desert of this city by the great emigration it caused, induced the government to establish a board of health. I was pointed out as a member. I would not refuse to lend my assistance; and the services I have been obliged to render have taken up so much of my time (and you may suppose I had not a great deal of it to spare) that I am reduced to the last day, to the eve of the *Mercury's* departure, to attend to my promise. I do not despair, however, of success. As words and reasonings are of no avail if the grace of God does not give them the power of persuading, as this may be granted to the simplest observations as well as to the most learned arguments, I trust that the few remarks I have tried to make will be supported with that grace which I implore, and with

out which a learned treatise would be but the sound of a timbrel.

“I shall answer your queries in due succession:—

“*First.* They tell you that the Protestant Church has the right succession, they (your clergymen) having always been ordained by bishops of the Roman Catholic Church, and that they call themselves Protestants because they protested against the errors of the Church of Rome, which had deviated from the primitive Church—errors unknown to the first four ages of Christianity. They admit therefore—

“1. That the true Church must come in right succession from the apostles;

“2. That the Roman Catholic Church was, in the first four ages, the true Church.

“3. That the Protestant Church comes directly from the Roman Catholic Church.

“You will remember, and they have admitted it, that the true Church could not fall and could not err. The Protestant Reformation took place in the sixteenth century. The Church of Rome had fallen into error (according to their assertions) since the fifth century, and they omit to name a church that must fill a space of eleven centuries. That they might be right, it would have been necessary that their protestations against the errors of the Roman Church should have taken place the moment they appeared, so that they might be entitled to be considered as the followers of truth without deviation or interruption, and that we and not they might be censured as having separated from the general Church. Was this the fact? When the Protestants first appeared and declared the invocation of saints to be idolatry, confession an imposition, the sacrifice of the mass an abomination, the real presence a superstition, the invocation of saints, confession, mass, were the avowed tenets and the constant practice of the Church. Those very bishops who

ordained the first abettors of the Reformation followed that doctrine, and the first reformers themselves a few days before said mass, heard confessions, &c. If all these things were errors, the bishops who ordained them had erred—they (the reformers) had erred themselves—the whole Church had erred. The supposed existence of these errors destroys the possibility of the uninterrupted succession of the true Church. It is therefore true, and most true, as I told you before,—viz.: that if they acknowledged their succession from the Roman Church, (a fact they cannot deny,) they must confess that, if this Church had erred for the space of eleven centuries, it could not be the Church of Jesus Christ, and their very succession proves a vitiated origin, and, of course, a false establishment. If, on the contrary, the Roman Church was the true Church, it could not err, and the reformation of its doctrine was both useless and impious.

“ You will constantly observe that the Protestants are very careful to avoid this dilemma. They will never give you a straight answer on this subject. They will immediately change the theme, propose other arguments, and draw your attention from the principal point.

“ They have moreover imposed on you, and taken advantage of your ignorance of ecclesiastical history, when they have told you that the first four ages knew not and practised not the things they call Popish errors. I shall content myself with exposing the infidelity of their accounts in a few instances. They will then be considered by you as false guides, and the little I shall say will be sufficient to enlighten you, if God grants power to my pen.

“ Your clergymen abominate the sacrifice of the mass. St. Justin, who lived about fifty years after the death of the apostle St. John, praises the sacrifice of the Eucharist, and says that it was offered by Christians throughout the world

“St. Irenæus, disciple of St. Polycarp, who had been disciple of the apostle St. John, bears the same witness.

“Tertullian, who lived in the second age, assures us that the sacrifice was offered among Christians for the health and preservation of the emperors. In advising women to retirement, he says, that to visit the sick, to assist at the sacrifice, and to hear the word of God, were the only motives that should induce them to go out of their houses. He assures us that the sacrifice was offered for the dead, the anniversary day of their death.

“St. Cyprian, who lived in the third age, declares that the practice of offering the sacrifice for the dead was general and ancient.

“You see therefore that the doctrine relative to the sacrifice and to purgatory was known and admitted before the fifth age.

“The Liturgy of the Church of Jerusalem, which is attributed to St. James, is worded thus :—‘Grant, O God, that our oblation may be found acceptable and sanctified by the Holy Ghost for the propitiation of our sins and for the repose of those who departed before us.’ The Liturgies of the Churches of Constantinople, Alexandria, and Ethiopia, are framed nearly in the same words.

“Tertullian, who lived in the second age, deplores the blindness of those Christians who did not confess their sins through shame. Here is therefore another essential point of belief known to the primitive Church and combated by your reformers.

“You see therefore that you cannot trust their veracity. I am surprised that you did not perceive the weakness of their cause by their own reasonings.

“They cannot deny that their reformation took place in the sixteenth century. To prove their mission, they claim their succession from the Roman Catholic Church. They

admit that Jesus Christ kept his word not to abandon his Church, and still they pretend to belong to the true one, in consequence of their succession from that which, according to their declaration, had deviated from truth since the fourth century. What monstrous reasoning!

“My dear Mrs. Seton, keep well in mind the following argument, and do not trouble your head with controversies.

“All Christians admit that Jesus Christ has established a Church, and that he would be with it to the end of time. St. Paul calls it the column of firmness and of truth.

“There must, therefore be a true Church, and this must be as ancient as Christianity itself.

“All our endeavors must be to find which, among the Christian societies that claim the privilege, is the true Church.

“When we have found it we need no longer study. Let us believe what she teaches, as the true Church cannot err.

“New institutions cannot pretend to the above privilege. If to obtain it they claim succession from another Church, the argument must be this:—

“Either the Church you proceed from was true, or false. If true, you were wrong to change her doctrine; if false, you are false yourselves.

“Right succession and innovation are contradictory things.

“The study of religion cannot be difficult. It must be adapted to the talents of all. Controversies do no good.

“Your clergymen will always endeavor to keep your attention from the above principles, and to throw you into the labyrinth of controversies. If they succeed to throw confusion in your mind they have gained the battle. You will be neither Catholic nor Protestant. They do not care a farthing about it, provided you be not a Catholic

“As to what they have said respecting councils and their

contradictions, you will observe that as there have been at times two popes, one legal and one illegal, so there have been legal and illegal councils. These must have been wrong, the others right. They could not therefore possibly agree; and the general Church, in admitting those, has refused to acknowledge the others. The treatise I gave you about the infallibility of the Church will show you where infallibility resides.

“I hope to have fairly answered all your questions. I wish I could be near you. I would keep my word to clear your doubts. With the help of God, I would not fear the learned arguments of your divines, without being a divine myself.

“I am, with perfect esteem,

“Your humble servant and affectionate friend,

“PHILIP FILICCHI ”

While Mr. Filicchi was thus manifesting his friendly and pious zeal in behalf of Mrs. Seton, she was an object of equal solicitude on the part of his brother in America. We have seen that while in New York he visited her frequently, and when his affairs called him to Boston, he opened a correspondence with her, the main object of which was the promotion of her spiritual welfare. His letters breathed a spirit of the warmest and most exalted friendship, which, although viewing her religious enlightenment as the highest consideration, did not overlook, as we have seen, her temporal happiness. He counselled her in her doubts and consoled her in her trials. Writing from Boston, November 7, 1804, he says:—“Fight, my worthy friend; pray without ceasing. The merciful Redeemer of us all will at last come to your relief, wipe away your tears, exalt your humility, reward your fortitude.” He might well address her in this language under the weight of suffer

ing which then oppressed her soul. The mists that still clouded her mind on the subject of religion would alone have sufficed to throw a sensitive and devout spirit like hers into a state of cruel anguish. But, in addition to this, she was met with coldness and indifference by some of her relations and former friends, who could not brook the idea of her hesitating in the preference of Protestantism to Catholicity. For a lady of Mrs. Seton's social standing, and one who had enjoyed every comfort of life before the loss of her husband, this persecution would have been a very serious obstacle to her conversion, had she not possessed a singular firmness, and been actuated by the purest and most elevated intentions. But her object was to place herself and her children in the true way of salvation, and convinced, as our Lord declares in the gospel, that "it will profit a man nothing to gain the whole world if he lose his own soul," she was willing to sacrifice the advantages of this earth for that peace and eternal happiness which the world cannot give. By frequent recourse to prayer and spiritual reading she supported herself under these trials, hoping that the Almighty would at length regard the sincerity of her heart, and dispel the clouds that still hovered over her mind. Writing to a friend at this time, she thus describes her peculiar situation and the cause that produced it:—

"On arriving home (from Italy) I was assailed on the subject of religion by the clergy, who talked of antichrist, idolatry, and urged objections in torrents, which, though not capable of changing the opinions I had adopted, have terrified me enough to keep me in a state of hesitation; and I am thus in the hands of God, praying night and day for his divine light, which can alone direct me aright. I instruct my children in the Catholic religion, without taking any decided step; my heart is in that faith, and it is my

greatest comfort to station myself in imagination in a Catholic church."

They who are acquainted with the various, sometimes mysterious, difficulties that haunt the mind in its progress from error to truth, will readily comprehend that the Catholic faith preponderated in the heart of Mrs. Seton, while she was held back by a certain obscurity still lingering upon the subject, and which we may believe to have been permitted by the Almighty, either as a punishment of the rash exposure of faith, or as a means of testing the fidelity and increasing the merits of his servant. She had no need of further discussion or investigation in regard to the true Church. From the very first opposition that she had met with on the part of her friends in America, she entered profoundly into the examination of the question; author was read after author; the texts referred to her consideration were weighed on her knees and with constant tears; and when she was told by her relations that her strong belief in Catholic doctrine was a temptation, she doubled against the enemy of her soul the most effectual weapons in the spiritual conflict, humility, prayer, and fasting; she therefore had employed all the ordinary means for informing herself correctly upon the subject of religious truth; and if she still was prevented, by a certain feeling of diffidence or dread, from being fully influenced by the powerful motives which she possessed for embracing the Catholic communion, it was a trial which God permitted for his greater glory and the more decided benefit of her soul. Her only resource was to pray, to knock at the door of divine mercy, until it should please the Almighty to shed upon her the rays of his heavenly light.

The letters of Mrs. Seton which we have placed before the reader present a lively picture of her distressing situation; but it may be interesting to enter more fully into her

thoughts, and to consider the reasoning by which she rebutted the arguments of her Protestant friends. It will serve to show the powerful hold of Catholic principles on her mind and heart, and the steady action of divine grace in drawing her to the true faith. During the painful struggle of her soul from the month of July, 1804, to the end of the year, she wrote several letters to her friend, Mrs. Amabilia Filiechi, of Leghorn, in which she expresses her sentiments with equal simplicity and force.

“July.

“I had,” she says, “a most affectionate note from Mr. Hobart to-day, asking me how I could ever think of leaving the Church in which I was baptized. But, though whatever he says to me has the weight of my partiality for him, as well as the respect it seems to me I could scarcely have for any one else, yet that question made me smile; for it is like saying that wherever a child is born, and wherever its parents place it, there it will find the truth—and he does not hear the droll invitations made me every day, since I am in my little new home, and old friends come to see me; for it has already happened that one of the most excellent women I ever knew, who is of the Church of Scotland, finding me unsettled about the great object of a true faith, said to me, ‘Oh do, dear soul! come and hear our J. Mason, and I am sure you will join us.’ A little after, came one whom I loved for the purest and most innocent manners, of the Society of Quakers, (to which I have been always attached;) she coaxed me too with artless persuasion:—‘Betsy, I tell thee, thee had better come with us.’ And my faithful old friend of the Anabaptist meeting, Mrs. T——, says, with tears in her eyes, ‘Oh, could you be regenerated, could you know our experiences and enjoy with us our heavenly banquet!’ And my good old Mary, the Methodist, groans and contemplates, as she calls it, over my soul, so

mised because I have yet no convictions. But, oh my Father and my God! all that will not do for me. Your word is truth and without contradiction, wherever it is. One faith, one hope, one baptism I look for, wherever it is; and I often think my sins, my miseries, hide the light; yet I will cling and hold to my God to the last gasp, begging for that light, and never change until I find it."

"August.

"There is a sad weariness now over life I never before was tried with. My lovely children round their writing-table, or round our evening fire, make me forget a little this unworthy dejection, which arises, I believe, from continual application of mind to these multiplied books brought for my instruction; above all, Newton's Prophecies. Your poor friend, though, is not so easily troubled as to the facts it dwells on, because it may or may not be; but, living all my days in the thought that all and everybody would be saved who meant well, it grieves my very soul to see that Protestants, as well as your (as I thought) hard and severe principles, see the thing so differently—since this book, so valued by them, sends all followers of the Pope to the bottomless pit, &c.; and it appears by the account made of them from the apostles' time, that a greater part of the world must be already there at any rate. Oh my! the worshipper of images and the man of sin are different enough from the beloved souls I knew in Leghorn, to ease my mind on that point, since I so well knew what you worshipped, my Amabilia; but yet, so painful and sorrowful an impression is left on my heart, it is all clouded and troubled. So I say the penitential psalms, if not with the spirit of the royal prophet, at least with his tears, which truly mix with the food and water the couch of your poor friend, yet with such confidence in God, that it seems to me he never was so truly my Father and my all at any moment of my life.

Anna coaxes me, when we are at our evening prayers, to say, *Hail, Mary!* and all say, 'Oh do, ma, teach it to us!' Even little Rebecca tries to lisp it, though she can scarcely speak; and I ask my Saviour, why should we not say it? If any one is in heaven, his mother must be there. Are the angels, then, who are so often represented as being so interested for us on earth, more compassionate, more exalted, than she is? Oh, no, no! Mary, our Mother, that cannot be. So I beg her, with the confidence and tenderness of her child, to pity us and guide us to the true faith, if we are not in it; and, if we are, to obtain peace for my poor soul, that I may be a good mother to my poor darlings; for I know if God should leave me to myself after all my sins, he would be justified; and since I read these books, my head is quite bewildered about the few that are saved; so I kiss her picture you gave me, and beg her to be a mother to me."

"September.

"Your Antonio would not have been well pleased to see me in St. Paul's (Protestant Episcopal) Church to-day; but peace and persuasion about proprieties, &c. over-prevalled: yet I got in a side pew, which turned my face toward the Catholic Church, in the next street, and found myself twenty times speaking to the Blessed Sacrament *there*, instead of looking at the naked altar where I was, or minding the routine of prayers. Tears plenty, and sighs as silent and deep as when I first entered your blessed Church of the Annunciation in Florence—all turning to the one only desire, to see the way most pleasing to my God, whichever that way is. Mr. Hobart says, 'How can you believe that there are as many Gods as there are millions of altars and tens of millions of blessed hosts all over the world?' Again I can but smile at his earnest words; for the whole of my cogitations about it are reduced to one thought:—'It is

GOD who does it—the same God who fed so many thousands with the little barley-loaves and little fishes, multiplying them, of course, in the hands which distributed them.’ The thought stops not a moment to me; I look straight at my God, and see that nothing is so very hard to believe in it, since it is HE who does it. Years ago, I read in some old book, ‘When you say a thing is a mystery and you do not understand it, you say nothing against the mystery itself, but only acknowledge your limited knowledge and comprehension, which does not understand a thousand things you must yet own to be true.’ And so often it comes in my head, if the religion which gives to the world (at least to so great a part of it) the heavenly consolations attached to the belief of the presence of God in the Blessed Sacrament, to be the food of the poor wanderers in the desert of this world, as well as the manna was the support of the Israelites through the wilderness to their Canaan; if this religion, says your poor friend, is the work or contrivance of men and priests, as they say, then God seems not as earnest for our happiness as these contrivers, nor to love us, though the children of redemption and bought with the precious blood of his dear Son, as much as he did the children of the old Law; since he leaves our churches with nothing but naked walls, and our altars unadorned with either the ark which his presence filled, or any of the precious pledges of his care for us, which he gave to those of old. They tell me I must worship him now in spirit and in truth; but my poor spirit very often goes to sleep, or roves about like an idler, for want of something to fix its attention; and for the truth, dearest Amabilia, I think I feel more true union of heart and soul with him over a picture of the crucifixion I found years ago in my father’s portfolio, than in the——; but what I was going to say would be folly, for truth does not depend on the people

around us, or the place we are in. I can only say, I do long and desire to worship our God in truth; and if I had never met you Catholics, and yet should have read the books Mr. Hobart has brought me, they would have in themselves brought a thousand uncertainties and doubts to my mind; and these soften my heart so much before God, in the certainty how much he must pity me, knowing, as he does, the whole and sole bent of my soul is to please him only, and get close to him in this life and the next, that in the midnight hour, believe me, I often look up at the walls through the tears and distress that overpower me, expecting rather to see his finger writing on the wall for my relief, than that he will forsake or abandon so poor a creature."

"November.

"I do not get on, Amabilia; cannot cast the balance for the peace of this poor soul; but it suffers plenty, and the body too. I say daily, with great confidence of being one day heard, the 119th Psalm, never weary of repeating it, and reading à Kempis, who, by the way, was a Catholic writer, and, as our Protestant preface says, 'wonderfully versed in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures;' and I read much, too, of St Francis de Sales, so earnest for bringing all to the bosom of the Catholic Church; and I say to myself, Will I ever know better how to please God than they did? and down I kneel to pour my tears to them, and beg them to obtain faith for me. Then I see faith is a gift of God, to be diligently sought and earnestly desired, and groan to him for it in silence, since our Saviour says I cannot come to him unless the Father draw me. So it is; by-and-by, I trust, this storm will cease—how painful and often agonizing He only knows who can and will still it in his own good time. Mrs. S——, my long-tryed friend, observed to me this morning that I had penance enough

without seeking it among Catholics. True; but we bear all the pain without the merit. Yet I do try sincerely to turn all mine for account of my soul. I was telling her I hoped the more I suffered in this life the more I hoped to be spared in the next, as I believed God would accept my pains in atonement for my sins. She said, 'that was indeed very comfortable doctrine;' she wished she could believe it. Indeed, it is all my comfort, dearest Amabilia, worn out now to a skeleton, almost death may now overtake me in the struggle. But God himself must finish it.

"Would you believe, Amabilia—in a desperation of heart I went last Sunday to St. George's (Protestant Episcopal) Church. The wants and necessities of my soul were so pressing that I looked straight up to God, and I told him, Since I cannot see the way to please you whom alone I wish to please, every thing is indifferent to me; and until you do show me the way you mean me to walk in, I will trudge on in the path you suffered me to be born in, and go even to the very sacrament where I once used to find you. So away I went, my old Mary happy to take care of the children for me once more until I came back; but if I left the house a Protestant I returned to it a Catholic, I think, since I determined to go no more to the Protestants, being much more troubled than ever I thought I could be while I remembered God is my God. But so it was, that the bowing of my heart before the bishop to receive his absolution, which is given publicly and universally to all in the church—I had not the least faith in his prayers, and looked for an apostolic loosing from my sins, which, by the books Mr. Hobart had given me to read I find they do not claim or admit,—then, trembling to communion, half dead with the inward struggle; when they said, 'the body and blood of Christ,' oh, Amabilia, no words for my trial! And I remember, in my old prayer-book of former edition, when I

was a child, it was not, as now, said to be spiritually taken and received; however, to get thoughts away, I took the *Daily Exercise* of good Abbé Plunkett, to read the prayers after communion; but finding every word addressed to our dear Saviour as really present, I became half crazy, and for the first time could not bear the sweet caresses of the darlings or bless their little dinner. Oh, my God, that day! but it finished calmly at last, abandoning all to God, and a renewed confidence in the Blessed Virgin, whose mild and peaceful look reproached my bold excesses, and reminded me to fix my heart above with better hopes."

Such was the resolution which, aided by the grace of God, was to be a source of light and peace to the troubled soul of Mrs. Seton—to abandon all to him and rely upon the declarations of his holy word. Her mind had been so harassed with doubt, so cruelly agitated by conflicting thoughts and ineffectual attempts to discover the true faith, that she had formed the desperate purpose of embracing no particular form of Christianity until the hour of death; but God was watching over her, to withdraw her feet from the brink of the precipice. On the feast of the Epiphany, the office of which commemorates the homage paid by the Wise Men to the infant Saviour of mankind, she took up a sermon of Bourdaloue on that subject, which, alluding to the inquiry made by those Eastern sages among the priests and doctors of the law, "Where is he who is born King of the Jews?" observes, that when we no longer discern the star of faith, we must seek it where alone it is to be found, among the depositaries of the divine word, the pastors of the Church. This suggestion, with the blessing of God, produced the most salutary impression on her mind. She at once resolved to consult again those books on the Catholic faith which had originally won her to it, and she endeavored also to obtain an interview with the Rev. Mr. O'Brien,

pastor of St. Peter's Church. Failing, however, in this, and ardently desirous of receiving direction from the ministers of God, she addressed a letter to the Rev. John Cheverus, then assistant pastor of the Catholic Church in Boston.* In vain did those around her attempt to influence her by worldly considerations. Writing to a friend at this time, she says that Catholics in New York were represented as "the effscourings of the people," and the congregation said to be "a public nuisance;" "but," she adds, "that troubles not me. The congregation of a city may be very shabby, yet very pleasing to God; or very bad people among them, yet cannot hurt the *faith*, as I take it. And should the priest himself deserve no more respect than is here allowed him, his ministry of the sacraments would be the same to me, if I ever shall receive them. I seek but God and his Church, and expect to find my peace in them, not in the people."

While her mind was in these happy dispositions, she received from Bishop Carroll a further evidence of the lively interest which he took in her welfare. In a letter to Mr. Filicchi he says:—"Though I have heard no more than is contained in your last concerning the most estimable lady for whose situation and happiness you are so much interested, yet I have the fullest confidence that, after being put to the severe and most distressing trial of interior darkness, doubts, and terrors of making a wrong step, our merciful Father in heaven will soon send her relief, and diffuse light and consolation in her heart. Among the religious books in her possession, I doubt not of her having that most ex-

* Afterward first Bishop of that city, and, still later, Bishop of Montauban, in France, and Cardinal Archbishop of Bordeaux. See his *Life*, by the Rev. J. Huen Dubourg, translated from the French by Robert M. Walsh; 12mo., Philadelphia, 1841. The letter which Mrs. Seton wrote to Mr. Chéverus at this interesting juncture, and his answer, I have not been able to discover, notwithstanding the most diligent search.

cellent one, generally ascribed to Thomas à Kempis, 'Of the Following of Christ.' Recommend to her, when her soul is weighed down with trouble and anxiety, to read the ninth chapter of the second book, entitled 'Of the want or absence of every comfort.' As far as it is in my power to judge of her state of mind, from the account of it contained in your letters, I do not think it advisable for her at present to perplex herself with reading any more controversy. She has seen enough on that subject to assure herself of the true principles for settling her faith. Her great business now should be to beseech our Divine Redeemer to revive in her heart the grace of her baptism, and to fortify her soul in the resolution of following unreservedly the voice of God speaking to her heart, however difficult and painful the sacrifices may be which it requires. Having confirmed herself in this resolution, it must be to her a matter of the first importance to inspect the state of her conscience, and judge herself impartially and with the utmost sincerity, divesting herself as much as she can, with the aid of divine grace, not only of every sinful attachment, but of every affection that has not God for its source, its motive, and its object. She ought to consider whether the tears she sheds and the prayers she offers to heaven are purely for God's sake, and arise solely from compunction for sin, and are unmixed with any alloy of worldly respects or inordinate solicitude for the attainment of some worldly purpose. Indeed, when I read the words you copied from her letters, and her letters themselves, I remain convinced of the sincerity of her endeavors to make herself conformable in all things to the divine will; but afterward a fear arises in my mind that God discovers in her some lurking imperfection, and defers the final grace of her conversion till her soul be entirely purified of its irregular attachments. The ordinary course of Providence, with respect to those who are to be tried by

interior darkness and tribulation, is to subject them to it after their conversion is completed; and it often happens that those trials become highly useful, and dispose those who are subject to them to disclose with the utmost sincerity the entire state of their consciences, all their weaknesses, and even those imperfections of which formerly they made no account. Perhaps, in the case of your most esteemed and respected friend, it pleases God to suffer her to experience now, before her open union with his Church, those agitations of conscience which will induce her to perform, with the greatest care and attention, all previous duties necessary for her adoption into it."

Unfortunately, we are not in possession of the correspondence which passed between Mrs. Seton and the Rev. Mr. Cheverus at this period; but we know from other sources of information that the wise counsels of that distinguished clergyman, and the excellent advices of Bishop Carroll, contributed in an eminent degree, under God, to dispel the doubts and apprehensions of her soul and inspire her with a fixed determination to seek admission into the Catholic Church. Her final resolution on this important question, and the grounds on which it rested, are thus beautifully expressed in her own words:—

"Now they tell me, take care, I am a mother, and my children I must answer for in judgment, whatever faith I lead them to. That being so, and I so unconscious, for I little thought, till told by Mr. Hobart, that their faith could be so full of consequence to them or me, I will go peaceably and firmly to the Catholic Church; for, if faith is so important to our salvation, I will seek it where true faith first began—seek it among those who received it from God himself. The controversies on it I am quite incapable of deciding; and, as the strictest Protestant allows salvation to a good Catholic, to the Catholics I will go, and try to be a good

one. May God accept my intention and pity me! As to supposing the word of our Lord has failed, and that he has suffered his first foundation to be built on by antichrist, I cannot stop on that without stopping on every other word of our Lord, and being tempted to be no Christian at all; for, if the first Church became antichrist, and the second holds her rights from it, then I should be afraid both might be antichrist, and I make my way to the bottomless pit by following either. Come, then, my little ones, we will go to judgment together, and present our Lord his own words; and if he says, 'You fools, I did not mean that,' we will say, 'Since you said you would be *always*, even to the end of ages, with this Church you built with your blood, if you ever left it, it is your word which misled us; therefore please to pardon your poor fools, for your own word's sake.'

Under these convictions, Mrs. Seton applied without delay to be admitted into the "one fold under one shepherd." For this purpose, on the 14th of March, Ash-Wednesday, she went to St. Peter's Church, in a spirit of entire consecration of herself to God. "How the heart," she says, "died away as it were in silence before the little tabernacle and the great crucifixion over it! Ah, my God, here let me rest, and down the head on the bosom and the knees on the bench. If I could have thought of any thing but God, there was enough, I suppose, to have astonished a stranger by the hurrying over of the congregation; but as I came only to visit his Majesty, I knew not what it meant till afterward,—that it was a day they received ashes, the beginning of Lent; and the droll but most venerable Irish priest, who seems just come there, talked of death so familiarly that he delighted and revived me." After the service, Mrs. Seton made a formal abjuration of Protestantism, and profession of the Catholic faith at the hands of Rev Matthew O'Brien, and in presence of Mr. Anthony

Filicchi, her devoted friend.* With the simplicity and humble submission of a true child of the Church, she acknowledged her belief in all its teachings, relying with confidence upon its authority as the representative of Christ on earth; and her mind thus composed, she returned home, she says, "light at heart and cool of head, the first time these many long months, but not without begging our Lord to wrap my heart deep in that open side, so well described in the beautiful crucifixion, or lock it up in his little tabernacle where I shall now rest forever. Oh the endearments of this day with the children, and the play of the heart with God while keeping up their little farces with them!" Her whole attention was now devoted to the requisite preparation for the reception of the sacraments of penance and the holy Eucharist, which were to be the seal of her peace and union with God; and we cannot better convey than in her own expressive language an idea of the fervent dispositions of her soul in approaching these fountains of divine grace:—

"So delighted now to prepare for this good confession, which, bad as I am, I would be ready to make on the housetop, to insure the good *absolution* I hope for after it,—and then to set out a new life—a new existence itself—no great difficulty for me to be ready for it, for truly my life has been well called over in bitterness of soul these months of sorrow passed.

"It is done—easy enough. The kindest, most respectable confessor is this Mr. O'Brien,—with the compassion and yet firmness in this work of mercy which I would have ex-

* In memory of this joyful occasion, Mrs. Seton gave to Mr. Filicchi, who had been so instrumental in her conversion, a copy of the "Following of Christ," with this inscription:—"Antonio Filicchi, from his dear sister and friend, Eliza A. Seton, to commemorate the happy day he presented her to the Church of God, the 14th March, 1805."

pected from my Lord himself. Our Lord himself I saw alone in him, both in his and my part of this venerable sacrament; for oh! how awful those words of unloosing after a thirty years' bondage. I felt as if my chains fell, as those of St. Peter, at the touch of the divine messenger.

"My God! what new scenes for my soul! Annunciation-day I shall be made one with him who said, 'Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you can have no part with me.' I count the days and hours—yet a few more of hope and expectation, and then——. How bright the sun, these morning walks of preparation! Deep snow, or smooth ice, all to me the same—I see nothing but the little bright cross on St. Peter's steeple.

"*March 25.*—At last God is mine, and I am his. Now let all go its round. I have received him. The awful impressions of the evening before—fears of not having done all to prepare, and yet even the transports of confidence and hope in his goodness. My God! to the last breath of life will I not remember this night of watching for morning dawn—the fearful, beating heart, so pressing to be gone—the long walk to town, but every step counted nearer that street—then nearer that tabernacle—then nearer the moment he would enter the poor, poor little dwelling so all his own. And when he did, the first thought I remember was, 'Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered;' for it seemed to me my King had come to take his throne, and, instead of the humble, tender welcome I had expected to give him, it was but a triumph of joy and gladness that the deliverer was come, and my defence, and shield, and strength, and salvation, made mine for this world and the next. Now, then, all the excesses of my heart found their play, and it danced with more fervor—no, must not say that—but perhaps almost with as much of the Royal Prophet before his ark; for I was far richer than he, and more honored than he ever

could be. Now the point is for the fruits. So far, truly I feel all the powers of my soul held fast by him who came with so much majesty to take possession of his little poor kingdom."

Such were the fervent sentiments that accompanied Mrs. Seton to a participation of the bread of life. The memory of that day never passed from her mind; she commemorated it annually, sanctifying it by acts of gratitude to God, and approaching with renewed piety that sacrament of love in which she found a pledge of her eternal union with God.

BOOK IV.

Mrs Seton's appreciation of Catholicity — Correspondence with Rev. Mr. Cheverus—Other clergymen—Persecution from her family—Her temporal affairs—Mr. Filicchi's substantial friendship—Her sons placed at college—Daily duties—Piety and faith—Instructions of Rev. Mr. Tisserant—Mrs. Seton receives the sacrament of confirmation—Messrs. Filicchi and Tisserant embark for Europe—Relations between Mr. Filicchi and Mrs. Seton—Her deportment toward Protestants—Intercourse between her and Miss Cecilia Seton—Conversion of the latter—Her heroic faith—Increased opposition to Mrs. Seton—Her new friends—Example of her sister-in-law and herself—Instruction of her children—She meets Rev. William Dubourg—New plans—Confers with Bishop Carroll—Views of Messrs. Matignon and Cheverus—Remarkable prediction of the former—Notice of Mr. Dubourg—Difficulties of Mrs. Seton's position in New York—She consults Bishop Carroll—His advice—Another interview with Mr. Dubourg—She resolves to commence an institution in Baltimore—Plan of Mr. Dubourg.

AFTER the long and difficult struggle which she made to become a member of the true Church, Mrs. Seton could not but feel in an extraordinary degree the worth of that hidden treasure of faith which had been revealed to her. So

highly did she prize it, and so grateful a sense did she entertain of the precious gift, that she poured forth the most fervent thanksgiving to the Father of lights, for the mercies he had vouchsafed to her, and hastened, like the woman in the gospel who had found the groat that was lost, to express her joy and happiness, by communicating the glad tidings to all her friends. The Rev. Mr. Cheverus received the following letter from her soon after her conversion:—

“REV. AND DEAR SIR:—

“My joyful heart offers you the tribute of its lively gratitude for your kind and charitable interest in its sorrows when it was oppressed with doubts and fears, and hastens, after the completion of its happiness, to inform you that, through the boundless mercy of God, and aided by your satisfactory counsels, my soul has offered all its hesitations and reluctancies a sacrifice, with the blessed sacrifice on the altar, on the 14th of March, and the next day was admitted to the true Church of Jesus Christ, with a mind grateful and satisfied, as that of a poor shipwrecked mariner on being restored to his true home.* I should immediately have made a communication so pleasing to you, but have been necessarily very much engaged in collecting all the powers of my soul for receiving the pledge of eternal happiness with which it has been blessed on the happy day of the Annunciation, when it seemed indeed to be admitted to a new life and that peace which passes all understanding. With David, I now say, ‘Thou hast saved my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling,’ and certainly desire most earnestly to ‘walk before him in the land of the living,’ esteeming my privilege so great, and what he has done for me so beyond my most lively hopes, that I

* By admission to the true Church, Mrs. Seton probably means that she was baptized conditionally and approached the sacrament of penance.

can scarcely realize my own blessedness. You, dear sir, could never experience, but may picture to yourself a poor burdened creature, weighed down with sins and sorrows, receiving an immediate transition to life, liberty, and rest. Oh, pray for me, that I may be faithful and persevere to the end; and I would beg of you advice and counsel how to preserve my inestimable blessings. True, there are many good books, but directions personally addressed from a revered source must forcibly impress. For instance, many years I have preferred those chapters which you appoint in St. John; but, from your direction, make it a rule to read them constantly. The book you mentioned, 'The Following of Christ,' has been my consolation through the severest struggles of my life, and indeed one of my first convictions of the truth arose from reflecting on the account a Protestant writer gives of Kempis, as having been remarkable for his study and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and fervent zeal in the service of God. I remember falling on my knees, and with many tears inquired of God if he who knew his Scriptures so well, and so ardently loved him, could have been mistaken in the true faith. Also, in reading the life of St. Francis de Sales, I felt a perfect willingness to follow him, and could not but pray that my soul might have its portion with his on the great day. The sermons of Bourdaloue have also greatly helped to convince and enlighten me. For many months past, one of them is always included in my daily devotions."

The spiritual aid here solicited from the Rev. Mr. Cheverus was most cordially extended. The epistolary correspondence which had commenced between him and Mrs. Seton was continued to the close of her life, to the great satisfaction and edification of both. He entertained for her the highest respect and esteem, and expressed to her the hope that their correspondence would be kept up, as he con-

sidered it a happiness to be favored with her letters. Shortly after her admission into the Church, he sent her a prayer-book, "as a small token of his friendship and respect," adding:—"Whenever you think I can be of any use to you, I beg, dear madam, you will apply without any fear of doing it too often; I shall always answer your esteemed letters with punctuality, and in the best manner I am able." Mrs. Seton had the advantage of intercourse with several other distinguished clergymen of that day. Besides the venerable Bishop Carroll, whose valued services in her behalf we have already noticed, she became acquainted with the Rev. Dr. Matignon, pastor of the Catholic Church at Boston, who, like Mr. Cheverus, had been driven from France by the terrors of the revolution, and, like him, had won the respect of the whole population of Boston.⁽⁶⁾ A gentleman writing to Mrs. Seton from this place remarked to her, in allusion to these worthy ecclesiastics:—"Their appearance, their deportment, their learning, are acknowledged almost with enthusiasm by most of the Protestants themselves." The Rev. Michael Hurley, an Augustinian friar, then lately arrived from Europe, and afterward pastor of St. Augustine's in Philadelphia, was also a particular friend of Mrs. Seton, and, as we shall see hereafter, took an active part in her spiritual concerns. But Mr. Cheverus recommended to her particular regard, as a director on special occasions, the Rev. Mr. Tisserant, a French ecclesiastic, who was on a visit to America, and resided principally at Elizabethtown, New Jersey; "a most amiable and respectable man," as Mr. Cheverus styled him, and equally conspicuous for his learning and piety. It was a particular blessing of God upon Mrs. Seton that she was surrounded at this time by so many shining members of the priesthood; for the difficulties of her position, in consequence of the change in her religious sentiments and practice, called for the exercise of great fortitude,

which found a powerful support in the sympathy and counsels of her enlightened friends.

The most painful circumstance that she had to contend with was the opposition and indifference of many with whom she had ever been united by the most intimate ties. Not reflecting that her earnest inquiry after the true faith, and the disposition to make every sacrifice for the peace and salvation of her soul, should have entitled her to increased respect and admiration, these false friends suffered themselves to be misled by a bigoted and unchristian spirit. She had followed the dictates of her conscience and become a Catholic; this was enough to excite against her the most unkind feelings, even among those who professed to believe that every one should judge for himself on the subject of religion. Such has always been the extraordinary inconsistency of sectarianism; but at the period of Mrs. Seton's conversion the spirit of hostility to the Catholic Church was more deeply rooted in the public mind than at the present day. The time had just passed away when the true faith was proscribed in New York, and, although the severe penalties which had been enforced against the exercise of the Catholic religion were now abolished, the Protestant exclusiveness of the ante-revolutionary period was far from having disappeared, and the Catholic portion of the community being comparatively small, and possessing no social or political influence, it was considered by the aristocracy of the city a sort of degradation to leave the ranks of Protestantism for the communion of the true Church. To a woman of Mrs. Seton's delicate sensibility, the aversion and estrangement of many who had been warmly attached to her must have been in the highest degree painful. Some, indeed, of her former friends remained unaltered in their attachment, but few had the courage to appear so openly.

This state of things could not but operate materially against

her temporal prospects. The decline of her husband's affairs, caused by untoward circumstances which have been referred to, had left her without a sufficient maintenance for her family. If she had remained a Protestant, however, she would have received every assistance, and would have inherited a large fortune; as it was, she was obliged to depend upon her own exertions, except so far as she was aided by the munificent friendship of Mr. Filicchi and a few others who were interested in her welfare. Had circumstances required it, or even had Mrs. Seton acquiesced in the plan, he would have provided a comfortable home for herself and her family in Italy; and he assured her repeatedly that even in this country his means would be liberally advanced for the promotion of her happiness, if they who should be her first resource in the order of nature neglected to supply her wants. His agents in New York were constantly directed to honor any demands that she would make upon them, while she herself was urged by him on various occasions, and in the most pressing manner, to accept his friendly offers. He hoped, by carrying her through the troubles of this world, to attain to the happiness of the world to come. "To relieve her wants," he said, "was the pride of his soul, and his best passport for his last journey." But Mrs. Seton's energy of character and spirit of humility did not permit her to rely entirely upon the generosity of others. She wished to exert herself, in accordance with the circumstances of her situation, for the support of her family; and with this view she adopted a plan suggested by one of her friends, to open a boarding-house for a limited number of boys who attended an academy in the northern suburbs of the city. By her attentions to the youths thus confided to her care she was enabled in part to secure a comfortable maintenance.

In addition to his other acts of generosity, Mr. Filicchi

showed a deep and efficient interest for the education of her children. During a visit to Canada, in the summer of 1805 he made the necessary inquiries relative to the collegiate establishment at Montreal, intending to place her two boys in that institution, one of whom was now seven and the other nine years of age. The buildings, however, having been damaged by fire, were not prepared for the reception of students from abroad. This circumstance directed his attention to the colleges at Baltimore and Georgetown, in the United States; and after mature reflection they were entered at the latter establishment in May, 1806.⁽⁷⁾

However repugnant to natural pride may have been the present condition of Mrs. Seton, compared with the affluence and independence of former years, she found in it an occasion of joy and thankfulness, because she had the consolation to know that her sacrifices and troubles had proceeded from her resolution to do the will of God. In her religion she possessed a treasure which amply compensated her for the loss of earthly things. Every day increased her gratitude to God for having made her what she was, and her generous fortitude was a proof of the high value which she set upon the inestimable blessing. With these sentiments she went through her daily round of duty, commencing it with prayer and attendance at the holy sacrifice of mass, and frequently approaching the holy communion, the great source of her spiritual energy and comfort. She would then occupy herself with her domestic concerns, and, after the little fatigues and labors of the day, assemble her children and entertain them at the piano, while they united their innocent voices with hers in some pious anthem. Such was the course which she pursued, with an humble submission to the will of God in the midst of her trials, and free from all pride that would have murmured against the dispensations of Heaven. The following incident will show the Christian temperament of

her soul, in regard to her temporal situation. An elderly gentleman, a relative, knowing that for the support of her family she was dependent on her exertions, would frequently take a basket, go himself to the market, purchase the joint of meat which he knew she liked, (for he had in more prosperous days been a guest at her table,) add to it some other little article, and carry it himself to her humble dwelling, fearful of intrusting so delicate a commission to a servant. In speaking of this circumstance to a friend, in after years, she manifested a lively sense of the kindness that had been shown to her.

With this patient submission to the orderings of the divine will, Mrs. Seton united an extraordinary fervor in the performance of her religious duties, and a lively spirit of faith in all her actions. She looked upon the privilege of receiving the holy communion as the greatest happiness on earth, and as a remedy for every evil. The following words in a letter to one of her relations, whom she urges to sigh after the possession of the true faith, show the sentiments that animated her in receiving the bread of life:—"Beg him, supplicate him, on Sunday, that he will permit you to receive with true faith the sweet substance instead of the shadow. Oh heavenly bliss! delight past all expression! how consoling, how sweet, the presence of Jesus to the long-ing, harassed soul! It is instant peace, and balm to every wound." So intensely did she feel the happiness of possessing our Lord really present on the altar, that she wondered much more at the insensibility of the Christian who stands at a distance from this heavenly treasure or is not wholly spiritualized by its divine communications, than at the mystery itself which the eucharistic institution presents to our belief. "There is a mystery," she says, "the greatest of all mysteries, not that my adored Lord is in the blessed sacrament of the altar,—his word has said it; and what so

simple as to take that word which is truth itself?—but that souls of his own creation, whom he gave his life to save, who are endowed with his choicest gifts in all things else, should remain blind, insensible, and deprived of that light without which every other blessing is unavailing, and that the ungrateful, stupid, faithless being to whom he has given the free, the bounteous, heavenly gift shall approach his true and holy sanctuary, taste the sweetness of his presence, feed on the bread of angels, the Lord of Glory united to the very essence of its being and become a part of itself, yet still remain grovelling in the earth,—is, my poor, poor soul, is what we too well experience, while lost in wonder of his forbearing mercy, and still more wondering at our own misery in the very centre of blessedness. Jesus then is there: we can go, receive him; he is our own. Were we to pause and think of this through eternity, yet we can only realize it by his conviction. That he is there—oh heavenly theme!—is as entirely true as that bread naturally taken removes my hunger, so this bread of angels removes my pain, my cares; warms, cheers, soothes, contents, and renews my whole being. Merciful God, and I do possess you! kindest, tenderest, dearest friend, every affection of my nature absorbed in you, still is active, nay, perfected in its operations through your refining love. Hush, my soul, we cannot speak it. Tongues of angels could not express our treasure of peace and contentment in him. Let us always whisper his name of love as an antidote to all the discord that surrounds us. We cannot say the rest; the harmony of heaven begins to us, while, silent from all the world, we again and again repeat, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. And how many say the adored name, looking beyond him, while looking for him—deny him on his altar! Who, then, is the author of the religion I adore? Is man, then, wiser in his inventions than eternal Wisdom? Did he contrive a method to relieve the wretched, to support the feeble,

to recall the sinner and secure the inconstant? Which of us, having once tasted how sweet the Lord is on his holy altar and in his true sanctuary, who finding at that altar his nourishment of soul and strength to labor, his propitiation, thanksgiving, hope, and refuge, can think but with sorrow and anguish of heart of the naked, unsubstantial, comfortless worship they partake of who know not the treasure of our faith? Theirs founded on words of which they take the shadow, while we enjoy the adored substance in the centre of our souls! Theirs void, cheerless, in comparison of the bliss of our daily offering, where Jesus pleads for us! Oh my soul, when our corrupted nature overpowers, when we are sick of ourselves, weakened on all sides, discouraged with repeated relapses, wearied with sin and sorrow, we gently, sweetly lay the whole account at his feet; reconciled and encouraged by his appointed representative, yet trembling, and conscious of our imperfect dispositions, we draw near the sacred fountain. Scarcely the expanded heart receives its longing desire, when, wrapt in his love, covered with his righteousness, we are no longer the same—adoration, thanksgiving, love, joy, peace, contentment. Unutterable mercy! take this from me; though now the happiest of poor and banished sinners, the most wretched, desolate. What would be my refuge? Jesus is everywhere, in the very air I breathe; yes, everywhere, but in his sacrament of the altar as present actually and really as my soul within my body; in his sacrifice daily offered as really as once offered on the cross. Merciful Saviour! can there be any comparison to this blessedness? Adored Lord, increase my faith, perfect it, crown it, thy own, thy choicest, dearest gift. Having drawn me from the pit, and borne me to thy fold, keep me in thy sweet pastures and lead me to eternal life.”

The following language expresses the comfort which she experienced in approaching the tribunal of penance, which

had the effect of invigorating her soul against the assaults of her spiritual enemies:—

“At the tribunal of reconciliation I received strength. Father Sibourd assured the feeble soul, and warned it of the treacherous fiend who would tempt the little child from the arms of its mother. Dear, dear adored Redeemer, as the suffering, disobedient, and ungrateful child, but wretched and lost without your reviving and pitying tenderness and pardon, I have lain and still remain at your sacred feet. The abundance of tears there shed will, mixed with your precious blood, feed and nourish the soul that faints and pants for deliverance from its chains, and hopes in your mercy alone.”

In order to impress more vividly and enduringly upon her mind the good thoughts and resolutions which the grace of God had inspired, Mrs. Seton was in the habit of committing them to paper,—a practice which is often witnessed among pious persons, and found to be a great help in the service of God. Her religious inclinations had led her to this custom from early life, and, now that she enjoyed blessings so far surpassing those of former days, she did not abandon one of the most effectual means of treasuring them up in her memory and affections. From the scraps which she has left us, and of which we have already furnished a few specimens, it is plain that the sanctification of her soul was with her the “one thing necessary,” the object of her deep and constant solicitude. To promote this she entered profoundly into the scrutiny of her sentiments and actions, prayed often, and meditated upon the truths of faith. She thus brings before her view the weakness and falterings of human nature in the hour of difficulty, and the necessity of being always sustained by divine grace.

“*Sept. 29, Feast of St. Michael, Archangel.*—The sigh of the wretched hails you, glorious friend! My soul claims

your patronage by its fervent affection and confidence in your protection against its enemy. How he triumphs in that poor soul! Poor, poor soul! in the hour of peace and serenity how confidently you asserted your fidelity, how sincerely embraced pain and suffering in anticipation, and now that only one finger of his hand, whose whole weight you deserved, is laid on you, recollection is lost, nature struggles, you sink, sorrow overpowers, and pain takes you captive. Oh, my soul, who shall deliver? My Jesus, arise, and let thy enemies be scattered. Shelter my sinking spirit under his banner who continually exclaims, 'Who is like God?'"

On the feast of St. Theresa, October 15, considering her imperfection by the light shed from the example of that great saint, she pours forth her soul to God with equal earnestness and humility, and animates herself to further and more strenuous efforts in his service. "Holy Mother! you called yourself a sinner, the worst of sinners. What then am I? The sins of your whole life would be balanced by the sum of any one of my days. My Almighty God! what then am I? And if in the short and feeble sight of mortality so deeply dyed, what then in the searching light of thy truth and justice? My Saviour, my Jesus, hide me, shelter me. Shelter the shuddering, trembling soul that lays itself in thy hand. Yes, again I begin—nothing is done. Oh, give me that clean heart—give me thy Spirit. Oh God, how short may be my time! Help me, draw me on. How much of my day is past I know not. Save me; let not the night overtake. Blessed saints of God, pray for the wandering, weary soul who has stayed so far behind. You have reached the summit, pray for me."

Nothing can exceed the vivid portraiture which Mrs. Seton draws of her own heart, and of the strong emotions

rising within her in the moment of devout recollection and prayer. Her morning visit to the church in opposition to the sluggishness of nature, the consolations she enjoyed in the presence of God, the unreserved offering of herself to him on the altar of charity, her only desire to love him, and this at the risk of every thing on earth,—all is depicted to us with a power of language and a force of description that shows how deeply she was affected by these sentiments of faith.

“*Feast of St. Thomas of Villanova, September 18.*—Remember this day—the head cleaving to the pillow, the slothful heart asleep—how unwilling you were roused to go to your Lord, who has so often overflowed the cup of blessing at the very moment of insensibility and ingratitude. So this day, when he was approached more as a slave goes to regular duty than the perishing wretch to its deliverer, how sweet, how merciful was the reception he gave! how bountiful, how abundant thy portion! What a reproof to the soul that loves thee, adored Master! and how mercifully, too, it was awakened to receive it! What was its reply? It can only be understood by the unutterable love and intelligence of a spirit to its Creator, Redeemer, God. But it must remember the ardor with which the offering was renewed of *all, all*, for the attainment of thy dear love. Imagining the corrupted heart in thy hand, it begged thee with all its strength to cut, pare, and remove from it (whatever anguish it must undergo) whatever prevented the entrance of thy love. Again it repeats the supplication, and begs it as thy greatest mercy, cut to the centre, tear up every root, let it bleed, let it suffer any thing, every thing, only fit it for thyself, place only thy love there, and let humility keep sentinel, and what shall I fear? What is pain, sorrow, poverty, reproach? Blessed Lord they all were once thy inmates, thy chosen com-

panions, and can I reject them as enemies, and fly from the friends you send to bring me to your kingdom? Lord, I am dust; in sweetest, pitying mercy scourge me, compel my coward, feeble spirit; fill it with that fire which consumed the blessed saint this day commemorated, when he cried out declaring that all torments and fatigues should joyfully be borne to obtain it. Unite my unworthy soul to his earnest entreaty:—‘O, omnipotent Jesus! give me what thyself commandest; for though to love thee be of all things most sweet, yet it is above the reach and strength of nature. But I am inexcusable if I do not love thee, for thou grantest thy love to all who desire or ask it. I cannot see without light, yet if I shut my eyes to the noonday light the fault is not in the sun, but in me.’”

This love of God which she so ardently invoked into her soul was the principle of all her actions; for it led her to unite them continually with those of Jesus Christ, and even to preserve as much as possible the thought of God in the midst of her temporal affairs. On one occasion in particular, when she was very much harassed by the frequent calls upon her attention, her spirit seemed to be unfettered by outward cares, and flew almost every moment to the engrossing object of her affections. Speaking of this circumstance, she observed, “Who can bind the soul which God sets free? It sprang to him fifty times an hour. Scarcely a moment without being turned to him, while the voice and eyes were answering down below, sweet! sweet!” Spiritual writers teach us that there are two principal methods of walking in the presence of God: either by occasional direction of one’s thoughts and aspirations to the Almighty, or by entering into the spirit of our great Model, and striving to copy in our various actions the example which he has displayed. Mrs. Seton practised this excellent means of sanctification in both ways, and,

while she thus proved the ardor and sincerity of her love for God, she enjoyed that blessed peace which it always imparts to the soul. Even in the midst of scenes that were calculated to depress the mind and fill the heart with sorrow, she found a source of interior joy in endeavoring to imitate the spirit of self-denial which our divine Saviour exhibited in his sufferings. Alluding to the sickness which afflicted some of her family, she says:—"Our little hospital is cheerful this morning after a sad night. Gladly accompanied our Adored in spirit through the streets of Jerusalem all night. When the heart is all his, how easy is pain and sorrow, or, rather, pain and sorrow become purest joy. The hand trembles, as you may see, but the soul is all peace."

That peace which is the portion of the chosen servants of God is seldom unmixed with interior struggles. The joy of the Holy Ghost supposes trials which are dispensed to all; and it is the reward of those who learn from the sublime teachings of the gospel and the exercise of prayer how to possess their souls in patience. For this reason Mrs. Seton was led, by those who had the direction of her conscience, to seek in prayer and in the counsels of her spiritual advisers the strength and light which she needed for preserving the tranquillity of her soul. "I hope," Mr. Cheverus wrote to her, "you continue to enjoy that happy peace which surpasseth all understanding. Should it, however, be disturbed by doubts, anxieties, &c., do not get discouraged. In the midst of the storm, and when Jesus seems to be asleep, call upon him with earnestness; he will arise, and every thing will be calm within you." During the first year after her conversion she corresponded frequently with the Rev. Mr. Tisserant, already mentioned, who, residing not far from New York, was more easily accessible as her counsellor in the time of difficulty. The

instructions which he gave her were a source of great comfort in her trying situation, and may be read with advantage by every pious Christian. Having removed to her sister's residence on Staten Island during the fall of 1805, when the yellow fever was prevailing in New York, she was much perplexed in mind, and, among other things, in not being able to perform the religious duties to which she had been accustomed. While she was suffering these interior troubles, Mr. Tisserant conveyed to her the following excellent advice:—

“ You are, no doubt, well convinced, madam, that I feel a most lively interest in all the cruel troubles, afflictions, and agitations which you have experienced, and the confidence which you have in me renders it unnecessary to give you any further assurances of what I say. Would that I had the power to put an end to all those difficulties! I should be happy even in being able to alleviate your sufferings; and, as you are of opinion that my advice will have this effect, I have not the slightest hesitation in giving it; and in doing so I allow the well-founded diffidence which I have in myself to be overcome by a desire to conform to your wishes. I think that in retiring to your sister's house you have acted for the best, and in remaining there you will do the will of God for the present. We should judge of his will in regard to our situation in this world from the nature of circumstances, when these present nothing incompatible with our duties, and particularly when to act otherwise would place us in an extraordinary position. But circumstances seem to have combined in directing you to your present situation in the house of a cherished sister. The ties of consanguinity and friendship, with the dictates of charity, superadded to the other considerations which led you thither, give them a decisive weight, and by pursuing a different course you would have placed yourself in a state which could have

been justified only by the supposition that the demands of religious duty required it. This, however, is not the case. You can perform your religious duties in your present situation. If you draw the distinction between the requirements of duty and those practices which are suggested only by the spirit of devotion, a great desire of perfection or of sensible consolations, you will perceive that you can, strictly speaking, discharge your obligations where you are. Confession and communion are of precept only once a year. You can absent yourself from mass, when there is a grave reason for so doing and if to assist at it would be attended with a serious inconvenience, as may be your case. You need have no scruple of conscience in your case, in requesting your pastor to dispense you from the precept of abstinence on Fridays and Saturdays, and I have no doubt that it will be granted, &c. As to what is not obligatory, there are circumstances in which we are not only permitted, but even bound, to lay it aside, for reasons less urgent than those which you may have. I am far from signifying to you that you ought to relinquish all practices of piety that are not strictly obligatory. Such a suggestion as this would be a pang to your heart; it would only add to the severe trials which it already suffers. The love which you have for your divine Saviour will lead you frequently to seize a propitious moment for enjoying the consolations imparted by your pious observances. But, in tracing the line of distinction between duty and that which is not so, I wish simply to prevent you from being disturbed by scruples, and to regulate that ardent zeal for all that relates to the glory of God and the salvation of souls which I have witnessed with so much pleasure in your words and actions, and which, if not restrained, might become too partial to your inclinations, would cause you to neglect more than is advisable your personal comfort, and, what is more, would exhibit our holy religion, among persons who do not profess

it, more inflexible than it really is on those points which are matters of supererogation, or, at most, requirements of the ecclesiastical law, from which a dispensation can be obtained for grave and sufficient reasons. In short, madam, I think that in your situation, after complying with your stricter duties, you may obtain a dispensation from those precepts of the Church which would place you under a serious restraint, and that you ought to omit those practices of piety which subject you to the inconveniences you have mentioned. I know how reluctantly this course will be pursued by a soul whose delight is to remain at the foot of the altar and there meditate on the tender love of her divine Spouse. I also consider this modification of your rule which you are compelled to adopt as a new trial which the Almighty sends you, and one different from those to which you have been accustomed. You are called upon to sacrifice to him even the sweet comforts of religion, and no doubt you will pass through this trial with the same success which has attended you in others. The dispositions of your soul, which you have described to me in so affecting a manner, leave no doubt in my mind on that score. With such dispositions you will draw upon yourself the grace of God, and this will enable you to accomplish all things. The meditation of the Holy Scripture will suggest to you many motives of encouragement, and afford you much consolation. I have met with several passages in saying my office. Tobias in his affliction said to God, 'I am in trouble, O Lord, but I know that after a storm thou bringest a calm, after tears and sorrow a transport of joy: but, O God of Israel, may thy holy name be blessed at all times and under all circumstances!' And Job exclaims:—'The Lord hath tried me as gold in the fire: my feet have followed in his paths: I have walked faithfully in the way which he made known to me: I have not deviated from it.' Calm your inquietude, also, in refer-

ence to your dear and amiable children. You are much concerned about your two boys; but I am persuaded that your gentle and affectionate treatment will give you the victory over their hearts, and will enable you to avert hereafter the difficulties which your actual situation leads you to apprehend."

At the opening of the holy season of Lent, in the year 1806, Mrs. Seton was prevented by some grave reason from assisting at the solemn ceremonial of the Church; but, although debarred this satisfaction, she endeavored to compensate for its loss by the fervor of her private devotions, and applied herself with earnestness to the duties and practices which are prescribed at this penitential time. On this occasion Mr. Tisserant wrote to her, moderating her zeal, and directing her in the safe-keeping of that happy peace which Almighty God imparted to her soul:—

"*March 9, 1806.*—You tell me that you were prevented from going to church on Ash-Wednesday. The ceremonies of that day are well calculated to produce solemn impressions. If I did not know how deeply convinced you are of the nothingness of this world and of the necessity of penance, I would regret the more that you had been prevented from assisting at the distribution of the ashes, &c. I am edified, however, by the manner in which you passed that day in the midst of your little parish. Your Lent has commenced with a sacrifice and with the mortification of the will, and with good resolutions, which I hope God will bless; strengthen them by the practice of what the Church enjoins at this holy time. But do not exaggerate things. Remember what you have to do as a mother and in the employment which you have undertaken. All this is trying, and does not permit you to do what perhaps I would advise if you were in a cloister. If you should have a real doubt on any subject, consult your director. . . . You did well to reject the thoughts that tended

to disturb the peace of mind which you enjoyed at the beginning of Lent. The recollection of our past faults ought not to beget inquietude. A mental calm that springs from a principle of pride or presumption, or leads to the neglect of duty, is indeed to be feared; but yours, accompanied as it is with a sense of your former sins, and with a constant disposition to do all you can in future for the love of our divine Master, and particularly to perform the works of penance prescribed at this holy time, is, in my opinion, the result of that filial confidence which the infinite goodness and power of our Heavenly Father ought to inspire, and is one of the most precious gifts that he bestows. It is a duty on our part to cherish it while it is granted. Endeavor, therefore, by being faithful to your resolutions, to discard whatever might deprive you of it. If it please God to withdraw it from time to time, strive to render yourself worthy of it again, by bearing the trial with courage and redoubling your fervor. It will give me pleasure to learn that you are accustoming yourself to banish those vague anxieties which sometimes haunt your mind. . . . The habit of dismissing them will give you more control over your imagination, and will contribute to your perfection as well as to your happiness."

During the course of the Lent, Mrs. Seton suffered much from sickness; and, notwithstanding her entire resignation to the will of God, her indisposition produced a depression of mind that tended to disturb the peace of her soul. Mr. Tisserant, while he encouraged her in recalling with Christian sentiments the thought of death, cautioned her against reflections that would lead her to apprehend the consequences of her malady:—

"*March 16, 1806.*—Your last letter greatly afflicts me, as I learn from it that you have been seriously indisposed, and that your sickness has left on your mind a deep impression relative to its immediate or ultimate consequences

A Christian should oftentimes, even in the enjoyment of health, contemplate his last end, and that dissolution which will terminate the present life. He should fancy to himself that this event may take place at any moment, and at the foot of the crucifix offer to God the sacrifice of the dearest considerations that bind him to this world, and by these preparatory means render more easy that final sacrifice which is inevitable. Bodily suffering is an admonition to the Christian to indulge in these sentiments, and the pious soul is careful not to neglect so salutary a practice. I have been much edified by the manner in which you have performed this duty, and I thank God for having given you that peaceful resignation which looks more to the decrees of his holy will than to the momentary suggestions of nature, and for having blessed you with so perfect a reliance upon his providential care in relation to your spiritual interests and whatever is most dear to you. May you always remain in these happy dispositions!"

Her sickness still continuing toward the end of Lent, Mr. Tisserant warned her against the indiscreet austerity into which she might have been led, directing her to postpone to some other period what was then beyond her physical strength, and suggesting the following sentiments for the exercise of her piety on the Friday of Holy Week:—
"Cast yourself in the arms of an expiring Saviour; give yourself to him, and dwell upon the confidence and consolation which this great mystery should inspire. You have told me that the heart of Jesus was your refuge: let it be so always; retired within that asylum, what have you to fear, and what can appear to you burdensome or painful?"

For a clergyman whose enlightened counsel was a source of so much consolation to her, Mrs. Seton could not but entertain the most profound regard; and hence, upon the approach of the solemn occasion when she was to receive the

sacrament of confirmation at the hands of Bishop Carroll, she invited Mr. Tisserant to act as her sponsor, and to present her to the Church of God as a candidate for the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Her letter, however, did not reach him in time, and he wrote to her, lamenting the disappointment, and congratulating her upon the signal blessings she had received :—"I submit to the disappointment, and the more readily, as the choice which you have made of me, to witness your happiness and to be the surety of your holy resolutions, is so flattering and agreeable to me, that I must consider myself unworthy of the satisfaction it would have imparted. If I was deprived of so great a pleasure, you at least have received those precious graces which will confirm your faith, animate your courage for the martyrdom to which you have exposed yourself, and render fruitful the apostleship which is the result of your conversion and example. With these graces you have also received the Spirit of consolation, who, I trust, will make you more and more sensible of his divine and tender influences. Oh that I had been present at the moment when you received the character of soldier of Jesus Christ, and the strength to combat still more generously under his sacred banner!"

Shortly after this happy event, which took place in St. Peter's Church, New York, on the 26th of May, Mr. Tisserant embarked for Europe, much to the loss of Mrs. Seton, who valued his advice and friendly interest the more as religion was now her only comfort and support. Great also was her loss and affliction in being compelled to bid adieu to Mr. Filicchi, whose incomparable services to her could be imagined and felt, but not expressed in word. That he had been a true, constant, and devoted friend of her and her children was enough to have made him the object of their grateful and affectionate regard; but he was more than this. He had performed toward her the part of a brother.

When in a strange land she was overtaken by the bitterest affliction, he became her protector. He offered her a home in her widowhood, and even left the endearments of his own family to accompany her to her native shores. He it was who first directed her to the true path of eternal life: he also stood by her in every difficulty; in all her doubts and anxieties he enlightened, encouraged, and consoled her, and he did not desist a moment from his charitable zeal until he beheld her safely arrived in the haven of Catholic truth. And, when they whom the sacred ties of consanguinity should have led to share their abundance with her and her little ones were unmoved by the wants of her situation, he nobly exerted himself for their assistance, and still more nobly offered to supply all her necessities from the ample means of himself and his brother. Such friendship was not lost upon a lady of Mrs. Seton's elevated sentiments, nor upon a Christian of her accomplished virtue. She fully appreciated all that had been done in her behalf, as well as the prospect of still further kindness, and she knew that only a brother's heart could have prompted such a course. She therefore called him brother, and entertained for him the feelings of a sister; but the sincerity and warmth of her gratitude can be understood only from the eloquent and inimitable language which she herself has employed in depicting it. In a letter addressed to him on the 14th of March ensuing, the anniversary of her abjuration of Protestantism, she says:—"My dear Antonio, this day cannot be passed over without offering some part of it to my dear brother, who has largely shared the happiness it commemorates. Do you remember when you carried the poor little wandering sheep to the fold, and led it to the feet of its tender shepherd? Whose warning voice first said, 'My sister, you are in the broad way, and not in the right one'? Antonio's. Who begged me to seek the right

one? Antonio. Who led me kindly, gently in it? Antonio. And, when deceived and turning back, whose tender, persevering charity withheld my erring steps and strengthened my fainting heart? Antonio's. And who is my unfailing friend, protector, benefactor? Antonio! Antonio! Commissioned from on high, the messenger of peace, the instrument of mercy. My God, my God, my God, reward him! The widow's pleading voice, the orphan's innocent hands, are lifted to you to bless him. They rejoice in his love; oh, grant him the eternal joy of yours!" Such was the valued friend from whom she was about to be separated. On his part, also, a painful sacrifice was to be made. In her and her children he beheld an adopted family, the object of his deep and constant solicitude; in them he witnessed a trophy of his zeal and piety, a perpetual source of pleasure and edification in a strange land; the interest which he took in their welfare he considered the secret of the many favors he had received from Heaven. "Your letters," he wrote to her, "are to me models of language and style, a pattern of friendly expressions, a living example and incitement to virtue and godliness, a true blessing in my present wandering, wearisome life." In parting, it was the consolation of those mutually-cherished friends to reflect that religion and virtue had united them,—that one had visited "the widow and the fatherless in their tribulation," while the other had found the priceless treasure of faith, which would more than supply the loss of all earthly comforts and possessions.

Mrs. Seton, in the midst of an anti-Catholic society, was naturally called upon to advocate the cause of truth; but though she prudently availed herself of the opportunity to defend it, she did not urge it unnecessarily upon the attention of others. She thus writes to one of her Protestant friends, who had alluded to her conversion:—"I assure

you, my becoming a Catholic was a very simple consequence of going to a Catholic country, where it was impossible for any one, interested in any religion, not to see the wide difference between the first established faith, given and founded by our Lord and his apostles, and the various forms it has since taken; and, as I had always delighted in reading the Scriptures, I had so deep an impression of the mysteries of divine revelation, that, though full of the sweet thought that every good and well-meaning soul was right, I was determined, when I came home, both in duty to my children and my own soul, to learn all I was capable of understanding on the subject. If ever a soul did make a fair inquiry, our God knows that mine did, and every day of life increases more and more my gratitude to him for having made me what I am. Certainly, though, it was the knowledge of the Protestant doctrine with regard to faith⁽⁸⁾ that made me a Catholic; for, as soon as on inquiry I found that Episcopalians did not think everybody right, I was convinced my safe plan was to unite with the Church in which, at all events, they admitted that I would find salvation, and where also I would be secure of the apostolic succession, as well as of the many consolations which no other religion but the Catholic can afford. The whole is, that with the convictions of my conscience, my salvation depended on embracing the Catholic faith. I never obtrude my thoughts on the subject, but leave all to their own light and grace, while I enjoy mine. A true joy to me, indeed, the daily morning sacrifice, and our frequent and daily communion, when prepared! What a contrast to the morning sleep in former days! It has been my wealth in poverty and joy in deepest affliction." Notwithstanding this prudential course on the part of Mrs. Seton, she was liable to the usual annoyances of those who are disposed to assail the truth without being willing to respect its claims. Under these

circumstances, she was advised by Mr. Cheverus to defend her religion with prudence and moderation, but not to enter into discussion with such as were governed more by the spirit of contention than by the love of truth; as disputes of this kind generally lead to a violation of charity, instead of promoting any useful end. "I am aware," says he, "of the difficulties and troubles you must have to encounter in the midst of your acquaintances. When those who raise objections expect an answer, give them some short and clear reason of that hope which is in you. If they grow too warm, recommend only to them to read and examine at leisure, if they think it worth their while. Silence is the best answer to the scoffers. But, whether you speak or be silent, let your heart cry to the Lord in the hour of temptation. When you have done what you thought most proper at the time, you have committed no sin, even if afterward you should think that you ought to have acted in a different manner.

"Be not anxious, my dear madam, but rather rejoice in hope. Jesus has received you in the number of his true disciples, since, like them, you rejoice in your sufferings and afflictions. Like the blessed apostle whose festival we celebrate to-day, you welcome the cross as the greatest blessing and think yourself happy in being fastened to it. May God Almighty maintain you in these sentiments! May the love of Jesus keep your heart during this holy time, and prepare it to become a sanctuary worthy of him!"—*November 30, 1805, St. Andrew, Ap.*

These instructions of Mr. Cheverus were communicated about the beginning of Advent, 1805. At this time, while some of Mrs. Seton's relatives were very much opposed to her on the ground of religion, there was one who was united to her by the most intimate and holy friendship. We have already mentioned the name of Miss Cecilia Seton, her sis-

ter-in-law, as a person in whose virtuous training she took a most lively interest. She was very young, possessed of great personal attractions, and equally remarkable for the sweetness of her manners and the piety of her disposition. We may form some idea of the affectionate and virtuous intimacy that existed between her and Mrs. Seton from the following note, which she received from the latter in October of the same year.

“The sweetest and even the most innocent pleasures quickly pass in this life, and the dear moments of peace and love enjoyed with my Cecilia this morning appear only as a dream. But, as a dream pleasing and soothing to the mind often gives it a foretaste of something it earnestly covets, so my heart turns to the dear hope that it may one day enjoy your society even in this world; or, if otherwise ordained by our dear and Heavenly Father, the more certain hope of an eternal union before his throne cannot fail us but by our own negligence and perversion, against which we must pray literally without ceasing,—without ceasing, in every occurrence and employment of our lives. You know, I mean that prayer of the heart which is independent of place or situation, or which is rather a habit of lifting up the heart to God, as in a constant communication with him; as, for instance, when you go to your studies, you look up to him with sweet complacency, and think, O Lord, how worthless is this knowledge, if it were not for the enlightening my mind and improving it to thy service, or for being more useful to my fellow-creatures, and enabled to fill the part thy providence may appoint me! When going into society, or mixing with company, appeal to him who sees your heart and knows how much rather you would devote to him; but say, dear Lord, you have placed me here, and I must yield to them whom you have placed me in subjection to: oh keep my heart from all that would separate me

from thee! When you are excited to impatience, think for a moment how much more reason God has to be angry with you than you have for anger against any human being, and yet how constant is his patience and forbearance. And in every disappointment, great or small, let your dear heart fly direct to him, your dear Saviour, throwing yourself in his arms for refuge against every pain and sorrow. He never will leave you or forsake you."

The friendship of Mrs. Seton and her sister Cecilia was of that elevated character which acted as an encouragement to both in the love and pursuit of virtue; and it gradually produced impressions upon the mind of the latter which could not fail, with the grace of God, to result most favorably for her spiritual welfare. The happy influence of Mrs. Seton's piety and constancy was also much aided by an illness with which it pleased Divine Providence to afflict her relative toward the end of the year above mentioned. During her sufferings, Mrs. Seton consoled her by her visits, or by writing to her, and suggesting the most excellent acts of devotion for the time of sickness. The following we place before the reader as an illustration of her fervent piety and lively faith:—

"Oh that I could take the wing of the angel of peace, and visit the heart of my darling child! Pain and sorrow should take their flight; or, if ordained to stay as messengers from our Father of Mercies, to separate you from our life of temptation and misery, and prepare you for the reception of endless blessedness, I would repeat to you the story of his sufferings and anguish who chose them for his companions from the cradle to the grave. I would help you to separate all worldly thoughts from your breast, to yield the sinful body to the punishment it deserves, and to beg that sanctifying grace which will change temporal pain to eternal glory; and then I would again remind you of those sweet

instructions and heavenly precepts we read together the happy night we last enjoyed. . . . My Cecilia, I beg, beseech, implore you, to offer up all your pains, your sorrows and vexations, to God, that he will unite them with the sorrows, the pangs, and anguish, which our adored Redeemer bore for us on the cross, and entreat that a drop of that precious blood there shed may fall on you to enlighten, strengthen, and support your soul in this life and insure its eterna. salvation in the next. He knows all our weakness and the failings of our hearts. As the father pities his own children he pities us, and has himself declared that he never will forsake the soul that confides in his name."

In this communication Mrs. Seton exhorts her beloved relative in a particular manner to pray, and in this spirit to offer her sufferings in union with those of the Son of God, because she knew well that fervent and persevering prayer is never rejected by the Almighty, and would be the surest means of obtaining for her sister the graces which her situation needed. But as her illness was growing worse, and she had as yet taken no decisive step for the change of her religion, Mrs. Seton began to fear lest she herself had been deficient in doing what duty required for the conversion of her sister; and, surrounded as the invalid was by her Protestant connections, who could not endure the mention of Catholicity among them, she was at a loss to know precisely how to act under these circumstances. She therefore applied for advice to the Rev. Mr. Cheverus, who sent her the following answer:—

BOSTON, *January 26, 1806*

DEAR MADAM:—

"I must tell you first that your conscience ought to be free from scruples about the past, since you have done in

regard to your interesting sister every thing which you thought discretion and prudence could allow.

“In her present situation is it your duty to go farther? I am at a loss myself how to give an answer to this question. I have for these few days consulted in prayer the Father of lights; I have endeavored to place myself in your situation Here is the result, which, however, I propose to you with the utmost diffidence.

“Neither the obstacles you mention, nor the sickly state of the dear child, permit to instruct her in points of controversy. What you have told her till now appears to me nearly sufficient.* I would recall to her, when opportunities should offer, the amiable and pious wish of living one day in a convent and there to become a member of the Church. Should she ask any questions, I would answer her in few words without entering into the particular merits of the question,—telling her that when she is better you would examine those matters together; that at present it is enough to know Jesus and him crucified; to put all her trust in him, to suffer with him, &c.; . . . to wish to become a member of his Church. Which church is his? she will perhaps say. Answer: The Catholic, because the most ancient, &c. If she asks no questions, I would confine myself to what you have said to her before. It is important that you may continue to visit her. Every thing that would put an end to your intercourse with her must be avoided.

“The most embarrassing circumstance will be when you see her near the period of the fatal disorder. Then, perhaps, you will be with her oftener and alone. Let the love of our adorable Saviour in his sacrament and on the cross be the subject of your discourse. You might also mention

* She had probably learned from Mrs. Seton the principal points of Catholic doctrine.

the anointing of the sick in St. James, and if she desires it, and it can be done, procure to her the blessing of receiving the last sacraments. Could they be hard-hearted enough to refuse such a request, and at such a time? The whole weight of their displeasure will fall upon you, but God has given you strength to bear it, and will make rich amends by his interior consolations. It is probable, however, that you will not find an opportunity of accomplishing this. Should it unhappily be the case, you will have nothing to reproach yourself with; for if you attempt to do more than the above, it is almost certain that you will be hindered from doing any thing at all.

“Your beloved sister has been made by baptism a member of the Church. Wilful error, I have reason to think, has never separated her from that sacred body. Her *singular innocence of mind and ardent piety* have also, very likely, preserved her from offending God in any grievous manner; and I hope, in consequence, that even if she cannot receive the sacraments she will be a member of the triumphant Church in heaven, although it would be to her an unspeakable advantage to receive the sacraments, and would render her salvation more secure. Dreadful indeed is the situation of those who, being cut off from the Church, or having offended the Almighty, depart from this world without those heavenly remedies which the Church has in store for her dying children. Happy those who like you feel their heart warm, and abound with joy and peace in the breaking of the heavenly bread, in the celebration of the holy festivals.”

By this wise direction Mrs. Seton was equally consoled and instructed in the course she was to pursue. She was to make every effort consistent with a discreet and enlightened zeal to procure for her beloved relative the consolations of the sacraments; but, in the event of this being

impracticable, she was to suggest to her suffering friend such considerations as, with the help of divine grace, would awaken in her heart sentiments of perfect love and contrition, and thus prepare her for a happy death. It pleased the Almighty, however, to raise her from the bed of sickness and afford her an opportunity of paying a more signal homage to the truth, of which he has made his holy Church the depository. After her recovery, Miss Seton turned her attention more particularly to the examination of this subject, and, in defiance of the most violent opposition on the part of her relatives, she at length resolved to abandon the errors in which she had been educated, and to embrace the Catholic faith. No effort was left untried to dissuade her from this step; and such was the blind and determined zeal excited against her, that her connections kept her in close confinement for several days, threatening every extravagance they could think of; for instance, that she should not live with the corrupter of her mind, (Mrs. Seton,) even if she did become a Catholic, but be sent away to the West Indies, in a vessel then ready for the voyage; that she would cause the destruction of Mrs. Seton and deprive her children of bread; and that, if no shorter way presented itself, they would petition the legislature to remove Mrs. Seton out of the State, &c. But Miss Cecilia, fully alive to the importance of the subject, and well persuaded that no considerations whatever should be suffered to interfere with her duty to God, was prepared to make every sacrifice in order to obey the call of divine grace. The Almighty supported her courage in a peculiar manner during her trial, nerving her against the fiercest opposition, and, after due preparation, she was admitted into the true Church on the 20th of June, 1806.

The consequences of this step were, in a temporal point of view, most painful. All her friends abandoned her, and

left her unprovided for in the world; and for a generous and affectionate heart like hers, and for a young person in the bloom of youth, being only fourteen years of age, of delicate health, and the favorite of her family, it is difficult to conceive how cruel must have been the pang that thus severed the ties of nature. But the Almighty seems to have selected her as an occasion of signaling his tender mercies and displaying the wondrous efficacy of his grace. She regretted the loss of friends who had always been dear to her; but well convinced that her friends and relatives could not justify her at the tribunal of God, if she resisted the known truth and the inspirations of divine grace, she accounted all the considerations of flesh and blood as worthless in comparison with the securing of her eternal interests, and resolutely declared to her family that she had become a Catholic, and that nothing would ever break the bonds that united her to the true Church. Her conduct throughout this trying ordeal evinced a heroism worthy of the brightest days of Christianity. Excluded from the protection of her relatives, who solemnly avowed that she should never re-enter their houses or be suffered to associate with her family, Miss Seton sought a refuge under the humble but hospitable roof of her sister-in-law. Here she was welcomed with open arms; and these two pious and fervent souls found, in the enjoyment of each other's society, a support under the heavy crosses which they had to endure, and a mutual encouragement to the faithful and constant practice of duty. The reception of the youthful convert into her house, although a matter of duty for Mrs. Seton under existing circumstances, became the occasion of increased aversion for her on the part of her connections. Some of them would not permit even their children to speak to her or hers, while others barely allowed her to enter their dwellings. Even they who professed to be the ministers of charity,

Bishop Moore and Rev. Mr. Hobart, her former pastors, arrayed themselves against her, and, through bigotry or interest, called upon those who might have assisted her in her establishment, and warned them against having any communication with her. In this state of things, all the energy of her soul was brought into requisition. Her life was a continual sacrifice and suffering, for which, however, she was strengthened by the grace of God, and by the sympathy and counsels of the new class of friends who had gathered around her. Soon after the conversion of Miss Cecilia, Dr. Maignon, of Boston, addressed a letter to Mrs. Seton, expressive of the high regard which he entertained for her, and encouraging her to continue faithful in the new paths which the Almighty had marked out to her. "Your perseverance," he says, "and the help of grace, will finish in you the work which God has commenced, and will render you, I trust, the means of effecting the conversion of many others. You already experience much consolation in the step taken by your dear sister, who has been led not less by your example than by the maladies and afflictions dispensed from Heaven, to embrace with so much fervor the only way to eternal life. The determination she evinced in this affair, being yet so young, and despite the serious difficulties she had to contend with, is most assuredly, as you say, a visible wonder of divine grace. Though deprived of all human assistance, or, at least, debarred the aid she has need of, Almighty God will not abandon her, and your prayers will not be vain. May you soon have the same happiness in the two cherished beings whom you mention with so much hope!* The pleasures as well as the troubles of this world pass very rapidly; happy they who love their friends only in God,

* Two sisters-in-law of Mrs. Seton, who were favorably disposed toward the Catholic faith, and one of whom subsequently embraced it, as will appear in the sequel.

and who hope with reason to meet each other hereafter in his eternal kingdom."

Among the chief sources of comfort which Mrs. Seton enjoyed in her affliction was the society of the pious, amiable, and accomplished family of Mr. James Barry, a respectable merchant of New York. With all the warmth and generosity of the Irish character, they united a spirit of religion and blandness of manner which entitled them to universal respect and esteem. They were honored with the particular friendship of Bishop Carroll. Mrs. Seton was a frequent visitor at their residence, where she was always welcome, and often enjoyed their bounteous and cordial hospitality; at the same time availing herself of their intelligence and piety to seek advice in the moment of need. These attentions which she received from the Barry family were always gratefully remembered. In writing to a friend about this time, she alludes with a spirit of thankfulness to the "Barrys, whose tenderness and attention to the poor fanatic," she says, "are my sweetest earthly pleasure."

From her corespondence with the Messrs. Filicchi she also derived much comfort and encouragement. Writing to her from London, November 3, 1806, in answer to a letter from her, in which she probably mentioned the increased opposition on the part of her family, Mr. Antonio sends her the most fervent exhortation to persevere in the noble fortitude which she had already displayed. "If blessed are those who are in tears," he says, "you, my beloved sister, are blessed indeed. Courage and perseverance! The crown of everlasting glory awaits only those, you know, who persevere to the end. . . Pray for your persecutors. Your forbearance, your fortitude, your charity, your piety, will put them to the blush at last. If not, God and I are your protectors—of whom shouldst thou be afraid?"⁽⁹⁾ The

intelligence of his safe arrival in Leghorn, in the midst of his family, filled her heart with joy and gratitude, and she hastened to spread the news among her friends. "What could I do," she writes to him, "but say *Te Deums*; first carry the letter to Mrs. Barry, then to Mr. Hurley, or rather to our family of pastors, who shared my joy, gave thanks for your escape, and admired that Providence who provides such a brother for the poor little forsaken woman, and permitted her to go the next morning to communion, to offer the thanksgiving of inestimable value? With my whole soul I did so." The escape to which she alludes was a providential deliverance of Mr. Filicchi from a most perilous situation while crossing the Alps on his way to Italy. The account of this circumstance, which he sent to Mrs. Seton, is equally honorable to his piety as a Christian, and indicative of the profound veneration which he entertained for her character as a servant of God.

"On the dreadful summit of Mount Cenis, on the Alps, on my way into Italy, I truly did attribute to the efficacy of your prayers in my behalf the preservation of my limbs and life. I was in the *diligence*, or mail-stage with four wheels and four horses, descending the mountain in a dark, wintry night, blowing and snowing, and every thing around us covered with snow. We had a light to guide our path; but on a sudden, by the carelessness of our driver, the light was put out, and we found ourselves in the most imminent danger of missing our way and falling over the precipice. The driver declared that he was not able to discern his path. We were all in the pangs of death. We could not alight, we could not walk in the depth of the snow, we could not expect any human succor, and were forced to go on, trembling at each step of our horses, as if about to tumble down into the abyss. A French lady, our fellow-traveller with an officer, was in a fit of convulsions, when most unex-

pectedly a lantern appeared of a poor shepherd coming up the mountain as a guardian angel to save us. It was on Monday night, the 8th of December, the day of the festival of our Blessed Lady's Conception. Early in that morning, they had all laughed at my going to mass; but fear drew afterward from their lips, against their will, the awful acknowledgment of their forsaken principles of religion. I looked immediately on you as my principal intercessor, and you must have had certainly a great share in my deliverance. What wonder, then, in my readiness to be serviceable to you? Through your good example, they find me now a better Christian than I was, and through you my mercantile concerns are blessed by God with an uninterrupted success. I shall not therefore be so foolish as to desert your cause. Pray only our Divine Redeemer to extend his mercy toward me, for the most important welfare in our next life. If I have been happy enough to be the instrument of introducing you to the gate of the true Church of Christ here below, keep me fast by you when called up stairs: we must enter together into heaven. Amen." To realize this blessed hope was the object of Mrs. Seton's ardent prayers.

Amid the difficulties of her position she was comforted especially by the expressions of regard and friendship which she received from Bishop Carroll and the Rev. Mr. Cheverus. The former, writing to her, under date of May 23, 1807, after giving his opinion on a matter of business, thus speaks of her and her situation:—"I would add, if you stood the least in need of any motives which I could suggest, my encouragement to you to persevere in the exercise of your constancy, under the trials to which you have been subjected since our separation.* Though you are persecuted for obey-

* He had administered confirmation in New York, in May of the preceding year.

ing the dictates of your conscience, and are not allowed to speak with freedom to persons dear and closely allied to you, yet your example, and patient, I may add, joyful suffering, must produce and have already worked their effect on the consciences of them who place a higher value on their salvation than all earthly things. For *your* perseverance I feel no apprehension; but great is my solicitude for those who are debarred from receiving the instruction you could so well give them, and deprived of the bread of life; but still I trust in God's fatherly goodness toward them, who is so able to counteract the impediments and delusions which human prudence or errors cast in the way of his favored servants." He then begs to be remembered by her children, to whose "innocent prayers" he attaches great importance. Bishop Carroll, although he gave Mrs. Seton the strongest evidences of the high esteem which he had for her, was careful to maintain her in the path of humility, convinced that by this means only could she be preserved from spiritual shipwreck. He therefore tells her:—"Whatever I learn or hear of you increases my solicitude, respect, and admiration. But attribute no merit to yourself on this account. Whatever is estimable in you, either by nature or grace, is God's gift and his property; and it is beneath the dignity of a Christian, who has ever meditated on the folly as well as the criminality of pride, to glory in that which belongs not to him."

During his stay in New York, Mrs. Seton found a faithful friend in the Rev. Mr. Hurley, who, as she expresses it, was "rigid and severe in a calm, but, whenever she had any trouble, most indulgent and compassionate." She knew well how to appreciate the good-will and kind assistance of him and so many others who were truly interested in her real happiness. In the midst of friends whom religion had substituted for those whom the world had taken away, the

bitterness of her trials seemed to be forgotten, and her soul enjoyed a delightful peace. She thus alludes to this subject in a letter to Mr. Anthony Filicchi:—"Upon my word, it is very pleasant to have the name of being persecuted, and yet enjoy the sweetest favors; to be poor and wretched, and yet be rich and happy; neglected and forsaken, yet cherished and tenderly indulged by God's most favored servants and friends. If now your sister did not wear her most cheerful and contented countenance she would be indeed a hypocrite. 'Rejoice in the Lord always.' Rejoice, rejoice."

Animated with such sentiments, Mrs. Seton's constant effort was, according to the advice of the apostle, to "overcome evil with good," and, by showing in her actions the excellence of the faith to which she had been admitted, to subdue the unchristian spirit arrayed against her. Her sister Cecilia walked closely in her footsteps, adhering faithfully to the advice of her spiritual directors, to illustrate in her conduct and in the purity of her life the beauty of that religion which she had embraced. The instruction which the Rev. Mr. Hurley gave her on this subject* will be useful to all who read it in a spirit of Christian submission. After alluding to the happiness of serving God, he says:—"It is this which you are in quest of, and which, being humble of heart, you will assuredly find. Your setting out in this pursuit was strongly marked with the divine predilection; and, as it was then my duty to observe it, the same duty now compels me to remind you of it, and to admonish you that in all things you give proof of the sanctity of your vocation, and vindicate, by your exemplary conduct, by your submission, your humility and patience, that holy religion into whose mysteries you have been now so long initiated.

* In a letter from Philadelphia, dated August 29, 1807

'Look at our conduct,' was the almost only answer which the primitive Christians made to their calumniators : in fact, it proved to be such as to leave no place for a rejoinder. The arguments which they deduced from their sublimated morals, in favor of their faith, were nearly irrefragable, as we may judge from the wonderful progress it made. Alas ! could we but say so now, what converts would we not see ! how many returning to the fold of Christ ! But God is wonderful in all his ways. He has put it in your power to magnify the wonders of his mercy, and let me exhort you not to neglect it. To doubt of your doing so, as also of your perseverance, I dare not. The thought itself I would banish from my mind as a temptation. Your deportment throughout the entire of those vicissitudes with which 'the Orient from on high hath visited you,' precludes any such unhallowed idea. But we never can be too cautious, nor as circumspect as our vocation in Christ Jesus would require. The path which you have so gloriously entered is at the best an arduous one, and bestrewed with difficulties which life alone will end with. In meeting them we have indeed this great consolation :—that our Model met them before us ; that he forewarned his disciples that all who should truly desire to serve him would encounter them also ; that they are the only sure, unerring vehicles to transepulchral regions, and that by tolerating them future glory should be revealed to us. And what consolation tantamount to that which flows from the very source of every good ? from that fount which rises unto life everlasting, and from which alone we can draw forth with joy and gladness ? You, my dear child, have explored even the head of this spring. You have participated of its pellucid waters, and have experienced its exhilarating, sublimating effects. Perhaps I have been your guide to it ; nay, have administered to you its refreshing portions. If so, let me have the comfort, both here and hereafter, to find that

my subserviency has been profitable, has been effectual. Remember the 17th of June.* It stands recorded in heaven and must be in your heart. Meritless as I am, witness of the transactions of that day, others bear witness likewise. When we shall be called upon, may we be found side-aside !”

By a strict observance of the excellent counsels here imparted, Miss Seton became “a beautiful ornament” of the religion which she professed, and eventually regained the admiration even of those who thought her wisdom folly. A lady of her acquaintance, who was much attached to her, having become dangerously ill, she visited her daily, and nursed her with the most assiduous care.† Here it was, at the deathbed of a common friend, that Miss Seton had an opportunity of meeting her relatives; and such was the sweet submissiveness of manner and prudence of behavior exhibited by her on this occasion, that she completely conquered the opposition of her family, who all invited her to return among them. If Mrs. Seton did not experience the same partial justice at their hands, it was not from a want of charitable and kind deportment in their regard. When, in the circumstance just related, or at other times, she met with those of her connections who had placed themselves in a hostile position, she manifested the same cordiality and affection as if she had no cause for complaint. But what was denied on

* According to her own statement, she was “united to the Catholic Church on the 20th of June, 1806.” Mr. Hurley may have mistaken the precise date, or he refers to some religious act different from that which Miss Seton designates as her admission into the Church.

† Mrs. Seton also assisted this lady in her last moments, and thus speaks of her departure from this world:—“Oh, how awful! without prayer, without sacrament, without faith! Terrified, impatient, wretched! How shall we ever praise enough that mercy which has placed us in the bosom of our mother!”

the part of her family she found in the quiet and peaceful enjoyment of her religion; so much so that she wore a contented and joyful countenance, and appeared to have lost nothing, even for this world, by the sacrifices which conscience had compelled her to make. In a letter to Mr. Philip Filicchi, who had so effectually aided her by his enlightened instructions in the investigation of Catholic truth, she describes in a forcible manner the happiness she possessed under all her difficulties, and the continual efforts which she made for the sanctification of her soul.

“It is best,” she says, “to be obliged to conquer the principle most apt to blind me in my pursuit; and my daily object is to keep close to your first advice, (with St. Francis,) to take every event gently and quietly, and oppose good-nature and cheerfulness to every contradiction; which succeeds so well that now it is an acknowledged opinion that Mrs. William Seton is in a very happy situation, and Mr. Wilkes says, speaking of *his* professions, ‘Yet Providence does not do so much for me as for you, as it makes you happy and contented in every situation.’ Yet—indeed how can he build who has not the Rock for his foundation? But Mrs. William Seton is obliged to watch every moment to keep up the reality of this appearance. You know, Filicchi, what it costs to be always humble and satisfied, though when this disposition is familiarized it is the true treasure. Do—do pray continually for that soul whose salvation has already cost you so much care. While enjoying *the greatest happiness on earth*, which I obtain sometimes three times a week, (the weather and children sometimes deprive,) imagine the effusions of warm and ardent affections at that moment of grateful joy and triumph, conscious that nothing on earth can add to or take from this infinite good which supplies the place of all other to the confiding soul, whose very desolation in human possessions is the best foundation for this un-**fail**—

ing happiness. And then, how came this knowledge to my soul? whose blessed hands guided it to its only treasure? who encouraged it when sinking, and drew it on when afraid of its own salvation? And my darling children—I teach them to consider you too the source of all our consolation.”

As a truly Christian mother, Mrs. Seton allowed nothing, after the salvation of her own soul, to occupy so important a place in her thoughts and plans as the spiritual welfare of her children. They had entered with her into the fold of truth; and she taught them, both by word and example, to prize this gift of faith above every worldly consideration. So natural and affectionate was the manner in which she endeavored to impress upon their youthful minds the obligation of serving God, that it could not fail to produce its full effect. Religion and duty were subjects not reserved only for the class of catechism or the moment of prayer; they were frequently suggested to their attention. From the words of the parent, exhaling on every befitting occasion the spirit of fervent piety, her offspring imbibed a love of virtue, and learned how to appreciate its inestimable blessings. Nothing can surpass the admirable tact with which Mrs. Seton conciliated the warm affection of her children, and directed her influence over them to the glory of God and their personal sanctification. Her language was such as to inspire them with noble sentiments and virtuous aspirations; to make them sensible that their highest reward was to be found in the good-will of a loving parent, and in the consciousness of having fulfilled their duty to Almighty God. In answering a note which she had received from her eldest daughter, then ten years of age, she says:—“Your little letter gave joy to my heart, which loves you more than I can express, and earnestly prays to our dear Lord Jesus to bless you and make you his own.” On another occasion, while her daughter was receiving instructions from the Rev.

Mr. Hurley, probably as a preparation for her first communion, Mrs. Seton wrote to her in the following words:—

“MY DARLING DAUGHTER:—

“You must not be uneasy at not seeing me either yesterday or to-day. To-morrow I hope to hold you to my heart, which prays for you incessantly that God may give you grace to use well the precious hours of this week; and, I repeat, you have it in your power to make me the happiest of mothers, and to be my sweet comfort through every sorrow, or to occasion the heaviest affliction to my poor soul that it can meet with in this world; and, as your example will have the greatest influence on your dear little sisters also, and you do not know how soon you may be in the place of their mother to them, your doing your duty faithfully is of the greatest consequence, besides what you owe to God and your own soul. . . . Pray him, supplicate him, to make you his own. . . . Remember that Mr. Hurley is now in the place of God to you: receive his instructions as from heaven, as no doubt your dear Saviour has appointed them as the means of bringing you there.”

The piety, fervor, and unction of this maternal exhortation sufficiently indicate the ardor and purity of the love that dictated it. Mrs. Seton's great ambition and happiness was to educate her children as faithful followers of Jesus Christ. With this view her two sons, as we have before stated, were placed at Georgetown College, their location at Montreal being then impracticable. But it had always been the wish of Mr. Anthony Filicchi, their generous friend and benefactor, that they should be raised at the institution in Montreal; and he gave their mother a distant hope that she herself, with her little girls, might be admitted into a convent there, and employ her talents in the instruction of youth,

while her children would have the facility of being thoroughly trained in the knowledge and practice of the Catholic religion. This hope Mrs. Seton indulged rather as a delightful dream than as a prospect to be subsequently realized, because it appeared to her too much happiness to be enjoyed during her earthly pilgrimage. But her thoughts were more practically directed to it by the Rev. William Valentine Dubourg, President of St. Mary's College in Baltimore. He became acquainted with her in the following way. Having visited the city of New York in the autumn of 1806, he was one morning offering up the holy sacrifice of mass in St. Peter's Church, when a lady presented herself at the communion-rail, and, bathed in tears, received the Blessed Sacrament at his hands. He was struck with the uncommon deportment and piety of the communicant, and when afterward seated at the breakfast-table with the Rev. Mr. Sibourd, one of the pastors of the Church, he inquired who she was, rightly judging in his mind that it was Mrs. Seton, of whose conversion and edifying life he had been informed. Before Mr. Sibourd had time to answer his question, a gentle tap at the door was heard, and the next moment Mrs. Seton was introduced, and knelt before the priest of God to receive his blessing. Entering into conversation with her respecting her sons and her intentions in their regard, he learned from her the views and wishes of Mr. Filicchi, as stated above, and the remote expectation she had of removing herself, with her daughters, to Canada. Mr. Dubourg, who was a man of enlarged views and remarkable enterprise, no sooner became acquainted with the design which she entertained of retiring at some future period into a religious community, for the welfare of herself and her children, than he suggested the practicability of the scheme within the limits of the United States. Mrs. Seton immediately wrote to Bishop Carroll, informing him of what had passed between her and

Mr. Dubourg, and requesting his advice in the matter "I could not venture," she says, "to take a further step in so interesting a situation without your concurrence and direction, which also, I am assured, will the more readily obtain for me the blessing of him whose will alone it is my earnest desire to accomplish." After mentioning the particular trials she had to contend with in New York, and assuring Dr. Carroll that she had yielded in condescension to her opponents every point possible consistently with her peace for the hour of death, she continues:—"And for that hour, my dear sir, I now beg you to consider, while you direct me how to act for my dear little children, who in that hour, if they remain in their present situation, would be snatched from our dear faith as from an accumulation of error as well as misfortune to them. For myself, certainly the only fear I can have is that there is too much of self-seeking in pleading for the accomplishment of this object, which, however, I joyfully yield to the will of the Almighty, confident that, as he has disposed my heart to wish above all things to please him, it will not be disappointed in the desire, whatever may be his appointed means. The embracing a religious life has been, from the time I was in Leghorn, so much my hope and consolation, that I would at any moment have embraced all the difficulties of again crossing the ocean to attain it, little imagining it could be accomplished here. But now my children are so circumstanced that I could not die in peace (and you know, dear sir, we must make every preparation) except I felt the full conviction I had done all in my power to shield them from it: in that case it would be easy to commit them to God."

While Mrs. Seton was consulting Bishop Carroll in regard to the important arrangement suggested by Mr. Dubourg, this gentleman was conferring with the Rev. Messrs Matignon and Cheverus, of Boston, upon the same subject

After having weighed the matter attentively, they came to the conclusion that her Canada scheme should be abandoned, and that it would be preferable to exert her talents in the way proposed by Mr. Dubourg. Mr. Cheverus wrote to her, "hoping that this project would do better for her family, and being sure it would be very conducive to the progress of religion in this country." It was the opinion, however, of these distinguished clergymen that the execution of the design should not be precipitate; and they therefore advised her, through Mr. Dubourg, "to wait the manifestation of the Divine will—the will of a Father most tender, who will not let go the child afraid to step alone." The wise forethought of Dr. Matignon led him to believe that Mrs. Seton was called, in the designs of God's providence, to be the instrument of some special mercies that he wished to dispense to the Church in this country. "I have only to pray God," he wrote to her, "to bless your views and his, and to give you the grace to fulfil them for his greater glory. *You are destined, I think, for some great good in the United States, and here you should remain in preference to any other location. For the rest, God has his moments, which we must not seek to anticipate, and a prudent delay only brings to maturity the good desires which he awakens within us.*" Bishop Carroll, in answer to Mrs. Seton's inquiries, informed her that, although he was entirely ignorant of all particulars, yet, to approve the plan of Mr. Dubourg, it was enough for him to know that it had the concurrence of Dr. Matignon and Mr. Cheverus.

Mr. Dubourg, whose penetrating mind and enterprising spirit were so instrumental in shaping the destiny of Mrs. Seton, was born in 1766, at Cape François, in the island of St. Domingo. Having been sent to France for his education, he there embraced the ecclesiastical state, and went through his course of study in a seminary of St. Sulpitius.

Soon after his elevation to the priesthood, he was compelled to fly from that country by the violent persecution which was then raging against religion and its ministers, and he went to Spain, where he lived for two years. He then embarked for the United States, where not long after his arrival he became a member of the Society of St. Sulpitius, at Baltimore.⁽¹⁰⁾ The year after, (1796,) he was appointed by Bishop Carroll president of the college at Georgetown, which, under his direction and with the aid of able professors, acquired a high reputation before the public. The Sulpitians having opened a collegiate establishment in Havana, Mr. Dubourg was sent to the aid of his brethren in that city in 1798; but circumstances having combined to frustrate their efforts, he returned the following year to Baltimore, where in conjunction with his *confères* he commenced an institution for the education of youth, and laid the foundation of St. Mary's College. The design was encouraged by his superiors, particularly as it was hoped that the establishment would furnish candidates for the ecclesiastical state. Mr. Dubourg had brought with him from Cuba several young men, who with others from the same country were the first pupils of St. Mary's. American youths were not admitted in the beginning, as the rising institution at Georgetown was considered amply sufficient for the wants of the students furnished by the United States. Full of energy, Mr. Dubourg erected on the seminary grounds spacious buildings, which were specially adapted to the purposes of a collegiate establishment, and the increasing patronage of the public soon gave evidence that his views and efforts were duly appreciated and would lead to permanent usefulness.

A mind like his—of quick perception and comprehensive grasp, fertile in expedients and generally happy in the selection of such as were most effective—could not fail to discover in Mrs. Seton a woman of superior worth, and one

whose eminent qualities might be employed with the most signal advantage to religion and society. On her part, Mrs. Seton was much amazed at the idea of her being considered a fit instrument for promoting the interest of the Church; because she was far from forming a just estimate of her own abilities. She knew, however, that the ways of God are very different from those of men, and she bowed submissively to his designs in relation to her, hoping by the path of obedience to ascertain and fulfil them. In a letter to Mr. Filicchi, after stating the views of Messrs. Matignon and Cheverus that she was destined to forward the progress of the true faith, she adds:—"The very idea is enough to turn a stronger brain; but I know very well HE sees differently from man, and, as obedience is his favorite service and cannot lead me wrong, according to the old rule I look neither behind nor before, but straight upward, without thinking of human calculations." In this way she resigned herself entirely into the hands of God, awaiting the further orders of his providence, to be disposed of as he might indicate through the voice of her superiors.

Urged by the counsels of individuals so fully entitled to her confidence and respect, Mrs. Seton did not hesitate to relinquish the idea of removing to Canada. The opinion of Mr. Philip Filicchi, whom she had also consulted, further encouraged her in the renunciation of that project and consoled her for the failure of her hopes. About the beginning of November, 1807, in replying to a letter which she had received from him, she says:—"Your letter is indeed a cordial one. I often read it to encourage and strengthen me in the disappointment of not being permitted to fulfil the so long anticipated removal of my family to Canada; which plan, originating in the benevolence and precautions of your Antonio for our welfare, had been long contemplated in my female fancy (which you know must be active) as one of the

sweet dispositions of Providence among the many it has effected for us through him. But your opinion, added to the united sentiments of those persons whose will is my law, has banished even the thoughts of it, (voluntarily indulged,) though naturally they present themselves on every occasion of difficulty so frequent in the particular situation in which we are placed. Quite sure I am, many would await us there; but they could scarcely be combined of materials so repulsive to my nature."

While in this state of suspense, looking forward to the opportunities that God would send her for accomplishing the plan of Mr. Dubourg, Mrs. Seton's position in New York became more difficult and embarrassing. In the fall of 1807, the board of the students attending Mr. Harris's school, which we have mentioned before, fell short of the maintenance of her family: the boys who lodged in her establishment were very unfit companions for her children; and their parents, discovering her inability to control them, thought that the advantages of their situation were much lessened by this circumstance, and complained personally on the subject, so that her remaining in it was a matter of favor. Add to this that the academy of Mr. Harris was to continue for three years longer, Mrs. Seton's expenses in fuel and house-rent were enormous, her children were prevented six months in the year from attending the services of the Church, and she herself could assist at them only with inconvenience, though to be present at the offices of religion was her only comfort. In this state of things, Mrs. Seton, urged on the one hand by the shortcomings of her revenue and on the other by the spiritual dangers to which her children were exposed, after having conferred with her pious and enlightened friend, Mrs. Barry, and received the express direction of the Rev. Mr. Sibourd, wrote to Bishop Carroll to solicit his advice in so important an emergency. For herself, as

she said, she was well assured that difficulties and crosses were the best companions of a Christian, and were peculiarly necessary to keep her views in the right direction; but she was compelled to claim his indulgence in a consideration so intimately connected with the happiness of her *dear ones*. She therefore unfolded to him all the circumstances of her case that she might be guided entirely by his decision. But the humble and filial manner in which she approaches him is worthy of particular notice. After stating the reasons which induce her to encroach upon his valuable time, she says:—"Now then, dear sir, I imagine you seated in your elbow-chair, and my poor self at your feet; and in the first place tell you, from the time Filicchi mentioned his resolution that my boys should go to Montreal, I have considered it as a shelter offered us by Providence for the safety of my little girls, in respect to their faith, and security when it shall please God to remove me from them. You know their situation and dangers from their connections; therefore it is useless to mention it, or my own view of advancing my own salvation. The means of executing this plan amount to six hundred dollars per annum, as certain, and liberty to claim twice that sum from the subscription Filicchi obtained for us; also in the hands of Mr. M., five hundred dollars present. I have certainly the hope that my talents, such as they are, might be made useful in the instruction of children and assist our maintenance." She then details the difficulties of her position as mentioned above, and proceeds with the following statement:—"The sacrifices I should make in leaving this place are centred in the dear converted sister, who now lives with her brother, (the other dear girls are not permitted to see me,) and the dear Barrys, who are individually dearer to me than any friend I have. For every other connection, they have so much distrust and suspicion of my character, considering, and justly, that

every action is involved in my religious principles, that they certainly would rather consider it as a relief, if they knew I was in a situation conformable to my own peace. If you think it best to waive all delicacy with respect to these gentlemen who employ me, and not leave the place without their dismissal, making the best of circumstances until some providential change takes place, I shall feel every thing reconciled by your decision, and in every event be convinced it is the will of God. If you think the boys may properly be removed to Montreal, and that I may remove with them, it will be my greatest security to be authorized by your judgment and permission." Mrs. Seton referred again to the plan of settling in Canada, as it was probably the only one that appeared to her practicable in the immediate urgency of her case. The answer which Bishop Carroll returned at this important juncture was characterized by his usual wisdom and prudence. He informed Mrs. Seton that her two sons at Georgetown College were doing well; but that if six hundred dollars a year would be sufficient at Montreal for their education and maintenance, and that of her amiable daughters, it was a great inducement for her to remove thither, where her talents would be highly useful, if the good ladies of the convent would employ them. He stated, however, an objection to this plan, which, he thought, deserved attentive consideration. "If your girls," he asked, "become dissatisfied and unhappy at Montreal, or their health injured by the climate, so that you should be obliged to leave it, (for you could not consent to let them depart without you,) are you confident of being enabled to re-establish yourself at New York?" This was a question which required to be satisfactorily answered to her own mind. As to the contract she had entered into with the Rev. Mr. Harris, principal of the school, Bishop Carroll remarked:—"Surely, my dear madam, if you can-

not fulfil your engagements without exposing your dear daughters to improper company and occasions dangerous to the purity of their minds, you ought to take effectual measures to persuade the gentleman to consent to release you from your engagements: after which, motives of economical prudence seem to require of you to make a trial of Montreal, after being well assured that you have not been misinformed as to the expense; for indeed it is incredible to me that it can be so moderate."

These directions from Bishop Carroll were received by Mrs Seton about the beginning of December, 1807. In the following spring the difficulties of her pensionate already mentioned had become still more embarrassing, and, having abandoned the idea of removing to Canada, she was patiently awaiting the further manifestation of Divine Providence in her regard, sure that it would point out to her some other way when the proper time arrived. Such was the situation of her affairs when she incidentally met with the Rev. Mr. Dubourg at the residence of a gentleman who was their common friend. Mr. Dubourg having, in the course of conversation, mentioned some particulars respecting the property of the college over which he presided, and the vacant lots of ground belonging to it, Mrs. Seton remarked, in a jesting way, "I will come and beg." These careless words afterward induced an explanation of her exact position in New York; "and," observes Mrs. Seton, "Mr. Dubourg, interesting himself for us as he does for even the least of God's creatures to whom he may be useful, said decidedly, 'Come to us, Mrs. Seton, we will assist you in forming a plan of life which, while it will forward your views of contributing to the support of your children, will also shelter them from the dangers to which they are exposed among their Protestant connections, and also afford you much more consolation in the exercise of your faith than you have yet enjoyed. We

also wish to form a small school for the promotion of religious instruction for such children whose parents are interested in that point.' You may be sure, I objected only want of talents; to which he replied, 'We want example more than talents.'" It is easy to imagine how delighted Mrs. Seton must have been by this generous invitation from Mr. Dubourg, particularly when he assured her that her two sons would be admitted into St. Mary's College without any expense. Dr. Matignon and Mr. Cheverus were immediately consulted in relation to the project, and they expressed at once their decided approbation of it. The latter, in the name of both, addressed a letter to Mrs. Seton without delay, in which he observed:—"Such an establishment would be a public benefit for religion, and, we hope, a real advantage to yourself and amiable family. We infinitely prefer it to your project of retreat in Montreal." At the same time, Mrs. Seton conferred with some of her friends in New York, who were also of opinion that her removal to Baltimore was an excellent scheme; and she therefore determined to leave her native city, and to seek elsewhere for herself and her family that temporal maintenance and religious security which were not attainable in the home of her childhood. In the arrangement of the plan, which now wholly engrossed the mind of Mr. Dubourg, he suggested the expediency of renting a two-story brick house which had been recently built near St. Mary's Seminary, and was well suited to the object contemplated. He thought that this would be the most prudent step in the beginning, and that the experience of the first year would enable her and her friends to judge more correctly of the proper measures to be taken for the establishment of her institution on a more extensive footing. But the following letter which he wrote to her on the 27th of May, 1808, will show more in detail the character of the

institution which he proposed, and the resources which she had to depend on.

“From your esteemed favor received yesterday, I conclude there is no further obstacle in the way than the ultimate decision of your New York friends as respects the time of your removal. I cannot but approve the delicacy and moderation with which you wish the whole affair to be conducted with every person connected with you. I only say, with Mr. Wilkes, ‘the sooner will be the better.’ But, to be perfectly explicit, and enable you to be so with your friends, I think I ought to enter into a minute detail of the parts of the plan which I conceive to be the most prudent to pursue in the beginning and in the sequel. I have already stated that I thought it premature to purchase a house. I would rent one for the first year. This space of time would be sufficient to obtain an answer from Italy,* and otherwise to make a trial of our strength and of our prospects. The question about the house would only be whether we should prefer one which is contiguous to our chapel, but hardly large enough to accommodate eight boarders and your own family, to another about two hundred yards distant, in which you could easily lodge twenty, but whose rent would be \$400, instead of \$250, which the former would be. I am inclined to think the smaller house would be sufficient for one year, because I do not feel extremely anxious to see the number of your pupils increased with too great rapidity. The fewer you will have in the beginning, the lighter your task, and the easier it will be to establish that spirit of regularity and piety which must be the main-spring of your machine. There are in the country enough, and perhaps too many, mixed schools, in which ornamental accomplishments are the

* That is, from the Messrs. Filicchi, whose co-operation Mrs. Seton requested, encouraged by their generous friendship.

only objects of education: we have none, that I know, where their acquisition is connected with and made subservient to *pious* instruction; and such a one you certainly wish yours to be. To effect it, my opinion is that none but Catholic girls, or such as would be permitted by their parents to receive a Catholic education, should obtain admittance in it. True it is that, the number of such being small, it would perhaps take several years before the income of the pensions would be equal to the expense. To supply the deficiency we must depend on Providence, which has already given you sufficient encouragement, in the generous offers of your Leghorn friend, to save us the imputation of rashness. If one year's experience persuades us that the establishment is likely to succeed in promoting the grand object of a Catholic and virtuous education, and if it pleases Almighty God to give you, your good Cecilia, and your amiable daughter, a relish for your functions and a resolution to devote yourselves to it, so as to secure permanency to the institution, we will then consult HIM about the means of perpetuating it, by the association of some other pious ladies who may be animated with the same spirit, and submit all our ideas to your worthy friends and protectors. If they approve of them, a lot on our ground will not be wanting, on which we may, *little by little*, erect the buildings which the gradual increase of the institution may render necessary."

Under the guidance of this zealous and enlightened ecclesiastic, Mrs. Seton hastened to prepare herself to set out for the field of her future exertions. The day before she left New York, he wrote to her, animating her to enter with zeal and confidence upon the course which she had determined upon: "I remain," says he, "more and more satisfied that, even were you to fail in the attempt you are going to make, it is the will of God you should make it, so great is the number of circumstances concurring in its favor Among others

I cannot help being struck at the unanimity of all your friends, both worldly and spiritual, in recommending and encouraging it, and particularly at the eagerness with which every member of our community has received the overtures I have made them on the subject. There is not one of my respected brethren* but anticipates the greatest advantages from the meditated institution, and is ready to promote it to the full extent of his powers. Let us then now place our whole confidence in him who chooses thus to make us know his holy will, and be ready to meet with joy every contradiction or ill success which might attend our compliance." After expressing his approbation of Miss Cecilia Seton's accompanying her sister, he continues:—"My sister is eager to lock you in her arms, and to form with you a connection which even death will never dissolve. My little niece has written to her mamma in the effusion of her joy at the approach of a new mamma and a new family of sisters. She shares (and it is not saying little) in all the sentiments of veneration and affectionate regard for you which glow in the breast of your ever devoted friend."

* That is, of St. Mary's Seminary and College at Baltimore.

BOOK V

Mrs. Seton embarks for Baltimore—Her sentiments during the voyage and on her arrival—Her sons removed to St. Mary's college—Attentions received by her—Happiness in her new situation—Letter from Mr. Filicchi—She writes to him—His generosity—Commencement of an academy—Exercises of the school—Rev. Peter Babade—First communion—Miss Harriet Seton—Mrs. Seton's attachment to her and her sisters—Piety of Miss Cecilia Seton—Correspondence between her and Mrs. Seton—Mrs. Seton's first associate—Remarkable coincidence—Project of a work of charity—Mr. Samuel Cooper—Purchase of land near Emmettsburg—Rev. John Dubois—Beginnings of Mt. St. Mary's College—Prediction of Rev. Mr. Cheverus—Mrs. Seton is joined by others—Her humility—Costume and exercises of the sisters—Mrs. Seton binds herself by vow—Name of the society—Further accessions—Miss Cecilia Seton's sickness and voyage to Baltimore—Mother Seton accompanies her to Emmettsburg—Her sister Harriet's conversion.

HAVING completed her arrangements for leaving New York, Mrs. Seton, with her three daughters, embarked for Baltimore in a packet on the 9th of June, 1808. What were the saddening reflections which memory recalled, and the overpowering emotions of her heart, in launching again upon the ocean, it would be difficult to describe. She could not see the shores of her native city receding from her view without drawing the contrast between the circumstances under which she had left it at a former period and her present situation. Then she was beloved and cherished by a numerous family, whose tender regards and warmest sympathies accompanied her to a distant clime; now she was an outcast, at it were, from that society in whose affections she had lived for so many years. She was an exile from the place of her birth; and her departure, instead of being adequately soothed by the kind attentions of her natural friends,

was rather a subject of congratulation for the unrelenting bigotry of many among them. But Mrs. Seton's faith was equal to the fiery ordeal through which she had to pass. On board of the vessel she was kindly treated by all her fellow-travellers, which prompted her to pour forth her heart in gratitude to God, and to make a frequent offering of herself that he might dispose of her according to the designs of his providence. Much of her time during the passage was spent in prayer and acts of resignation to the divine will; and as she drew near the end of her voyage, and thought of the new career she was about to enter upon, in the midst of strangers, she threw herself with an entire confidence into the arms of Providence, burying all care and solicitude in the reflection that she was pursuing the course marked out to her by the will of God. "To-morrow do I go among strangers? No. Has an anxious thought or fear passed my mind? No. Can I be disappointed? No. One sweet sacrifice will reunite my soul with all who offer it. Doubt and fear will fly from the breast inhabited by HIM. There can be no disappointment where the soul's only desire and expectation is to meet his adored will and fulfil it." Such were the fervent sentiments that accompanied Mrs. Seton to her new sphere of labor, and which were not a little enhanced by the religious ceremonial at which she assisted immediately on her arrival in Baltimore. Having reached the wharf late at night on Wednesday, June 15, she did not leave the vessel until the following morning, when a carriage conveyed her and her children to St. Mary's chapel, for the purpose of assisting at the holy sacrifice of mass, for it was the feast of Corpus Christi, and the day on which the beautiful church attached to St. Mary's seminary was dedicated to the service of God. The splendor and solemnity of the ceremony awakened the most lively impressions in Mrs. Seton, whose feelings were almost overpowered by the scene.⁽¹¹⁾

After the service she was introduced to a new circle of friends, from whom she met that warm and cordial reception which made her feel perfectly at home.

A few days after her arrival in Baltimore, she went to Georgetown for the purpose of removing her two sons from the college at that place to the institution under the charge of Rev. Mr. Dubourg. Here they were received free of expense, and they enjoyed at the same time the advantage of that maternal vigilance which, when exercised with wisdom, is a considerable help in the training of the youthful heart. Mrs. Seton was a woman of that sterling sense which prevented the proximity of her boys to her own residence from becoming an obstacle in the way of their collegiate duties. Her affection for them could not be surpassed; but it was tempered and governed, in its outward manifestations, by that wise discrimination which knows the injurious effect which parental indulgence too often produces, in counteracting the salutary influence of academical discipline upon the disposition and habits of young persons.

Mrs. Seton's conversion had excited a good deal of attention; but her removal to Baltimore, with a view to conduct a female academy, added to the interest with which she was looked upon by a large class of the community. Many persons of the first respectability called to see her, some perhaps through motives of curiosity, others from higher considerations, to offer the tribute of respect and to welcome her in their midst. Among those who waited on her, Colonel John Eager Howard, former governor of Maryland, and one of the wealthiest citizens of Baltimore,* deserves honorable mention. Mr. Howard paid her a visit, and, entertaining a particular regard for her and her family, with

* Known in the history of the American Revolution as the "Hero of Cowpens."

whom he was acquainted, he offered her a home in his elegant mansion in the suburbs of the city, promising also to educate her sons and daughters as his own. A proposal like this she could not but consider as a noble act of generosity on the part of Mr. Howard, and she duly testified her grateful sense of the kindness; but in thanking him she politely declined accepting it, observing that she had not left the world for the purpose of entering it again. The visits which were paid to Mrs. Seton she would willingly have dispensed with had she consulted only her love of recollection and retirement; but she followed in this the advice of her directors, who thought it better that she should not refuse herself to those who called on her. But she found chiefly among the reverend clergy warm and efficient friends, who looked upon her as an instrument in the hands of God for advancing in a special manner the interests of his holy Church. The venerable Bishop Carroll was delighted to find himself in the midst of her little family circle, and they were equally overjoyed by the paternal kindness which that excellent prelate always manifested toward them.

Although Mrs. Seton was now separated from her relatives and surrounded by persons whose acquaintance she had but recently formed, her situation was so preferable in every respect that she could scarcely believe her own happiness. A comfortable dwelling and well adapted to her purpose, numerous and influential friends, who took the liveliest interest in her welfare, the brightest prospects of success, every heart caressing her, "the look of peace and love on every countenance," and, above all, her close proximity to St. Mary's chapel, which afforded every facility for devotional exercises,—all this, so different from what she had experienced in New York, caused her heart to overflow with joy and thankfulness. Writing to a friend a short time after her change of residence, she says:—"I find the difference of situa-

tion so great that I can scarcely believe it is the same existence. All those little dear attentions of human life which I was entirely weaned from are now my daily portion from the family of Mr. Dubourg, whose sister and mother are unwearied in their care of us. The little necesssities which I cannot afford are daily sent to us, as a part of their family, and in every respect my condition is like a new being. The fence of our boundary is the only division from a beautiful chapel, which is open from daylight till nine at night. Our house is very neat, placed between two orchards, and two miles from the city.⁽¹²⁾ My prospects of an establishment I leave to God Almighty."

So great an improvement in the situation of Mrs. Seton was too important an event not to be immediately communicated to her friends at Leghorn. No person on earth was more ready to share her joy or to sympathize in her sorrows than Mr. Anthony Filicchi; and, while she was penning a letter to inform him of the change that had taken place, the following expression of his devoted friendship, in answer to a previous communication from her, was on its way to her from Italy. "You are right, you are but just, in never admitting, (as you declare in your last letter,) among your fears and thoughts, the criminal one of my ever having less interest or affection for my virtuous American sister, my boasted of holy converts. In spite of distance and of the interrupted correspondence of which you complain, you never before were so present in my mind, never so purely deep in my heart as now. As we both grow old, our common end, heaven, must draw us daily nearer each other, till we meet again, and shall shake hands together, to part no more. . . I rejoice in the good behavior and improvement of your boys and girls. A Christian education will be the best inheritance you can leave to them. . . My friends, the Murrays, have repeated orders from me to supply whatever

might be wanting in others. You must call on them as regularly as agreed on between us, and as often as you may be in want. If you attempt to disregard your brother's direction in this respect, I will not write you any more. I will try not to think of you, if possible. My means are to-day double of what they were at the date of my subscription.* In the universal stagnation of trade, fortunate speculations have largely made up for the loss of our usual consignments from the United States. A special Providence is visible in every step of ours. If you are heard so much in heaven in my behalf, should I be so ungrateful as to desert you on earth? It is mortifying indeed to receive, but mortification is the duty of a Christian."

To a friend who felt so lively an interest in her happiness, the intelligence of her removal to Baltimore could not fail to be most welcome. In apprising him of it she was aware that the undertaking she was about to commence might at a later period demand considerable expense, and prudence required that she should not venture too far without knowing on what resources she might confidently depend. She, therefore, wrote to Mr. Anthony Filicchi, to consult him in a matter which was in some degree to be committed to the generous disposition which he had already manifested toward her; and it will be seen that in doing this she only anticipated the magnanimous proposals of the letter which we have just cited. After informing him of the circumstances which more immediately led to her removal from New York, and that through the benevolence of him and other friends she had been enabled to bring one thousand dollars with her to Baltimore, she adds:—"Here we are under the sheltering wing of beings who live only to promote the glory of God and to help the friendless and

* That is, the annual contribution of \$400 toward her support, which began in 1806.

distr .d. I removed my boys from Georgetown immediately, and Mr. Dubourg has received them in the college, free of all expense to me, and I may make use of your generous allowance to assist our maintenance. As our plan does not admit of taking any but boarders, and those Catholics, it cannot be forwarded with that speed which attends an institution founded on worldly views. Yet there is every hope that it will gradually succeed, as it is committed solely to the providence of Almighty God. Should I, my dear Antonio, enter into a detail of the effects of the unexpected, and to me immense, happiness of living in such society as here surrounds us,—every soul breathing only divine charity, the sweet company and friendship of one of the most amiable women in the world, the sister of Rev. Mr. Dubourg, who suffers me also to call her sister,—a chapel the most elegant in America, and very little inferior to some in Florence, so near my dwelling that I can hear the bell at the altar,—oh, Filicchi! you who know so well how to pity your sister will gladly receive the account of this happy reverse. The gentlemen of the seminary have offered to give me a lot of ground to build on. It is proposed (supposing such an object could be accomplished) to begin on a small plan, admitting of enlargement if necessary, in the hope and expectation that there will not be wanting ladies to join in forming a permanent institution. But what can a creature so poor in resources do? I must trust all to Divine Providence. . . . With that frankness I owe to you, from whom no thought of my mind should be concealed, I dare to ask my brother how far and to what sum I may look up to yourself and honored brother in this position of things? What you have done is so unmerited by the receiver, what you continually are doing for us is so much more than could in any way be expected, that I force myself to ask this question, which is, however, necessary to the regularity of my proceed-

ings and the respect due to these reverend gentlemen who interest themselves so earnestly in our regard. At all events, whatever may be the result of this letter on your dear heart, let it not be a moment checked in the sentiment which is my greatest happiness in this world. Write, I conjure you, Antonio; if you think your poor little sister even wrong, at least pity her, and love her forever as she does you."

In thus appealing to the munificent friendship of Mr. Filicchi, Mrs. Seton felt on the one hand that fear, which was the natural suggestion of prudence, that she might be presuming too much upon his aid, while on the other she was encouraged, by his noble and repeated offers, to trust largely in his assistance. Although his beneficiary, she was induced by his generous manner to waive all delicacy in accepting and even in soliciting his kindness. He found so much pleasure in supplying her wants, he urged her so emphatically to draw upon his means, he reminded her so constantly that he considered her in a great measure the occasion of his increased prosperity in this world, that he made the acceptance of his generosity appear as much in the light of a favor conferred upon him as a service rendered to others. All this he had manifested in his previous letters; and his answer to Mrs. Seton's last communication was equally significant of his sterling and practical friendship. "I am extremely pleased," he says, "in seeing you out of New York, among true Christians, surrounded by all your children, and under the holy tuition of such worthy persons as those you mention. To promote the establishment you intimate, so much approved of by my Cheverus and Matignon, you will please to draw on our friends, J. Murray & Sons, of New York, for one thousand dollars, charging the same to the account in the world to come of my brother Philip and of your brother Antonio. If something more should be wanted, you are commanded to quote

it to me plainly and positively. Your prayers have so much bettered our mercantile importance here below, that, in spite of all the embargoes, political and commercial troubles which have caused and will cause the utter ruin of many, we possess greater means now than before, thanks to God, with the same unalterable good-will."

Although Mrs. Seton did not receive this additional testimony of Mr. Filicchi's friendship for many months after she had written to him, she was well assured, by his uniform kindness, that in case of need his co-operation in her undertaking would be cheerfully and efficiently bestowed. Encouraged also by all around her, she opened her boarding-school for young ladies about the beginning of September, and easily obtained the limited number of pupils that she proposed to educate. The main object of her institution being to impart a solid religious instruction and form the youthful heart to the love and practice of virtue, only the children of Catholic parents were admitted. Besides morning and evening prayer, they assisted regularly at the holy sacrifice of the mass and the recitation of the rosary. The remainder of the time was devoted to the usual branches of female education, as reading, writing, arithmetic, plain and fancy needlework, and the English and French languages. The study of the Christian doctrine, however, was the principal object of their attention, which Mrs. Seton endeavored to impress deeply upon their minds.

Though the institution which she had opened implied on her part no obligations arising from a special consecration of herself to God, yet she looked forward to the moment when such a vocation would be manifested by Divine Providence; and she regulated her actions as if she had already commenced a life of religious seclusion, living retired from the world, and applying herself only to the duties of her charge and what would tend directly to the advance-

ment of her spiritual welfare. Hence, she paid no visits but those which business or charity required. In retirement from the world she found a blessed peace, for she thereby escaped the distractions of secular life, and was enabled more easily to commune with God in the meditation of heavenly things; or, as she herself expresses it, she was "in the secret of God's tabernacle, where alone safety was to be found, with true liberty and sweet content." Her visits to the Blessed Sacrament were frequent, and she approached the holy communion every day, unless some particular circumstance prevented it. In this constant attention to holy things she found her greatest happiness, setting to profit the means of sanctification which she enjoyed, and prizing them above all worldly advantages. We may judge of her recollection, fervor, and interior joy, from the language which she employed in alluding to her spiritual privileges:—"Every morning at communion, living in the very wounds of our dearest Lord, seeing only his representatives, and receiving their benediction continually."

Besides the scholastic exercises mentioned above, it was usual to read to the pupils every Friday the narrative of our Saviour's passion, to inflame their hearts with a becoming sense of gratitude and love for their divine Redeemer. The religious instruction of the scholars was confided to the Rev. Peter Babade, of the society of St. Sulpitius, and a professor at St. Mary's College. Soon after Mrs. Seton formed his acquaintance, she discovered in him a spirit congenial to her own—a man of vivid fancy and ardent temperament, with a frankness and suavity of manner which won her entire confidence and led her to select him for the direction of her conscience. Mr. Babade frequently visited the school, and was the spiritual father and protector of the little family of which Mrs. Seton was the head. In the spring of 1809 he prepared some of the children for the im-

portant duty of first communion which took place at the close of a spiritual retreat. On this occasion Mrs. Seton was transported with the beauty and holiness of the scene around her. The solemnity of the season,—it being the paschal time,—the impressive services of the Church, and youthful innocence sealing its consecration to our Lord by an ineffable union with him in the sacrament of his love, all contributed to enliven her faith and inflame her soul with the most ardent devotion. Writing to a sister-in-law at this time, she thus alludes to the spiritual delights which she enjoyed:—“O Cecil, Cecil, this heavenly day, and the heavenly week that is past—every hour of the week filled with sacred sorrow! and this day imagine six of us, the girls all in white, as modest as angels, receiving from the hands of our blessed father Babade our adored Lord. He had been all the week preparing them, and every night our little chapel has resounded with love and adoration. This morning, in the subterraneous chapel of the Blessed Virgin, in the very depth of solitude, on the tomb of our Lord,* he celebrated the adorable sacrifice and dispensed the Sacred Passover. His tears fell fast over his precious hands while he gave it, and we had liberty to sob aloud, unwitnessed by any, as no one had an idea of our going there. What a scene! Could you but have shared it! Immediately after, the dear Mr. Dubourg came down, and said the mass of thanksgiving, served by our father Babade, whose gray hairs looked more venerable than can be expressed. Every night we have *Benediction*. Imagine twenty priests, all with the devotion of saints, clothed in white, accompanied by the whole troop of the young seminarians in surplices also, all in order, surrounding the Blessed Sacrament ex-

* An altar, with an opening in front, containing a representation of our Saviour in a state of death.

posed, singing the hymn of the resurrection. When they come to the words, 'Peace be to all here,' it seems as if our Lord is again acting over the scene that passed with the assembled disciples."

This happiness which Mrs. Seton experienced was a source of great satisfaction to the few cherished friends whom she had left on removing to Baltimore,—but particularly to her sisters-in-law, whom we have already mentioned as sympathizing warmly in her trials and remaining steadfast in their affection despite the frowns of her adversaries. These true and faithful relatives, although pained by the separation which deprived them of her valued society, rejoiced for her sake that she had found, at a distance from her native place, increased happiness for herself and her children. Miss Harriet Seton wrote to her immediately after her departure from New York in the most affectionate strain. After expressing the intensity of her suffering by the loss she had sustained, she adds:—"But why should I have but one pang? When I can already view you in the bosom of happiness, can fancy I see your dear countenance brighten with joy when pressing to your breast your sweet little boys, for a moment I can almost cease to regret your absence; but, when reflecting that that absence, in all human probability, may be an eternal one, I shudder. I am resolved to think so no more: it cannot be. HE is too good and generous to permit a separation between those who love him so tenderly: by some means or other he will surely unite us. I will cling to that dear hope with confidence. It will support me under every trial, be the soother of every pain." These words, though not prophetic, were predictive of truth. Every thing seemed to oppose the prospect of her ever being united with Mrs. Seton in this life; and, surrounded as she was by the gay and fashionable society of New York, greatly admired for her personal charms, and

closely watched by her family on account of her known preference for the Catholic religion, she feared that these obstacles might prove the cause of an eternal separation from her whom she so much loved. In addition to this, she had pledged her heart and hand to a step-brother of Mrs. Seton, who was not a Catholic,—a circumstance which would only have increased the difficulties to be encountered in the event of her determination to embrace the true faith. Yet she hoped as it were against hope; and, when she heard of the happiness enjoyed by her relative in Baltimore, she was prompted both by affection and a spirit of religion to sigh for a reunion. Alluding to the account Mrs. Seton had given of the friendship she met with in her new situation, she says, “Where is it, my beloved sister, you could go without meeting with kindness and affection? They must indeed be insensible beings who know you without loving you. Your description is delightful. Every thought, every hope, flies toward the happy spot you have pictured. Oh that I may one day be there, but not in my present state, to be happy! Let me enjoy the precious privilege of serving God in your blessed faith. What comfort can I have in my own, when I know there is a better? Dearest sister, pray for me always; never forget me when in the chapel. Recollect, at sunset, I shall always meet you at the foot of the cross in the *Miserere*. What a sweet remembrance!” These aspirations of her soul, as we shall see in the sequel, were all realized by the merciful dispensations of Providence, in defiance of the obstacles which in the natural course of things seemed to render it impracticable. In the mean time she found alleviation of her pain in corresponding with Mrs. Seton, and in the society of her sister Cecilia, who, as we have seen, had so heroically, at the age of fifteen, triumphed over every opposition to her union with the Catholic Church. She thus speaks of her in a letter to her

sister-in-law in Baltimore. "November 29, 1808.—At last I am here, close by my Cecil's elbow,—a situation that monarchs might envy. It is here alone that my poor heart feels some little cessation from pain and sorrow. What anguish the most acute could not be hushed in her dear society! Her presence actually works a charm upon my mind. I almost forget that pain ever found a place in my bosom. Oh, my dearest sister, if it was so that I could be permitted to remain, how sweetly we should pass the winter, thinking, speaking, writing to you! The world should be forgot, with all its various vanities, and we should lose ourselves in thoughts of heaven and you. It is too much to think of. What pleasure, what happiness, could be equal to it? None that could give my heart more real satisfaction. You know I have been closely allied to little misery for these four or five years past, and need some consolation to keep me from going to wreck. Such being the case, surely my darling will not refuse an innocent request from one who loves her with affection that no language can describe; it is to let me share a portion of your thoughts the 27th of December. It must ever be a day of bitter agony to you; yes, to us all;* but, as it was the will of our dear Lord, we must bow submissive and kiss the rod. Will you, can you, my sister, call to remembrance that on that day your Harriet was ushered into existence, not to repose upon a bed of roses, but of thorns, and for many years back has been accustomed to share your tenderest thoughts and receive some rules of conduct for the new year, some little affectionate letter of advice and comfort blended? I now stand more in need of this than ever, and shall sigh for the arrival of that day that brings me if only one line to say that I was remembered at the foot of the cross."

* The anniversary of the day on which her brother, Mrs. Seton's husband, died.

Mrs. Seton, on her part, entertained the warmest affection for her sisters in New York, and felt the deepest solicitude for their welfare, especially for the three who still remained in the Protestant communion. They were always in her thoughts, and were daily commended to God in her prayers. "In my dear, sacred communions," she says, "which are almost every day, often my soul cries out so much for you all that it seems impossible to express the desire in any words, but a deluge of tears is the only relief." On another occasion, alluding to two of these cherished souls, she says, "They little know what my soul endures for them. Sweet, precious beings! gladly, joyfully, would their own sister give the last drop of her blood for them!"

But, knowing well how sensibly her absence was felt by Miss Cecilia Seton, the generous little convert to Catholicity, Mrs. Seton ardently desired and prayed that the Almighty would permit her to join her in Baltimore. This young but eminently pious Christian had always found in Mrs. Seton a beloved companion, a counsellor in her difficulties, and a consoler in the hour of trial; and she could not but suffer intensely by a separation from so loved and valued a friend. Nothing, however, could abate her fervor in the practice of religion. Although left alone among her Protestant relatives, she persevered with constancy in the faithful performance of her duties. Her actions were all regulated by a rule having the approbation of her director; and, though its observance was not always perfectly agreeable to human nature, cœdience made it "sweet and easy," supporting her continually with the thought that she was accomplishing the will of Heaven. In the frequentation of the sacraments she found her "greatest earthly happiness," and her soul overflowed with consolation at the thought of the blessings imparted in the holy communion. It gave her unspeakable pleasure to hear from her sister in Baltimore; but she did not too easily

yield to the impulse of natural affection; to purify her intention she would sometimes before opening her letters offer her heart to God or make an act of resignation. Having chosen a heavenly spouse to whom she had consecrated all her affections, she firmly resisted the allurements of the world when it sought to withdraw her from that holy life which she had embraced. Entirely dependent on the care of an affectionate brother, who was a Protestant, Miss Seton was at times under the necessity of enduring with patience what otherwise her piety would have invincibly opposed. On one occasion, she was compelled by her brother to assist at a theatrical exhibition, which she did with the utmost reluctance and unwillingness, and only for the sake of escaping a greater evil. But, though present in body, her mind was far from mingling in the excitement of the drama. To prevent her eyes from falling upon those objects which others have so much curiosity to see, she placed her little niece on her lap before her, and, instead of paying any attention to what was passing around, she spent the time in the recitation of the rosary.

The Catholicity of Miss Cecilia Seton rendered her situation any thing but agreeable among her Protestant relatives. Some of them treated her with the utmost kindness, while from others she met with "angry words and cross looks," as she herself expresses it. Her religion was abused in her presence, its "abominations" descanted upon, and, between those who wished her out of New York and others who held her back, she knew no alternative but to suffer in silence for the love of God. "I would go anywhere else," she says, "and be the meanest servant. . . . Was there not an all-wise Creator to direct, and a Jesus to recompense for our pains, I know not what I should think of my situation." In these trials she was strengthened and consoled by the reflection that she was suffering persecution

for justice' sake, for that Divine Master whose grace would enable her to bear it. "How sweet is it to feel that we suffer with and for Jesus! My soul truly rejoices. The cup is at first bitter, but in it there is an unknown delight for those that truly love. | Dear, dearest sister, if I was with you I should not have these sighs, these tears, these many offerings to make. I fear my scales would be very light." In transmitting an account of her situation to Mrs. Seton, she recommended herself to her prayers, expressing the firm conviction that God would in his own good time deliver her from this conflict. The answer which she received will show that she could not have unbosomed her feelings to one who would be a better support to her amid the contradictions which she suffered.

"Yes, my Cecilia, favored of heaven, associate of angels, beloved child of Jesus, *you* shall have the victory, and **HE** the glory. To him be glory forever who has called you to so glorious a combat and so tenderly supports you through it. You will triumph, for it is Jesus who fights, not you, my dear one. Oh, no! young and timid, weak and irresolute, the lamb could not stem the torrent nor stand the beating storm: but the tender shepherd takes it on his shoulder, casts his cloak about it, and the happy trembler finds itself at home before it knew its journey was half finished. And so, my dear one, it will be with you. He will not leave you one moment, nor suffer the least harm to approach you; not one tear shall fall to the ground nor one sigh of love be lost. Happy, happy child! and if you are not removed to the sheltering fold that awaits you, he will make you one in his own bosom until your task is done. Happy, happy child! how sweet must be your converse with that Divine Spirit which puts in your heart, yet so inexperienced, so untutored, the science of the Saints! How must those blessed beings rejoice over you, while walking

steadfastly in their paths and their sufferings! It is poor sister who must beg you to pray for her. I am at rest, my darling, while you are mounting the heights of Sion. Often, too, I sleep in the garden while you are sharing the bitter cup: but it is not to be so long; his mercies are endless, and I shall not be left without my portion. Pray for me that it may not come from within: that, and that alone, is real anguish. As it is, I am daily and hourly receiving the most precious consolations, not with the enthusiastic delight you know I once experienced, but gently, gratefully offering to resign them in the very moment of enjoyment. Your letter will be food for thanksgiving and joy in our dear Lord beyond all human calculations. I would willingly go through any bodily suffering to receive such a feast for the soul. What shall I say in this case? God alone is sufficient. Our blessed Padre* has wept with joy at reading your letter; I have also consulted Mr. Dubourg, and all agree that it is a case which the hand of man must deem sacred and consign to God alone; but not without the assurance that all our prayers are and shall be united for your most precious soul's support and consolation. . . . My darling child, may you be soon released if it is his blessed will! but the sacrifice must be consummated, and sister's soul prays for you unceasingly, nor is it unaided by prayers of much more worth. How many holy souls are perpetually united for that end! . . . A thousand blessings be with you." August 8, 1808.

To be associated with her sister, enjoying every facility for the entire dedication of herself to God, would have completed the happiness of Miss Seton. But even in this she strove to conform herself to the divine will. When she was apprised of Mrs. Seton's arrival in Baltimore and the cheering prospect before her, the tears gushed from her eyes; but,

* Rev. Mr. Babade.

as she remarks herself, they were not tears of regret or impatience to be with her, but of a soul wholly resigned to her God, desiring only his will, and even feeling happy at being permitted to make so great a sacrifice. On the other hand, every day and every hour she became more and more disgusted with the world and all that belongs to it, and her thoughts involuntarily turned upon the happiness of being with her sister. "I feel my situation," she says, "daily more painful. It is God only that can know all. It seems to me he will not let it remain long so. I am hourly in fear of splitting on the many quicksands and rocks which surround me. Oh, sister, when shall I be delivered from them? And when I think of being with you it's like thinking of paradise."

Such were the elevated motives that prompted her desire of retiring from the world. She had in view only the glory of God and her own sanctification; looking upon a state of religious seclusion not as a life of ease and pleasure, but one of penance and humiliation.

To ascertain the divine will in her regard, she prayed frequently and with fervor to the Father of lights, offered her communions for this purpose, and made known to her spiritual guide all the circumstances of her situation and the dispositions of her soul. At length, in the spring of 1809, he expressed the opinion that the Almighty called her to a state of religious seclusion, and directed her to place her trust in him until he would appoint the moment for the accomplishment of her wishes.

When Mrs. Seton commenced her institution in Baltimore, she had no certain prospect of forming a society whose members would be specially consecrated to the service of God. Such an undertaking was to depend on circumstances which could only be developed in the course of time. In the autumn of 1808 the designs of Providence began to

manifest themselves more particularly in her regard. —The Rev. Mr. Babade, being on a missionary excursion at Philadelphia, became acquainted with a young lady (Miss Cecilia O'Conway) who was desirous of seeking a refuge from the distractions of the world, and for this purpose was preparing to cross the Atlantic. Having informed her of Mrs. Seton's intentions, she was induced to change her plans and remain in America. Her father accompanied her to Baltimore, and offered her to Mrs. Seton as a child whom he consecrated to God. On the 7th of December, Miss O'Conway became her first companion, and assisted in the school then under her charge. In this manifestation of Divine Providence Mr. Babade thought that he discerned the commencement of an undertaking which would gradually collect round Mrs. Seton a numerous band of spiritual daughters, and he applied to her, requesting her at the same time to repeat continually those words of the 112th psalm, "Who maketh the barren woman to dwell in a house, the joyful mother of children."

About this time another circumstance took place which still more plainly indicated the will of God in reference to the good work. Mr. Cooper, who was then a student in St. Mary's Seminary, at Baltimore, intending, if such were the divine will, to prepare himself for the sacred ministry, possessed some property; and he was desirous of literally following the maxim of the gospel:—"Go, sell what thou hast, and give it to the poor, and come, follow me." One morning, immediately after receiving the holy communion, Mrs. Seton felt a strong inclination arise within her to dedicate herself to the care and instruction of poor female children, and to organize some plan for this purpose that might be continued even after her death. She communicated this to the Rev. Mr. Dubourg. "This morning," she said, "in my dear communion, I thought, 'Dearest Saviour, if you would but give me the care of poor little children, no matter how poor;'

and, Mr. Cooper being directly before me at his thanksgiving, I thought, 'He has money :—if he would but give it for the bringing up of poor little children, to know and love you!'" Mr. Dubourg, joining his hands, observed that it was very strange; for Mrs. Seton had not mentioned the subject to any one else. "Mr. Cooper," said he, "spoke to me this very morning of his thoughts being all for poor children's instruction, and if he had somebody to do it he would give his money for that purpose; and he wondered if Mrs. Seton would be willing to undertake it." The good priest was struck at the coincidence of their views, and he requested them each to reflect upon the subject for the space of a month, and then to acquaint him with the result. During this time there was no interchange of opinion between Mrs. Seton and Mr. Cooper in relation to their wishes; and at the expiration of it they both returned separately to Mr. Dubourg, renewing the sentiments they had expressed before, one offering a portion of his temporal means* and the other her devoted service for the relief of the poor and suffering members of Christ. The providence of God in behalf of the American Church was so clearly indicated in the circumstances just related that little room was left for deliberation. Bishop Carroll, having been informed of the design, gave his warmest approbation to it, in conjunction with the Rev. Francis Nagot, the saintly superior of St. Mary's Seminary; and the only question that now presented itself for consideration was in reference to the locality of the intended establishment. Mr. Dubourg, who was the prime mover in the undertaking, was anxious to have the institution in the city of Baltimore or its vicinity. But Mr. Cooper gently insisted upon the selection of Emmettsburg as a more convenient situation; and the good priest, taking his words as pro-

* Eight thousand dollars.

phetic, replied, "Be it Emmettsburg." Mr. Cooper's preference for this situation was no doubt founded upon the physical and moral advantages which it offered for a religious community. Far from the bustle and dissipation of the city, remarkable for a pure and healthy atmosphere, and surrounded by the wild grandeur of its mountain scenery, it presented peculiar attractions for a conventual establishment.

The munificent aid contributed by Mr. Cooper toward the proposed institution justly entitles him to be considered one of its principal benefactors. He, like Mrs. Seton, had been called from the highway of error into the fold of Catholic truth. Born in Virginia, in the very heart of Protestantism, he engaged in maritime pursuits, and visited different parts of the globe. Falling dangerously sick at Paris, he felt himself urged to read the Holy Scriptures, with which he had not yet been acquainted. This reading greatly interested him, and caused him to reflect seriously upon the unhappy consequences of being unconcerned about the future. The New Testament particularly made a deep impression upon his mind, and to it he mainly attributed his conversion. While he read of the ineffable goodness of the Son of God, he burned with love for him without yet knowing him, and he ardently desired to have a friend like Him whose history he had perused. One day he heard, or thought that he heard, a voice saying to him, "If you wish me to be your friend, it depends only upon yourself." Some time after, while at London, always occupied with the same thought and engaged in reading the New Testament, in which he continually discovered new beauties, he heard the same voice addressing him a second time; but it did not indicate to him the way of acquiring the happiness to which he aspired. He therefore opened his thoughts and feelings to a Protestant friend, who advised him to examine the claims of the different Christian denominations, with the

view of embracing that which would appear to him the best-founded in truth. Accordingly, he provided himself with the doctrinal books of the various sects in England, and returned to the United States, resolved to enter seriously upon the investigation of the subject. A Catholic lady completed his sources of information by giving him a work that treated of the orthodox faith.* In the course of his inquiries he also consulted Bishop White, of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Pennsylvania, and other clergymen of note, especially to satisfy his mind in regard to the reasons that had led to the separation from the Catholic Church in the 16th century. The result of this examination was the conviction that the reformation, so called, was altogether indefensible; and in the autumn of 1807, during the visitation of Bishop Carroll at Philadelphia, he became a member of the true Church. Mr. Cooper being a man of fortune, and having mingled in fashionable life, his conversion produced a great sensation in that city. Soon after this happy event he was moved by the grace of God to embrace the ecclesiastical state, and he entered the seminary at Baltimore in September, 1808, where he formed the acquaintance of Mrs. Seton and became a co-operator in the charitable work which she now contemplated.

The vicinity of Emmettsburg having been selected for the location of the sisterhood projected by Mrs. Seton, Mr. Dubourg turned his attention to the purchase of an eligible site; and, on a visit to that part of the country shortly after, he bought the land now held by the Daughters of Charity, about half a mile south of the village. At that time the only tenement on the farm was a very small stone building, forming about one-half of what is now used as the wash-house of the institution. The property was settled in the joint

* *Ami de la Religion*, December, 1843.

tenantship of the Rev. Wm. V. Dubourg, Rev. John Dubois, and Samuel Cooper. The Rev. Mr. Dubois was at that time located near Emmettsburg, being pastor of several congregations in Frederick county and principal of a school which he had recently established. His important connection with the future history of Mrs. Seton requires that we should introduce him more fully to the reader.

Born in Paris on the 24th of August, 1764, he was remarkable from his early years for those qualities which distinguished him in after life,—piety, energy, and perseverance. Having finished his scholastic course with great honor to himself, he embraced the ecclesiastical state, and was elevated to the priesthood in the year 1787. He officiated in Paris until the outbreak of the revolution, when, like many others of his brethren, he was forced to seek an asylum in a foreign land. Having arrived at Norfolk, Va., in July, 1791, he obtained from Bishop Carroll the necessary faculties for officiating at that place and at Richmond. Furnished with commendatory letters from General Lafayette, he formed the acquaintance of many distinguished men of the times in this country, among whom were James Monroe and Patrick Henry, to the latter of whom he was indebted for occasional lessons in the English language. The kindest attentions were paid to him by these and other illustrious individuals; and it was undoubtedly owing to their intervention that he was permitted to offer up the holy sacrifice in the capital of Virginia, where but a short time before a Catholic priest had been compelled, in visiting his flock, to disguise himself for the protection of his person and life. When he had acquired some knowledge of the English tongue, Mr. Dubois was appointed by Bishop Carroll to the charge of the congregations of which Fredericktown, in Maryland, was the central point; and from the year 1794 to 1808 he was continually employed in passing from one station to another, preaching, adminis-

tering the sacraments, and instructing the young. By his exertions the first Catholic church at Frederick was erected, and from this place he visited once a month, and alternately, the church in the village of Emmettsburg and a chapel at the base of the mountain, about two miles from the town. At this period the country around wore but slight traces of cultivation; the wildness of the forest was visible on every side. In November, 1805, the two congregations above mentioned assembled on the brow of the hill, cleared a sufficient space for the site of a house, and, having hewn logs for the purpose, they erected a small one-story residence, containing two rooms.* In the following spring they commenced the building of a brick church higher up the mountain, which was completed in 1807.† Mr. Dubois soon after took possession of the log-house, and, together with the pastoral duties which he performed, commenced a school for the instruction of youth in knowledge and piety. This school was originally held in a small brick house at some distance from the mountain, but was soon removed to a more commodious log tenement on the rise of the hill.⁽⁴³⁾ Mr. Dubois having in 1809 become a member of the society of St. Sulpitius, to his care were transferred the pupils of the preparatory seminary, near Abbottstown, Pennsylvania, the object of which was to form professors for St. Mary's College and students for the seminary at Baltimore.⁽¹⁴⁾ In the spring of that year sixteen youths were conveyed from the institution in Pennsylvania to the establishment near Emmettsburg, which was now designed as an ecclesiastical school and an appendage of that in Baltimore. But the salubrity of its situation, the pure and delightful water that abounded on the spot, and above all its remoteness from the vices and distractions of a

* Known afterward as Mr. Duhamel's house.

† The present church on the mountain, but since enlarged and improved.

city, induced many parents to solicit admission for their children, though not aspirants to the priesthood; and their request was granted the more readily as, besides forming many young persons to virtue and science, it afforded useful employment to ecclesiastical students, who, in pursuing higher studies, could devote a part of their time to the teaching of inferior classes. By this arrangement also they, as well as the institution, were relieved from the expense of their education, and the house was supplied with a body of competent instructors. The undertaking succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectations of its zealous and holy founder. Such was the beginning of Mount St. Mary's College, which has become so fruitful a nursery of science and religion, and rendered such important services to society and to the American Church. From this period its history will be found closely interwoven with that of Mrs. Seton and the community under her charge.

While the preliminaries of her undertaking were in progress, Almighty God was disposing the hearts of many to co-operate in the good work, and language almost prophetic was addressed to her in reference to its successful accomplishment. Rev. Mr. Cheverus no sooner heard of the proposed institution than he wrote to Mrs. Seton in the following words, dated April 13, 1809:—"How admirable is Divine Providence! *I see already numerous choirs of virgins following you to the altar. I see your holy order diffusing itself in the different parts of the United States, spreading everywhere the good odor of Jesus Christ, and teaching by their angelical lives and pious instructions how to serve God in purity and holiness.* I have no doubt, my beloved and venerable sister, that He who has begun this work will bring it to perfection." Of this result Mrs. Seton had the fullest confidence, for every thing indicated the blessing of God upon the undertaking, and daily events

seemed most happily to concur in bringing it to maturity. She was now hailed far and near as the mother of a new and spiritual family, whose proudest distinction would be to wear the badge of Christian perfection; and her heart expanded with joy at the anticipation of the blessings which they were chosen to dispense. "The scene before me," she says, "is heavenly; I can give you no just idea of the precious souls who are daily uniting under my banner, which is the cross of Christ. The tender title of mother salutes me everywhere, even from lips that have never said to me the common salutation among strangers."

The second lady who offered herself as a candidate for the new sisterhood was a Miss Maria Murphy of Philadelphia, remarkable for her gentle and amiable disposition. She left the house of her mother without her consent, in obedience to what she deemed to be the will of God for the sanctification of her soul, having previously ceded the little property she possessed to her relatives. Mrs. Seton endeavored to prevail upon her to return to her family, but her tears and prayers were victorious, and she remained with the full approbation of her parents. She arrived in Baltimore some time in the month of April, 1809. In May of the same year two others hailed Mrs. Seton as their spiritual mother,—Miss Mary Ann Butler of Philadelphia, and Miss Susan Clossy of New York, the former only a few days before the latter. Several ladies in Baltimore were also preparing themselves at this time to join the community, while others in the vicinity of Emmettsburg looked forward with delight to the blessings which they hoped to enjoy under the spiritual guidance of Mrs. Seton. The following letter to her, from one of these postulants, will show the lively joy awakened by the expectation of her coming, as well as the piety and zeal which formed the elements of the new undertaking. "Oh, my reverend mother! I cannot tell you what an effect

that sweet letter had on me. It seems to me it has enkindled in my breast flames which I hope with the grace of God will never be extinguished. . . . My ghostly father desired me to offer up my communion, not only for you according to your desire, but to obtain of our dear Lord an increase of the sentiments which he has been pleased to inspire me with, through you, his servant. I also implored that day the intercession of the Virgin Mary, that she would vouchsafe to beg for me of her blessed Son our Lord all the requisite dispositions which I hope will fit me for the happy life which I sue for. You asked me, dear mother, if I did not wish to see the sisters. I do. But is it not a weakness in me? I am afraid I seek for some consolation, and I know I ought not. Oh, when shall I be indifferent about any thing, even spiritual comforts? This I must learn at your school: for you must know I am but a child: I only begin to crawl in the ways of God; and that interior spirit which detaches us from every thing that is not God, and makes the true spouse of Christ, I have yet to acquire. I stand sometimes on the top of our dear Mount St. Mary's, whence I can see the happy spot that is to receive you and my sisters and myself, and I can hardly contain my joy." May 2, 1809.

Mother Seton, as we shall hereafter call her, possessed in an eminent degree that fervor which she communicated to others; but the sentiment of her own unworthiness predominated in her heart. She looked upon herself as altogether unsuited to the task of forming souls to the practice of the Christian virtues; and on the evening of the day that it was assigned to her by the bishop and clergy, her spiritual advisers, she was seized with a transport of mingled love and humility, in reflecting upon the subject. Being with two or three of her sisters, and the discourse turning upon the probable designs of Providence in their regard, Mother Seton became so penetrated with the awful responsibility,

and sense of her own incapacity, that she was almost inconsolable. For some moments she wept bitterly in silence, then, throwing herself upon her knees, she confessed aloud the most frail and humiliating actions of her life from her childhood upward; after which she exclaimed, in the most affecting manner, her hands and eyes raised toward heaven and the tears gushing down her cheeks, "My gracious God! You know my unfitness for this task. I who by my sins have so often crucified you, I blush with shame and confusion. How can I teach others, who know so little myself, and am so miserable and imperfect?" The sisters who were present were overwhelmed by the scene before them, and, falling on their knees, gave vent to their tears and painful emotions.

Mother Seton having now received four candidates into her house, it was the opinion of Mr. Dubourg that the time had arrived for their assuming, as far as practicable, the form of a religious community. She therefore proposed to the sisters to appear in a habit like that which she wore herself, and which consisted of a black dress with a short cape, similar to a costume that she had observed among the religious of Italy. Her head-dress was a neat white muslin cap, with a crimped border, and a black crape band around the head, fastened under the chin.* This costume they assumed on the 1st of June, 1809, and the next day—feast of Corpus Christi—they appeared at the public service in St. Mary's Chapel for the first time in their conventual habit, receiving the divine sacrament of the altar as the seal of their consecration to God, and gladdening the hearts of all who witnessed this edifying scene, so full of promise to the Church. Mr. Dubourg, in particular, was in raptures at the spectacle presented by this little band of devoted sisters, which had

* Mrs. Seton had worn this dress since the death of her husband

been formed under his wise superintendence and was to be the germ of so much good to religion and society.⁽¹⁵⁾

Mother Seton herself, with a soul glowing with charity and delight, organized her community by the adoption of such rules as circumstances permitted. Regular hours were appointed for the daily actions and duties of the sisters, who were employed partly in attending to the domestic concerns and partly in conducting the exercises of the school. Stated days were fixed for the reception of the holy communion, and the sisters were exhorted to practise the mortification of the tongue and other senses, and to apply to certain studies for the purpose of qualifying themselves for fulfilling the future designs of Providence. No particular religious institute had yet been adopted for the final organization of the society, but it was deemed expedient that Mother Seton should bind herself, at least for a time, by some special act of consecration, to the holy life she had embraced; and for this reason she made a vow privately, in the presence of Bishop Carroll, obligating her for the space of one year to the practice of poverty, chastity, and obedience. With what sentiments she assumed this additional obligation may be best gathered from the language in which she herself alludes to it. The object of it, she says, was to embrace poverty, in whose arms she desired to live and die, and from which, indeed, she had no means of escape; to promise a chastity so dear and lovely that she esteemed it her true delight to cherish it; and, above all, to bind herself to obedience, the true protection and safeguard of her soul. To give to the new community all the care and support which the success of such an institution demands, the Rev. Mr. Dubourg was appointed its ecclesiastical superior, whatever form it might subsequently take. Various names were suggested for the designation of the society; but this point could not be well determined until the adoption of a permanent rule which

would give a fixed character to the institute. However, at the request of Mother Seton, it was agreed that the members of the community should be called "Sisters of St. Joseph;" for it was the dictate of her piety to place herself and society, sisters and children, under the protecting care of St. Joseph, the faithful guardian of the Son of God on earth.

Shortly after the adoption of the conventual habit, the sisterhood had an accession of two members from the city of Baltimore,—Mrs. Rose White, a widow lady, and Miss Catharine Mullen. Divine Providence at the same time was wafting to this abode of Christian piety another soul, whose highest ambition had long been the total consecration of herself to God, under the maternal guidance of Mother Seton. This was Miss Cecilia Seton, her sister-in-law. As we have stated, her spiritual directors had finally decided that she was called to religious seclusion; but circumstances seemed to forbid the immediate execution of her wishes. The Almighty, however, listening to the fond aspirations of her heart, which looked only to his greater glory, accomplished in her behalf what human calculations could not achieve. She fell dangerously ill, and her physician deeming it expedient for her safety to try the effect of a sea-voyage, she at once expressed a wish to visit Baltimore, where she was confident of meeting with the tenderest care from Mother Seton. The arrangements were accordingly made, and her sister Harriet, already mentioned, who had been her constant nurse and was nearest to her heart, was appointed, among other attendants, to accompany her, to share her sufferings, and in all probability to receive her last sigh. On the 12th of June they landed at Baltimore, Miss Cecilia's symptoms having grown much less favorable than at her setting out from New York. But she was now in the arms of one whom she delighted to call her sister, her friend, her mother;

and it would be difficult to describe the joy of these devoted beings in meeting each other again. Miss Cecilia's attendants having remained with her a few days, returned to New York, with the exception of her sister Harriet, who had intended also to return, but was compelled to stay with her beloved and suffering relative in consequence of her disease becoming still more alarming. In this state of things the physicians who attended her in Baltimore advised a jaunt into the country; and it was immediately determined that Mother Seton should accompany her to the mountains of Emmettsburg, the site of her contemplated institution. As soon as the necessary arrangements could be made, she, with her two sisters-in-law, her eldest daughter, and Sister Maria Murphy, left Baltimore in a coach, on the feast of St. Aloysius, 21st of June, and on the following day the party arrived at Emmettsburg.* The house on the land belonging to the sisterhood not being as yet habitable, the Rev. Mr. Dubois, President of Mt. St. Mary's Seminary, kindly offered them the log-house on the mountain, a little above the seminary, and paid them all that attention and hospitable care for which he was proverbial.† A few days

* Among the papers of Mother Seton we find the following note of the journey to Emmettsburg, which shows that, although the ladies travelled a great portion of the way on foot, they proceeded with light and joyful hearts. "We were obliged to walk the horses all the way, and have walked ourselves—all except Cecilia—nearly half the time: this morning four miles and a half before breakfast. The dear patient was greatly amused at the procession, and all the natives astonished as we went before the carriage. The dogs and pigs came out to meet us, and the geese stretched their necks in mute demand, to know if we were any of their sort, to which we gave assent." In this happy description we have an illustration of that wonderful cheerfulness for which Mother Seton was remarkable.

† At this time Mr. Dubois had vacated the log-house on the hill, and removed to the buildings at the foot of the mountain, provided for the seminary

after, the two younger daughters of Mether Seton joined her at the mountain cot,—an humble dwelling indeed, but holy and venerable in the remembrance of all who beheld it adorned with the beauty of every virtue.

Measures were immediately taken to put the farm-house on the property of the sisterhood in a fit condition to be occupied. In the mean time Miss Cecilia Seton recovered her health, at least temporarily, and began to enjoy the facilities which that favored spot afforded for innocent relaxation and pious contemplation. As soon as her strength permitted it, she would sally forth, in the company of Mother Seton and her sister Harriet, to ramble in the woods that led to the heights of the mountain, enjoying equally the pure and invigorating air and the beautiful prospect of the romantic country around. On other occasions, she would accompany Mother Seton and her children to the little church, situated above them on the hill, to offer the morning or evening adoration, or to assist at the holy sacrifice of mass. Her sister Harriet, however, not being a Catholic, never followed them into the chapel, but either walked in the woods or seated herself on a rock in front of the church, musing within herself, and desiring to be with her companions in the holy place. One evening in July, when the sun was about to sink behind the tops of the trees that cover the summit of the mountain, and every thing in nature was lovely, Miss Harriet looked on every side, her soul feasting upon the beauty of the scene. (Still, a sad depression stole over her mind. She saw the little band ascend the steps of the chapel and the door close after them, while she remained alone, as it were, an outcast from God's holy temple.) Sinking at the foot of a tree, she was overpowered by her feelings. The tears coursed down her cheeks, and her soul became the theatre of the most conflicting emotions. Mother Seton, on returning from the church, finding her in this state of de

jection, inquired the cause of her distress. At first no reply was given; but, on being pressed to explain her grief, she exclaimed, "Why, oh why cannot I go into the church with you all?" "And why not," replied Mother Seton, "if you wish it? If you cannot perceive the sweetness of His presence as we do, at least you might say your prayers." Rejoiced by this encouraging answer, she ever after accompanied her friends to the chapel, and was a pattern of recollection and devotion. She often remarked, speaking of the moment of the elevation, that "she thought she could not feel a more awful impression if our adored Lord was really before her on his clouds of majesty." At length, on the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, knowing that the divine sacrifice was offered for her both in Baltimore and at the Mountain, and seeing her sister Cecilia, Mother Seton and her daughter Annina, all before her at the heavenly banquet, her heart was overpowered; yet it struggled on in the conflict between nature and grace until, between ten and eleven o'clock at night, "stealing up to the church by the light of a full moon, in deepest silence, her arms crossed upon her breast, and the moon's reflection full on her pale but celestial countenance, I saw," says Mother Seton, who describes the circumstance, "the falling tears of love and adoration, while we said, first the *Miserere* and then the *Te Deum*, which from her childhood had been our family prayers. Descending the mountain, she burst forth the full heart:—"It is done, my sister; I am a Catholic: (the cross of our dearest Lord is the desire of my soul: I will never rest till he is mine." Mother Seton, well aware of what she would be compelled to endure on her return, (for she had formed an engagement that made a return obligatory,) represented to her the consequences of the step she meditated, in order to prepare her heart for a full and perfect sacrifice. "Yes," she replied, "I have examined all this in my own mind. I have

weighed well the consequences; and the engagement I have made I will keep, if, as a Catholic, I am received by those dear friends to whom I am sincerely attached; but I cannot remain a Protestant; and if, as a Catholic, I am rejected even by this dear one, (showing the miniature of him whom she had promised to marry,) I MUST SAVE MY SOUL."

If nothing more of interest had occurred during Mother Seton's brief sojourn on the Mount than this happy change in the religious sentiments of her beloved relative, this would have been amply sufficient to render it an ever memorable period. She remained there only till the end of July; but, in the few weeks that she passed in that holy and secluded spot, a triumph of grace had been achieved which afforded her another source of abundant consolation amid the trials to which her faith had subjected her.

BOOK VI

Mother Seton and her companions remove to St. Joseph's Valley—The conventual house—Elements of the sisterhood—Design of the institute—Its rules—First retreat—Counsels of the Superior—Discipline enforced—Employment of the sisters—Privations—Miss Harriet Seton—Her fervent piety and death—Sympathy for Mother Seton—The community move to a new building—School commenced—Illness and death of Cecilia Seton—Condition of the institution—Visit of Bishop Cheverus—Rev. John B. David—Second retreat—Correspondence between Mother Seton and Mr. Filicchi—Her gratitude—Efforts for the permanency of the house.

WHILE Mother Seton was enjoying the hospitality of Rev. Mr. Dubois in the little cot above the seminary, the house on the newly-purchased property, destined for St. Joseph's

community, had undergone the necessary repairs to make it habitable. The arrangements having been completed, she removed thither on the 30th of July, accompanied by her three daughters, her two sisters-in-law, and three members of her community, two of whom were from the immediate neighborhood. On the same day, the other portion of the sisterhood who had been left in Baltimore started for Emmetsburg, agreeably to the directions of Mother Seton. The travelling party consisted of nine persons, among whom were her two sons; and they performed the journey in a wagon, which, with the quantity of furniture and baggage it contained, afforded no great convenience as a mode of conveyance; but the anticipation of their happy home in St. Joseph's Valley awakened among the sisters a lively joy, which was equally shared by their companions. On the feast of St. Ignatius, July 31, they reached Emmettsburg, and were received with a most affectionate welcome by Mother Seton and those around her in the little dwelling where the contemplated society was to continue its humble beginnings. To any but those who had entered upon a life of sacrifice and penance for God's sake, the community-house would have appeared insupportable. It was a small tenement, as we have already stated, consisting of one story and a garret, having only two rooms on each floor. Here were crowded together sixteen persons, many of whom had been reared amid the comforts of life, and all of whom had been better situated in the world; but, as the saintly leader of this generous band of women afterward observed, the daily offering of the holy sacrifice, and the happiness of possessing the Blessed Sacrament, in a little closet just wide enough to hold a small altar, made many things convenient which otherwise could not have been borne. At this period the sisters were ten in number, including Mother Seton, who could not have been aided by more competent subjects

to carry out the design which she then contemplated.* All were full of zeal for the new undertaking, and animated with an ardent desire of consecrating themselves to God in the service of their neighbor; while some were particularly qualified by their education for the mental culture of youth, and others had a special capacity for conducting the equally important matters of the household department, which at that time imposed no small degree of labor upon the sisters. Among them also were those whose peculiar attraction was to cultivate the interior life, while others evinced a more marked disposition for the active offices of charity. Thus did Divine Providence, in laying the foundations of an institution which was to combine the sanctification and perfection of its members with the practice of the most exalted and diversified charity toward their fellow-beings, select the fittest materials for the execution of his design, and exhibit in the rising community every variety of talent and virtue that could place it on a solid footing. But, as nothing important, either in spiritual or temporal matters, can be accomplished by a numerous society without the observance of a certain order in their employments, rules were adopted for the community until such time as it would receive a more permanent organization. Mother Seton having determined, in conjunction with the ecclesiastical superiors, to form the institute upon that of the "Daughters of Charity," founded by St. Vincent of Paul, in France, measures were immediately taken to procure the constitution and rules of that society; and it was hoped at the same time that some of its members would visit this country, in order to aid the rising community of St.

* The following are the names of those who composed the sisterhood:—
Mrs. Eliza A. Seton, Cecilia O'Conway, Maria Burke, Susan Clossy, Mary Ann Butler, Rose White, Catharine Mullen, Sarah Thompson, Ellen Thompson, Cecilia Seton.

Joseph's by their experience and example.* Another important object of attention was the erection of a more commodious residence for the sisters. The contracted space to which they were confined affording no conveniences for the different exercises of the house, workmen were soon employed to put up a log-building of sufficiently ample dimensions, and every effort was made to accomplish the undertaking with the utmost despatch. In the mean time the temporary regulations of the sisterhood were observed with as much exactitude as practicable under the circumstances. The sisters were directed to rise at five o'clock in the morning, and, after vocal and mental prayer until half-past six, they assisted at the holy sacrifice of mass, reciting the first part of the Rosary on their way to the chapel and the second on returning. After breakfast, at nine o'clock they made an act of adoration of the Sacred Heart, and attended to various employments until a quarter before twelve, when they devoted a few moments to examination of conscience, adoration, and reading of the New Testament. During dinner one of the community read a portion of the Holy Scriptures. After the recreation at two o'clock there was a reading from the Following of Christ, an adoration, and work until five; then visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and recitation of the third part of the Rosary. At supper the *Spiritual Combat* was read. After the recreation, at half-past eight o'clock, there was a spiritual reading, followed by prayers, when the community retired. These rules, while they contributed to the order and regularity of the house, presented to the sisters abundant means of sanctification. In order to inspire them with a lofty estimate of their holy vocation and with zeal in the performance of their duties, a spiritual retreat—the first of

*The Rt. Rev. Benedict J. Flaget, Bishop elect of Bardstown, who was then about to embark for France, was commissioned to obtain the rules of St. Vincent.

the community—was opened on the 10th of August by the superior, the Rev. Mr. Dubourg, who in his daily instructions enforced the great truths of religion and the motives of Christian perfection, in that eloquent and impressive manner for which he was distinguished.

Besides the daily course of exercises prescribed to the sisters, they were directed to employ themselves in offices of charity, in the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, according to the opportunities which Providence would supply. Among their spiritual duties, mental prayer was to be considered as holding the first rank, and the sisters were exhorted to perfect themselves as far as they could, with the help of divine grace, in this holy art of conversing with God, remembering that recollection and disengagement are the two principal dispositions required in those who wish to practise it successfully. After meditation, spiritual reading and examination of conscience were deemed of the greatest importance. Besides the reading in common, the sisters were directed to read something also in private, and to meet once a week for a conference on spiritual matters. In regard to the reception of holy communion, the superior makes the following judicious remarks, in a letter to Mother Seton, September 13, 1809:—"I have often reflected on the danger of frequent regular communions in a community. That danger must strike you as it does me. Repeat then very often to our daughters that the rule does not prescribe any number of communions in the week, but only restricts them to three, leaving it to the prudence of the director to permit whom he thinks fit to approach so frequently, or render communions more rare with certain individuals. Nothing should so often be inculcated as the dispositions necessary for very frequent communion, and the assurance that the superior will never judge of the merits of a sister from her approaching oftener or more seldom, but from the

fruit she derives from it. The extraordinary fourth communion in the week should be limited to the feasts of our Saviour and Blessed Lady, and three or four of the patrons, such as St. Joseph, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Aloysius, and St. Francis de Sales. This limitation will set a greater value on that favor and excite a greater devotion on those days." In the same communication Mr. Dubourg expresses his great satisfaction in hearing that a "generous competition to please God in their superiors reigned among all the sisters."

Charity, the queen of virtues, reigned supreme in this favored spot. All seemed united by one common aspiration, and aided each other in fulfilling the duties of their vocation. The sisters found ample employment in their spiritual and domestic affairs, in the instruction of youth and the care of the sick. The scholastic exercises demanded as yet but a small portion of their time, as the narrow space to which they were confined rendered it impossible to conduct a school, properly so called. The only class held at this time consisted of the two boarders who had followed Mother Seton from Baltimore, and her three daughters. But, independently of this, the sisters found sufficient scope for the exercise of their industry in the variety of domestic employments which a community necessarily presents, while their charity was called into requisition by several families in the vicinity that were afflicted with sickness. Even when her own house was filled with patients suffering from the fall fever, the zeal and charity of Mother Seton did not withhold from others the valuable services of her spiritual daughters. The Rev. Mr. Dubois, chaplain of the sisterhood, celebrated mass every day in its humble chapel; and on Sundays, after the early service at St. Joseph's, he officiated either in the village church or that on the mountain. It was customary for the sisters to attend this late service,—a

circumstance which contributed much to the honor of religion, by the edifying example which they displayed on their way to the church, reciting a part of the Rosary, and in the holy place assisting with piety and recollection at the divine office. They also rendered important assistance on such occasions, in decorating the sanctuary of religion and performing the duties of the choir. But there was another circumstance connected with their Sunday visits to the mountain, which deserves to be specially recorded. After the morning ceremony, they and the young ladies under their charge would assemble at a place called the "Grotto," whose associations are sacred in the recollection of all who ever frequented that interesting spot. The grotto was a romantic part of the mountain, a little above the seminary, where nature displayed itself in all its rude and picturesque beauty. Huge rocks, overgrown with moss, and projecting over a ravine where a crystal stream gurgled down the hill in the midst of dense foliage and wild flowers of various hues,—such were the attractions that had made it a favorite resort. Here, too, the hand of piety had planted the cross—the symbol of our redemption,—and erected the image of her who is justly styled the Help of Christians. Here would Mother Seton, before taking the simple repast with her little band, invoke the divine blessing, by reciting the "canticle of the three children;" and none that ever witnessed it could ever forget the tones of that voice and the fervor of that heart which, in the midst of the wild scenery of nature, called upon all creatures to bless and magnify their Creator.

Christian mortification was a characteristic feature of the sisterhood; and, from the description which Mother Seton has given of it, we may infer that its inmates had begun in earnest to labor at the work of their sanctification. "So earnest was every heart," she says, "that carrot-coffee, salt pork, and buttermilk, seemed yet too good a living." One

of the sisters who had lived in ease before her retirement from the world is thus spoken of in a letter written from St. Joseph's at this time:—"She is making fine progress in the paths of penance, and drinks carrot-coffee with as good a grace as if she had been used to mortification all her life, and takes dry bread at breakfast as if it was really her choice. Besides, her eloquent tongue has a continual embargo on it, except in recreation; and this is no small penance, you may suppose, to us all." The contracted residence of the sisters not allowing them to conduct a school which would afford the means of support, and the funds of the house being entirely absorbed by the purchase and improvement of the property, the revenue of the institution was not commensurate with the expenditure required for so numerous a family; and, owing to these circumstances, the community were at first reduced to a very destitute condition. For this reason, a beverage was manufactured from carrots, to supply the place of coffee, and was sweetened with molasses. The bread used by the sisters was made of rye, and of the coarsest description. "For many months," writes one of the community, "we were so reduced that we often did not know where the next day's meal would come from." On Christmas-day they considered themselves fortunate in having some smoked herrings for their dinner and a spoonful of molasses for each. But these privations, far from being unacceptable to the sisters, were welcomed as marks of the divine protection; and they vied with each other in making light of the inconveniences they had to suffer. Mother Seton, notwithstanding the difficulties to be encountered, seemed to be the more rejoiced that the Son of God found her community worthy of sharing his cross. Often, in a kind of transport, she would exclaim, her arms extended toward heaven, "Oh, my sisters! let us love him: let us ever be ready for his holy will. He is our father. Oh, when we shall be

in our dear eternity, then we will know the value of suffering here below!" She never ceased to inculcate to her spiritual daughters the duty of sanctifying their souls, and thus preparing themselves for any good work in which it would please God to employ them; but, knowing well that they could become worthy instruments of the divine goodness only by an entire disengagement from themselves and the world, she endeavored, both by word and example, to inspire them with a sincere love for the cross of Christ. Nor were opportunities wanting for the generous practice of self-denial, as the preceding narrative shows and as will appear still more from the sequel.

But, in the midst of many trials, the community of St. Joseph's presented abundant sources of consolation, among which the admission of Miss Harriet Seton into the Catholic Church is deserving of particular notice. We have seen that this young lady, convinced of the truth, formed the generous resolution of embracing it, despite the formidable difficulties which such a step would naturally create on the part of her relatives and friends abroad. From the moment she resolved upon it, her whole aim was to prepare herself for a worthy reception of the sacraments. Every means of promoting her spiritual welfare was set to profit. She joined the sisters of St. Joseph's in all their exercises with a most cheerful grace, and united with them in the most common labors, bearing the hardships of their living as if she had always been accustomed to it. But, as the happy day approached on which she was to seal her consecration to the service of God by a first union with Jesus Christ in the sacrament of his love, her soul was filled with holy raptures, and the joy which she felt displayed itself visibly in her ardent zeal to adorn the altar for that blessed occasion. It was the festival of Our Lady of Mercy,—the 24th of September,—a day of heavenly delight to her

and of lively joy to the whole community, but particularly to Mother Seton. The following sentiments, which she penned on the same day, will better illustrate the state of her mind than any words of description. "Is it so, O my Jesus! source of all delight? Have I this day received you into my heart?—a thought too ecstatic; a thought replete with the purest, the most celestial happiness! Is it so? Jesus, my all, has condescended to enter my unworthy breast, to converse with me, to call me his own! He will no longer permit me to be a stray sheep; he has taken me on his shoulders, and carried me home to repose in peace on his divine bosom. Eternal praises and thanksgivings would come short of what I would wish to render to him for all his mercies in calling me to his holy Catholic Church, the only true faith. Oh, may this day of heavenly happiness be marked in heaven,—this day on which my fervent and firm resolutions to remain until death therein were sealed and signed by his precious body and blood! May I ever find in his adorable sacrament the same ardent desire, the same fervent wish, to be for eternity united to Jesus!"

To consolidate this happiness by setting to profit the opportunities which she enjoyed in the solitude of St. Joseph's Valley, she solicited from her friends in New York a further leave of absence than had at first been obtained. Her request, however, not being granted, she took occasion to urge it still more forcibly upon their favorable consideration. In a letter to a married sister, whom she viewed in the light of a mother, she says, "Your long-expected letter, my beloved mother, has at length arrived, but, with it, not, as I had fondly anticipated, a compliance with the wish I had recently expressed,—an intention, I thought, very far from displeasing or giving you the smallest pain, and one which, from the very particular and critical situation of our dear Cecilia's health, might naturally be expected. But,

with my usual sincerity on all occasions with you, I *must*, and feel it my most sacred duty to tell you that, since my absence from Greenhill,* that revolution of sentiment you in all probability feared—a fear of which no part of the family, I believe, were divested at the time of my leaving home --has already taken place. I have united myself to Cecilia by another tie, stronger than any that ever linked our hearts before,—the sacred tie of *religion*. A union of sentiment on this point, I feel very confident, will meet with many reproaches from all those so dear to my heart; but, after once experiencing the full conviction of having acted, not, as many may think, from the thoughtless caprice of the moment or under the influence of persuasion, but in conformity to the irresistible conviction of that monitor within which forcibly led me to the step I have taken, all that can or does follow will be insufficient to shake my firm resolution to adhere to it. My motives are known to God alone, in whose power only it is to develop the secret intentions of the heart. Under the existing causes, then, I think, combining all circumstances, you will consent to gratify my wish of remaining where I am. My affection and attachment for you can end but with my life. A happier day may come, when I shall have an opportunity of disclosing the extent of it.” She then alludes to her matrimonial engagement with Dr. Barclay Bayley, and expresses her determination to fulfil it, provided his sentiments toward her be not altered by her conversion to Catholicity. “Should such a change, however, take place, I shall endeavor,” she says, “to seek my peace and happiness where I cannot be disappointed.”

We have placed this letter before the reader to show the invincible courage with which Miss Seton nerved herself

* The residence of her brother-in-law's family.

against every opposition to the step she had taken. Home and kindred, the favor of friends, the pleasures of the world,—all were accounted as nothing, so far as they conflicted with the one thing necessary—the salvation of her soul. She would rather be denounced in the company of true believers and endure the hardships and privations which the humble cot of St. Joseph's then imposed, than, at the sacrifice of her interior peace, shine in the gay circles of the world or taste of its fascinating but delusive joys. In this generous resolve she was doubly confirmed by the grace of that invigorating sacrament in which the Holy Ghost with his manifold gifts descends into the Christian soul. This happiness she enjoyed on the 20th of October, when Bishop Carroll honored St. Joseph's sisterhood with a first visit and administered the holy rite of confirmation. Additional light and energy could not have been more opportunely imparted to this young and fervent convert; for no sooner did the intelligence of her union with the Catholic Church reach New York than she became an object of censure and persecution, while no small share of the dreadful mischief was attributed to the "siren voice" of Mother Seton. The reproachful letters of her friends and the learned ones of controvertists were darted upon her; but, equally regardless of the imputations cast upon her sincerity and upon her wisdom, she only looked forward to the "supernal prize," striving, by a frequent approach of the sacraments and by exercising every mark of faithful souls, to prepare herself for the rewards of eternal life. She soon became ripe for heaven. During the autumn and winter of 1809, the sisterhood of St. Joseph's was severely tried by sickness as well as privation,—an event which the cautious observer easily anticipated. Bishop Carroll, writing to Mother Seton in the beginning of November, remarks:—"I cannot reflect with patience on your situation and that of your dear sisters for this winter: for Mr. Du-

bourg says you cannot go into your new house till the new year, and surely that is no time to remove. I hope and trust that, contrary to the appearance of your open and inconvenient house, you may not any of you get your deaths." Whether this circumstance contributed or not to the generation of disease, the sisterhood was for several months an infirmary. Among the patients was Mother Seton's eldest son, who, having been seized with a nervous fever, was sent to St. Joseph's, to be nursed under the immediate eye of his loving parent. But, with the scant accommodations of the house, it was next to impossible to provide the suffering boy with the conveniences which his situation required. Afterward he became so ill that the last rites of religion were administered to dispose him for a happy death. His decease being momentarily expected, the sisters were already preparing for the issue of such an event, and his aunt Harriet assisted in arranging the shroud : but it pleased God to restore the health of the child, and the shroud destined for him shortly after enclosed the earthly remains of her who had made it. While attending with unremitting care at the bedside of her invalid sister Cecilia, she was seized with a violent fever which soon brought her to the verge of the grave. Such were the amiable qualities and shining virtues of Miss Harriet Seton, that she had become endeared to every member of the community; but on the bed of sickness her eminent piety shone forth with a lustre which excited the admiration of all around her. When fever parched her burning lips, when the throbbings of the temple indicated the intense sufferings of the head, when insensible as it were to every thing else, speak but of God, of heaven, of eternity, and her sinking faculties seemed to revive. To the last she manifested a great confidence in the intercession of Mary, in whose honor she wore the holy scapular : but her devotion to the blessed sacrament of the altar was of the most lively

and ardent description. Since her first communion she had received weekly, and sometimes oftener, this bread of angels, and during her sickness it was a source of unspeakable joy to her heart. Even in the moments of delirium produced by inflammation of the brain, all her thoughts seemed to be engrossed by that divine object; and the last sign of remaining life and reason that she exhibited was an effort to join the sisters in a hymn at the benediction. She then sank into a stupor, from which she passed to the sleep of death on the 22d of December. The following day her precious remains were conveyed, amid the tears and prayers of her companions, to the silent woods, and deposited in the very spot which she herself had chosen. During the preceding summer, Mother Seton had one day invited the sisters to take a walk and select a place for a cemetery. Miss Harriet Seton accompanied them. Some designated one spot, some another; but the attention of Miss Seton was arrested by a large oak-tree before her, and, having an apple in her hand, she playfully threw it against the tree, saying, in a loud tone of voice, "This is my spot." Her words were predictive; in four months she reposed there, the "first-fruits of them who sleep" in St. Joseph's Valley.

Though the decease of her cherished sister was a severe trial to Mother Seton, she derived abundant consolation from her lively faith, which viewed the afflictions dispensed by the hand of God as evidences of his special favor and protection. She also found, in the particular interest manifested for her and those around her by the most pious and respectable ecclesiastics in the country, a support to her fortitude and increased encouragement to persevere in the paths of Christian perfection. "As you are happy enough," writes the Rev. Anthony Kohlman, then in New York, "to take your many trials in that light in which the saints considered them, as great favors of your divine Bridegroom,—as, instead

of wavering at these repeated strokes, you feel your courage increased, your confidence strengthened, and your love to God more and more inflamed,—we have great reason to admire and praise the amiable conduct of the Almighty, who, as holy Job says, tries his faithful servants so admirably. In the eyes of the unwise they seem to be afflicted unto death, while their souls are in peace and abounding with consolation. If the sudden departure of Harriet filled us with grief, my joy, I must confess, was no less in considering that happy state of fervor and love in which Jesus called this his beloved spouse to his eternal embraces.” January 17, 1810. “What a happy death!” exclaims the Rev. Mr. Cheverus, alluding to the same event: “may my last end be like hers! Our penance is to be appreciated rather by its fervor than by the length of time. She who ‘loved much’ became in a moment a saint and the friend of Jesus. . . . I look upon your trials, difficulties, &c. as the stamp of divine favor and protection upon your establishment. Remember St. Theresa, St. Frances Chantal, &c. Like them, I hope you will become saints, and the mothers of many saints.” January 24, 1810. Mother Seton received letters of a similar import from Bishop Carroll and other members of the clergy; but that of Rev. John B. David, who had then become officially connected with the sisterhood in the capacity of ecclesiastical superior, deserves special notice, as well on this account as for the solid and excellent advice which it contains. “Crosses, privations, and afflictions, seem to be the lot which our blessed Lord has apportioned for your soul. Courage, my dear mother! these are the precious jewels with which the Divine Spouse is pleased to adorn his bride. They are the most valuable earnest of his love and the sweet pledges of his future liberalities. Our dear Harriet is not dead, but lives to her God. In lamenting her loss for us, I cannot forbear looking upon her death as a happy

event for herself. From what storms and dangers is she not delivered! Perhaps God foresaw that, if she had lived, the persecutions and allurements of a wicked world would have shaken her constancy and caused her to forsake her good resolutions. Let us adore the unsearchable, but always wise and merciful, ways of Providence; and let us more than ever convince ourselves that Jesus wishes to be the sole possessor of our hearts, and would have his spouses above all others to abandon themselves with perfect resignation into his hands, casting away all anxious cares, leaving entirely to him the choice of the good or evils that are to befall them, with a total abnegation of their own interest and a full reliance on the care of his providence, having no other thought, in troublesome and painful encounters, than to submit lovingly to whatever God will be pleased to ordain. The soul in this state of resignation fears neither sickness nor poverty, desires neither health nor riches, but simply applies to the service of her Master, according to this word of our Lord to a beloved spouse of his: 'Take care of me and I will of thee.' How precious are the fruits of this resignation! It makes the soul the dwelling of peace, joy, and liberty, which are the true fruits of the Divine Spirit." December 28, 1809. Such were the excellent maxims which Mother Seton adopted for the regulation of her sentiments and actions. Submission to the holy will of God was constantly on her lips and in her heart; and, in the numerous and severe trials which she had to contend with, she found perpetual occasions for the practice and cultivation of this necessary virtue.

The new house which had been undertaken for the more convenient location of the sisters having been sufficiently advanced to allow them to occupy at least a part of it, they removed thither on the 20th of February, 1810. (It was a log-building, two stories high, fronting to the south, and having the main entrance equidistant from the two ends

At the eastern extremity a small kitchen was attached to it, and on the west was another addition for the purpose of a sanctuary, sacristy, and an apartment where strangers could assist at mass, facing one end of the sanctuary.) The choir, where the community heard mass and performed other devotions, was immediately in front of the altar, and by means of a folding-door could be united with or separated from it as the occasion required. The blessed Sacrament was conveyed from its former locality to its more worthy but humble receptacle, with all the solemnity which circumstances permitted, the Rev. Mr. Dubois officiating, and the sisters walking in procession, with hearts joyfully uplifted to God, who was leading them another step in their way to usefulness. The newly-constructed sanctuary could boast of no rich decorations; but there was a beauty of virtue and a fragrance of devotion that adorned its precincts and made it lovely in the eyes of the Almighty. "So poor was the little altar," says a cotemporary witness, "that its chief ornaments were a framed portrait of our dear Redeemer, which Mother had brought with her from New York, her own little silver candlesticks, some wild laurel, paper flowers, &c.: yet, what a happy, happy company, far from the busy, bustling scenes of a miserable, faithless world!" In front of the altar were inscribed those significant words of our Saviour:—"This is my command, that you love one another." The sisters, being now provided with the necessary accommodations for the commencement of a day-school, opened a course of instructions on the 22d of February, many pupils having been received from the village and surrounding country. In the education of youth they were directed by the superiors to aim chiefly at the inculcation of piety and sound morals, though secular learning was not to be neglected.) We have seen that Mother Seton had placed her community in a special manner under the patronage of St. Joseph, the patron

of those who are charged with the care and instruction of youth. For this reason she desired that, in commencing the duties of the sisterhood in the new residence, the more solemn invocation of the divine blessing upon the undertaking should take place under his auspices; and accordingly the first high mass chanted in the large chapel was celebrated on his festival, the 19th of March, 1810.

But her attention to the details of the institution was soon divided by the increasing illness of her sister-in-law Cecilia, whose health had but temporarily improved since her arrival in the vicinity of Emmettsburg. This heroic young lady, who had exhibited in her conversion a piety, wisdom, and intrepidity seldom equalled in maturer years, had always ardently desired to embrace a life of religious seclusion, and when Providence afforded her an opportunity of joining Mother Seton, she was determined to remain with her, expecting, as she said, "not a life of ease and pleasure, but a life of penance and humiliation."

Her anticipations were fully realized; for the poverty of the institution to which she had attached herself, with her continual sufferings, afforded her constant occasions for the practice of Christian self-denial. The following sentiments which she wrote in several letters to one of her spiritual directors, only a short time before her death, will exhibit a true picture of her soul.

"February 1, 1810.

"This day, my dearest father, I am filled with the idea that I shall not see the end of this month. They tell me I am recovering: I think the remainder of my exile will be very short,—blessed be God!—yet, strange to tell, I am melancholy and sad. I long for the moment when this mortal part shall be dissolved, and the soul will rest in the bosom of its God. Yet I fear the approaching moment. Why is it so? Because I know judgment must follow

death If the saints themselves so much feared the tribunal, what must *I* do? You will tell me, they confided in the mercy of their God! Oh, was it not for the confidence with which my Jesus inspires me, what would become of me? Oftentimes I behold nothing but darkness and gloom before me; 'tis then that the soul clings close to our Adored—more closely than ever."

"March 1.

"The month of February past, and my tottering frame still stands; but whence this change? With a cheerful heart I feel myself every day get weaker, and feel happy in the idea that a few weeks must end it all. What now is all the world to me? it vanishes like smoke. Night or day, sunshine or rain—'tis all one to me. My eyes are fixed on the eternal day; pain has become my rest, and my nights never more sweetly passed than when restless and uneasy. Dearest Lord! how good you are to me; you have indeed heard my prayer—always to let me suffer for you, that so I may expiate my offences; and when the hour of death shall come I may pass immediately from this world into thy arms of mercy. Oh, how precious now is every hour of my time! Not an instant shall be lost. Every thought, word, and action, shall tend to the one point. And how ungrateful I should be to my merciful Creator did I not devote to him, to the uttermost of my power, the short remainder of my life, which, most probably, will be but a few weeks longer!

"Since the last accounts to my dearest Father, the soul has tasted more peace than it has since our darling Harriet has gone. Death has no longer a frightful appearance. I can now meditate on it with the greatest composure; my daily pains I feel hourly more precious, though sometimes I get wearied, and even wish to be released; yet I find, in my severest pains, that I fervently pray our Lord to give me still more, and purify and prepare me for himself. I can-

not help thinking, from the nature of my complaint, that I am fast approaching toward the end of my exile; the pilgrimage has been wearisome, the mountain very hard to climb these few months past, which only makes me long more ardently for the haven of rest. But shall I ever reach that port? May there not be some sins yet unexpiated? If so, I trust our Jesus will shed a ray of his divine light in my unworthy bosom. Before the arrival of that hour doubts and fears will arise; but Jesus speaks peace and comfort. I cannot express to my soul's Father my longing desires for the Holy Communion. I receive as often as the sisters, but I seem to desire still more; and days that I do not receive him I am not the same creature. I have much more comfort in my communions than formerly. According to our necessities he gives. Death and eternity ever before me! Why is it so? Because thou, dearest Lord, givest me some pain, some bodily uneasiness, to remind me of the slightness of that thread which holds my existence. Was it always so? Once you saw my weakness, and pitied it. You have made me see, dear Lord, the vanity of all human things. I now truly feel this life a weary pilgrimage, and long for the hour when my mortal part shall be dissolved and I shall be at rest. Cut and crucify this sinful body here; here let it pay the penalty that is due; but oh, my Jesus, spare me hereafter!—at the hour of death comfort and receive me!"

In the second week of April, by the recommendation of the physicians, sister Cecilia Seton was conveyed to Baltimore by Mother Seton, accompanied by her eldest daughter and one of the community. It was thought that a change of air and better opportunities of medical advice might prove beneficial; but, toward the end of the month, she calmly yielded her soul into the hands of God, the admiration of all who knew her, for the many brilliant virtues and

amiable qualities which she possessed. Her remains were conducted by a procession of the clergy, followed by a numerous concourse of persons, to the chapel of St. Mary's Seminary, where a solemn mass of requiem was celebrated for her repose; and, after the ceremony, Mother Seton, with the Rev. Mr. Cloriviere and the sister who had accompanied her to Baltimore, set out immediately for Emmettsburg, to convey the body of her beloved relative to its final resting-place in St. Joseph's Valley. It was deposited in that lonely spot on the 30th of the month. If nature grieved at the loss of one so dearly cherished, faith rejoiced at the happy event. The death of her two sisters-in-law, who were as the dearer part of Mother Seton's existence, became for her a source of holy joy; inasmuch as she saw them sheltered from many dangers that would have been unavoidable in their situation, if they had been obliged to return among their kindred, or even had they remained with her to pass through the trials of perseverance to which they would have been subjected. She thus speaks of them in writing to a Protestant friend:—"Dearest Harriet and my angel Cecil sleep in the wood close beside me. The children, and many of our good sisters, to whom they were much attached, have planted their graves with wild-flowers, and the little enclosure which contains them is the dearest spot to me on earth. I do not miss them half as much as you would think, as, according to my *mad notions*, it seems as if they are always around me. At all events, separation will not be long."

Vastly different were the sentiments which the departure of these two young ladies in the bloom of life awakened among some of their anti-Catholic friends. For them it was a sore vexation, and, in consequence, they visited Mother Seton with expressions of the strongest indignation. According to them she was "the pest of society," a

“hypocrite and bigot,” because she would not, like them, act the tyrant over the consciences of others: but all this, as she observed to a friend, was “music to the spirit longing only to be conformed to Him who was despised and rejected by men.”

Released from her attendance upon the sick, Mother Seton applied herself unremittingly to the duties of the opening school and of the spiritual community under her charge. On the 14th of May, the first boarding-pupils were received from Frederick county, five in number, and were soon followed by others. In June, the total number of scholars at St. Joseph's was forty, and before the close of the year the boarders alone had increased to thirty. The institution, however, according to its original design, was intended rather for the benefit of the poorer class than for the education of the rich; but the indebtedness of the house, and the want of an adequate support, rendered the admission of the latter unavoidable. Aided by excellent tutoresses, Mother Seton confined herself principally to a general superintendence of the school, particularly as her feeble health did not permit her to assume any laborious duty. Her part was to visit the classes, to exercise the talent of smiling and caressing, to give the look of encouragement or reproof, and in this way to inspire both the pupils and their mistresses with a cheerful zeal in the performance of their respective duties. The applications for admissions into the sisterhood were also frequent, and, with the prospects of the school, gave reason to believe that the divine blessing would continue to attend the institution. Mother Seton thus alludes to the condition of the house toward the end of May, 1810. After mentioning some of the difficulties she had encountered in the beginning, she says:—“You know the enemy of all good will of course make his endeavors to destroy it; but it seems our Adored is determined on its full success,

by the excellent subjects he has placed in it. We are now twelve, and as many again are waiting for admission. I have a very, very large school to superintend every day, and the entire charge of the religious instruction of all the country round. All apply to the Sisters of Charity, who are night and day devoted to the sick and the ignorant. Our blessed Bishop intends removing a detachment of us to Baltimore, to perform the same duties there. We have here a very good house though a log building, and it will be the mother-house and retreat in all cases, as a portion of the sisterhood will always remain in it, to keep the spinning, weaving, knitting, and school for country-people, regularly progressing. Our blessed Bishop is so fond of our establishment that it seems to be the darling part of his charge; and this consoles me for every difficulty or embarrassment. All the clergy in America support it by their prayers; and there is every hope that it is the seed of an immensity of future good. You must admire how our Lord should have chosen such a one as *I* to preside over it, but you know he loves to show his strength in weakness and his wisdom in the ignorant; his blessed name be adored forever! It is in the humble, poor, and helpless he delights to number his greatest mercies and set them as marks to encourage poor sinners."

Though Mother Seton deemed herself unworthy of the station which she filled, the rapid progress of her institution proved that she was fully adequate to the office that had been assigned her. During the years 1810 and 1811 several candidates applied for admission into the sisterhood, which steadily increased in numbers, while it continued to flourish in the fervent practice of the Christian virtues. Of these Mother Seton furnished a bright example. A spirit of mortification, love of holy poverty, strict fidelity to rules, recollection of mind, with a cheerful countenance,

shone conspicuously in all her actions. No one could visit St. Joseph's House without being edified by the zeal and regularity which prevailed there. Upon a visit which the Rt. Rev. Bishop Cheverus made to the valley in November 1810, in company with Bishop Egan, of Philadelphia; he was sensibly affected by the spirit of fervor which he witnessed among the sisters. Writing to their Mother-Superior shortly after, he says, "The happy moments I have spent with you and them are present to my mind, and still more to my heart. I almost envy their happiness and yours. I hope their pious example has not been lost upon me." On the other hand, the truly religious spirit of St. Joseph's community was not less clearly manifested in the lively joy which the presence of those excellent prelates inspired. "I need not tell you," says Mother Seton, in a letter to Archbishop Carroll, "our consolation in receiving the blessed bishops, nor how many benedictions they poured upon us. We have been very sensible of this special favor." To Mother Seton the visit of Bishop Cheverus was a source of peculiar satisfaction; and the impressions which it awakened may be more easily imagined than described. He had been her friend and counsellor before and ever since her conversion; had aided her in various and important junctures by his wise instructions, and still maintained with her a correspondence in which he manifested the liveliest interest in the welfare of herself, her children, and her spiritual daughters. But this valued and venerated guide she had never seen until he presented himself at the sisterhood on the occasion just mentioned. "No sooner did he make himself known to her than she fell upon her knees, seized his hands, bathing them with her tears, and remained in that posture more than five minutes, without being able to articulate a word."⁽¹⁶⁾

* *Life of Cardinal Cheverus*, translated from the French by Robert M.

At this time Mother Seton derived the most efficient aid from the wise direction of the Rev. John B. David, who, upon the resignation of Mr. Dubourg, had been appointed superior of St. Joseph's community. Mr. David was born near Angers, in France, in 1761, of pious parents, whose earnest efforts were directed to his religious education. Blessed from his early childhood with a disposition to piety, and endowed with excellent talents, he rapidly advanced in knowledge and virtue, and passed through his collegiate course among the Oratorians with distinguished success. Having embraced the ecclesiastical state, he studied theology in the seminary of Nantes, and afterward, when a deacon, he joined the society of St. Sulpitius. Upon his ordination to the priesthood, in 1785, he was employed by his superiors in the seminary of Angers, as a professor of philosophy, theology, and Scripture; but the institution having soon been closed by the revolutionary movements, Mr. David took shelter in a private family, where he lived retired for two years, and then sailed for the United States in the company of Rev. Messrs. Flaget and Badin, in 1792. During the voyage he applied himself to the study of the English language; for he made it a rule to be always employed in some useful occupation. Hence, on his arrival in this country, having some knowledge of English, he was at once appointed by Bishop Carroll to the charge of a mission in Maryland, where he labored for twelve years with great assiduity and success. He was the first to introduce among the faithful in the United States the salutary practice of spiritual retreats, and he found them most effectual means of reviving the spirit of piety among the members of his different congregations. In 1804, Bishop Carroll named him to a professorship in

Walsh, Philadelphia, 1841, p. 83. This work states, incorrectly, that Mrs. Seton had been in Philadelphia, and had established a hospital for the sick at Emmettsburg.

Georgetown College, which he filled with ability; and two years after, he was called to St. Mary's Seminary, in Baltimore, under the charge of the Sulpitians, to which body he belonged. Here he was laboriously occupied in various offices of the institution, and in the duties of the sacred ministry, when in the fall of 1809 he was appointed to superintend the spiritual concerns of the rising community in St. Joseph's Valley. For this office he was well qualified by his skill in the direction of souls and his zeal for the strict observance of discipline. Obedience and simplicity were points on which he insisted in a special manner in his instructions to the sisters. They were virtues in which he excelled himself, and which he was careful to impress upon all under his charge. The second retreat of the community, which commenced on the 8th of October, 1810, was conducted by him. At this time there were fifteen members in the sisterhood. The following direction, which he gave to Mother Seton, selected from the few fragments of his instructions that have been preserved, may still be read with profit, and will perhaps be interesting to those who now belong to the society. "I am sorry to hear of your being so much indisposed. Undoubtedly, Lent, though not very severe in these our wretched times, ought nevertheless to abate something of its rigors for those who are in your case. Your pastor and confessor will prescribe in his prudence what your situation requires, and I doubt not but that the love of penance will yield in our dear infirm sisters to the voice of obedience, for obedience is better than sacrifice. I much approve of the maxim that complaining is a sort of infidelity when it has for its principle impatience or an anxiety for relief. But, on the other side, obedience and sincerity require that infirm sisters, when asked about their state of health, should candidly declare what they suffer, neither adding through exaggeration, easily suggested by self-love to

excite commiseration, nor diminishing through a misconceived humility or modesty. I earnestly exhort you, dear Mother, to caution your daughters against a want of that sincerity, candor, simplicity, so much recommended to us in the gospel; and to remind them often that the true spirit of religion is a spirit of infancy, which knows no disguise. It must be a rule among the sisters that, whenever they are indisposed, they do not wait till they are asked, but go and declare it to their Mother, not by manner of complaint, but simply through prudence and obedience to the rule; and, when questioned, they ought also to answer in all simplicity and truth."—February 23, 1811. A few months after he had written this letter, St. Joseph's was deprived of the valuable services of Mr. David, in consequence of his determination to follow the Rt. Rev. Bishop Flaget, his old friend and companion, to his new field of labor. They set out for Kentucky in the spring of that year. Mother Seton having always relied for direction chiefly upon the wise counsels of Archbishop Carroll, she became still more the object of his paternal care now that another change in the government of St. Joseph's House had become necessary by the departure of Rev. Mr. David. She had maintained an uninterrupted correspondence with that venerable prelate, who evinced a most lively interest for the happiness of herself, her children, and her community. On this occasion he wrote to her assuring her of his continued solicitude and of his earnest attention to all that would be requisite for the "benefit and perfect contentment of herself and her interesting family." At this period, and until the appointment of another ecclesiastical superior, he assumed a more particular superintendence of her affairs, owing to circumstances that will be mentioned in the sequel.

With the income from the school and the occasional donations of persons friendly to the institution, St. Joseph's

House had so far advanced without embarrassment. As we have seen, Mr. Anthony Filicchi, of Leghorn, had no sooner heard of the institution undertaken by Mother Seton in Baltimore, than he contributed largely to the furtherance of it, directing her at the same time to draw without hesitation upon his agents for any additional aid she might require. An occasion soon presented itself for another appeal to his liberality. Rev. Nicholas Zocchi, an Italian clergyman, who was pastor of Taneytown and other places in Maryland, was about to visit Italy, and he requested Mother Seton to exchange a thousand dollars with him for a bill on her friend in Leghorn, which she readily did, having need of funds at the time; but, fearing lest she might have calculated too much upon his generosity, she thus expresses her apprehensions:—"It is almost useless to tell you that the New Yorkers have given me up altogether and entirely. . . . I find my name cannot be mentioned before them. . . . Does it hurt you that I press so hard on you and make no further application to them? Consider, how can I apply to them for means which would go to the support only of a religion and institution they abhor?—while what is taken from you is promoting your greatest happiness in this world and bringing you nearer and nearer to the Adored in the next. But, again, let me repeat, if I have gone too far, stop me short forever, if you find it necessary, without fear of the least wound to the soul you love, which receives all from your hands as from that of our Lord, and, whenever they may be closed, will know that it is He who shuts them who uses all for his own glory as He pleases. I do not write your Philippic now, as this latter will serve to say all to both—except the fervency and attachment of my very soul to you in Christ. May he be blessed and praised forever! How great that attachment is, and with how much reason, can only be known by one who once was what I have been, and

can conceive how great the contrast of past and present is. This is understood by Him alone who gave you to me and us to you; for which, I trust, we will love, praise, and adore through eternity." Mother Seton had no need of apologizing for her appeal to Mr. Filicchi's continued liberality. The friendship of this truly Christian gentleman knew no bounds. He not only honored her draft upon him, but he urged her in the most pressing terms to repeat her demands in any other emergency that might arise. "Chase your diffidence away," said he; "speak to your brother the wants of a sister, and trust in the One who knows how to clothe and feed the birds of the air and make the grass of the earth to shine." The progress of St. Joseph's sisterhood, and the benefits that began already to accrue from it to society and religion, were a source of the most lively joy to the heart of Mr. Filicchi; for he could not but feel that, under God, he had been vastly instrumental in accomplishing this good work. In the establishment that had risen up at St. Joseph's he beheld the happy results of his own zeal and munificence, to which the Almighty had imparted a copious blessing. Such was the view of it which Mother Seton also entertained. In writing to him, she would say, "Pray for your own work, that it may be crowned at last." But no language can express the heartfelt gratitude with which she recalled the numerous and signal favors which she had received at the hands of the Messrs. Filicchi. She looked upon them as friends whose benefactions could never be sufficiently repaid. We might infer this from the portions of her letters already cited; but the following will show that her gratitude was of the most practical character, and that nothing was omitted on her part to draw an abundant blessing and reward upon those true friends who never wearied in well-doing.

June 24, 1811.

“My dear, a thousand times dear, Antonio, you cannot even guess my joy to hear once more of you and your most dear ones; that our Filippo, for whom so often the sighs and aspirations of regret and desire for his rest and repose have ascended, and so many communions of gratitude and affection have been offered, (fully convinced that he was no longer with you,) to hear not only that he is alive, but certainly recovering, and that neither of you are angry with the poor little sister or have thought of renouncing her. Oh, what true and heartfelt comfort and blessing is this, to compare with the many acts of resignation I have been constantly making, not only of your precious life in the dangers of your situation, but of that friendship and protection which is our only earthly possession. . . . Dearest and most generous of all hearts, *your* possessions will never, never fail. . . . If you have received no other letters than those you mention, you do not perhaps know of the happy conversion and subsequent death of our Harriet Seton. Cecilia's death Mr. Zocchi must have mentioned particularly. Harriet's was also everyway consoling. I have them both lying close by our dwelling, and there say my *Te Deum* every evening. Oh, Antonio, could you and Filippo know half the blessing you have procured us all! My Anna now treads in their steps, and is an example of youth, beauty, and grace, internally and externally, which must be and is admired as a most striking blessing not only to her mother, but to many. My two little girls are very good, and know no other language or thoughts but of serving and loving our dear Lord—I do not mean in a religious life, which cannot be judged at their age, but of being His wherever they may be. The distant hope your letter gives that there is a possibility of your coming to this country is a light to my gloomy prospects for my poor children,—not for their temporal good: our

Lord knows I would never grieve to see them even beggars if they preserve and practise their faith;—but their prospect in the case of my death is as desolate as it can be, unless they are given up to their old friends, which would be almost their certain ruin of principle. I give all up, you may be sure, to Him who feeds the birds of heaven, as you say; but, in the weak and decaying state of my health, which is almost broken down, can I look at the five without the fears and forebodings of a mother, whose only thought or desire is for their eternity? Our blessed Cheverus seemed to have many hopes of them when he came to see us last winter, and encouraged me to believe he would do all he could for their protection. To him and your Filicchi hearts I commit them in this world. Our success in having obtained the confidence of so many respectable parents, who have committed the whole charge of their children to us, to the number of about fifty, besides poor children who have not means of education, has enabled us to get on very well without debt or embarrassment; and I hope our Adored has already done a great deal through our establishment. The reverend Superior of St. Mary's in Baltimore, who was our first director, has zealously endeavored to do a great deal more; but he did not find me as ready as converts generally are, as I had to include the consideration of my poor children in my religious character, which has greatly pleased and satisfied our blessed Cheverus and Archbishop Carroll, who is now more my protector than ever, more truly attached to us, and, finally, takes the superior charge of our house, which at first he had bestowed on another; so that every thing I do or act, even in points less material, is and will be solely directed by them. . . . Oh, Filicchi! how is the blessing you most love increased and increasing in our wooden land, as you used to call it! Blessed, a thousand times blessed, be His holy name forever! You direct your letter to Balti-

more, but we are fifty miles from it, in the midst of woods and mountains. If we had but the dear Christian children and their father and mother, it would be an earthly paradise to me. No wars or rumors of wars here, but fields ripe with harvest; the mountain church St. Mary's, the village church St. Joseph's, and our spacious log-house, containing a private chapel, (*our Adored always there,*) is all our riches, and old Bony would not covet them, though one of the most eloquent and elegant orators at the bar of New York wrote our poor Harriet, among other reasons why she should not listen "to the siren voice of her sister," that in a few years every Catholic building should be razed to the ground and our house shortly be pulled about our ears. That would be odd enough in the land of liberty. Will you tell your most honored brother that my prayers shall not now go beyond the grave for him, but will be equally constant? All the children go to communion once a month, except little Rebecca, (Annina once a week,) and, believe me, their mother's example and influence is not wanting to excite every devotion of gratitude and lively affection for their true and dearest friends and best of fathers, through whom they have received a real life and been brought to the light of everlasting life. Our whole family, sisters and all, make our cause their own; and many, many communions have been and will be offered for you both, by souls who have no hope of knowing you but in heaven. Eternity, eternity, my brother! Will I pass it with you? So much has been given which not only I never deserved, but have done every thing to provoke the adorable hand to withhold from me, that I even dare hope for *that*, that which I forever ask as the dearest, most desired favor. If I never write you again from this world, pray for me continually. If I am heard in the next, oh, Antonio, what would I not obtain for you, your Filippo,

and all yours! . . . May the blessings you bestow on us be rewarded to you a thousand times! Ever yours."

From the statements here made by Mother Seton, we learn that the institution under her charge continued to flourish and to produce the most precious fruits. Her children in the order of nature, her daughters at St. Joseph's and her two sons at the mountain college, were growing up in knowledge and piety; the pupils whose education was committed to her care were steadily increasing in number; her spiritual daughters were also rallying thickly around her, and the work of charity was done to the poor. Exteriorly St. Joseph's House was moving in a tide of usefulness, while internally it was the abode of peace and sanctity, and afforded a happiness which was unknown in the busy world. Mother Seton has thus depicted the blessings of her religious retirement, in a letter to a dear friend who was thinking of visiting the institution. "The very thought of your visiting gives a delight to us you can never imagine. The solitude of our mountains, the silence of Cecilia's and Harriet's graves, your skipping children over the woods, which in the spring are covered with wild-flowers they would gather for you at every step, the regularity of our house, which is very spacious, and in an end wing contains our dear, dear chapel, so neat and quiet, where dwells, as *we* believe,* night and day, you know *Who*; this is no dream of fancy, and only a small part of the reality of our blessing. You must be a witness to believe that, from Monday to Saturday, all is quiet, no violation of each other's tranquillity, each helping the other with a look of good-will which must indeed be seen to be believed. All the world would not have persuaded me if I had not proved it; so you may be incredulous till you come and see. We have no kind of society but our

* She was writing to a Protestant.

mountain pastor, who is a polished, simple, truly holy man, says mass for us at sunrise all the year round. If any one has a trouble, it is carried to him; they receive their consolation, and it is buried in silence."

[The blessings, however, enjoyed by the inmates of St. Joseph's, and the usefulness of the institution, would not have been permanent without increased and strenuous exertions on the part of Mother Seton. The maintenance of the house found a provision in the income from the board and tuition of the pupils: but the debts contracted by the improvement of their property were yet to be liquidated, and threatened to place it in a very embarrassing position. In this situation of affairs, different plans were devised for the relief of the house, among which it was proposed that Mother Seton should make a tour through the country, and solicit aid from those who were friendly to the objects of the institution: but this scheme was eventually abandoned.] Bishop Cheverus, writing to her on this subject, says, "I am much grieved at the troubles you are in, and the more so because I do not see how you will be extricated from them. Yourself to leave your house and travel to make collections, &c. does not appear to me an eligible plan, although it would procure me the happiness of seeing you in Boston; and, in the present situation of affairs, very little, I am afraid, would be collected. An application by a circular letter would hardly produce any thing, but at least it would not be attended with the same inconveniences as your personal attendance. . . . I am still in hopes that some pious and generous souls will give, or at least advance, the money you owe, and that your invaluable establishment will subsist and flourish."

[To avert the destruction of the institution, Mother Seton privately appealed to the liberality of friends, among whom General Robert G. Harper was conspicuous, both for the interest he manifested in the welfare of St. Joseph's House

and for the eminence of his position in society.* The following letter, addressed to him by Mother Seton, will serve to show the difficulties she had to contend with, and the eloquence of her pen in pleading the cause of religion and humanity:—"Will you permit the great distance between us to be forgotten for a moment, and suffer the force of those sentiments which your liberality and kindness to us have created to act without reserve in speaking to you on a subject I believe you think interesting? [The promising and amiable perspective of establishing a house of plain and useful education, retired from the extravagance of the world, connected also with the view of providing nurses for the sick and poor, an abode of innocence and refuge of affliction, is, I fear, now disappearing under the pressure of debts contracted at its very foundation.] Having received the pensions of our boarders in advance, and with them obliged not only to maintain ourselves, but also to discharge the endless demands of carpenters and workmen, we are reduced now to our credit, which is poor indeed. The credit of twenty poor women, who are capable only of earning their daily bread, is but a small stock, particularly when their flour-merchant, grocer, and butcher, are more already in advance than they are willing to afford. What is our resource? If we sell our house to pay our debts, we must severally return to our separate homes. Must it be so, or will a friendly hand assist us, become our guardian protector, plead our cause with the rich and powerful, serve the cause of humanity, and be a father to the poor? Would Mrs. Harper be interested for us, or is this an extravagant dream of female fancy? Oh, no! Mrs. Harper has a heart of pity; she has proved it unsolicited. If we were relieved but from a momentary em-

* General Harper, son-in-law of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, was one of the most gifted orators of the American Bar. Some of his speeches have been published, in 3 vols. 8vo.

barrassment, her name would be blessed by future generations ; for, so simple and unpretending is our object, we cannot fail of success if not crushed in our beginning. The Rev. Mr Dubourg has exerted himself continually for us, and bestowed all he could personally give. From him we are to expect no more. What shall we do? How dare I ask you, dear sir, the question? But, if addressing it to you gives you a moment's displeasure, forgive; and, considering it as any other occurrence of life which is differently judged of according to the light in which it is viewed, then blot it out, and be assured, whatever may be your impression of it, it arose from a heart filled with the sentiment of your generosity and overflowing with gratitude and respect. . . . Dear Mrs. Harper, tell your sweet nieces to look at the price of a shawl or veil, and think of the poor family of St. Joseph's." December 28, 1811.

Happily for religion and society, the institution was rescued from its impending danger by the timely aid of its friends; and, though it had to struggle on amid difficulties and trials, it gradually became more and more consolidated, and an instrument of great and extensive good in the hands of Divine Providence.

BOOK VII.

Colony of Sisters expected from France—Their disappointment—Origin and diffusion of the “Daughters of Charity”—Object and spirit of the Society—Government of St. Joseph’s House—Mother Seton’s peculiar position—She consults Archbishop Carroll—His advice to her and approval of the rules—Adoption of them by the Community—Final confirmation—Mother Seton’s humility—First election of officers—Costume of the Sisters—Increase of the Society—Sister Annina Seton—Her illness, piety, and death—Mother Seton’s sentiments.

It has been stated in the preceding book that, with a view to form St. Joseph’s community upon the institute of the “Daughters of Charity” founded by St. Vincent of Paul, the society in France was requested to depute some of its members to aid in establishing a branch of the sisterhood at Emmetsburg. The Rt. Rev. Mr. Flaget, who had been intrusted with the negotiation of this matter, succeeded in awakening a lively interest in favor of the contemplated institution, and obtained from the society in Europe its assent to the proposed measure. As the following communication will show, several sisters were appointed, and were expecting soon to embark for their new mission in the United States of America:—

“BORDEAUX, July 12, 1810.

“MY DEAR SISTERS:—

“As it is not yet in my power to leave France, I write for the purpose of proving to you that you are the object of my thoughts. I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing you in a few months, as the Almighty, who calls you to our holy state, and has inspired me as well as many of my companions with the desire of being useful to you, will not fail

to prepare the way for our departure. That all-powerful God who made choice of poor fishermen, weak and ignorant men, to become the foundations of his Church, is pleased also in our days to employ the most feeble instruments, for the greater glory of his name, to found an establishment that will be agreeable to him, since it has for its object the service of his suffering members. Oh, how beautiful is that calling which enables us to walk in the footsteps of our Divine Saviour, to practise the virtues which he practised, and to offer ourselves a sacrifice to him as he offered himself for us! What gratitude, what love, do we not owe to that tender Father for having chosen us for so sublime a vocation! Let us thank him, dear sisters, and pray him for each other, that he will grant us the grace of corresponding faithfully to this inestimable privilege. Let us have recourse to the Blessed Virgin, to St. Vincent of Paul, our father, to Mademoiselle Legras, our blessed mother, that they may obtain this happiness for their cherished daughters. There can be no doubt of our being dear to them, since we love them and desire to be subject to them. As Monseigneur Flaget will have made known to you the dispositions which his zeal and holy interest for you have awakened among us, I will conclude, dear sisters, (soon to be companions,) by assuring you of the sincere and entire devotedness and respect of

“Your very humble sister,

“MARIE BIZERAY,

“Unworthy daughter of charity,

“Servant of the poor.”*

The zealous and pious wish here expressed to serve the cause of charity in this country was not permitted by Di-

* The original letter is in French, and is signed by two others, Sister Woirin and Sister Augustine Chauvin, who probably had also been designated for the United States.

vine Providence to be realized. Owing to obstacles thrown in the way by the government of Bonaparte, the colony of French sisters could not obtain the necessary passports, and accordingly their arrangements were frustrated. The Rt. Rev. Mr. Flaget, however, obtained a copy of their rules, and brought it with him on his return to America, in August of the same year.

The end which the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph proposed to themselves was to honor our Lord Jesus Christ as the source and model of all charity, by rendering to him every temporal and spiritual service in their power, in the persons of the poor, the sick, prisoners, and others;* also, to honor the sacred infancy of Jesus Christ in the young persons of their sex whom they may be called upon to form to virtue, while they sow in their minds the seed of useful knowledge.† Thus the poor, of all descriptions and ages, the sick, invalids, foundlings, orphans, and even insane persons, were embraced within the sphere of their solicitude and care. Another object of their zeal, no less important at that time in America, was the instruction of young persons of their sex in virtue, piety, and various branches of useful learning. This instruction they were to extend gratis to poor orphans, as far as circumstances would permit. The education of female youth in general did not enter into the plan contemplated by St. Vincent of Paul. On the one hand, the great facilities which France and other parts of Europe offered for the instruction of young ladies in the knowledge and accomplishments of their sex, made it needless for the good of society; while, on the other, the liberal

* "The king answering shall say to them: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me." Matt. xxv. 40.

† "He that shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me." Matt. xviii. 5.

endowments by which his spiritual daughters were enabled to pursue their charitable labors dispensed them from the necessity of earning the means of support. But the case was very different in the United States. The superiors of St. Joseph's community thought it essential to the very existence of the society that it should embrace in its object the education of young ladies who were able to pay for their instruction, as without this its resources would be insufficient for the maintenance of the mother-house and an orphan asylum. Moreover, this modification of the rules of St. Vincent appeared the more desirable, as it would extend the benefits of religious instruction to a class of society which has the greatest influence upon public morals, and which then possessed but scanty facilities in the United States for obtaining a solid and virtuous education.

To carry out the above-mentioned objects, the society is composed of such as were never married, and of widows, who are required to be sound of mind and body, and free from all defects that would prevent them from discharging the functions of their state. They must be of good character and respectable connections, of an age commonly not short of sixteen nor exceeding twenty-eight, and, above all, fully disposed to serve God during their whole life in the persons of the poor and the education of youth, with an entire submission to the guidance of superiors and a great fidelity to the rules of the institute.

Candidates for admission into the sisterhood are permitted, after mature deliberation, to enter the novitiate, or term of probation, during which they are instructed particularly in the duties and spirit of their vocation. At the expiration of this period, if judged competent by the superiors, they are allowed to make the simple vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and permanency in the company, according to their rules, and this for one year only, conformably to

the practice of the community. These vows are intended to check the inconstancy of the human mind, and to prevent a hasty return to the world which might be followed by regret and remorse; but, as they bind only for a period of twelve months, the sisters are at liberty to withdraw at the expiration of this time, though they are supposed to make their vows in the first instance with a determination to remain during their whole life in their holy vocation.

As nothing could be more excellent and sublime than the end contemplated by the sisterhood of St. Joseph's, the most perfect dispositions are required in its members, and the rules prescribed for their observance tend no less to their own personal sanctification than to their preparation for the service of the neighbor. That they may correspond with the grace of their vocation, and fulfil, with merit to themselves and benefit to others, the great obligations annexed to it, they are strenuously exhorted to the practice of holiness, to aim at Christian perfection, and to join the exercises of an interior and spiritual life with their exterior employments, according to the regulations of the institute, the faithful observance of which is considered the most effectual means of attaining the ends of their holy state. Though they do not belong to a religious order, (such a state being incompatible with the objects of their society,) yet, as they are more exposed to the world than members of a religious order, having in most circumstances no other monastery than the houses of the sick or the school-room, no other cell than a rented apartment, no other chapel than the parish church, no cloister but the public street or hospital, no enclosure but obedience, no grate but the fear of God, no veil but that of holy modesty, they are taught to aim at the highest virtue, and to comport themselves under all circumstances with as much edification as if they were living in the seclusion of a convent. The salvation of their soul is

the paramount consideration they are to have in view. The cultivation of humility, charity, and simplicity, the performance of their actions in union with the Son of God, contempt of the world, disengagement from created things, love of abjection, patient and even cheerful endurance of all earthly crosses and trials, and a great confidence in Divine Providence, are practices which the sisters consider essential to their profession.

In addition to these holy maxims, which may be said to form the characteristic spirit of the society, the sisters are animated in a special manner, by the requirements of the holy vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, to pursue with zeal the objects of their institute. The most admirable rules are laid down for the practice of mutual charity among themselves, and also for the proper fulfilment of the duties that may be assigned to them, whether attending the sick in hospitals and private houses, conducting free schools and asylums, or discharging other offices of their state. The dangers to be met with in various situations are pointed out, as well as the precautions to be adopted. In a word, no instruction is omitted that could tend to qualify the Sister of Charity for the worthy and successful performance of her high functions.

But, as she would in vain hope to acquit herself faithfully of these onerous duties, and in that proper spirit which they demand, without the assiduous exercise of prayer and reflection, a strict attention is required to various practices of piety, such as morning and evening prayer, meditation, spiritual reading, self-examination, frequentation of the sacraments, and other devotions, which tend to enkindle in the soul the love of God and the neighbor, to nourish the spirit of faith, and to maintain a perpetual triumph of grace over the weakness of nature and the suggestions of the world. In any of the situations in which a sister may be

employed, whether at the mother-house or on the missions, a large portion of her daily time is appropriated to prayer and other spiritual exercises, while the remainder is filled up with the duties of her calling.

The power and authority which were necessary to maintain the spirit of the institute, to insure its objects, and regulate its various operations, were vested in a central government, composed of a superior-general, (who is a clergyman,) a mother-superior, an assistant, a treasurer, and a procuratrix. The superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpitius in Baltimore was *ex officio* protector of the constitutions of the society, and had an eye to their faithful observance. The superior-general was to be consulted on all important matters, both temporal and spiritual. The mother-superior was to exercise a more immediate supervision over affairs, and particularly over the principal establishment in which she resides. To be eligible to this office, it was required that a sister should be thirty-five years of age and have been a member of the community twelve years; moreover, that she should possess a mature judgment, with the talent of governing, and, above all, be exemplary in the practice of the different virtues which the vocation of a Sister of Charity demands. The mother was to be elected in a general assembly of the sisters, by a majority of votes, for a term of three years, and could be re-elected a second term, but not longer. The offices of assistant, treasurer, and procuratrix, were also to be conferred by a majority of votes, and for only one term of three years. These officers formed the council of the mother: and to their joint deliberation were referred all matters relating to the interests of the company. Besides the mother and her council, there was a mistress of novices in the principal house, appointed by the mother with the aid of her advisers, to form those who were admitted into the sisterhood to the spirit and duties of their vocation. One

of the sisters was also appointed, in the same way, to regulate and superintend the exercises of St. Joseph's Academy. The establishments abroad have each a presiding officer to watch over its concerns, who is appointed by the same authority, and is called the sister-servant. All other inferior offices are distributed by the mother, according to her judgment and discretion.

In consequence of the peculiar position of Mother Seton, surrounded by five children, who depended entirely upon her maternal care and vigilance, especially for the security of their religious principles, it was at first thought impracticable for her to bind herself permanently to a religious company and to assume the government of it, obliged as she was to take the principal part in the superintendence of her children's welfare. She herself was fully convinced that, without her continual solicitude and efforts for the guidance of her sons and daughters, they would be much exposed to the influence of their Protestant relatives, who were numerous and wealthy; and for this reason she could never entertain the idea of assuming obligations that would be incompatible with her previous and paramount duty as a mother. Writing to a friend on this subject, she says, "By the law of the Church I so much love, I could never take an obligation which interfered with my duties to the children, except I had an independent provision and guardian for them, which the whole world could not supply, to my judgment of a mother's duty." Under the circumstances in which Mother Seton was placed, it was a matter of serious consideration, pending the discussion of the rules and constitutions to be adopted by the sisters, whether she ought not to confine herself to a literary institution independent of St. Joseph's community. There seems to have been a difference of opinion among the pious and learned indivi-

duals who were consulted upon the subject; but Mother Seton, in this as in every other emergency regarding the happiness of herself and those around her, submitted all to the decision of Archbishop Carroll, her constant and intimate adviser. In a letter to him, dated September 5, 1811, she thus confides the case to his superior wisdom, with sentiments of entire resignation in regard to its issue. "You, my most venerated father, know every thing that has passed, from my first union with this house until the present moment,—temptations, trials, &c. &c.; and now I cast all at the feet of the Adored, placing every consideration and all my concerns in your hands, as His representative, to decide my fate. The rules proposed are nearly such as we had in the original manuscript of the sisters in France. I never had a thought discordant with them, as far as my poor power may go in fulfilling them. The constitutions proposed have been discussed by our Reverend Director, and I find he makes some observations on my situation relative to them; but surely an individual is not to be considered where a public good is in question; and you know I would gladly make every sacrifice you think consistent with my first and inseparable obligations as a mother. I shall beg the kindness of Mr. Dubois to hide nothing from you of my dispositions and situation as he knows them, and certainly, as far as I know myself, they are known to him as to God." The answer of the archbishop to this communication shows what great importance he attached to the subject of it, and how earnestly he applied himself, in the examination of the rules by which St. Joseph's House was to be governed, to make such arrangements as would best promote the interests of the society at large and of each member individually. In regard to Mother Seton, he thought that her particular situation required special rules of guidance in her connection with the sisterhood. After having examined the constitutions

and rules submitted to him by the superior, Rev. Mr. Dubois, he addressed the following letter to Mother Seton :—

“BALTIMORE, September 11, 1811.

“HONORED AND DEAR MADAM :—

“Shall I confess that I am deeply humiliated at being called on to give a final sanction to a rule of conduct and plan of religious government by which it is intended to promote and preserve, among many beloved spouses of Jesus Christ, a spirit of solid and sublime religious perfection? When I remember how many prayers, fastings, watchings, &c. were employed by the holy founders of religious institutions to obtain light and assistance from the Holy Ghost to render their constitutions and rules adapted to the objects of their pious zeal, I am so sensible of my unworthiness that I would certainly decline from the task, if I did not entertain a confidence that it may please God to bestow a blessing on the ministerial acts of the ministers of religion whom he has constituted, to which blessing they are not entitled if only their private worth were considered. Under this impression, therefore, I shall and do now give my approbation to the constitutions exhibited to me by Mr. Dubois, after they shall receive the alterations suggested to and by him. You will know from him what these are; and it affords me great pleasure to learn that all the material points, on which a difference of opinion was thought to exist, have been given up by Messrs. de St. Sulpice in their last deliberations. If they had not, I do not think that I should have approved the constitutions as modified in the copy thereof which has been before me. Mr. Dubois has not exhibited the rules of detail and particular duties of the sisters; but these being matters of which yourselves and your father-superior will be the best judges, I commit you and them with the utmost confidence to the guidance of the Di-

vine Spirit. I am exceedingly anxious that every allowance shall be made, not only to the sisters generally, but to each one in particular, which can serve to give quiet to their consciences, provided that this be done without endangering the harmony of the community; and therefore it must become a matter of regulation. I am rejoiced likewise to know that the idea of any other connection than of charity is abandoned between the daughters of St. Joseph and the Society of St. Sulpice;—I mean that their interests, administration, and government, are not to be the same, or, at least, under the same control. This removes many inconveniences for you and for Messrs. of St. Sulpice. No one of that body but your immediate superior, residing near you, will have any share in the government or concerns of the sisters, except (on very rare and uncommon occasions) the superior of the Seminary of Baltimore, but not his society. This, however, is to be understood so as not to exclude the essential superintendence and control of the archbishop over every community in his diocese. Your own peculiar situation required special consideration, on account of your dear children. It seemed to me that only general principles for you and your family's case should be now established, grounded on justice and gratitude; and that special considerations should be deferred to the period when the circumstances may require them. At present, too many persons would be consulted, and, among them, some who are incompetent to judge; and even they who are most competent might find their most equitable provisions rendered useless by the changes produced in a few years. Mr. Dubois has been very explicit in communicating, I believe, whatever it was proper for me to know. On my side, it has been my endeavor, when I read the constitutions, to consult, in the first place, the individual happiness of your dear sisters, and, consequently, your own; secondly, to render their plan of life useful to reli-

gion and the public; thirdly, to confine the administration of your own affairs and the internal and domestic government, as much as possible, to your own institutions once adopted, and within your own walls. Your superior or confessor alone need be informed or consulted in matters where the mother and her council need his advice. I shall congratulate you and your beloved sisters when the constitution is adopted. It will be like freeing you from a state in which it was difficult to walk straight, as you had no certain way in which to proceed. In the mean time, assure yourself and them of my utmost solicitude for your advancement in the service and favor of God; of my reliance on your prayers; of mine for your prosperity in the important duty of education, which will and must long be your principal, and will always be your partial, employment. A century at least will pass before the exigencies and habits of this country will require, and hardly admit, of the charitable exercises toward the sick sufficient to employ any number of the sisters out of our largest cities; and therefore they must consider the business of education as a laborious, charitable, and permanent object of their religious duty.

“I am, with esteem and respect, honored and dear madam,
your servant in Christ,

“J., Ab’p of Balt.”

Agreeably to the views expressed in this communication of Archbishop Carroll, Mother Seton’s relations with her children were specially provided for in the constitutions which were about to be adopted. In the article which required widows who apply for admission into the sisterhood to have previously arranged the temporal concerns of their children, so as to be free from all future molestation on this point, an exception was made in favor of Mother Seton, who was authorized, even after having taken her vows, to watch over her children’s welfare, and to administer her and their

property,—both that which was then in her hands and what ever should afterward be acquired. It was also provided, in her favor, that, in case she should be elected for a third term to the charge of mother, and the superiors of the society should deem her continuance in office advisable for the public good and on account of her situation with her children, her election might be ratified. By these wise regulations the valuable services of Mother Seton were secured to the rising community of St. Joseph's, while she herself enjoyed in its peaceful seclusion all the advantages of religious retirement, without relinquishing the claims which five beloved children held upon her maternal care.

The rules and constitutions having been maturely considered by the superior, the Rev. Mr. Dubois, in conjunction with the superior of St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, and the Most Reverend Archbishop, they were submitted to the sisters of St. Joseph's House, in order that any proper representation might be made in relation to them, previous to their final ratification. The sisters were informed on this occasion that they were under no obligation of abiding by these rules except of their own choice; that they were free to accept them or to retire from the community. All, however, were invited to remain, notwithstanding any infirmities they might have contracted since their entrance into the house; and, having been requested to express their sentiment of approval by raising their hand, all, with one exception, determined to embrace the rules as they had been arranged by the superiors and presiding officers of the community. At this time, (January, 1812,) there were twenty sisters in the institution. Immediately after this, the constitutions were again referred to the archbishop and the superior of St. Sulpice in Baltimore, who gave them a definitive confirmation, (January 17,) and returned them for the observance of the sisters. Mother Seton welcomed them as a precious

deposite, to be sacredly cherished by her and her companions, and she never ceased to show her love and veneration for these holy regulations.⁽¹⁷⁾

The objects of the society being now clearly defined, and the spirit of the rule, with the form of government, being distinctly understood, it only remained for the sisters to enter upon the practice of what had been so wisely matured for the welfare of the institution and the sanctification of its members. With this view, as soon as circumstances permitted, an election was held for four officers, to fill the places of Mother, Assistant-Mother, Treasurer, and Procuratrix. In a letter to Mother Seton at this time, Archbishop Carroll did not fail to suggest that the election should be conducted "with that spirit of charity and humility and entire submission to its event, and with that preparation by prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which would insure constant tranquillity and regularity." Such were the dispositions indicated in the constitutions for this important proceeding; and the fervent souls who then composed St. Joseph's community were fully sensible of the duty that devolved upon them. As to Mother Seton, the general opinion and desire of the sisterhood having marked her out as the person who would be called to the highest rank in the government, she could not conceal the alarm and diffidence with which she anticipated such a result. She had hitherto, indeed, presided over the institution; but now that the affairs of the house were to assume a greater regularity, and its inmates were to take a new flight, as it were, toward Christian perfection, she felt her inability to discharge the duties of superior, and required encouragement to undertake them. On this occasion, one of her companions contributed much by her excellent advice to tranquillize her mind. She observed to her that the qualifications of a superior are only those of a Christian parent; that in both prudence should be combined with judg

ment, firmness with moderation. "Be a mild, patient, and firm mother," she continued, "and you need not tremble under the burden of superiority. Jesus can never give you a task above your courage, strength, or ability. Don't let uneasiness and fear appear so plain to the weak. You must at least be the moon, if the sun is too bright and too dignified a character. The more gentle and modest light will suit our valley, in the growing fervor of your little company. I do not want you to dart the rays of the great St. Theresa; times, places, and circumstances, change the order of this life."

As the number of sisters at St. Joseph's was small, and they had not been long enough in the house to fulfil all the conditions required by the constitutions for admission into the sisterhood and the enjoyment of its privileges, most of the regulations regarding the election of the principal officers were at this time dispensed with. It was required, however, that all who voted should have been at least one year in the community. It was provided also that the four officers should be appointed on four successive days, and their respective terms of service distributed so as to prevent the election of the mother and that of the other officers from recurring the same year. Having proceeded to the election, the sisters chose the following persons to conduct the affairs of the institution:—Mrs. Eliza Ann Seton, as Mother-Superior; Mrs. Rose White, Assistant; Miss Catherine Mullen, Treasurer; Miss Ann Gruber, Procuratrix.

To awaken a due spirit of fervor in the practice of the regulations adopted by the sisters, they performed the exercises of a spiritual retreat, which commenced on the 2d of February. They were at the same time informed that a further novitiate of one year would be allowed every one then in the community, in order to try her vocation; after which she could either leave the institution or bind herself by the

prescribed vows. No particular form of habit, to be worn by the sisters, was determined by the constitutions: it was a matter left for decision at some future period, when the community would be more numerous. Until then, they were directed to wear the costume which had been used from the commencement of the sisterhood, and to which we have already referred. It may be remarked, however, that for some years neither the form nor material of the community-dress had a very definite character. Some weeks after the sisters were established in the valley, the black cap was introduced and afterward retained. The color of the dress, as well as the material, was not very uniform. The straitened funds of the house required the observance of a very rigid economy, and for this reason habits for the sisters were frequently made from the articles of clothing which they had brought with them to the institution. In the year 1812, one piece of linsey, pepper-and-salt color, was purchased for this purpose, and the habits manufactured from this stuff were considered by the members of the house as remarkably genteel, compared with others then in use. We may judge, however, that they scarcely reached the proper standard, from a humorous observation of Bishop Cheverus, who, seeing one of the sisters in her linsey habit, inquired of Mother Seton if she was "under penance." At a later period, when the income of the establishment had increased, black bombazette was introduced for the habits of the sisters; but during the war between Great Britain and the United States, in consequence of the difficulty of procuring this article, flannel was substituted in its place, and was used afterward, during winter and summer.

By the introduction of a settled rule of life, Mother Seton had the consolation of seeing the community under her charge acquire a still greater prospect of permanency and usefulness, which was confirmed in no small degree by

the fervor of her spiritual daughters and the numerous applications for admission into the sisterhood. During the course of the year allowed for the trial of the rules, and as a term of further probation for those who had already entered the community, not less than ten ladies were received, many of whom were afterward distinguished ornaments of their profession. But, among the bright examples which the sisterhood presented of zeal for the acquirement of religious perfection, there was one that afforded Mother Seton a peculiar subject of joy and thanksgiving. In the society around her, her eldest daughter Annina was conspicuous. This young lady, from her earliest youth, had been remarkable for the beautiful qualities of her mind and heart, which, with her personal charms, acquired greater lustre in proportion as she advanced to a maturer age. While she resided in Baltimore with her mother, previous to her removal to Emmetsburg, although but a child in her fourteenth year, she was the admiration of all who knew her, more for her discretion and propriety of behavior than even for her beauty. A year later she won the affections of a young gentleman of Guadeloupe, of great wealth, superior talents, and finished education; and such were the advantages which this union seemed to promise that it was readily approved by Mother Seton and the friends of her family. Shortly after the match had been arranged, the favorite of Annina set out for his native place, to make the necessary preparations for his settlement in the United States; but the opposition which he met with from a mother, his only parent, thwarted his views, and finally succeeded in prevailing over his plighted faith. Mother Seton, throughout this whole affair, conducted herself as a wise and truly Christian parent. Although she would have preferred not to see her daughter, at so early an age, absorbed in the romance of youthful passion, she thought it better to aid her with her

sympathy and love than to oppose her inclinations. Her prospect in life, so far as human calculations could discern, was indeed all that could flatter the heart of a mother; yet she trusted not to the appearances of this world, but committed the whole matter to the good providence of God, that he might bring it to the most favorable issue. Her prayers were not in vain. The Almighty permitted that a union which would have drawn her eldest child into the vortex of worldly cares and temptations should never take place, because he desired himself to be her only spouse, and called her to the enjoyment of his special graces. "Oh, how good has the Source of all good been to her!" exclaimed Mother Seton, in alluding to her escape from the ties that had bound her. Her daughter viewed the result of her engagement in the same light. Although she was prepared to fulfil her promises with the utmost fidelity, maturer reflection had convinced her of the superior happiness which they enjoy who make God the sole object of their affections; and when she learned that she was free from the bonds she had contracted, she rejoiced, and thanked God for the favor he had bestowed upon her. Availing herself of the facilities which the blessed retirement of St. Joseph's Valley afforded, she made rapid progress in the formation of her character, and in the practice of the Christian virtues. When absent from the valley, she sighed to return to its peaceful shades, where she could devote herself more faithfully to her religious duties. At one time, being on a visit to Baltimore, although she resided with an amiable and virtuous family, she wrote earnestly to her mother to send for her, that she might be free from the distractions and temptations to which a secular life exposed her. Her language is that of the most fervent and unaffected piety. In one of her letters she says:—"The waving poplars before my window is all that looks like home; but, looking through them, I see no pure

blueskies or peaceful mountains; only smoking chimneys and high brick buildings. Oh, my mother, how hard to be good in Baltimore!" Many were the secret acts of mortification performed by this heroic girl. While yet among the number of pupils, she observed, as faithfully as any of the sisters, the rules and customs of the community;—rising at four o'clock in winter and summer, and repairing to the chapel, where, without fire, even in the severest weather, she would spend an hour in prayer and meditation before the offering of the holy sacrifice. After mass, she assembled her favorite class of the village children, whom she delighted to teach, but particularly to form their young hearts to the love and practice of piety. The young ladies of the academy, struck by the example of her many virtues, presented as they were in so attractive a form, were stimulated to the emulation of her conduct; and some of them associated themselves under her direction, for the purpose of being animated in the great work of their sanctification. This edifying band, consisting of ten or more of the elder girls in the academy, was called a decury, and was governed by particular regulations, tending to the spiritual advancement of its members. Frequent acts of penance were performed by them; and every evening, when they assembled, each one drew by lot a virtue to be practised. Anna Seton was the life and soul of this pious company; and the young ladies, with a model like her before their eyes, vied with each other in the performance of duty. Her very appearance was an incentive to virtue; for her intellectual and winning features, together with every action, not only bespoke the superiority of her mind, but, as a bright mirror, reflected with redoubled lustre and with powerful effect the beauty of Christian piety. She had the happy talent of accommodating her words and counsels to the capacity and wants of those to whom she addressed herself. The following instruction which she

gave to a child who was preparing for her first communion is remarkable for its simplicity, and for the zeal which it breathes for the spiritual welfare of her neighbor:—

“DEAR THERESA:—

“I only write to you to put you in mind of the great action you are going about; and do, my dear love, try to prepare your heart to receive our blessed Lord. Oh, think how good he is to you in granting you such a favor! Spend, every day till Christmas, a quarter of an hour in the chapel, to offer your heart to our blessed Lord and beg him to prepare it. You know you cannot do it yourself. Offer yourself to the Blessed Virgin; beg her to make you her child. Pray our dear Lord to be born in your heart, as he was in the stable of Bethlehem for our salvation. Oh, remember, Theresa, you can make your first communion but once: try to make it well, then. Think, my love, how happy you will be if you receive him for your salvation. Oh, when death comes, how you will wish that you had made it well! but it will be too late then, and how dreadful if you have made it ill! Take care: throw yourself, in spirit, at the foot of the cross; say to our Lord you are a weak child, you can do nothing of yourself. Beg him to send the holy spirit of his love in your heart, to consume it with this blessed fire; beg him to enlighten your faith, that you may receive him worthily. Oh, how happy would I think myself *if I could again make my first communion!* *I would think I could never prepare myself enough.* In the course of the day, while you are at your lessons, sometimes think, ‘Oh, how happy am I! Jesus, my dear Jesus, is coming to me. O dearest Lord, prepare me for yourself.’ Try to serve him, and make resolutions to do your best. Try, when you think any thing will make you angry, to reflect, ‘Is this preparing to receive my Jesus?’ When you are at your prayers, keep your head

bowed down and your hands joined, and do not look about the chapel, because you need not think our Lord will listen to your prayers when you do not even think of what you are saying to him. . Oh, my love, if you knew what I feel for you and the girls who are to make their first communion! All I ask of you is to beg Him to prepare your heart and to give you a true sense of what you are going to do. I know I need say nothing if our Lord pleases to make you his; all I wish is to put you in mind, because I would be so happy to think you would be forever his. Pray for me, dear love; beg our dear Lord to make me his and to teach me how to love him."

The beauty of this letter consists chiefly in its adaptation to the simplicity of the child to whom it was addressed, who could not have understood its excellent lessons had they been couched in any other language. The absent pupils of St. Joseph's, as well as those in the institution, were objects of Anna Seton's virtuous zeal. They who had been her companions recalled with grateful emotions her example and conversation, which had produced impressions equally profound and salutary. They remembered with joy the happy influence she had exerted over them, and thanked God for the privilege of having formed her acquaintance. On her part, she sought by the wisest admonitions to cherish and cultivate the precious seed which had been sown in their hearts, and to prevent it from being dissipated by the storms of temptation so common in the world. Writing to a young friend who was called to brave its dangers, she thus encourages and directs her for the conflict:—"You say you wish to be resigned to live in the wicked world, as you call it; but, dearest H——, you have many opportunities of serving and pleasing our dear Lord in it. Make use of them: it is for them you will be called to account. Here is the first

day of Advent, and we are chiefly to keep in mind the judgment-day: never cease praying, my sweet friend, that we may meet one another joyfully in that day of terrors. When we think of the eternity which follows, we may well tremble. How good a use should we make of the few moments which our God gives us here, to gain a happy one! Be not careless. If those moments are lost, eternity will also be lost. When we meet there, you may thank me for reminding you, though I think so little myself of that awful day so soon to come. Meet me at the foot of the cross, next Sunday, at eight in the morning. Pray for your Anna." In another letter to her sister, she says:—"Come, we must walk on resolutely, though the way is so rough and strewn with thorns. Don't forget to say the prayers we joined in for a happy death. You know we ought to take a little trouble for that which should be the concern of our *whole life*." Well could this fervent young lady admonish others of the "one thing necessary;" for she made it the continual object of her own thoughts and efforts. Eternity was the great consideration that occupied her mind and formed the incessant aim to which all her actions were directed. Whatever she said, whatever she wrote, all turned to one point,—to be prepared for death, that, like the wise virgins in the gospel, she might be always ready, with her lamp trimmed, to meet the heavenly Bridegroom. Such was Anna Seton, a model of piety, regularity, and modesty to her companions, and a most edifying example of virtue to the sisters themselves. To promote her spiritual advancement and consecrate herself more perfectly to the service of God, she applied for admission into the sisterhood, which was readily granted; but this fervent soul was already ripe for heaven, and was soon to be called to the eternal rewards for which she had so diligently labored. Toward the end of September, 1811, she was taken with chills and fever, and pain in the breast

and side, the consequence of exposure to the rain, and in a short time she was reduced to the necessity of confinement to her room and bed. In addition to these symptoms, a violent cough supervened, which left no doubt as to the nature of her complaint, which proved to be a confirmed phthisis. During her long illness, the virtues of Anna Seton shone forth with increased splendor, particularly her patience, mortification, disengagement from creatures, and conformity to the will of God. Her beautiful sentiments and glowing fervor have thus been traced by the pen of her mother, in the form of dialogue and narrative:—

“When first we found her complaint obstinate, speaking of her danger, she said:—‘I never can believe that, after all our dear Lord has done for me in this house, and attaching me so much to it, he will ever let me leave it. He knows I always will be his and his alone.’ ‘Well, but, my Anna, if poor mother should die, or be no longer Mother,—if strangers should fill her place,—could you have courage to stay?’ ‘Why, dearest mother, if another was in your place, they would not hinder me from serving our Lord, when they saw I did my best; but if our Dearest* will take me without trying me, I am very willing. But oh, how I have abused his graces! If only I had made use of the opportunities he has given me here! If the girls did but know how sorry I am for every vexation I have given the sisters, and every fault I have committed against silence at table, and every bad example! Oh, if I get better, I will be different in every respect.’ When it was proposed, with a view of relieving her, to put a seton in her side, she observed, ‘Yes, my mother, I agree to it, though I do not believe it will do my body any good; but let me pay my penance for so often drawing in my waist to look small and

* That is, our Lord. It was a common expression at St. Joseph's.

imitate the looks of my companions. Let the ribs now draw with pain for having drawn with vanity.' When the operation was postponed, 'Oh, no,' she said; 'to-day is Friday: let it be done to-day; it is the best day, my dear Lord.' Through all the painful dressing of the wound, and drawing the cord every day, she gave no other expression than the lifting of her streaming eyes, and the exclamation, 'My dear Lord!' Sometimes she would say, when taking her powders, 'My mother, why would you keep me? If my life is prolonged a little, it must be done at last.' She once observed, 'Every one will think in Baltimore my ill health is occasioned by disappointment, that is, mortification; but our dear Lord knows how much I have thanked him for my escape; he knows how I dreaded being obliged to fulfil my foolish promises.' To her former companions she wrote:—'I am suffering now in earnest, not as we used to do on our knees, when meditating the passion of our dear Lord; we used to wish to suffer with him, but, when called to prove the wish, how different is the reality from the imagination! Let my weakness be a lesson to you.' When I half reproached her for her little care of her health, rising at the first bell and even being on the watch to ring it the moment the clock struck, washing at the pump in the severest weather, often eating in the refectory what sickened her stomach, 'Ah, dear mother!' she replied, coloring deeply, as if she was wounding humility, 'if our Lord called me up to meditate, was I wrong to go? If I washed at the pump, did not others more delicate do it? If I ate what I did not like, was it not proper, since it is but a common Christian act to control my appetite? Besides, what would my example have been to my decury, if I had done otherwise in any of those cases? Indeed, I have given too much bad example without that. Dearest Lord, pardon me.'"

What the feelings of Mother Seton were in witnessing

the sufferings and rapid decline of her daughter can be better imagined than described. To see so gifted and beloved a child, in whom youth, beauty, talents, piety, all combined to make her the idol of a parent's heart, sensibly fading from her view, was more than nature could bear, unaided by the influences of religion. But, where nature was wanting, grace superabounded to strengthen and support her. With all the devotedness that maternal love could inspire, she watched day and night by the couch of her dying Annina, bestowing every care and administering every comfort with the most unremitting attention, and exhibiting the most heroic courage and resignation to the will of God. Mother and daughter seemed to vie with each other in the display of Christian sentiment under this painful trial; and it would be difficult to decide which was the more worthy of admiration,—the daughter pressing forward with eagerness to her heavenly home, or the mother generously offering the sacrifice of her first-born child. The beauty of the scene now passing in St. Joseph's Valley was felt far beyond its hallowed limits. From every quarter was the voice of sympathy, comfort, and encouragement, addressed to Mother Seton and her suffering daughter. The Rev. Mr. Dubourg, of St. Mary's College, Baltimore, thus wrote to the former:—"From your report, I entertain little hopes indeed; but the dispositions of Annina must console you. Happy mother, amid all your trials! Already have you sent up before you two adopted daughters. Annina's anxiety to follow them does not surprise me, and must afford you great spiritual comfort. Why did you bring them to light but to prepare them for heaven? The sooner they have done with the trials of the passage, the better for them, the more consoling for you. I am sometimes thinking of the generous mother of the Maccabees, or of St. Felicitas, who both had the happiness to exhort their seven sons to martyrdom and

to be united with them in the Lord. But I am still more moved at the remembrance of Mary at the foot of the cross. Your situation comes near to theirs, and you will find in your faith the same motives of courage. Look up; yes, look up. Nothing here below is worthy of your attention. Nothing surely can offer you a substitute for your daily losses."¹⁸) From Archbishop Carroll, who took the liveliest interest in the welfare of Mother Seton and her family, she received the most grateful expression of his sympathy and advice:—"While the situation of your dear Anna Maria fills with sorrow the hearts of your and her friends, they have at the same time occasion to bless God for her singular resignation of herself into the arms of Providence, her humble confidence in divine mercy, and your truly Christian fortitude, the effect of lively faith. Indeed, it is to me a matter of doubt whether you will not stand in greater need of that fortitude, to wipe off the tears and allay the anguish of dear Anna's brothers and sisters when she will be removed from them, than to moderate the vehemence of your own sensibility at losing the visible presence of such an angel. May the Prince of peace continue to calm the emotions of your soul! We will unite our prayers to those of the favorites of heaven by whom you are surrounded, that the holy will of God may be done and his glory thereby increased. . . . Let dear Anna know that, viewing her almost as the happy inhabitant of a better world, I feel for her an awful respect, and, may I not add, veneration." Bishop Cheverus, of Boston, wrote to her in a similar strain:—"Since I received your last, I am every day with you at the bedside of our dear Anna. I cry with you, I rejoice with you, I pray with you and the dear child, and think I hear her repeat the admirable and moving words she addressed to you. Instead of consoling, I can hardly help congratulating you and your sweet and holy daughter." These words of com-

fort and instruction from distinguished pastors of the Church were carefully treasured up by Mother Seton and her suffering child. The situation of the latter becoming daily more critical, it was deemed advisable to administer the last sacraments, which she received with extraordinary sentiments of fervor on the 30th of January. Death was now advancing at a rapid pace; but she witnessed its approach with the most admirable composure, and with a rare energy of soul encouraged and soothed the grieving hearts of all around her. We cannot better describe her real dispositions and those of her saintly parent at this time than in the words of the latter to a friend:—

“It is true: the dear, lovely, and excellent child of my heart is on the point of departure. The last week (second in February) she has been every moment on the watch, expecting every coughing-fit would be the last; but, with a peace, resignation, and contentment of soul truly consoling,—not suffering a tear to be shed round her,—she has something comforting to say to all, telling all her many companions who come occasionally to her bedside, ‘See how soon you may die! think how you would wish to be, if you were on this bed of death with me!’—always calculating with me, ‘If I was to live, dearest mother,’ and drawing all her conclusions that she is not only willing but happy to go, before she passes the dangers and trials of future years. When the last change took place, and cold sweat, gasping breathing, and agonizing pain, indicated immediate dissolution, the pain of her eyes so great she could no longer fix them, she said, ‘I can no longer look at you, my dear crucifix, but I enter my agony with my Saviour: I drink the cup with him. Yes, adorable Lord, your will, and yours alone, be done! I will it too. I leave my dearest mother because you will it—my dearest, dearest mother.’ Poor mother, you will say; and yet, happy mother! You can well understand this: for

me, dear friend,—to see her receive the last sacraments with my sentiments of them, her precious soul stretching out toward heaven, the singular purity of her life, of which I could give you the most amiable proofs, my calculations of this world,—all, dear friend, combine to silence poor nature." Nature, indeed, was hushed on this occasion, that faith might have its perfect triumph. On the Sunday before Annina's death, the mother, with a martyr's firmness, and the daughter, with equal energy of soul, desired that the young ladies of the academy should be introduced into her chamber, that the contemplation of the wasted form and faded beauty there presented might teach them a lasting lesson of the frailty of human life. The boarders, fifty in number, were distributed into bands, who were admitted one after the other; first, the children who had made their first communion, then the class that was preparing for it, and, lastly, those who composed Annina's decury. On appearing before her, she addressed them in the most impressive manner, her voice being like that of one from the grave:—"My dear girls, come and look at your poor Anna; see how I am reduced who but a few weeks ago was as well, as gay, as playful, and as happy, as you are. See me now in the arms of death; look at the state of my breast: I must now go to eternity. The mortification has already commenced." Here, uncovering her neck, to let them behold its sad condition, after the dreadful sufferings she had endured the night before, "See," she continued, "the body which I used to dress and lace up so well: what is it now? Look at these hands: the worms will have poor banqueting here. What is beauty? what is life? Nothing; nothing. Oh, love and serve God faithfully, and prepare for eternity. Some of you, dear girls, may soon be as I am now; be good, and pray for me." Sobs and tears were the only reply to this moving address, which sank deeply into the hearts of all present.

The nearer she drew to her last hour, the more absorbed did she become with the thought and desire of her eternal home. She delighted in hearing her favorite canticles of piety sung in her presence, or in repeating such parts of them as most inflamed her devotion. "Eternity, eternity!" she would often exclaim, "of never-ceasing joys. Eternity of never-ceasing sighs! Oh may I escape those dreadful woes!" Desirous of completing the sacrifice which she had made to God of her heart and its affections, Sister Annina requested the favor of being permitted to die a professed Sister of Charity; and, although the time had not yet arrived for any of the community to be admitted to the usual vows, she was allowed, on the day preceding her death, to bind herself by those sacred obligations of poverty, chastity, and obedience, thus becoming the first professed member of the sisterhood. On the morning of her departure, she called her two younger sisters, requesting them to kneel at the foot of her bed and sing these favorite lines:—

"Though all the powers of hell surround,
No evil will I fear;
For while my Jesus is my friend,
No danger can come near."

It was a heart-rending scene. The desire to please a beloved and dying sister nerved the young creatures to overcome their feelings, and with streaming eyes and throbbing hearts they entered upon the task; but the overpowerings of grief soon compelled them to desist. Mother Seton, with a fortitude rarely to be seen, sat supporting her expiring child, while the silent tears coursed down her cheeks, until the last sad conflict of nature became too severe. Some of the sisters prevailed upon her to change her position, when she retired before the Blessed Sacrament, until the scene was over and the pure spirit of Sister Annina had winged its flight to

heaven. She departed this life on the 12th of March, 1812, in the 17th year of her age. No sooner was the intelligence of the event communicated to the young ladies of the school, together with the last advice and farewell of their venerated companion, than the house resounded with sobs and lamentations. Every one was eager to kiss the last words of the angel of the school. Then they all retired before the altar to recommend her precious soul to the mercy of its Creator. On the following day, her remains were deposited in the grave, amid the prayers and regrets of the whole community,—the girls of the academy clothed in white, as an appropriate emblem of the pure and spotless character of her whose loss they so deeply deplored. Mother Seton, in following her sweet child to her resting-place, appeared more like a statue of grief than a living being. But one tear was seen upon her cheek, as she returned from the overwhelming scene; and, raising her eyes to heaven, she uttered slowly, as if yielding to the full force of the sentiment, "Father, thy will be done." Among her companions, Sister Annina was never forgotten. For several years, the children of the village delighted in covering her grave with moss and the lily of the valley. Every time they came to St. Joseph's school they would bring their collection of beautiful flowers to adorn the spot where reposed the beloved preceptress who had taught them so many lessons of virtue. Each one possessed some cherished memento of Miss Annina Seton's kindness and affection.

The departure of her eldest child, in the bloom of life and possessing so many endearing qualities, could not but be sensibly felt by Mother Seton, although faith sustained her and controlled her feelings. As she says herself, in writing to a friend, "The separation from my angel has left so new and deep an impression on my mind that, if I was not obliged to live in these dear ones, (her children,) I should

unconsciously die in her:—unconsciously, for never, by a free act of the mind, would I ever regret *his will*." "Who can tell the silent solitude of the mother's soul? its peace and rest in God!" At another time, the anniversary of Anna's birthday,* which brought her forcibly to her mind, she pours forth one of those plaintive strains which religion does not refuse to nature when indulged with due subordination to the spirit of faith. Augustin would not be condemned for the tears shed over a beloved parent, who had so often wept in her solicitude for him. Here the mother could be allowed to mourn over the loss of a child who had become endeared to her by every consideration of filial duty. "The remembrance of my lovely one," she writes, "now forces itself in every moment. Her singular modesty and grace of action, the lifting her eyes from the ground to cast the rays of her very soul into mine, which was often her only expression of her desires or wishes,—and now I am so happy that I never contradicted any of them,—her rational and pure sentiments set down in so many ways, the neatness and order of all her little affairs, and ingenious way of uniting economy and elegance in her plain and simple dress,—this was always a delight to poor mother, but now an admiration, and it appears to me I never saw or shall see any thing to be compared to her. Poor, poor mother, let her talk to you, dear Eliza; if you could have seen the moment when kneeling at the foot of her bed to rub her cold, cold feet a day or two before! she saw the tears, and, without being able to hide her own, although smiling at the same time, she repeated the so-often-asked question, 'Can it be for me! Should you not rejoice? It will be but a moment, and reunited for eternity, a happy eternity with my mother! What a thought!' These were her very words, and when in death's

* May 3.

agony her quivering lips could with difficulty utter one word, feeling a tear roll on her face, she smiled, and said with great effort, 'Laugh—mother—Jesus,' at intervals, as she could not put two words together. Oh, the last look of the eyes, as if piercing the clouds, and her dear hands locked on the breast and never unclasped!—the dear sister who dressed her in her white bed-gown cut the sleeves to preserve her posture,—poor mother must say no more now; only pray that she may be strengthened. . . . You believe me when I say, with my whole soul, 'THY WILL BE DONE FOREVER.' Eternity was Anna's darling word. I find it written in every thing that belonged to her: music, books, copies, the walls of her little chamber,—everywhere that word. . . . What would you give to adorn our white enclosure, containing the precious three,* with your myrtles and jessamines! The children have covered them with violets, and all the spring-flowers† of the neighborhood are collected there, the lily of the valley in abundance. So familiar they are with death, they have marked out my place next to Nina, and every day some new rosebush, or shrub, or flower, is carried there. K—— will sometimes kiss me in a transport, and ask, 'Oh, mother, won't we be happy when we are there?' Little B—— is more given to tears, and often says, 'If I should be left behind!'"‡

No sooner did the intelligence of Sister Annina's death reach her friends abroad, than expressions of the warmest sympathy were directed to Mother Seton. But she was addressed rather in a tone of congratulation than of grief, for having sent before her a child so remarkable for her piety

* Harriet Seton, Sister Cecilia Seton, and Sister Annina.

† This letter was written in May, 1812.

‡ How truly could the inmates of St. Joseph's say, with the apostle, "Our conversation is in heaven"

and innocence. "Happy mother!" exclaims one of her former pupils, "in having such a daughter to return to our dearest Lord. Happy I think myself in having such a friend in heaven."

BOOK VIII

Rev. Simon G. Bruté becomes the assistant of Mr. Dubois—Laborious charge of the latter—Notice of Mr. Bruté—Archbishop Carroll visits the Sisterhood—Fervor of the Community—Virtues of Sister Maria Murphy—Her illness and death—Spirit of poverty at St. Joseph's—First vows—Lessons and example of Mother Seton—Deaths in the Community—Sisters Eleanor Thompson, Benedicta Corish, Agnes Duffy, and Catharine Mullen—Sisters called to Philadelphia—Take charge of an Orphan Asylum in that city—Its origin and progress—Sisters of Charity in Kentucky—Mother Seton's attention to the Academy—Her qualifications as a preceptress of female youth—Conduct toward the pupils and their parents—Wisdom in the formation of character—Instructions to the young ladies—Her manner—Mildness in reproof—Salutary effect of her instructions.

RELEASED from the constant care which the illness of her daughter had imposed, Mother Seton turned her attention more particularly to the wants of the sisterhood and academy, which afforded continual employment to her charity and zeal. In September, 1812, her community had the happiness of receiving the regular services of the Rev. Simon Gabriel Bruté, who had been appointed the assistant of the Rev. Mr. Dubois. The duties of the latter clergyman had been daily increasing; and, although since the year 1810 he had been aided in his arduous labours by the Rev. Charles Duhamel, who had the pastoral charge of the congregation in Emmettsburg, he required additional help for his varied and important occupations. Besides having the charge of Mt. St. Mary's congregation, whose members were scattered

over the country round and called upon him in the time of sickness and other emergencies, he was the president of the College and superior of the Sisters of Charity, either of which offices would have been sufficient to occupy a man of ordinary zeal.* To these engrossing occupations he devoted himself with unremitting attention, and almost alone, as at this time he could command but a very limited assistance. Every morning he went, before the dawn of day, to celebrate mass at St. Joseph's, nearly two miles distant, and immediately on his return he entered upon a round of uninterrupted duty in the college, where he acted not only as president, but as the professor of the chief branches that were taught. This, with the intended enlargement of the course of study, and constant demand upon his time for the visiting of the sick and the administration of the sacraments, rendered it all-important that he should have the aid of a zealous and efficient priest to relieve him from a portion of the labor that threatened to overpower him. Such was the Rev. Mr. Bruté, whose distinguished talents and virtues became a most valuable acquisition to the two institutions in the vicinity of Emmettsburg and to the Catholic population generally.

Mr. Bruté was born at Rennes, in France, in 1779, of wealthy and respectable parents, whose first care was to educate their son in the fear and love of God. During the French revolution, the fortunes of his family being scattered, he assisted his mother, the only surviving parent, in a printing establishment, which she had undertaken as a means of subsistence. As soon as circumstances permitted, he entered upon a course of medical study, and, notwithstanding the spirit of irreligion which prevailed at the time, he fearlessly professed his faith and fulfilled its duties. In 1803,

* The college at this time (1812) numbered upward of sixty students.

he graduated in medicine with the highest honors; but, believing that the will of God called him to another sphere of life, he commenced the study of theology in the seminary of St. Sulpitius, at Paris, and, after five years of continual application to acquire the knowledge and virtues of the ecclesiastical state, he was promoted to the holy order of priesthood. After his ordination Mr. Bruté became a member of the Sulpitian society, and taught theology in the seminary of his native place until the year 1810, when he embarked for America in the company of the Rt. Rev. Mr. Flaget. On his arrival in Baltimore, he became a director in St. Mary's Seminary, and taught a class of philosophy in the college adjoining it. Here he soon distinguished himself by his ability as a scholar and divine, particularly in a controversy which was soon afterward provoked by the adversaries of Catholicity, and during which he gave signal proof of his zeal for religion and of the eminent talent and learning which he was capable of wielding in its defence. No clergyman could have been more suitably appointed to aid Mr. Dubois than Mr. Bruté, whose physical activity was not less remarkable than his intellectual and moral qualities. Besides sharing in the duties of the college and the holy ministry, he celebrated mass four times in the week at St. Joseph's sisterhood. Mother Seton derived the greatest benefit from his excellent counsels. She and Mr. Bruté were congenial spirits; their minds would seem to have been cast in the same mould. A vivid fancy and ardent temperament, with an entire yielding of himself to the impulses of faith, caused Mr. Bruté to feel most powerfully the truths of religion, and with a corresponding fervor to announce them in word or writing. His ideas flowed so rapidly that at times he would not stop to give them a full expression in language; but he poured forth his subjects, as it were, in flashes of word and sentiment, leaving much to be

supplied and felt by those to whom he addressed himself. In Mother Seton he found a soul who could follow him in his lofty and beautiful flights on the wings of faith, who could catch the fire of his thoughts and commune with him in the enjoyment of their elevating power. From him in a great measure did she learn how to preserve her soul in peace amid the trials of her position, and, abandoning herself to the will of God in all things, to look forward in hope and joy to the term of all earthly suffering and vicissitude.

Soon after Mr. Bruté's arrival at the Mountain, St. Joseph's valley was cheered by a visit from Archbishop Carroll, who administered the sacrament of confirmation at the sisterhood. It was always a happiness for Mother Seton to receive the directions of this enlightened prelate, who, on his part, was ever charmed with the edifying scenes which St. Joseph's house presented to his view. At this period, he beheld the community all vying with each other in the practice of Christian perfection, and preparing themselves, by the duties of the noviceship, for a more solemn consecration to the service of God.* Mother Seton, both by her instructions and example, animated them in the pursuit of their holy vocation. She addressed them frequently on this subject, sometimes reading to them the observations of some spiritual writer, and then adding her own reflections. The principal lessons which she inculcated were a spirit of sacrifice and mortification, a generous and willing service to God, and a

* The following lines, written by the archbishop to Mother Seton a few months after his visit to the sisterhood, will show the fatherly interest which he felt in the institution:—"If I had time for a lengthy letter, you would, perhaps, receive such a one; for it would give me pleasure to write to you on different subjects, and recall to my recollection, not only your dearest sisters and your amiable children generally, but each of them individually. But now I can do no more than recommend myself to their holy prayers and assure them of my paternal affection."

disposition of soul to be ready for any manifestation of the divine will. But what she preached to others as the proper spirit of those who aspired to be the favored spouses of Jesus Christ, she never failed to illustrate in her own daily life; convinced that the highest duty of a superior is to lead souls to God by the influence of example. Nor was she disappointed in her expectations. Her spiritual daughters zealously aimed at the practice of the virtues which she inculcated, and gave joy to her heart by their progress in the ways of God. "You would not believe," she writes to a friend, "how beautifully our affairs go on. Oh! what perspective for eternity! To be sure, the beauty of the cross is the greatest charm, but it is that which makes the prospect so good."

Among those most distinguished for their virtue in St. Joseph's house was Sister Maria Murphy, the second person who had joined the community. She was a native of Ireland, and a niece of Matthew Carey, Esq., of Philadelphia, so well known for his active philanthropy and the vindication of his countrymen against British oppression. Possessed of a singular sweetness of disposition and of great personal charms, she beheld a bright prospect before her in the world: but the grace of God inspired her with an aversion for its empty enjoyments, and led her to seek a more perfect happiness in religious retirement. From the day on which she took the habit, she was conspicuous for the holiness of her life; her humility, modesty, and recollection being objects of admiration and edification to all around her. Such was her gentleness of manners that Mother Seton gave her the name of "dove." Although a lover of silence, from her habit of recollection, she always met her companions and others with a smile. Notwithstanding her delicate health, holy poverty and mortification were her favorite virtues. She was known to select the oldest and worst articles of clothing,

and to delight in taking for her meal the refuse of the table. As it was feared that her austerity might be injurious to her health, she became an object of vigilance. One day, being obliged, on account of her occupations, to dine with another sister after the community hour, and finding that the supply was too scanty for two persons, she relinquished her portion to her companion without being observed, placing herself in such a position as to conceal what she was eating. But the other sister, having been led by suspicion to examine more closely into the matter, discovered that she was dining on a bit of hard bread and a cup of water; and she observed to her, "Dear sister, if you do not take your portion, I will tell mother. You are killing yourself." Upon this, Sister Maria looked at her companion with an air of seriousness, and said, "Ah, I did not expect that of you: you know how much I have offended God, and how great a penance I owe for my sins. I do so little in satisfaction for them. Why would you prevent me?" On saying this, she took, with great humility, the part that had been assigned her, but not without mingling it with her tears. Naturally of a weak constitution, she was subject to frequent attacks of sickness, which at length resulted in a disease of the lungs. On one occasion, she was directed to bathe her feet in warm water, which the sister infirmarian having brought, she put her feet into it and immediately withdrew them, observing that the water was too hot. But her attendant insisting that it was not too warm, she returned her feet into the vessel and held them there as long as she was required, although it caused her intense pain, and produced an inflammation from which she suffered for a long time after. By this assiduous practice of the virtues of her state she soon became ripe for heaven. During her last illness, when the holy Viaticum was brought to her, such was the transport of her joy in beholding the Sacred Host before her, that she almost fell from her

bed in an effort to go and meet her heavenly Spouse. Her countenance beaming with inexpressible delight, she exclaimed, "Oh, my Jesus, my dear Lord!" and then, as if recollecting herself, she fell back on the pillow, and received with great composure and fervor the adorable object of her love. She calmly expired on the 15th of October, 1812, leaving her memory in benediction among all who knew her. In alluding to her death, Mother Seton exclaimed, "What a delight for poor mother to have been, and to be still, her mother! The natural one was present, but the spiritual one, who had all her little secrets of the soul, was the dearest."

During the period allotted for the trial of the rules and for determining the vocation of those who had joined the community, abundant opportunities were presented of cultivating that spirit of poverty which was characteristic of the society. The war between Great Britain and the United States had caused a considerable rise in the price of merchandise, and made it necessary to introduce a more rigid economy. With this view, it was proposed that the use of sugar should be dispensed with among the sisters,—a sacrifice to which they readily assented. A deliberation was also held respecting the use of cotton instead of linen, the former being a much cheaper article and more conformable to the spirit of holy poverty. Though the change involved no little inconvenience for many, especially in the warm season, all were in favor of adopting the coarsest material of clothing, as best suited to the servants of God. This disposition to practise the evangelical counsels was the best preparation which the sisters of St. Joseph's could bring to those solemn engagements by which they were to seal their consecration to God in the service of their neighbor. They had left the world, with all its attractions, to sanctify themselves by laboring in the cause of charity; and the time had now arrived

for completing the sacrifice, by the simple vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, thus binding themselves in a special manner to the renunciation of earthly things, and even of their own will, that they might be free to execute the will of God in any employments to which they would be called.⁽¹⁹⁾ More than a year had been allowed them as a term of probation, at the expiration of which, eighteen members of the community were admitted to the above-mentioned obligations, viz.:—*Mother-Superior*, Mary Eliza Ann Seton, and Sisters Rose White, Catharine Mullen, Ann Gruber, Elizabeth Boyle, Angela Brady, Cecilia O'Conway, Susan Clossy, Mary Ann Butler, Adele Salva, Louise Roger, Margaret George, Sarah Thompson, Eleanor Thompson, Martina Quinn, Fanny Jordan, Theresa Conway, and Julia Shirk. This impressive and joyful ceremony took place on the 19th of July, 1813, and gave a new impulse to the zeal and piety of the sisterhood. The following month a novitiate was established in due form, Sister Catharine Mullen being appointed mistress of novices, who were then about ten in number, eight of whom had entered the community during the previous year. By the admission to the vows and the opening of the novitiate the society became complete in its organization, and was prepared to extend its usefulness abroad, as soon as Divine Providence would indicate the proper moment. In the mean time the sisters were full of zeal and activity in the various occupations assigned them, which was a source of great joy to the heart of their venerable superior. Though she felt, as her humility expressed it in a letter to Archbishop Carroll, "like a dry and barren tree" in the midst of her spiritual daughters, she was the prop and encouragement of all around her, animating them by her exhortations, and displaying a bright example of every virtue that became their profession. The following extracts from her writings will serve to show the style and spirit of

the instructions which she gave to those under her direction.

Speaking of the interior life, she says, "You must be in right earnest, or you will do little or nothing. First, it requires a constant guard over our senses. What sort of interior life would you lead, if, every time the door opens, or if any one passes you, you must look up? if you must hear what is said, though it does not concern you? or, if you remain silent and in your modest attention to your duty, what would be your interior life if you let your thoughts wander from God? I once heard a silent person say that she was listening to every thing around her and making her Judas reflections on all that was said or done, and another that she delighted in silence, because she could be thinking of her dear people. But you know better than that. Still, I will tell you what is my own great help. I once read or heard that an interior life meant but the continuation of our Saviour's life in us; that the great object of all his mysteries was to merit us the grace of this interior life and communicate it to us, it being the end of his mission to lead us into that sweet land of promise,—a life of constant union with himself. And what was the first rule of our dear Saviour's life? You know it was to do his Father's will. Well, then, the first end I propose in our daily work is to do the will of God; secondly, to do it in the manner he wills it; and thirdly, to do it because it is his will. I know what his will is by those who direct me; whatever they bid me do, if it is ever so small in itself, is the will of God for me. Then, do it in the manner he wills it,—not sewing an old thing as if it was new, or a new thing as if it was old; not fretting because the oven is too hot, or in a fuss because it is too cold. You understand: not flying and driving because you are hurried, nor creeping like a snail because no one pushes you. Our dear Saviour was never in extremes. The third object

is to do this will because God wills it,—that is, to be ready to quit at any moment, and to do any thing else we may be called to.”

Discoursing on the virtue of walking in the presence of God, one of the principal helps in the spiritual life, she says, “You know how apt your mind is to wander, and how easily you are led away by sensible objects. You will never receive any lively impressions of grace until you overcome this dissipation of mind. If you are ever so fervent at your prayers, or desire ever so much to be good, it will be all like putting hartshorn in a bottle and leaving the cork out:—what will it be worth? So, all the prayers, readings, and good talk you love so much will be to little purpose unless you place a sentinel at the door of your heart and mind. You often lose in ten minutes by your dissipation of mind more than you had gained a whole day by mortification. See your dear Saviour alone in the midst of your soul; like a shepherd, he calls for all the powers of your soul, all the affections of your heart, to come around him like his own little flock. But how they are scattered about! See, he holds a paper in his dear hand: what is written on it? ‘Speak little, my child; pray much; cherish no attachment; keep close to me; let every thing that passes pass; mind nothing but what is eternal. I never take my eyes off of you night or day: how can you forget me so often?’”

In exhorting her sisters to be faithful in corresponding to the grace of God and to act with purity of intention, she would say, “Not a single grace is given you but was bought with the blood of Jesus, your compassionate Saviour. Not one grace is given but might by your fidelity to it become for you an eternal treasure. Not one grace is given you but you must give an account of it in your hour of death and judgment. . . . St. Augustin says, Our least action, when done for God, is precious to him, while the greatest actions

without this pure intention are worthless and contemptible in his eyes. With what a lively, cheerful heart we go to work, even when the thing we are to do displeases poor nature, if only grace cries out courageously, 'It is all for you, my God!' You know every step we take all day long is a step of nature or a step of grace; or, as our blessed St. Francis de Sales says, we are always obeying our bad Mary or our good Mary;—our bad Mary, who is the daughter of Eve, or our good Mary, daughter of the Blessed Virgin, who solicits us to follow her dear Mother's holy example and do every thing for the glory of God. And think how great is our blindness and misery when, for want of directing our intentions to this end, we lose the merit of all we do, instead of gathering up heavenly treasures and weaving our bright crown for eternity. Alas! says St. Augustin, why, for the short time we have to live, are we not busy in gaining our rewards? When so rich a harvest is before us, why do we not gather it? All is in our hands, if we will but use it. We suffer and toil through our days; and after all our labor, instead of coming before God loaded with merits, we will stand empty-handed in his presence, and have nothing to offer but our useless regrets and bitter remorse, when both will be unavailing. You have been many times told that to avoid this sad evil we must take care not to do our actions as through custom and without motive; not to do them through vanity or pride; not to do them through human respect or self-love, which tries to poison all we do.

"The rule given us for securing the heavenly practice of pure intention is to be careful of our morning offering, which seals the whole day: since Fénelon says, that after it is made fully and sincerely, if we should forget to renew it from hour to hour, (as good souls commonly do,) and not retract it by any act of our will, (if no mortal sin comes in the way,) our first good offering secures all we do for the day.

What a comfort that is! Yet do not neglect to renew your offering from time to time, when you can think of it,—especially our principal actions,—uniting them to those of our dear Saviour, and reviewing them now and then; for it often happens that we begin well, but suffer many miseries of nature to slip in before we finish.”

After stating the fundamental principles of a spiritual life, she explains the difficulties that stand in the way of it. “You wish so much to be good and to please our dear Lord, that you will not be tired if I tell you what the spiritual guide says of the obstacles to our interior life. The first is, the little knowledge we have of ourselves and of our faults; for, as by an interior life we wish to be united to our Lord, a pure heart must be prepared, in which He may reign as in his own kingdom. Self-love does not like to hear it, but our heart is very corrupt, and we must do continual violence to our bad nature to keep it in order. Our love of God is always opposed by our self-love; our love of one another by the miserable pride and pretension which creates jealousy, rash judgment, and the pitiful dislikes and impatience which so often trouble us and wound charity. Curiosity, too, which keeps us engaged in what is doing and saying, brings home many a foolish companion for our thoughts, to break the silence and peace our Lord desires to find in us. Who that reflect on their own nature can doubt of its corruption and misery? You know how unwilling we are to deny ourselves, how unwilling to be reproved or contradicted, how trifling a thing will make us sad, how we delight to be commended, while, with a sort of natural cruelty, we see blame and fault in others which we are scarcely willing to excuse. How should we live an interior life until some of our natural rubbish is removed? how walk valiantly with our Saviour, dragging our foolish attachments after us, and ready to faint if the least weight of his cross presses on us? The less sensible

we are of our misery the greater our evil is, for an immortal soul cannot bear to hear the truth nor to be reprov'd even for its evident faults; so it remains buried in its darkness, and the enemy tries to double its blindness, while, sick and weak, it scarcely struggles against its imperfections, much less thinks of entering the sanctuary of an interior life. How is it that many of us keep the rule as to the letter of it, and also look pious enough? there is no want of good-will nor idleness indulg'd; and in a house where it would seem so easy to become saints, you would say, What is the matter? why are we not saints? why is there so little progress in perfection, or rather, why are so many tepid, heavy, discouraged, and going along more like slaves in a workhouse than children in their own home and the house of their Father? Why? Because we do not watch over our interior, do not watch the impulse of nature and grace in our actions, nor avoid the occasions of the habitual faults we live in, when it is in our power, or keep a good guard on ourselves when it is not. Frequent indulgence of useless thoughts, inconsiderate words, expressions of natural feeling, and changes of temper, all stand at variance with our sweet interior life, and stop the operations of grace, too often, indeed, even to grieving the Divine Spirit and sending him away. One immortal passion, a single bad habit not corrected, a natural attachment, though innocent as to appearances, will stand like a big stone at the door of our heart, and prevent us for whole years from advancing in the kingdom of our Lord. For how can such imperfection and miseries produce a spiritual harvest, any more than a laborer, throwing his grain in hard and dry earth covered with thorns and weeds, could expect to reap his produce? Will you, too, shut your heart to grace? You can make so fair a beginning now; if you only go to work courageously, you will so soon gather the fruits of your care; but if you

do not, your soul, unfaithful to its beautiful grace, will grow weaker and weaker, and drag life along like a sad slavery, instead of a prelude to the joys of eternity, which it really should be in our blessed condition, when our very pains and trials are but gems for our crown, if we use them in the beautiful spirit of our rule. One particular point you must attend to: as soon as you have committed a fault, make your quick act of contrition for it, for fear it draw you into another, as one weight pulls another after it. Make your sincere acts of contrition by a loving and sorrowful turn of your heart to our dear Saviour; and then, instead of pondering on the fault, try to think no more about it, only to guard against repeating it, or to say *Paters* and *Aves* in penance for it while you work. Every day must bring its trials: why, then, should we be troubled and surprised? Young people especially should fight cheerfully, since our Lord has so kindly called you in the morning of your days, and not exposed you to the anguish and remorse we feel after so many years of sin. It moves my very soul to see you young ones taken and sheltered by our dear Lord; and yet you often look ungrateful. . . . Can you expect to go to heaven for nothing? Did not our dear Saviour track the whole way to it with his tears and blood? and yet you start at every little pain! . . . The gate of heaven is very low; the humble only can enter it; the path to it is very narrow, and beset with our bad habits, our evil inclinations and deceiving passions; they all unite together to draw us aside, and, unless we are always on the watch, we soon go astray. . . . You think it very hard to lead a life of such restraint, unless you keep your eye of faith always open. Perseverance is a great grace. To go on gaining and advancing every day, we must be resolute, and bear and suffer what our blessed fore-runners did. Which of them gained heaven without a combat? Which way did they get there, and by what road?

Some of them came out of caves and deserts in which they had lived buried from the world and the enemies of God; others from prisons and dungeons—glorious confessors of the faith; others covered with their blood, which they shed for it. We are inheritors of this faith, but are not tried as they were. What are our real trials? By what name shall we call them? One cuts herself out a cross of pride, another of causeless discontent, another of restless impatience or peevish fretfulness; but is the whole any better than children's play, if looked at with the common eye of reason, much more the pure eye of faith? Yet we know certainly that our God calls us to a holy life,—that he gives us every grace, every abundant grace; and, though we are so weak of ourselves, this grace is able to carry us through every obstacle and difficulty; but we want courage to keep the continual watch over nature, and therefore, year after year, with our thousand graces, multiplied resolutions, and fair promises, we run around in a circle of miseries and imperfections, and, after a long time in the service of God, come nearly to the point from whence we set out, and perhaps with even less ardor for penance and mortification than when we began our consecration to him. You are now in your first set-out: be above the vain fears of nature and efforts of your enemy. You are children of eternity: your immortal crown awaits you, and the best of Fathers waits there to reward your duty and love. You may sow here indeed in tears, but you may be sure there to reap in joy."

These heavenly maxims, which Mother Seton delivered to her spiritual daughters as the means of conducting them to the heights of Christian perfection, were forcibly inculcated by her example. Obedience to the rule, conformity to the will of God, renunciation of self, opposition to nature, fidelity to every grace, all this was clearly visible in her actions. She strictly observed the regulations of the house, and was

incessantly occupied in the duties of her situation, yet always calm, self-possessed, even-tempered, and her soul apparently collected in God. It was a favorite practice with her to turn to good account all the little pains of body and mind which every day brought forth. She was remarkable for her love of poverty and mortification of the senses. Her clothing, furniture,—even the paper and pens which she used,—indicated this spirit of self-denial. Paper of fine quality she denied herself, always preferring that of the coarsest and cheapest description. Her pens were the refuse of the class-rooms. One day a sister having observed to her that her pens were nothing but stumps, she replied, smilingly, “Well, my dear one, that is to atone for your waste of pens.” This remark, though made in a gay and playful manner, contained a lesson. Her mortification was not less conspicuous. Though her health was delicate and her stomach naturally weak, she would have no other fare than that of the community, and if any thing were prepared especially for her she would decline it, saying that she owed an example to others, and that what she eat could not injure her if taken in small quantity. Particularly assiduous herself in frequenting the holy communion, she endeavored to inspire her community with the same sentiments of lively faith, love, and devotion, which glowed in her own bosom. She once gave a gentle but keen reprimand to a young sister who had omitted, on a communion-day, to approach the holy table. Meeting her after mass and looking her steadfastly in the face, she asked, “Why, my dear child, did you not come to our Lord for your recompense this morning?” “Mother,” replied the sister, “I felt a little weak, and took a cup of coffee before mass.” “Ah, my dear child,” rejoined Mother Seton, “how could you sell your God for a miserable cup of coffee?” The sick were special objects of her care and attention. She visited them twice every day,

procuring for them all the helps and comforts in her power. When not able, in consequence of indisposition, to see them herself, she sent her assistant, through whom she made every inquiry respecting their situation. She would often say that the sick were the blessing of the house, intimating to her spiritual daughters the many occasions of virtue and merit which the infirmities of nature present when viewed in the light of faith, and displaying that example of tender and compassionate care which they would be called upon, at some future day, to exercise in behalf of their suffering fellow-creatures.⁽²⁰⁾

Enlightened and led by such a guide, St. Joseph's community advanced rapidly in the ways of Christian perfection, and acquired a character which made it an object of universal admiration. It was an asylum of virtue, happiness, and peace. The world, with its harassing cares and dangerous allurements, found no admittance within its hallowed precincts. There God was loved, fraternal charity flourished, the maxims of the gospel reigned supreme, and the fruits of piety, which alone give true contentment to the soul, were gathered in the utmost profusion. Such was St. Joseph's Valley, justly deserving the name bestowed upon it by a distinguished clergyman of that day,—“a paradise upon earth,”—for here bloomed in all their loveliness the flowers of heavenly virtue.

During the year following the establishment of the novitiate, several of the sisters were called to their reward, leaving behind them a vivid recollection of their eminent virtues. Sister Eleanor Thompson, who died on the 28th of November, 1813, had been one of the first to enter the community at Emmettsburg. Her health being very feeble, she was an almost constant sufferer; but she edified all around her by her patience, meekness, and humility, united with great simplicity of manners and a solid and unaffected piety. Her

singular purity of soul justified the belief that she had never forfeited her baptismal innocence. Six weeks after, (January 14, 1814,) the institution witnessed the death of Sister Benedicta Corish, who in the brief space of nine months was a pupil, a novice, a professed sister, and an inhabitant of eternity. Her departure from life at the early age of seventeen, strengthened with all the consolations of faith, led Mother Seton to call her "a true child of benediction;" and such, indeed, did she deserve to be considered; for she had displayed a most beautiful example to her companions, and always approached the holy communion as if for the last time, and with the sentiments of the prodigal child, except on two occasions, when she went to the holy table more in the spirit of Mary when she said to the angel, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord!" On the 1st of December, the same year, Sister Agnes Duffy exchanged the trials of this world for the recompense of the just. She was remarkable for meekness and amiability, which shone conspicuous in her countenance and actions. In a few weeks the community was deprived of another member, whose eminent talents and virtues caused her loss to be deeply felt. Sister Catharine Mullen had become an associate of Mother Seton before the removal of the sisterhood from Baltimore. From her earliest years she had given her heart to God, who rewarded her fidelity with the grace of a religious vocation. Though her constitution was very delicate, she filled several important offices at the sisterhood. At the first election in 1812, she was appointed treasurer, and as such held a place in the council, for the duties of which she was particularly qualified. The following year, a novitiate having been opened, she was charged with the important duty of instilling into the candidates for the sisterhood the spirit of their sacred calling. No member of the house could have performed this office with greater advantage to religion. She was little acquainted with the

wisdom of the world, but, well versed in the science of the saints, she was eminently fitted to lead souls in the way to perfection. Zeal for the common good, humility with a total disregard of self, a spirit of mortification and an exact observance of rule, were the distinguishing traits in the virtue of Sister Catharine. One of her practices was to inspire others with a contempt of her person. She had very delicate and well-formed hands, which were much admired by the young ladies of the school. One day, perceiving that her hands had attracted attention, she stained them with walnut-juice, in order to give them an unsightly appearance. Such was her tender devotion to the sacred infancy of our Lord that she could not name the Divine Infant without being affected to tears. Gifted with a particular talent for the instruction of young persons, she took great delight in teaching the children of the village and the boarders of the academy, in preparing them for their first communion, and pointing out to them afterward the means of persevering in the love and service of God. It seemed as if the Almighty wished to manifest a special favor toward his faithful spouse, even in this world; for bodily sufferings were never wanting, particularly during the last two years of her life, which she terminated, in the most fervent sentiments, on the festival of Christmas,—a day peculiarly cherished by her, it being devoted to the commemoration of the temporal birth and infancy of the Word made flesh. Early in the morning of that day she had the happiness of being united to the Divine Infant in the sacrament of his love, having been conveyed to the chapel in an arm-chair; but, her last moments rapidly approaching, she had the privilege of again receiving him in the holy Viaticum, and before midnight her spirit had taken its flight to enjoy, says Mother Seton, “a third communion at the foot of the throne above.”

While some among the sisters of St. Joseph were thus

called to their heavenly reward, others were destined in the designs of Providence to extend the labors of the institute on earth, and to diffuse in the midst of populous cities the blessings of that charity which burned with so much fervor in the mother-house. Oftentimes, when enjoying their recreation in some shady grove or on the banks of the pleasant stream that flowed by the institution, had the sisters conversed together on the future that was in store for the society. On these occasions, surrounding their venerated superior, they would speak their sentiments freely, each one expressing her own ideas on the subject. Some wondered if the Almighty would ever enable them to extend their sphere of usefulness; others said, "Here we are buried in the midst of woods and valleys: nobody knows what we are doing, and truly the world forgets us." One day, amid the various speculations that were put forth, a young, playful sister, who had been listening in silence to the remarks of the others, cried out, "My dear children, don't grieve so much; depend upon it, the valley, quiet as it is, will give such a roar one day that the noise will sound over all America. Don't you remember what was said of the silence of St. Thomas Aquinas?" Mother Seton was highly amused at the gravity of this young prophetess, while many observed that the prediction would not be accomplished in their time. The period of its fulfilment, however, had now arrived.

Since the year 1797, a charitable effort had been made, by an association of persons in Philadelphia, for the maintenance of the children, male and female, whose parents had fallen victims to the yellow fever. These orphans were at first boarded with a suitable person, but were subsequently removed to a house rented for the purpose, adjoining the church of Holy Trinity where they were placed under the charge of a matron. From its commencement this good work had to contend with many difficulties. To the Rev

Michael Hurley, who had become pastor of St. Augustin's Church in 1807, it was much indebted for his indefatigable exertions in its behalf. Mr. Cornelius Tiers also deserves to be mentioned in this connection for the generous and opportune aid which he rendered to the institution.* The trustees of Trinity Church were the managers of the asylum, and, with a view to its better organization, they applied in 1814, through the Rev. Mr. Hurley, to procure the services of the Sisters of Charity. Notwithstanding the difficulties of the times,† the government at St. Joseph's readily acceded to their request. Mother Seton was filled with joy and gratitude at the opportunity of serving the poor orphans. Three sisters were at once appointed for the mission at Philadelphia, of which Sister Rose White was to have the superior charge, under the title of Sister-servant. On hearing that she had been selected to preside over the asylum, her humility was greatly alarmed, and she wrote to Archbishop Carroll, expressing to him her fears lest the good work should suffer from her want of talent and virtue. Her sentiments deserve to be recorded :—

“ MOST REVEREND AND DEAR FATHER :—

“ I think I can see your surprise when you heard of the choice made to send poor Rose to Philadelphia, knowing so well as you do how little capacity I have for any good and my little judgment for managing, and how much may be spoiled by my being sent as sister-servant to any city ; but God's will be done ! and pray, my dear Father, that I may prove no obstacle to the good in view nor a scandal to the

* The particulars regarding the first beginnings of this asylum have been taken from an article in the *Catholic Herald* of Philadelphia, September 30, 1852.(21)

† War was now carried on between the United States and Great Britain.

community. I am as one stupid and all surprised; I know nothing, and can see nothing but my ignorance and weakness, which is ever before me. If any good is done, it will be God alone, who will and can do it; as for me, I know nothing but sin, and an unhappy disposition of impatience, which has caused myself and others much pain in this blessed family, where I have often rendered myself an unworthy member of it."

Such was the true spirit in which she prepared herself to obtain the blessing of Heaven upon her charitable labors; for God resists the proud and gives his grace to the humble, and never fails to crown with success the efforts of those who rely solely upon his assistance. Having made the necessary preparations, the sisters set out upon their journey on the 20th of September, 1814, and travelled in a hired conveyance by land,—as it was the time of the embargo, when the Chesapeake Bay was infested with the hostile fleet of the British, and packet navigation was unsafe. For the purpose of saving expense, they were directed, so far as circumstances would permit, to ask hospitality on the way; and they experienced much kindness from the Catholic families that entertained them. On arriving at the asylum in Philadelphia, the sisters immediately repaired to the church adjoining it, to offer their homage of adoration and gratitude; after which they took lodgings at the residence of a friend, where they remained for several days, the asylum being still occupied by the matron, who also owned the furniture of the house. The requisite arrangements having been made, they took possession of the institution on the 6th of October, having thirteen children, boys and girls, under their care.* But

* The sisters did not approve of receiving boys and girls into the same asylum; but the inconvenience was at first tolerated, owing to the difficulty of placing them in separate establishments, which was effected at a subsequent period.

such was the condition of the asylum that it afforded ample work for the zeal of the good sisters. The children were in a ragged state, with scarcely a change of clothing, and the small number of beds in the house was not half sufficient for their proper accommodation. Nor was the prospect of meeting the wants of the establishment very cheering. Four thousand dollars were still due upon the house; the sum allowed by the managers for the support of the asylum was limited to six hundred; and the price of provisions, in consequence of the difficulties with Great Britain, was remarkably high. A society of ladies had been formed to aid the funds of the asylum, and by this means some portion of the expense was paid; but the sisters were disposed to rely chiefly upon their economical management and their influence with the public, in order to defray the expenses of the institution from the charities which they solicited. Hence, they suffered many privations in the beginning, procuring for themselves and the children the bare necessaries of life. For three months they ate no bread whatever at their principal meal, but used potatoes, which during the first year were their chief subsistence. Their coffee, made of corn, was taken without sugar, and the fuel for their fire was gathered from the tanyards. As soon as their wants became generally known, many persons presented themselves as friends of the institution. One day, the sisters being too much occupied at home, an orphan was despatched to the market with twelve and a half cents, *all the money in the house*, to buy a shin of beef. A few hours after, the child returned to the asylum with a large piece of meat, her twelve and a half cents, and fifty cents more, telling the sisters that an old market-woman, finding that she was one of the orphans, had given her the money and meat, and authorized them to call upon her for assistance whenever they were in want. This old woman became a generous friend of the institution. By

the benevolence of herself and others it gradually acquired ampler resources, and was enabled to maintain under its charitable roof an increasing number of orphans. The spirit of disinterestedness displayed by the sisters, and their self-denying devotion to the care of the helpless and forlorn, made a deep impression upon those who witnessed their charitable labors, and won for the institution the sympathy and aid of a numerous circle. It was also a proud day for the Catholics of Philadelphia when they could point to St. Joseph's Asylum as an illustration of that eminent virtue for which the true Church alone is distinguished, which leads her children to sacrifice all the comforts of life for the love of Christ and the cause of suffering humanity. "When I contrast the amiable and devout conduct of our sisters with that of worldlings," writes a lady of that place, "I love religion and our Lord tenfold more. They are the pride of our city and the ornament of our religion: they are loved by every one." Thus did the first institution of the Sisters of Charity abroad commence under many difficulties, which, however, soon disappeared by the effect of a wise administration and of the edifying zeal with which they performed the duties of their charge. In the course of three years the house was free from debt and gave promise of increasing prosperity. From this humble beginning, which Mother Seton used to call the "little mustard-seed," has arisen in the course of time a magnificent institution, which now graces the city of Philadelphia and exhibits the exercise of the noblest charity on the most extensive scale.*

About this time, the Rev. Mr. David, who had established a society of Sisters of Charity in Kentucky, conceived the project of incorporating them with the society at Em-

* St. Joseph's Female Asylum. The boys were subsequently transferred to a separate asylum,—St. John's.

mettsburg. The institution in Kentucky had been commenced toward the end of the year 1812. "Besides aspiring to the practice of religious perfection, by fulfilling the three ordinary vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, the members of the sisterhood were to devote their lives to such works of mercy, both corporeal and spiritual, in behalf of the neighbor, as might come within their reach; and also to apply themselves to the education of young persons of their own sex in all the branches of female instruction. To these occupations they were to add the instruction of poor children and servants in the catechism, and the visiting of the sick, without distinction of creed, as far as might be compatible with the other duties of their institution."* This society, as is commonly the case with institutions of a similar nature, had an humble beginning, but soon increased in number, and prospered beyond the most sanguine expectations of its holy founder. "The sisters edified all by their piety and laborious life" For two years they observed a provisional rule which had been drawn up by Father David; but it was at length determined that they should adopt the constitutions of the Daughters of Charity founded by St. Vincent of Paul. At the same time they chose a religious uniform, consisting of a black habit and cape, and of a cap which was at first black, but was afterward exchanged for one of white.† Such was the commencement of that excellent society whose members are known under the title of Sisters of Charity of Nazareth and have their mother-house in the vicinity of Bardstown. By their pious labors they have rendered and still render to religion and society the most im-

* Sketches of Kentucky, by the Very Rev. Dr. Spalding, p. 229.

† Sketches of Kentucky. In this valuable work the reader will find a detailed account of the origin and progress of the Sisters of Nazareth, p. 229 et seq.

portant services, by the various educational and charitable establishments under their charge.

After the society had adopted the rules observed by the spiritual daughters of St. Vincent of Paul, Father David conceived the idea of uniting it with the institution at Emmetsburg, which was governed by the same constitutions, though distinguished by a somewhat different uniform. To effect his purpose, he addressed several letters on the subject to the Rev. Mr. Dubois, superior of the sisters of St. Joseph, who assented to the proposal, but on conditions which were considered too onerous by Father David. The latter desired a separate novitiate to be established in Kentucky, and also that the superior should have the title of *Mother*, as given to the head-sister at St. Joseph's. To the latter requirement, Mr. Dubois made an absolute objection, and the former he was willing to accept only on condition that it could be justified by a precedent among the Daughters of Charity in France. He also demanded that the branch in Kentucky should not admit a greater number of members than the bishop of the diocese would engage to support, until a security for their maintenance had been otherwise provided. These views on one side and the other gave rise to difficulties which could not be satisfactorily adjusted, and thus caused the failure of the negotiation. The event, however, showed that, although organized under separate governments, the two societies could pursue their labor of love with a perfect union of hearts, and by the divine blessing cooperate most successfully in the accomplishment of the same glorious object.

In the institution over which Mother Seton presided, she was the guiding spirit of the literary as well as of the religious department. In the early days of the academy she herself took charge of the highest class among the pupils; but when she had the aid of more numerous instructors she

resigned most of her scholastic duties to other hands. Every day she visited the class-rooms, to show the interest which she felt in the improvement of the pupils, to speak a few words of encouragement and edification, and to give such directions as circumstances might require. Nothing but sickness prevented her from manifesting this mark of her solicitude for the children confided to her care. On one occasion, when confined to her room, she observed to the sister who had the principal care of the boarders:—"I feel uneasy sometimes that I cannot take my daily walk and see the dear girls; yet I console myself with the thought of your being there, for you have a mother's heart." She felt all the importance and responsibility of her station as the guide and instructress of female youth, and it was her continual effort, by word and example, as well as by constant vigilance, to promote the moral and physical welfare of all under her charge. The young ladies of the school she regarded as a sacred trust, committed to her by Divine Providence, and to be cultivated with a solicitude similar to that which the Almighty himself evinces for his creatures. Her direction to the sisters who had the particular care of them was, "Be to them as our guardian angels are to us." Such was the character which she herself exhibited in their regard; watching over them with the most unremitting attention, and forming them, by her actions and instructions, to the practice of the moral and social virtues. When she appeared before them, they beheld in her a lady who had adorned the most polished circles of life, and whose manners and disposition they might justly strive to imitate, to become at a future day the ornaments of society. In her they beheld a woman who had traversed the various relations of daughter, wife, and mother, with the highest honor to herself, and whose lessons were the fruit of reflection matured by experience. But, above all, they saw in her the accom-

lished Christian, whose warmest aspirations were for heaven and for the salvation of souls; who endeavored by a uniform charity and sweetness of manner to win all to the love and service of God. Hence the presence of Mother Seton was hailed with pleasure by her pupils. On her visit to the classes every eye beamed a welcome; for it was the signal that their best friend and true mother had come among them. To excite the emulation of the pupils, the most effectual means were employed, but chiefly those which appealed to their sense of honor and obligation. Weekly reports, regarding their diligence in study and their deportment, were read aloud in the refectory, in presence of the whole community; and to such as had distinguished themselves by their application and good conduct, honorable testimonials were awarded at the end of the scholastic year. The health of the young ladies was a special object of Mother Seton's vigilance. She took care that they were supplied with a wholesome and abundant diet, and that the hours of study were interrupted by proper intervals of recreation, during which they indulged in a variety of healthy amusements. Frequently they made excursions to the neighboring mountain, forming a pic-nic party, or engaging in other diversions equally profitable and delightful. Upon the sick pupils Mother Seton bestowed the most watchful attention. Every comfort was provided for them that the house could afford, and, that nothing might be omitted in this respect, she never failed, when the importance of the case seemed to require it, to give timely notice to parents of their children's indisposition. It was her custom also to keep them duly informed in regard to the proficiency of their daughters, and occasionally to request their co-operation in the correction of their faults, when the ordinary methods of doing this had proved ineffectual. In general, however, she thought it more wise not to acquaint parents with the fail-

ings of their children, knowing how peculiarly sensitive Americans are on this point. According to her view, where the fault is not to be corrected immediately by the parents, but rather by advice and education, it is best not to inform them of it, as they would consider it a reflection on themselves; and although, if you referred the matter to them, they would apparently acquiesce in what you say, in their heart they would extenuate the fault, whatever it might be, excusing to their children what they condemn to their superiors, and thus rendering fruitless any subsequent efforts for their improvement. In this, as well as in all other matters appertaining to the interest and happiness of those under her charge, Mother Seton pursued that course which appeared best calculated to promote their welfare and at the same time to save their parents unnecessary pain and anxiety. Entering fully into the feelings of the parental heart, she knew what they could bear and what it was expedient for them to receive, and with the greatest delicacy did she regulate her communications to the parents, always endeavoring to impart the word of comfort and gratification, and never withholding what it was necessary for them to know. On one occasion, writing to a person who had a daughter at St. Joseph's, she says, "I have continually deferred answering your obliging letter, always hoping to say something consoling to the heart of a parent, and unable to force myself to do the contrary; and now with pleasure can assure you that your dear daughter has shown a considerable perseverance in her good determinations for some time past," &c. Another time, a pious lady, very solicitous about the spiritual welfare of her child, and expecting rather more than she was capable of at her age, received from Mother Seton the following answer:—"My dearest loved friend—I think you are too anxious for the fruit of your dear little tree, which is ripening very fast, and will soon be as you

wish it. Quite sure as to the point of instruction—yet I tried to draw out all her little thoughts on the questions you proposed, and see a heavenly simplicity and purity of mind preparing the way to the most blessed fruits of faith. But we must wait for these fruits; for, if there is a true danger for one of her turn, it would be to push her too fast, and force an exterior look without the interior spirit.” Well could parents intrust their children to the direction of so wise and prudent a preceptress; for, if she avoided on the one hand that weak condescension which overlooks instead of correcting a fault, she understood on the other the necessity of training the heart gradually, and not forcing habits which must be the result of repeated and patient instruction, and the formation of which can be expected only after having gained the confidence of youth. She thus wrote to a pious gentleman who had a relative at St. Joseph’s school, whom he had lectured in too reproachful a tone by way of compelling her to her duty:—“You and I speak all for eternity; but take an advice from your old mother. I am a hundred to your thirty in experience,—that cruel friend of our earthly journey. When you ask too much at first, you often gain nothing at last; and if the heart is lost, all is lost. If you use such language to your family, they cannot love you, since they have not *our* microscope to see things as they are. . . . The faults of young people must be moved by prayers and tears, because they are constitutional and cannot be frightened out.”

Twice a week Mother Seton gave familiar instructions to the elder boarders, which were most gratifying to them as well as to the school-sisters, some of whom were generally present on these occasions. In these conferences she displayed her peculiar aptitude for the education of female youth. You would see there, not the stiffness of the schoolmistress or the cold stateliness of authority, that begets diffi-

dence or fear; but the fond and enlightened parent, whose elevated purposes, sincere zeal, and affectionate manner, won the hearts of her children and inspired equal confidence and admiration. She then spoke to them, in the most simple style, of the faults they were to avoid, the virtues they should practise, and frequently illustrated the subject by allusions most interesting to the youthful mind. She would say, for instance, "Your little mother, my darlings, does not come to teach you how to be good nuns or Sisters of Charity; but rather I would wish to fit you for that world in which you are destined to live; to teach you how to be good mistresses and mothers of families. Yet, if the dear Master selects one among you to be closer to him, happy are you! he will teach you himself." During these instructions, the children often proposed questions to Mother Seton, who permitted and encouraged them to do so. "Mother," said a pupil on one of these occasions, "I met with the word benignity in my catechism, and I don't know exactly the meaning of it." Mother Seton, with a smile, replied, "My dearest one, I can give no better answer to your question than to say, 'Look at Archbishop Carroll,' and you will see the meaning of this word on his countenance as well as in his manners."

But the great and absorbing object of Mother Seton in the education of her pupils was to form their hearts to virtue, and to inspire them with a proper aversion for the delusive vanities and sinful pursuits of the world. She laid before them at various times, but especially during the exercises of a spiritual retreat or the preparation for a first communion, the necessity of salvation, the importance of attending to their sanctification, and the means of promoting the peace of their souls. Her instructions also were characterized by a reasoning accommodated to the circumstances of her hearers. She thus warned them against the inconsistency of those who have the courage to brook the opinions and

observations of the world for the gratification of their vanity or pride, while they fear that same world on the question of serving God. "I have seen many girls in the world delighting even—through what they called an independent spirit, but in truth a silly pride—to practise many singularities in dress and manner. They said, 'I cannot help what people think,' and they did what was much more difficult than to observe the little practices you are bound to, and the subjection to the spirit of piety, which, while you would preserve your peace of conscience, could at last but secure you, after the first obstacles were overcome, the true love and respect even of those whose blame would most discourage you. Such will be the case when they see that your perseverance is through a principle of duty: whereas this dirty world is the first to laugh at those who subject themselves to it, especially if this subjection is against a better light, as must be the case with any one of you, who have so often been told your plain duty." To impress upon her pupils sound principles of morality, in opposition to the false maxims and corrupting usages of the world, was a particular object of Mother Seton's attention. She taught them that beauty was but a "superficial grace; that when a fair soul, however, is in a fair body, the latter may be cherished as a gift of the Creator. Beauty should be used as an attraction to virtue. When profaned, it is a violation of the temple of God and tearing away the victims which should have been offered at his altar." In regard to dress, her advice was to shun singularity, and to follow a middle course, avoiding extravagance on the one hand and carelessness on the other. But the danger of being present at balls, the theatre, &c. she depicted in a forcible and impressive manner. "The fable says that a butterfly asked an owl what she should do to keep from burning her wings, since she could never come to the candle without singing them. The owl counselled her

to abstain from looking even at the smoke of it. How can a soul belonging to God frequent such scenes as dances, &c. &c., where purity is so easily blemished and wounded and vanity is sure to be fed? But you will first burn your wings, poor little moth, before you will withdraw from the flame. In all these cases there is more safety in our fear than in our strength: it is ever easier to abstain from such pleasures than to use them well." She represented the misfortune of losing the divine grace in language calculated to inspire a lively dread of so great an evil. "To fall from grace," she said, "was to disfigure and deface the image of God in our souls. Their dignity is forgotten, and, while we are receiving the admiration of our exterior loveliness in the world, we become in the eyes of God like senseless beasts, lost to the society of angels, associated with devils, and slaves to our passions."

Besides cautioning her pupils against the dangers and evils they had to fear, she endeavored to provide them with the most excellent rules for sanctifying their actions and drawing upon themselves the copious benedictions of the Almighty. "Remember," she said, "it is a great point to direct your actions, and have some simple, good intention, even in the least. If a painter should draw his lines without proposing any idea to himself, his work would be a blot; or should a sculptor give a number of strokes to his block without intention to shape it, what would he do but weary himself to no purpose? while the least of our actions may carry its grace with it, if we turn it right. Every good action is a grain of seed for eternal life. It was an excellent word of St. Bernard, 'As your actions pass on, let them not pass away.'" In referring to the dispositions required for a profitable reception of the Holy Eucharist, she said that "the heart preparing for communion should be as a crystal vial filled with clear water, in which the least mote

of uncleanness may be seen," and, in thanksgiving for its heavenly graces, should "unite with the praise of heaven and earth, playing its part, as it were its little string to the great harp of creation." On days when the young ladies had approached the Blessed Sacrament, she did not fail to congratulate them on the great happiness they enjoyed. Entering the hall where they were assembled, she would open her arms, and express the delight she had experienced in seeing them around the holy table, at the same time reminding them that their hearts were the tabernacles of the divinity, and they should watch carefully the casket containing so precious a jewel.

Besides instructing her pupils orally on various occasions in reference to their religious obligations, Mother Seton distributed among them virtuous sentences, which served as spiritual bouquets to remind them at times of the particular habits which they ought to cultivate, and the spirit with which they should perform their daily actions.⁽²²⁾ Decuries, or associations consisting of ten members each, were also established, the object of which was to encourage the young ladies to spend their moments of recreation in innocent conversation and amusement, by the recital of edifying traits, and such other practices as would guard them against the spirit of levity and dissipation. Each decury had a sister to preside over it, and Mother Seton would furnish from her own well-stored mind, or from other sources, a variety of interesting anecdotes and narratives, for the instruction and entertainment of these little bands. Thus did she instil into the youthful mind the principles of Christian piety. Her own soul was full of the beauty of religion, and she sought to win all hearts to the practice of it by the same charms which it exercised over her. Hence she led her pupils to consider the attributes of God as father and friend, and to love him for these qualities, much more than to re-

gard him in the attitude of an avenging and inexorable judge. She frequently uttered those impressive words:—"Love God, my dear children, and you may forget there is a hell." Lessons like these, delivered in her earnest and maternal manner, produced an irresistible effect. It was impossible to listen to the ardent and affectionate appeals by which she enforced the maxims of divine truth, without feeling one's heart warmed by the holy fire that glowed in her own bosom. Her whole soul seemed to be present in her countenance.

It may be truly said that Mother Seton's manner was the secret of her extraordinary influence—a happy blending of ardent zeal with maternal sweetness. A moment's intercourse with her was sufficient to show that she acted from the deepest convictions of truth, while the kindness which she manifested easily prepared the way for its willing reception by others. This was visible in all the departments of her office as superior of St. Joseph's Academy. She easily conciliated the esteem and confidence of new comers to the school, causing them by her affectionate manner to forget the endearments of home, and to feel satisfied and pleased in a position which commonly begets for the pupil the most sorrowful moments. "Never can I forget," says a lady, alluding to her entering the academy, "never can I forget my first meeting with our beloved Mother. Separated from my parents and home, a child of but eight years, I alighted from the carriage at St. Joseph's, and felt for the moment I was a stranger. A band of young ladies came forth with joy to meet my travelling companions whom they knew, and in advance of them there walked a lady with outstretched arms, who kindly welcomed and embraced us. So maternal was her manner that she gained my heart at once, and I was happy under the same roof with Mother Seton." She exhibited the same tenderness of manner in

her general attention to the wants and wishes of the young ladies. On one occasion, a thunder-storm having arisen, all the children in a panic crowded to the chapel, where they fell on their knees in prayer. The sister who had charge of them, with more zeal than discretion, immediately ordered them away from the holy place, observing that they were very ready to fly to God in the hour of danger, while at other times they did not seek him so willingly. But Mother Seton, hearing of the circumstance, calmly reversed the order, and permitted the children to go into the chapel, intimating to the sister that their conduct was rather deserving of commendation. "To whom," she asked, "should they fly in time of danger, if not to our Lord?"* Even in reproving the faults of those under her charge, she did not forget that love is the most powerful ingredient in the remedy of evil. Her lecture in such cases was that of a mother in every sense of the word,—kind, yet firm and persuasive. If the delinquent proved refractory at the moment, she was placed alone on a bench under the image of the crucifix, which generally succeeded in bringing her to a sense of duty; and then she was dismissed with a kiss on the forehead. Her tenderness was so deeply felt in the mildness of her reproofs that she acquired in this way a greater ascendancy over the minds of her children than if she had punished them with severity. The young ladies were bound to her by the tie of affection; and such was the love and reverence she inspired, that they dreaded to incur her displeasure; hence, all were ambitious to serve her in every possible way, and for the same reason one word or look from her was frequently sufficient to correct any fault

* As the command of this sister was evidently too severe, Mother Seton could reverse it without detriment to the regard which inferiors should be taught to entertain for superior authority.

they had committed. Mother Seton's government, however, was not deficient in that firmness which is necessary to a wise administration. She knew how to distinguish the enlightened affection of a parent from a weak and injudicious condescension, and corrected the faults of her pupils with becoming energy; but in her reproofs or punishments the element of maternal kindness was so conspicuous that it seldom failed to accomplish its end. It was obvious to all that she desired only their good, and employed the most amiable means of effecting it; and hence, when she reasoned with them on their first duty to God or on their general conduct, her language produced a deep impression; the better part of their nature was aroused, and they strove to become all that Mother Seton wished them to be.

From what has been said, it may be easily imagined how successfully she exhorted her pupils to the love and service of God. During her administration, St. Joseph's Academy was a sanctuary of piety, where the Christian virtues all shone resplendent. Of this some idea may be formed from the deeply religious sentiments which accompanied the young ladies into the world and made them sigh for the happiness of being again within its precincts. One of them, writing to Mother Seton, says:—"At St. Joseph's every one united with me to praise and love our dearest Lord. I thought I would meet with the same invitations from the world; but they seldom say any thing to me of the love of our crucified Saviour. Few, I fear, know how sweet is his love. . . . Oh, happy inhabitants of St. Joseph's Valley!" Another says:—"I cannot help contrasting my present situation with that of last year: for, although I am very happy, yet I would like to spend the Lent at St. Joseph's." A third exclaims:—"The clock strikes three; what sweet odors from the inhabitants of the valley!" A fourth regrets that she cannot be allowed to receive confirmation at St. Joseph's,

as there she would have so much better opportunities of preparing herself in a worthy manner. Various other testimonies might be adduced to show the great fervor which prevailed among the pupils; but the following extract from a letter addressed to Mother Seton may not be unprofitably placed before the young reader, who will find here an example of the value that should be attached to the lessons of pious and enlightened tutors, and of the grateful veneration that should be manifested toward those who have labored to promote our happiness. . . "I remember with pleasure and gratitude the interest my own ever dear Mother used to manifest in my happiness; and it is now my most soothing occupation to recall to mind the happy days I have spent at St. Joseph's. When I was afflicted and depressed in mind, I ever found relief in your maternal bosom; from you I heard the voice of comfort which could ease my heart. Now, alas! I have none near me whom I can call by that tender appellation; but I still and will ever consider and love you as a mother, and, although I am separated from you, I hope often to be favored with your dear letters, which will be both a source of pleasure and instruction. . . St. Joseph's! the blest abode of innocence and virtue, how I long to see it! how widely does it differ from this corrupt world!"

BOOK IX.

Mother Seton's solicitude for her children—Her eldest son embarks in life—Her advice to him—He leaves America in company with Mr. Bruté—His brother—Death of Mr. Philip Filicchi—Illness of Miss Rebecca Seton—Her piety—Sentiments of her mother—Her lively faith—Her death—Dispositions of Mother Seton—Sympathy of her friends—Is re-elected Mother-Superior—Three sisters sent to the college at the Mountain—Death of Archbishop Carroll—His successor—Bishop Cheverus visits the Sisterhood—The sisters incorporated—Remarkable death of Mr. Emmett—Three sisters sent to New York—Return of Mother Seton's son from Europe—Enters the Navy—His former place occupied by his brother—Bishop Dubourg visits the Sisterhood—Death of Rev. Mr. Duhamel—Duties of Mr. Dubois—Progress of the college and character of its President—Mr. Bruté settles at the Mountain—Illness of Mother Seton—Is elected Mother-Superior for a third term—Her counsels to sisters on the Mission—Project of building a church—House for free-school erected—Deaths in the community.

MOTHER Seton had now reached that period of life which is the most productive of solicitude and apprehension for a Christian parent who is devoted to the true welfare of her children. When young persons are summoned from this world ere they have mingled in its sinful pursuits, they can be readily yielded into the hands of God, whose merciful providence is then rather a cause for joy and thanksgiving than an occasion of sorrowing and regret; because there is a well-founded hope of their having attained the great end of their existence—the enjoyment of eternal happiness. But when they are about to be emancipated from the parental charge, to launch upon the boisterous ocean of life and to grapple with the difficulties which are so often fatal to the innocence of youth or involve in such fearful uncertainty their perseverance in good, the parent cannot but feel the

deepest anxiety, as if now the fruit of all her vigilance and toil is to be exposed to the most imminent danger. Such were the sentiments of Mother Seton. She was grateful to God when it had pleased him to call her eldest daughter to himself while yet in the bloom of life; but she feared for those of her children whom he destined to move on the wide theatre of the world; and hence she had not only sought to prepare them, by a solid and virtuous education, to embark safely upon the course that his providence would assign to them, but she embraced every opportunity of impressing upon their minds the fear of God and the necessity of salvation, as the only means of securing them against future dangers. On the very day that her eldest son completed his eighteenth year, November 25, 1814, she addressed the following note to him:—"My own dearest child! Your birthday! You know your mother's heart. It had a dear communion for you for *our eternity*. Be blessed a thousand, thousand times! Take a few little moments in the church to-day, in union with your mother's heart, to place yourself again and again in the hands of God. Do, my dearest one."

Having now arrived at an age when it became necessary to embrace some vocation in life, this her eldest son was the peculiar object of her solicitude. The circumstances of the times were such that it was not very easy to determine the course which would prove most to his advantage. War was still carried on between Great Britain and the United States, which, in disturbing the usual operations of trade, created that alarm and mistrust which are inseparable from such agitations of commercial life. While Mother Seton feared lest her eldest boy should enter the naval profession, the unsettled state of commerce made it difficult to obtain for him a desirable situation in a mercantile establishment. Such was the state of things when the Rev. Mr. Bruté, of Mt. St. Mary's College, was called to France on business of

importance; and Mother Seton resolved to embrace the favorable opportunity of sending her son to Europe under his protection, and to place him, at least for a time, under the friendly care of the Messrs. Filicchi of Leghorn, where he could acquire a knowledge of business. Those gentlemen, as we have seen, were the generous friends of her and her family; and, though she could give them no previous intimation of her design, she hoped every thing from their noble and virtuous character, convinced that their unbounded kindness would not be withheld at a time when it could be exercised with so much advantage. The letter which she addressed to them on this occasion is a model of epistolary style, full of eloquent persuasion and of those beautiful sentiments which ought ever to animate the heart of a Christian mother. The predominant consideration with her was the spiritual welfare of her children. This was the absorbing object of her thoughts and desires as a mother, and every thing else in comparison was looked upon as utterly insignificant. Hence, when about to take leave of her eldest son, at his departure for a foreign land, she furnished him with the most excellent counsels, in which the first and the last lesson was to look constantly to the interests of his immortal soul, though she did not omit the necessary directions for his temporal good and general conduct among strangers. The advice which she gave him was full of the most practical wisdom, inculcating a due respect for the character of the reverend gentleman who was to be his protector, a grateful deportment toward her friends in Italy, habits of economy, a proper regard for the customs that he would witness among people abroad, but above all, the avoidance of sin,—the only real evil that a Christian has to fear in this world. “Our God, our eternity;” such was the last thought in the admirable directions which she gave him while she bathed them in her tears. In parting from her son, Mother Seton had

the consolation to know that he was governed by the highest principles of religion and filial duty,—the sweetest comfort to the heart of a Christian parent. If there was a joy that she experienced after this and for which she offered her fervent thanks to heaven, it was to see her son so securely sheltered under the protecting care of the Rev. Mr. Bruté, for whom she justly entertained the profoundest veneration, and whose kindness made her feel, as she herself expressed it, as contented as old Tobias when he placed his boy under the guardianship of the angel Raphael. The travellers embarked at New York on the 6th of April, and had a successful voyage to Bordeaux. Here Mr. Seton parted from his venerated friend, and proceeded to Leghorn, where he met with a most friendly reception from the Filicchi family.

While Mother Seton was solicitously occupied in the wise direction of her absent son, she was equally devoted to the interests of his brother at home, who was now preparing to enter upon some settled course of life. In providing for this emergency, she was governed by the same lofty principles which had always actuated her, looking to the security of his faith and the salvation of his soul as the paramount objects of concern: for, as she remarked on this occasion, "Religion must never be sacrificed; for what is man without a soul, and what is a soul without faith?" In the spring of 1816, her second son was admitted into the counting-house of one of the principal merchants in Baltimore, who was also one of the most influential members of the Catholic Church in that city.

Soon after this, Mother Seton received the painful intelligence that Mr. Philip Filicchi, to whom she owed so much for this world and the next, had died at Leghorn on the 22d of August. This event was indeed a hard stroke to a heart like hers, which had known so well how to appreciate the noble qualities of her Italian friend. His zeal and intelli-

gence had been chiefly instrumental, under divine grace, in opening her eyes to the light of truth, and in conjunction with his distinguished brother he was ready to share liberally with her and her family even the earthly treasures which Providence had bestowed upon him. While gratitude prompted her to convey her deepest sympathies to his afflicted relatives, and to have prayers and sacrifices continually offered up for the repose of his soul, she rejoiced for her son that he had known so eminent a pattern of virtue and beheld in him an example of wealth sanctified by religion. Alluding to the event in a letter to her son, she says:—"Our true and dear benefactor's death! Long I dreaded it, but our God alone in every thing! What an example has he left to you, my love, of the true Christian and true gentleman! How I pity Mr. Antonio! and Signora Maria must be desolate indeed! Do all you can, my son: I know and am sure you will; and do, do remember how narrow is the way that leads where they are gone so dear to us. This moment from communion! What does not my heart say for you continually! . . . Say every thing for me to our dear friends." The death of Mr. Filicchi was not the loss of a few only: it may be said to have been a public calamity; for, besides the gloom which it spread over the community by the departure of one whose bright virtues had won for him universal reverence and whose wisdom contributed so much to the public weal, hundreds of poor fed at his hands, orphans depending on his support, and prisoners relieved by his charity, now mourned for a lost benefactor. Their loss, however, was his gain; for he had kept his soul free from the defilements of the world, and, having made his riches subservient to religion, and placed his honor not in wealth, but in God, he had sent his treasures before him, and secured to himself friends to receive him in the eternal tabernacles.

Two months had scarcely elapsed when the tender affection of Mother Seton was put to a still severer trial by the loss of her youngest daughter,—a loss which is rather to be felt than described; for they who were personally and intimately acquainted with this young lady represent her as gifted with the finest qualities of mind and heart. She was naturally of a gay and happy disposition, which won the love of her companions; but her piety made her far more worthy of admiration. Ever since the winter of 1812, when she was injured by a fall on the ice, she had been more or less a continual sufferer. To have the advantage of the best medical attendance, she was sent to Baltimore; but, though partially relieved by her physician, she was far from being restored to health. During her stay in Baltimore, her mother addressed several letters to her, in which she employed the most persuasive language of maternal affection to impress upon her mind the lessons which her situation required and to render her pains an occasion of spiritual profit. In one of her notes she says:—

‘MY SOUL’S LITTLE DARLING:—

‘Mother’s eyes fill with tears even when she thinks of you—but loving tears of joy that my dear one may suffer and bear pain, and resign herself to the will of our Dearest, and be the child of his cross. You know mother has often told you that the one who suffers most is the dearest to me, and so our Dearest loves the child he afflicts with a double love. Remember, my dear one, what mother told you about love and obedience to our so kind and tender friend,* and our Dearest, not to forget him a moment: you know he never forgets you; and do not mind kneeling, but speak your heart to him anywhere. May his dear, dearest blessing be on you! . . . Jesus, Mary, and Joseph bless and love you.’

* The lady of the physician at whose residence she lodged in Baltimore.

While in Baltimore, Miss Seton had also the happiness of receiving the sacrament of confirmation, the grace of which was so desirable in her suffering condition.* The sacred gifts thus communicated to her, and the constant advice of her truly Christian mother, were not without the happiest effects. They encouraged her under the painful trial which she suffered, and taught her to seek for strength and consolation where alone they can be found,—in the love of God and in union with his divine Son. She frequently approached the sacraments, and by her advice and example encouraged her fellow-pupils to a more fervent practice of virtue. Many little associations were introduced by her among the boarders, generally under the protection of Mary Queen of Heaven, whose name through a spirit of devotion she added to her own. These associations had their particular regulations, by which the young ladies were led to the exercise of patience, charity, obedience, and other virtues of a Christian life. Often was she seen in presence of the Blessed Sacrament, a lighted taper in one hand and her book in the other, performing with the utmost recollection the pious duties which she had undertaken with some of her companions. By this exemplary conduct and her amiable deportment she became a universal favorite at St. Joseph's House. When the orphans educated there were formed into a class, separate from the boarders, they at first were pained by the humiliation which this distinction seemed to imply; but Miss Seton caused all their uneasiness to vanish by joining the class herself. To see her daughter at this tender age† so diligent and fervent in the cultivation of piety was

* It was probably to this consoling event that her mother alluded, when she wrote—"My soul's little darling, more and more and more beloved since the *sacred gift* has been bestowed on you. Oh, keep it carefully, and watch every word and thought."

† She was only in her fourteenth year.

a source of inexpressible delight to Mother Seton, who lost no opportunity of encouraging so happy a disposition by the most solid and impressive counsels. The following note she sent to her in answer, it appears, to a question about approaching the sacraments. "With the little pen I answer my dear, every day dearer, little darling, how much I desire she should go and unite still closer to our only Beloved. . . Go either Thursday or Sunday, as the rest do, and make your careful preparation of the purest heart you can bring him, that it may appear to him like a bright little star at the bottom of a fountain. Oh, my Rebecca! child of eternity! let peace and love stay with you in your pains, and they will lighten and sweeten them all. Be blessed forever!" The only direction of this note was, *my own child of eternity*,—an expression which Mother Seton applied to her suffering daughter, because she loved to contemplate her gradually ripening for the eternal crown by an humble and patient resignation to the will of God under the afflictions which he had sent her. Such was the consolation and joy of this Christian mother to see her beloved child, not decked off in the vanity of the world, but wearing the livery of Jesus Christ, and possessing in her painful disease, borne in his spirit and in union with him, a happy mark of predestination. "Oh the joy to that mother's soul!" she wrote on another occasion to her daughter, "the love of her Mother in heaven! the delight of her good angel presenting every moment of the suffering darling to her crucified Saviour, who counts her pains with his! My soul's darling, in her cradle and bandage, sitting on this swift-rolling earth—moments and hours passing so swiftly to our glorious happy eternity! Trust all indeed to him, my dear one; put all in his hands, and we will see by-and-by, when we get home in our Jerusalem, how good and tender he has been in giving you the thorny crown." The sufferings of Miss Seton having become aggra-

vated by the formation of a tumor on the thigh, which was the seat of her disease, it was thought advisable to send her to Philadelphia, for the purpose of consulting an eminent physician of that place. While there, she remained at the asylum conducted by the Sisters of Charity, from whom she received the kindest attentions; but her complaint baffled all the efforts of medical skill and friendly care, and left little or no hope of her recovery. Mother Seton, far from flattering her child with such a hope, turned her thoughts and aspirations continually to that better world where tears and sorrowing are exchanged for never-ending joys. On the other hand, nothing could exceed the affectionate tenderness with which she inculcated the lessons of Christian faith, and kindled in the heart of her daughter a desire of her heavenly home. "Oh, could I but take your jalaps and every pain, and your precious soul yet be adorned with the blessed graces they will bring to you! My Rebecca! he alone knows—on your bed and little pillow—but yet a little while—I hope every thing for our dear eternity, since you must suffer so much here." In the hope of relieving her pains, if not removing her disease, the physician ordered the use of an apparatus the application of which caused her the greatest suffering. Though agonizing to a mother's feelings to witness the torture which the use of this instrument gave to her child, she persevered with heroic fortitude in obeying the orders of the physician, until, perceiving after a fair trial that it would prove of no avail, she discontinued it, saying, "Let the holy will of God be done. If he pleases to call the darling to himself, happy for her to escape the dangers of a sinful world!"

With the increase of her sufferings, this admirable child seemed to increase in patience and conformity to the divine will. During six months previous to her death she had scarcely an interval of repose; yet she never lost her lively

and cheerful manner, and offered her sufferings continually to God in union with those of Jesus Christ. Mother Seton was in constant attendance upon her, being up half of the night and never leaving her bedside during the day; but her ambition to perfect that soul for the meeting of the heavenly Spouse, and the beauty of holiness which she beheld in it increasing from day to day, supported her strength and nerved her for the trying scene. "Our God!" she exclaimed, "how sweet to see his love in our little beloved!" Viewing the holy sentiments of her daughter, she could yield her even with joy into the hands of God. "There are moments of life," she wrote to her absent son, "when resignation and courage are scarcely to be thought an exertion; and this is one with us, with you even, so far from the daily scene of the heavenly virtues she continually displays, and which promise so certainly the blessed consequence of her early call from this world of uncertainty; for, if she remained with us through the succession of pains and trials which she must have passed in a longer life, we should be quite insecure for her eternity; but now we see her, as it were, exhaling to heaven in all the purity of her innocence. Be not selfish, my beloved; let her go." September 4, 1816.

But the nearer the youthful sufferer approached the last moment of life, the more fully did she respond to the cherished hopes of her saintly mother. While the bodily frame was fast falling to decay, the faculties of her soul and her Christian virtue shone forth more brightly than ever. She was not only willing to die, but she was convinced of the happiness of leaving the world at so early a period of life, and rejoiced at the prospect of her crown in heaven. Though full of humility at the thought of having proved so little her love for God, and penetrated with a salutary fear of his judgments, yet she had a tender and peaceful confidence in the merits of Jesus Christ, and joyfully hoped

that through him her efforts to please God would be crowned with the rewards of eternal life.

On one occasion, her sufferings being very violent, she expressed a desire to receive extreme unction; and although her director, the Rev. Mr. Dubois, perceived no immediate danger, he heard her confession, with the intention of anointing her on the following day. "It is impossible," said he, "to give an idea of the composure of mind and heavenly resignation of this blessed angel. After her confession was over, 'Father,' said she, 'is there any harm to hope that I will go to heaven as soon as I am dead?' 'No, my beloved child,' said I, 'if this hope is grounded not on any confidence you have in your own merits, but on the mercy of God and the merits of our Jesus.' 'Oh,' said she, 'it is so I understand it; what merits could such a child as I have? But when I look at the cross and consider that our Lord has shed his blood to save me, then I hope that my sufferings will be accepted as my penance, without going to purgatory. Oh! how I would like to go to heaven! Then I would love God and would not be afraid to lose him.'" She recalled with much comfort, at this eventful hour of her existence, the efforts which she had always made to prepare herself well for the sacrament of penance and to obtain the grace of a GOOD ABSOLUTION. Her support under the violence of her sufferings was the consideration of her Divine Saviour on the cross. Her eyes were almost continually fixed on the crucifix, the sight of which animated her to endure every pain after the example of Jesus Christ, while it inspired the most consoling hopes for her eternal reward. A few weeks before her death, she seemed to shrink at the idea of such an event, and gladly received the visits of her schoolmates, to cheer the hour of suffering. Mother Seton, fearing lest her thoughts might be diverted from the consideration of what she now desired to be the sole object of

her attention, had recourse to prayer. She requested several of the sisters to make a novena with her in honor of St. Joseph, to obtain for her beloved daughter the grace of a holy and happy death. The novena being ended, Rebecca seemed to be altogether absorbed in preparing for her last moments. She called her mother and desired that none of her companions should be admitted that day to her room. Her papers having been brought to her at her request, she made a selection of some, which she directed her mother to destroy, as they contained her confessions and the advices which she had received on those occasions. Others were prayers and devotions to the Blessed Virgin, or resolutions which she had formed after approaching the sacrament of penance, and her sentiments during retreats. From this moment to that of her final departure, her time was almost entirely employed in pious colloquies with her mother, who, in lavishing upon her all the care that the most tender affection could suggest, beheld with delight the beautiful dispositions of her dying child, who now spoke as familiarly of death as of an ordinary journey, and tried to soothe the distress of those around her by words which only the most courageous faith could inspire. "Death, death, my mother," she would say in the agony of her pains; "it seems so strange that I shall be no more here. You will come back, (from the graveyard,) dearest mother, alone. No little Rebecca behind the curtain. But that is only one side: when I look at the other, I forget all; you will be comforted. . . . If Dr. C—— would say, Rebecca, you will get well, I would not wish it—no, my dearest Saviour! I am convinced of the happiness of an early death, and *to sin no more*. That is the point, my mother," throwing her arms around her, and repeating, "sin no more!" On the vigil of All-Saints, feeling much worse, she desired to receive the last sacrament, the blessings of which she appreciated with the most

lively faith It happened that her mother and herself had just before been reading and conversing about the holy viaticum and extreme unction, so that all preparations were already made. After these consoling rites had been performed, in which she participated with the greatest piety and recollection, she awaited momentarily the call of her Divine Master, requesting different prayers to be recited, her ardent faith strongly depicted on her countenance, her thoughts fixed on God, and her heart pouring itself forth in acts of love and thanksgiving for the graces then bestowed upon her. When her first communion-candle, which had been lighted at her request, dropped into the socket, she expressed the disappointment of a child, because she had hoped that with the extinction of the candle she would be summoned from the world; yet she resigned herself with the strongest and tenderest submission of her will, closely uniting in the agony of Jesus in the garden. Her pains were now excruciating, and she had some fears lest her patience might fail, when the Rev. Mr. Dubois arrived, and, finding her in so pitiable a state, offered to remain with her. For so valued a favor her gratitude was inexpressible. The presence of a priest seemed to arm her against every power of the enemy; she even begged him to say his office near her, and reminded her mother, with a smile, that the Rev. Mr. Bruté called their little room *the tabernacle of the just*. The two following days were passed with increased weakness and pain. "Our God! our God!" exclaims Mother Seton, "to wait one hour for an object every moment expected! but poor Rebecca's hours and agonies are known to you alone!—her meek, submissive look, artless appeals of sorrow, and unutterable distress:—the hundred little acts of piety that All-Souls day, so sad and sorrowful,—the fears of the poor mother's heart, her bleeding heart, for patience and perseverance in so weak a child,—the silent, long looks at

each other,—fears of interfering in any way with the designs of infinite love :—oh that day and night and following day! The reverend Superior told her he would not wish her sufferings shortened ; she quietly gave up, felt her pulse no more, inquired no more about going, or what hour it was, but, with her heart of sorrow pictured on her countenance, looking now at the crucifix, again at her mother, seemed to mind nothing else.” In this full union of her soul with God, and with words of comfort to those around her, she fell into her agony, and her head sank upon the bosom of her mother, while her spirit took its flight above. “ This,” says an eye-witness, “ was the moment of victory over nature.” When Mother Seton had helped to lay the little corpse on the bed, having embraced it with the tender words, “ My Rebecca, my darling,” she turned toward one of the sisters, saying, “ My dear sister, bring me a change of linen ; now that my chains are broken, I will bless the Lord.” Raising her eyes and arms in a holy transport toward heaven, she exclaimed, “ O my Lord ! my darling is with you ; she will no more be in danger of offending you ; I give her to you with all my soul.” In making this offering to God, Mother Seton felt the full honor and happiness of returning pure and holy into his hands the child of her bosom, who, though so young, was adorned with every Christian virtue, and of whom it may be truly said, with the inspired writer, that her brief career had fulfilled the hopes of a long existence. Nature, indeed, would urge its claims ; the tears of affection would flow in homage to so much worth ; but faith was ever triumphant, joy and gratitude pervading the heart where grief could so justly have been permitted to enter. Mother Seton thus wrote to a friend, announcing the loss of her daughter :—“ You only can understand her delight and triumphs in the last sacraments, and dearest hopes through the divine sacrifice of the

altar, even after death. I could give you no possible idea of the peace, sweetness, fortitude, and piety of that beautiful soul, which shone so well and so purely on her face, that from being only a good-looking child, as when you last saw her, she became a real beauty even in death. High, high up your heart, dearest friend; no sad and unavailing regrets; see her now where she is, and that will silence all." But in writing to her absent son, in reference to the same event, Mother Seton displays all the heroic sentiments of her heart:—

"My soul's W——, what would I give to be with you at the moment you hear the last sad anticipated news for which all my many late letters have been preparing you! There are moments, my son, when gratitude to God must overrule even the tenderest, deepest feelings of nature; and this is one, my beloved; for scarcely could you be more sure, if you had seen your Rebecca ascend in the form of an angel to heaven, that she was actually there, than you may be through faith, after the death we have witnessed. It would be too, too selfish in us to have wished her inexpressible sufferings prolonged and her secure bliss deferred for our longer possession of this dear creature, though in her I have lost the little friend of my heart, who read every pain or joy of it, and soothed by the most dotting affection every daily care,—the darling of my soul though her so unexampled sufferings and patience. Yet I look up with joy, and feel only for you, so far away. She said often, if it was possible to show herself to you she would; but one thing she was sure our Lord would not refuse,—to let her see you; and, from the heavenly graces he favored her with in this world, we may well think he would deny her nothing.

"It is not possible to give you a true idea of the virtues of Rebecca: her beauty of soul and body increased daily even to the arms of death. Your last letter arrived the day be-

fore she died, while she was even in her long agony. I told her your tender love, and she raised her eyes to the crucifix, blessing you with love in every feature, yet the expression of distress which she always felt only for you—the only regret she ever expressed for this world. ‘Tell him only to meet me,’ she would say, and never could bear us to speak of you but for a moment. In the arms and on the dotting heart of her mother she gave the last sigh. Nine weeks, night and day, I had her in my arms,—even eating my meal with one hand often behind her pillow, while she rested on my knees. Her pains could find no relief or solace but in her own poor mother, so happy to bear them with her that truly it has in no way hurt me.” November 21, 1816.

Under this painful trial, it was a great consolation to Mother Seton to receive from so many distinguished and valued friends an expression of their sympathy according perfectly with her own elevated feelings. Bishop Cheverus of Boston, Rev. Dr. Matignon, and others, wrote to her, not in a strain of condolence, but congratulating her on the happiness of herself and the child whom she had so successfully trained to be the companion of angels. The following language of Rev. Mr. Moranvillé, the saintly pastor of St. Patrick’s Church in Baltimore, will convey the sentiments of all and show the high esteem which was entertained for the character of Miss Seton.

“Our dear Rebecca has at last met a better change. She is now in the embraces of Him whom she so ardently loved. Her last trials, borne with such unalterable joy and in a state of so great purity of mind and heart, have no doubt entitled her to the long-wished-for reward. No doubt she now looks with complacency upon her mother and her friends she has left behind, and solicits for us all a share in the blessed portion she now enjoys forever. Happy child! taken in the very bud of life, and permitted only to live long

enough to secure to herself, by her merits and virtue, a never-fading crown! Dear Mother, I could not but rejoice at your situation, in hearing so many edifying things of this child of blessing. She was long since ripe for a blissful immortality; and the Lord, who has taken her away from your presence, has comforted you with this reviving hope. We pray for her more for our own interest than from a sense of her being in want of any assistance."⁽²³⁾

It was a great happiness for Mother Seton that she could contemplate with joy those of her children who were yet travelling the journey of life, as well as those whom she had already yielded into the hands of God.

While she was devoting herself unceasingly to their true welfare, the institution over which she presided was fast rising in importance. The steady increase in the number of sisters and pupils at St. Joseph's, with the fervent practice of the Christian virtues that prevailed there, was a proof that the Almighty still favored it with his benedictions. According to the constitutions of the sisterhood, a second election for the appointment of a Mother-superior had been held on the 20th of July, 1815, which resulted in the retaining of Mother Seton in the office which she had already so ably filled. Sister Elizabeth Boyle was appointed Assistant-Mother; Sister Margaret George continued the duties of Treasurer, and Sister Joanna Smith entered upon the office of Procuratrix. About the same time, three of the sisters—Bridget Farrel, Ann Gruber, and Anastasia Nabbs—were sent to Mt. St. Mary's College, "full of desire," says Mother Seton, "to relieve the cares of their dear superior, and make some little return of his long labors for the house, by trying to serve his interesting establishment there." The Rev. Mr. Dubois still continued his eminent services to St. Joseph's community, amid his other arduous occupations, which literally overwhelmed him, particularly since the departure

of Rev. Mr. Bruté for Europe. He was oftentimes obliged to abstain from his meals on account of the fatigue under which he labored; and it was useless to represent to him the necessity of paying more regard to his health, for his enterprising spirit and indefatigable zeal made him indifferent to his personal wants.* Under these circumstances, to receive the aid of the sisters was a great relief to him in his responsible charge; while their superior management in attending to the infirmary, clothes-room, and other departments of the household, contributed much to elevate the college in the public estimation. This was the second mission which the Sisters of Charity undertook out of the mother-house.

Such was the progress of the institution, when its chief superior, the Most Rev. John Carroll, Archbishop of Baltimore, was called to his reward on the 3d of December, in the eightieth year of his age and the twenty-sixth of his episcopal career. The profound grief which this event excited, not only within the limits of his diocese, but over the whole country, was particularly felt at St. Joseph's sisterhood, in the establishment and government of which he had so largely co-operated. He had watched its progress with the deepest interest; and he had the high satisfaction, before he left the world, to see it advancing in usefulness and promising to become an instrument of the most extensive good for the American Church. For Mother Seton and her family he had always cherished a peculiar regard, and, accustomed as she was to rely much on the wisdom of his counsels, his death was a severe stroke to her, although she bowed with submission to the decrees of Providence.

* One day he said to Mother Seton, laughing, "You see my hair cut? I met the barber in the woods, and I sat down on a stone to let him do it there; *there is no time at home.*" This incident unfolds the whole character of that excellent and laborious priest.

Archbishop Carroll was succeeded in the metropolitan see by his coadjutor, the Rt. Rev. Leonard Neale, who, worn out with age and infirmity, applied without delay to the Holy See to have Bishop Cheverus of Boston associated with him in the episcopal charge. For the purpose of conferring with him on this important business, Bishop Neale invited him to Baltimore, and on his arrival made known to him his wishes and the request which he had presented to the Sovereign Pontiff; but he could not obtain the consent of Bishop Cheverus to be separated from his cherished flock in New England. He availed himself, however, of his visit, to receive at his hands the pallium—the badge of his archiepiscopal rank and authority. This ceremony took place in the parish church at Georgetown, on the 24th of November, 1816. In a letter of Bishop Cheverus to Mother Seton, he informed her of this circumstance, adding that at an early hour on the same day he had celebrated mass in the chapel of the Visitation Convent, where the edifying scene around him recalled vividly to his mind and heart the happy moments which he had spent six years before among the pious inmates of St. Joseph's. Nor could he refrain, on this occasion, when circumstances had brought him so near his venerated friend, the Mother-superior of the sisterhood, from paying another visit to her excellent institution. His stay at Emmettsburg was short; but it was fruitful in the consolations of their mutual faith. The terms in which he alludes to the occasion show at once the pleasure and edification which he had received and which he had diffused around him:—"The 8th and 9th of December, treasured up in the memory and affections of my heart! Your excellent sisters, their happy and edifying pupils, the mother with her children in heaven and on earth,—all, all in my heart and in my prayers, and will always be!"

Since the establishment of the sisterhood, the property

which belonged to it had been held in the name of the Rev. Mr. Cooper, its generous benefactor, and others; but, as the institution was now flourishing, and its means were likely to increase, it was considered prudent to obtain for the society an act of incorporation, in order to guard against any difficulties that might arise from imperfection or informality in their legal tenure. When the subject was mentioned to Mother Seton, she asked what advantages would be derived from the incorporation of the sisterhood, and she was told that one of the principal objects of the measure was to obtain for the sisters the right to "sue and be sued." "I cannot think that an advantage," she replied; but, as the friends of the establishment recommended the step, she was pleased that it should be adopted. An act for the incorporation of the sisterhood was passed by the legislature of Maryland, in January, 1817, principally through the exertions of General Harper.* Immediately after this, the farm occupied by the sisters was transferred to them in their own right by those who had previously held it. As a mark of the divine protection over St. Joseph's community, it is worthy of remark that an effort was made by Mr. Emmett, who formerly owned the land belonging to the sisters, with a large portion of the surrounding country, to recover the possession of it. Under the pretence of there being a flaw in the early deeds, by which the property had passed from his hands, he instituted a suit against the sisterhood which threatened to involve it in difficulty. But Providence did not permit the schemes of injustice to prevail. Mother Seton and her community had recourse to prayer. One morning, after they had invoked in a special manner the divine protection, that the

* The vote was thirty-five *ayes* and twenty-four *noes*, giving a majority of only eleven in favor of an institution the sole objects of which were the diffusion of knowledge and the relief of suffering humanity!

legal contest into which they had been drawn might have a favorable issue, the intelligence was brought them that Mr. Emmett, while walking through the streets of the village which bore his name, though apparently in good health, had suddenly fallen and expired. The event produced a great sensation throughout the country, and was considered as an intervention of the Almighty to arrest the further progress of injustice against his pious servants. In fact, the death of Mr. Emmett put an end to the proceedings in court.

While God was thus watching over the welfare of St. Joseph's community, he was opening a wider field for the exercise of its noble charity. New York, emulating the example of Philadelphia, applied for the services of the sisters and obtained them. The request was presented through the Rt. Rev. Dr. Conolly, bishop of the former city. It being the native place of Mother Seton, the selection of the sisters who would be sent thither was a matter of no small importance, as they who were to represent her abroad in the life of perfection which she had embraced would be narrowly watched by her former acquaintances, and would reflect honor or discredit upon her profession according to their ability and faithfulness in attending to the duties of their charge. The mission was confided to the care of Sister Rose White whose zeal, piety, and engaging manners had already contributed vastly to the success of the orphan asylum in Philadelphia, and eminently qualified her for undertaking an institution of the same kind in the city of New York. She set out for that place with two other members of the society—Sister Cecilia O'Conway and Sister Felicité Brady—on the 20th of June, 1817, and commenced in an humble way an institution which was destined to become, in the course of time, a most flourishing house of orphans. On this occasion, as before, Mother Seton delivered concise but comprehensive instructions to her spiritual daughters, recommend-

ing to them especially a spirit of union and charity among themselves, fidelity to their rules, and a kind manner to strangers. By observing her wise counsels the sisters succeeded in their work of charity; it went on prospering and triumphing over all the difficulties which are usually met with in the commencement of such undertakings, until it has risen to a degree of usefulness unsurpassed by any other institution of the kind in the United States. When the sisters went to New York, they occupied as an asylum a small frame house which stood on the site of the present spacious building in Prince Street, and only five orphans were confided to their care during the first twelve months. In the course of another year the number had increased to twenty-eight, one-third of whom were boys.*⁽²⁴⁾

Shortly after Mother Seton had sent a colony of her spiritual children to New York, she had the joy of again embracing in her arms her eldest son. During his stay abroad she had never failed to direct him by her enlightened counsels, his practical respect for which filled her with inexpressible consolation. "I see well," she wrote to him, "that integrity and filial love overrule all your youthful and natural feelings, and I can but be most grateful to our God and you that they have so long held you under circumstances so painful to you; for now I have gained my main object in parting with you, my beloved son, which was not so much to fix you with affluent friends, or in a tide of fortune, as to give you time to know yourself a little, to know the world a little, and to overcome your first ardent propensity for the

* The male orphans have been removed from the house in Prince Street to a separate establishment. Before this arrangement was made, there were three hundred and twenty-seven orphans in the house, of whom one hundred and forty were boys under eight years of age. At present, the male asylum contains three hundred and seventy-five orphans and the female asylum two hundred and fifty.

navy—which I know is even now the passion of your heart; yet I would be unjust to our tender affection if I withheld my whole mind from you, who have so well unfolded yours to me, and should conceal from you my fears, not for your dear person, my darling son, but for the dear immortal object which your deceased sisters would now solicit you for even more earnestly than your poor mother. My soul's W——, I need not tell you to rise above the clouds that surround us. You know well enough that we must pass our course of trials with the rest of human beings; those who have least of them are not the most enviable. For my part, I would think all the pains I ever endured fully rewarded by the sweet and unspeakable pleasure I received in reading your sentiments of love and duty contained in your last letters." What was the joy of the meeting between such a mother and such a son, after a separation of more than two years, may be more easily imagined than described. Pursuing his bent for the naval profession, Mr. Seton, after some months' stay near his beloved parent, embarked on a cruise of three years. The expressions of respect and love in which he wrote to her on the eve of his departure are worthy of his mind and heart.

"For the third time I sit down to address you a few lines. . . . I know your dearest heart is always near me, and I can truly say, that employed or at leisure, in bed or on my watch, your dear image is never absent from me. When I think of my little room at the Mountain and my daily visits to St. Joseph's, and compare them with my present situation, I cannot but wonder at my—I could almost call it infatuation, in ever wishing to leave a spot where now, it seems, I could be happy for life; but there is something which impels me forward. Surely, as some writer says, there is a tide in fate; else I cannot conceive what could have taken me from you. Yet I look forward with pleasure to

the time, if it please God to spare me, when I shall again hold you in my arms. Till then we must be content to read each other's thoughts."⁽²⁵⁾

The place vacated by Mr. William Seton in the mercantile establishment of Mr. Filicchi at Leghorn having been offered to his brother Richard, Mother Seton embraced with thankfulness the opportunity of locating her second son in so favorable a situation for beginning the world. He accordingly set out for Italy in the autumn of 1817, after receiving from his excellent parent the necessary counsels to guide him in his new position.

About the time of his departure, Mother Seton and her community had the pleasure of receiving a visit from the Rt. Rev. William V. Dubourg, who had been the chief instrument with her in the foundation of the sisterhood at Emmettsburg, and its first ecclesiastical superior. Returning from Rome, where he had been consecrated Bishop of New Orleans, he could not deny himself the satisfaction of viewing the progress of an institution with whose interests he had been so immediately connected, but from which he had been for several years far removed in the discharge of other arduous duties. He now witnessed the abundant fruits of the undertaking which he had originally suggested and so earnestly promoted. The little mustard-seed had sprung up into a tree of stately growth, and was diffusing far and wide its refreshing shade. The sisterhood, with upward of thirty members, filled with zeal for their sanctification,—the academy, with more than seventy pupils, who were receiving the blessings of a solid and religious education,—orphans at home and abroad sheltered from the frowns of a pitiless world, under the maternal care of the Sisters of Charity,—such was the gratifying spectacle which St. Joseph's House presented, and the contemplation of which could not but awaken sentiments of mutual and most lively joy between

him and Mother Seton. During his stay at Emmettsburg, Bishop Dubourg administered the sacrament of confirmation to several of the pupils and novices. After having taken a last farewell of the institution, he addressed a very friendly letter to its venerated superioress, in which he says:—
“In a few days I am to launch into the career allotted to me. Pray that I may run it to the term with unwearied constancy, notwithstanding the great obstacles that may be thrown in my way. Pray that I may become the model of my flock, and that, by avoiding all those faults which perhaps were the cause of my failure in my first attempt, I may deserve to be the instrument of the mercy of my God upon so many thousand ignorant, deluded, or corrupt souls, whose salvation is in a certain measure committed to my care. Oh, my dear Mother, what a charge! Enough to make one sink under its weight, if a proportionate assistance should for a moment be withdrawn. Pity me, and pray for me.”⁽²⁶⁾

In the month of February, 1818, the church at Emmettsburg suffered a severe loss, by the death of the Rev. Charles Duhamel, who had for several years attended the congregation of the village and occasionally assisted the Rev. Mr. Dubois in his duties at the sisterhood. He had formerly exercised the holy ministry at Cayenne, in French Guiana, whither he had been sent from the seminary *du Saint Esprit* at Paris, in 1784, together with the Rev. Messrs. Moranvillé and Hérard, his fellow-students in the same institution. His physical strength, however, was far from being equal to the labors of that trying mission, and he came to the United States, where he was appointed by Archbishop Carroll to the pastoral charge of Hagerstown, in Maryland, and subsequently to that of the congregation of Emmettsburg.* He was a zealous and energetic priest, and

* *Desultory Sketches of the Catholic Church in Maryland*; by B. U. Campbell, published in the Religious Cabinet, p. 437.

rendered important services in the last-mentioned situation; but the bodily infirmities which he suffered frequently interrupted his useful labors, and at length terminated his life. By the loss of Rev. Mr. Duhamel, Mr. Dubois felt more heavily the pressure of his multiplied and arduous occupations. His onerous duties at Mt. St. Mary's College and St. Joseph's sisterhood and academy, which were steadily increasing, together with those of his parochial charge, made it absolutely necessary that he should have the aid of some active and efficient clergyman. This was the more requisite as the Rev. John Hickey, who had for several years assisted him in his ministerial functions, was soon recalled to St. Mary's College in Baltimore. The ardent zeal and indomitable energy of Mr. Dubois could alone have sustained him amid the labors and difficulties of his situation. Since the year 1813, the course of study at the college had been considerably enlarged. Besides the elementary branches of an English education, the French language had been introduced, and the Latin and Greek more extensively taught; to which were added the higher departments of mathematics, with a course of rhetoric and moral philosophy. "As the original design of Mt. St. Mary's Seminary was to prepare young men for the study of theology, those of the students who gave evidence of a true vocation were transferred to St. Mary's Seminary, at Baltimore, as soon as their preparatory studies were completed. So eager was Mr. Dubois to supply that great want of our country,—a body of educated and edifying priests,—so improvident almost in the liberality with which he opened the doors of his humble institution to all who longed to devote themselves to the work of the holy ministry, that he furnished from year to year a considerable number of ecclesiastical candidates, most of whom have since become ornaments of the sanctuary, to which, in all probability, they would never have been admitted but for the little

nursery then established near Emmettsburg. When it is remembered that Mr. Dubois came from Frederick penniless,—that all his property was acquired on credit,—that he was continually making expensive improvements,—and when it is added that he was frequently imposed upon in his dealings with others,—that his accounts were not strictly kept, and that however poor and straitened, he could never turn a deaf ear to the cry of want, and did not hesitate even out of his own poverty to aid other meritorious undertakings,—we cannot be surprised that he should soon find himself embarrassed and almost overwhelmed by pecuniary difficulties. Still he struggled on with his characteristic energy and perseverance, with a noble, self-sacrificing devotion to his good cause, and with a firm reliance on the protection of God. He was cheered, too, by the visits, and aided and encouraged by the friendly counsels, of the first Archbishop of Baltimore, of the sweet and saintly Cheverus, and of Mr. Dubourg, the prime mover in many of the greatest works that have been undertaken in this country for the promotion of education and religion.”* As superior of the institutions under his charge, Mr. Dubois enjoyed the highest regard and confidence. “He was respected and beloved by his teachers and pupils. He was dignified, without being distant; always kind and amiable, yet firm in exacting diligence and maintaining discipline. He took evident pleasure in applauding and rewarding. He always carried with him the affection and admiration of those about him.”† In the happy results of his paternal and successful administration he found a true solace and compensation under the trying and oftentimes disheartening circumstances of his position, while

* Sketch of Mt. St. Mary's College; by an Alumnus, in *United States Catholic Magazine*, vol. v. 1846, p. 39.

† *Ibid.*, p. 40.

he was greatly relieved in his arduous duties by the young men who were aspirants to the sanctuary. But his chief consolation and support were derived from "the friendship and co-operation of him who was justly styled 'the angel-guardian of the mountain.'" This was the Rev. Mr. Bruté, who is already known to the reader. Since his return from Europe, in the autumn of 1815, he had been president of St. Mary's College at Baltimore, and filled that office with distinction. In the rising institution at Emmettsburg he felt the liveliest interest, and neglected no opportunity of furthering its prosperity. "Without his assistance," observes the writer already quoted, "it was impossible that the great works for the promotion of religion, education, and charity, commenced in the neighborhood of Emmettsburg, should have been successfully carried on." Mr. Bruté became again a resident at the Mountain and the assistant of Mr. Dubois, in the winter of 1818. Soon after his arrival in this new field of labor, the study of theology was introduced into the seminary, and he was appointed professor of divinity and lecturer on Sacred Scripture. At the same time he had charge of one or two classes in the collegiate department, where he displayed an extraordinary tact in the communication of knowledge. The institution also derived considerable benefit from the large and valuable library which he had brought with him, consisting of nearly five thousand volumes. In addition to these occupations, Mr. Bruté was pastor of the congregation at Emmettsburg and confessor to the growing community at St. Joseph's; and, notwithstanding the variety and importance of his duties, he fulfilled them all with a zeal and ability that are rarely witnessed. "His lessons of heavenly wisdom and piety, illustrated and enforced by his own example, were irresistible in their effects," and all his efforts were crowned with the most abundant success.⁽²⁷⁾

Mother Seton entertained a high regard for Mr Bruté as a director of souls, and during his late residence in Baltimore, as well as previously, had maintained a constant correspondence with him on spiritual subjects. About the time that he entered upon his duties at the sisterhood, Mother Seton was laboring under a violent inflammation of the lungs, which threatened to put an end to her invaluable life. While others were filled with grief at the uncertain state of her health, she herself rejoiced at the prospect of her departure from this vale of tears. She had never considered herself any thing more than the cement of her good sisters; and now that the institution, both as a house of religious perfection and an establishment of education, had become consolidated and promised to be permanently useful, and her children in the order of nature had reached a mature age, she thought that it was a proper moment for her to leave the world. She therefore directed all her thoughts to the happiness of a good death, which was the object of her most ardent aspirations; and in soliciting the prayers of her friends she begged them not only to dismiss their anxiety, but to bless the providence of God which seemed to call her to her rest. Writing to one of her former pupils at this time, on the anniversary of the birth of her youngest daughter, she closes her letter with a most lively expression of her faith and her desire to be released from the bonds of mortality:—"Rebecca's birthday! she would be sixteen: but counts time no more. What a thought! to go to *her*, and our ANNINA! to go to GOD!" Bishop Cheverus, on receiving the intelligence of her illness and of her desire to be with Christ, wrote to her, that, far from pitying, he envied her situation, hastening as she was to the embraces of Him who is love and of the saints of whom she had been the happy mother. "You will meet in heaven," he continues, "the venerable and dearest friend who is going to be taken from

me. Dear sister, pray that I may be endowed with some portion of your faith and resignation."

Divine Providence, however, did not permit these two holy souls to quit the world together. Dr. Matignon, to whom Bishop Cheverus alluded, was soon called to the reward of his many virtues, while Mother Seton was reserved for the greater blessing of the community over which she presided.⁽²³⁾ That same year, by a special exception which the constitutions of the society had made in her case, her election to the office of Mother for a third consecutive term was confirmed.* Retained in this responsible situation, she discharged the duties which it imposed with as much activity as was permitted by the very feeble state of her health. The disease which had seized upon her constitution was gradually undermining her strength, and she held herself in readiness, by a continual preparation of heart, for the call of her heavenly Spouse. "I cannot die one way," she wrote to a friend; "so I try to die the other, and keep the straight path to God alone. The little daily lesson, to keep soberly and quietly in his presence, trying to turn every little action on his will, and to praise and love through cloud or sunshine, is all my care and study. Satan offers his battles from time to time, but our Beloved stands behind the wall and keeps the wretch at his distance."

Mother Seton extended her vigilant care to the charitable labors of her spiritual daughters abroad, as well as to matters more immediately under her eye. She not only taught them by her wise counsels how to proceed in the holy work they had undertaken, inculcating maxims of prudence, charity, and patient endurance of the trials they had to encounter; she watched particularly over their wants, and manifested

* In a letter to a Sister of Charity, she called this an election of the dead.

toward them in every respect the tender solicitude of a mother. She thus wrote to a sister on one of the missions, who was indisposed, and a little discouraged in not being able to attend fully to her charge. "My own dear sister, I take a laugh and a cry at your flannels and plasters. Never mind; GOD is GOD in it all. If you are to do his work, the strength will be given you: if not, my precious child, some one else will do it, and you may come back to your corner. No great affair where his dear atom is, if only his will is done. Peace, dearest soul, from our Jesus. I look a long look at our dear crucifix for you. All are here nearly as you left: our faithful God the same! Ever your little mother." She thus directs a sister about to undertake a distant charge:—"Knowing as I do so well your heart's full desire to serve our Lord purely, I can say nothing to you, dearest soul, but to keep well to what you believe to be the grace of the moment. You will so often be at a stand for what is best in a situation so new; but only do for the best as you always have done, and leave the rest for our dear God. Try only to keep in mind, as I know you wish, to be guarded and very careful in disapproving or changing any thing until you have been there a while and can see through the meaning of every thing. Oh, may our dear Lord strengthen you in that point, and you will see how well all will go after a little while. We separate, dear child, but you go to do what we stay to do,—the dear will of God,—all we care for in this poor life. May he bless you forever!" On another occasion, Mother Seton having resolved to send abroad, on the work of charity, a sister who had a particular attraction for a cloistered life, put into her hand the following instruction previously to her departure:—"My own dear sister: going on her heavenly errand, and to crucify *self*! Bad, wicked thing! you owe it a good grudge; pay it well. My child, often I shall say in my solitude among a hundred,

'My sister is with you, my God! I find her in you: every moment she will be serving you and loving you with me.' . .

Love our Mother above: she will comfort you. I do not feel the least uneasiness about you. If you suffer, so much the better for our high journey above. The only fear I have is, that you will let the old string pull too hard for solitude and silence: but look to the kingdom of SOULS—the few to work in the vineyard of our Lord. This is not a country for solitude and silence, but for warfare and crucifixion. You are not to stay in his silent agonies of the garden at night, but go from post to pillar, to the very fastening of the cross. And mind, my lady, how you glance a thought at pulling out the nail which he put in with my hand, while his own so dear will hammer it up to the very head, I expect! I beg him, with a mother's agony, to do it softly and tenderly I would wish to hold your dear head while he does it; but he answers, 'no one held his:' but yet he will hold himself, supporting with one hand and fastening with the other. My sister, child of my soul, to God I commend you."

One of the objects most dear to the heart of Mother Seton was the erection of a chapel which would redound to the greater honor of God and afford better accommodations for her community. "We have a dwelling for ourselves and pupils," she said; "why cannot we have a small but neat chapel for the dear Master who condescends to reside among us on our altars?" Having been informed by the treasurer that the house was out of debt and held funds to the amount of sixteen hundred dollars, she thought that preparations might be commenced for the proposed building. As soon as her health permitted, she walked over the premises with some of the sisters, and pointed out the spot where the church should be situated. At the same time, a portion of the materials was obtained for the purpose; but upon fur-

ther deliberation it was deemed more prudent to defer its execution.*

Another project that Mother Seton fondly cherished was to provide a suitable building for the gratuitous instruction of the poor children of the neighborhood. A free school had been conducted at St. Joseph's as far as the limited accommodations of the house permitted; but it was desirable to make better arrangements for this department of the institution. For this purpose a two-story brick building was erected in 1820, where the children of the poorer class received the benefits of daily instruction and were also provided with a substantial meal. About twenty children attended this school in its commencement, and were always objects of the tenderest care on the part of Mother Seton. A free school had also been opened in Philadelphia, in 1818, for the children of the German Church. Thus, by the support of the orphan and the instruction of the poor, did the work of charity advance toward that vast system of beneficence which was to arise at a later period from the self-sacrificing devotion of the sisters of St. Joseph's community.

While the community was thus extending its usefulness, it pleased the Almighty to call several of its more valuable members to their heavenly reward. The first of these was Sister Mary Joseph Llewellyn, who, with three of her companions, had entered the society in 1814, after having been candidates for the order of Trappists.⁽²⁹⁾ She was remarkable for her piety, and closed her life on the 25th of May, 1816, by a death precious in the sight of the Lord. She was followed to her eternal home, the next day, by Sister Martina Quinn, who had entered the society in 1810. This young person possessed great simplicity, and, during the six years

* An elegant structure was erected, at a later period, on the spot selected by Mother Seton.

that she passed at St. Joseph's, was employed chiefly in the academy, where she made herself very useful by her talents and her kind and affable manner. At the time of her decease she had not yet reached her twenty-second year. On the 20th of December, Sister Magdalen Guérin closed her career of self-denial by a most peaceful and happy death. Having come with her sister from La Martinique, in 1811, she also accompanied her to St. Joseph's, where the latter entered the community as a candidate for the sisterhood, while she herself remained there as a boarder, and placed her son at Mt. St. Mary's College. During the voyage from La Martinique to the United States, amid the dangers of the sea, Madame Guérin had made a vow to wear a brown dress for three months, in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, if she reached her destination in safety.* On her arrival at St. Joseph's, she faithfully fulfilled her obligation; and such were the impressions of divine grace in her heart that she resolved to make an entire offering of herself to God in the service of her neighbor. Before the time for wearing the brown dress had expired, she requested to be admitted among the candidates of St. Joseph's community, and afterward assumed the name of Sister Madeleine. Having been accustomed to the ease and luxury of a West India life, she had many privations to endure in her new situation; but, led by the spirit of God, she cheerfully embraced these opportunities of self-denial, and soon made rapid progress in the way of perfection. She sought with avidity the most humble offices; and oftentimes her hands, which were very delicate

* The Blessed Virgin is honored by any act of Christian virtue. Brown being a penitential color, and unusual among ladies in the world, it was an act of humility and self-denial in Madame Guérin to wear it for three months. This dress, which she wore at St. Joseph's, suggested the idea of adopting the same color for the habit of the novices, to distinguish them from the sisters.

and well-formed, would bleed from exposure during the winter, in performing the rough work in which she was employed. On one occasion, as she was descending the stairway with a bucket in her hand, she met the reverend superior, who was on his way to administer the Blessed Sacrament to one of the sisters. Fearing lest she had manifested some disrespect, though she was not aware that the Blessed Sacrament was passing her, she took the first opportunity of going on her knees to the superior, to ask his pardon; but he replied, "What offence have you given? The God of all charity met a Sister of Charity performing an act of charity. How could he be displeased?" Though her union with God made her generally silent, her ever-ready smile and obliging disposition showed that she was only the more willing to serve her companions. During the sickness that terminated her life, as well as during health, she greatly edified the community by her lively faith and fervent piety, and left among her sisters a vivid recollection of her bright example. The following year, June 20, Sister Mary Theresa Egan, niece of Bishop Egan of Philadelphia, died the death of the just, after the most diligent efforts to perfect herself in the love of God. April 21, 1818, the sisterhood lost the edifying example of Sister Ellen Brady, a most promising novice. Mildness, patience, readiness to assist and do her utmost, humble compliance with advice, an equal temper of mind, very willing to support the weaknesses of others and to spare them her own,—such were the characteristics of her virtue. November 6, died Sister Mary Elizabeth Wagner, who was born and educated in a Methodist family, but, urged by divine grace, she was not satisfied until she had become a member of the true Church, which she designated as the Church of the apostles. "Luther is Luther," she used to say to her family, who were not so solicitous as herself on the subject of religion; "Calvin is Calvin; Wesley is Wesley: but where is

the Church of the apostles?" With a view of obtaining further information on this point, she was conducted by a Catholic relative to St. Joseph's, where she soon found the object of her search. She took great pains to become instructed in the Catholic faith, after which she entered the novitiate, and was most happy and exemplary to her last hour. She was followed, on the 20th of the same month, by Sister Mary Ignatia Torney, who was also a convert to the true faith. The next year, August 10, occurred the first death among the sisters employed on the mission: it was that of Sister Camilla Corish, which took place at Philadelphia. On the 20th of August, 1820, the community suffered a great loss by the demise of Sister Jane Frances Gartland, who, after having been educated in the house, entered the sisterhood in 1812, and passed through her novitiate with much consolation to herself and edification to those around her. Endowed with excellent talents, she took part in the duties of the academy, and held the chief office as angel of the school.* Subsequently, she was called to the duties of treasurer of the institution, and filled that employment until her death. The same year, November 17, Sister Mary Theresa Mills, a novice, was called to her reward.

* The prefects at St. Joseph's Academy were called *angels*, to imply that they were the guardians of the pupils and were to exercise a constant and benevolent watchfulness over their conduct. The name is still retained.

BOOK X

Mother Seton's literary taste—Her genius and writings—Conversations' powers—Impressiveness and propriety of manner—Affection for her children—Kindness to all—Gratitude—Friendship—How appreciated—Charity to the poor—Austerity to herself—Interior trials—Combat of self by obedience—Conformity to the Divine will—Spirit of the cross—Humility—Faith—Zeal for the spiritual kingdom—Its happy effects—Her devotion to the Mother of God—Her last illness and sentiments during it—Her death.

HAVING now approached the conclusion of those events which fill up the life of Mother Seton, particularly in her relations as a parent, the superior of a religious community, and the principal of an academy for young ladies, it only remains, for the completion of the narrative, to record the circumstances of her last illness. But, before we proceed to this task, we shall lay before the reader other incidents and facts, which, belonging more particularly to her everyday life, could not be conveniently introduced into the preceding narrative, yet furnish materials for the full portrayal of her character.

Endowed with a strong mind, and resolved from her early years upon the task of self-improvement, she found great delight in books, especially those which treated on spiritual subjects. Her reading was extensive and of a miscellaneous character: but the Holy Scripture was pre-eminently the study of Mrs. Seton. Even before she was a Catholic, she was in the habit of poring over the Protestant Bible, especially the Book of Psalms, and frequently would shut herself up in a room with darkened windows, for the

more quiet pursuit of this her favorite occupation.* To her intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures, even as she possessed them, may we attribute in a great measure, under God, her first enlightened views of the true faith and her final determination to abandon the errors of Protestantism. After her admission into the saving fold of Catholicity, she still continued the salutary practice of reading the inspired writings. By it she acquired a great facility in the felicitous application of the sacred text for the illustration of the subjects on which she either wrote or conversed. It was her custom also to make extracts from the divine records as well as from other sources of instruction; and it is plain, from the manuscripts which she has left, that she applied herself to this study with equal diligence and pleasure.

Her mind, stored with useful knowledge, had all the qualities that could render it a source of profitable enjoyment to herself and enable her to use it with powerful effect upon others. With a penetrating intellect trained to habits of reflection, and a lively fancy, she caught a vivid perception of things and felt them in the very depths of her soul: hence the copiousness and vigor of thought and beauty of metaphorical illustration, with the persuasive force and elegant appropriateness of expression, which characterize her writings. In her letters and other productions of her pen the stamp of genius is everywhere visible. Nature had gifted her with a deeply poetical soul. Her mind was of that just and comprehensive mould that made it keenly sensitive to the beautiful and true and predisposed it for the happiest inspirations of the muse. Few of her poetical compositions are extant: but, had she left no other writing of this description than the hymn "Jerusalem, my happy

* It may be said that she complied literally, according to her knowledge, with St. Jerom's advice:—"Nocturnâ versate manu, versate diurnâ."

home," it would be sufficient to win her the praise of considerable merit in this department of literature.⁽³⁰⁾ The melody which she adapted to it was also her composition, and shows that she possessed musical talents of a high order.

Mother Seton devoted much of her time to writing. One of her characteristics was to be always occupied; and when not employed in the class-room or the choir, she was diligently engaged with the pen. The vast correspondence which she carried on with the clergy and laity imposed on her a very arduous duty. Besides the parents and guardians of the children under her charge, and other persons to whom she wrote on business affairs, there were many in the former circle of her friends, and among those who had been educated at St Joseph's, whom she favored with her instructive and edifying letters, and who deemed it a happiness to maintain this epistolary correspondence with one whose virtues inspired them with so much admiration. The ecclesiastical superior of the sisterhood, justly appreciating the readiness of her pen, turned it to very profitable account for the benefit of her community. When not occupied with her correspondence or other duties, she was actively employed in preparing instructions or meditations for the inmates of the sisterhood and academy, extracting or translating from various authors the most useful passages of their writings. Her acquaintance with the French ascetic literature was very extensive; and the translations which she has left, while they are a monument of her talent and her faith, are also a valuable legacy to her spiritual children, a fountain of heavenly instruction for themselves and others.⁽³¹⁾

In conversation Mother Seton possessed a great command of language, and was remarkable for the captivating power of her words. After an interview with her, Archbishop Maréchal remarked to a friend that he was struck with her peculiar and happy manner of communicating her senti-

ments. On another occasion, when Mr. Dubois wished to prevail upon Bishops Cheverus and Egan, then on a visit to the Mountain, to remain one day longer than they had proposed, he had recourse to Mother Seton's influence as the most effectual means of success, assuring her that, "if her insinuating eloquence had half the effect upon them that it exerted over him, he would not fail to obtain his request." But words alone were not the secret of Mother Seton's conversational power. It was an ardor of soul beaming from her eye, lighting up her whole countenance, combined with a singular mildness and unction of words that compelled a most earnest attention and seldom failed to accomplish the object in view. A gentleman of New York, who had two daughters at St. Joseph's Academy, paid a visit to the institution. He was but a nominal Catholic, and had not performed the most essential duties of religion since the days of his childhood. For this reason, his children before their arrival at Emmettsburg had paid very little attention to the practice of their faith, being but slightly acquainted with its important truths and weighty obligations. But when they had been more fully instructed, and had become sensible of what the Christian character required, they were very desirous that their father, who was now verging upon the close of life, should have the benefit of an interview with Mother Seton. Several fruitless attempts had been made by the clergy to reclaim him from his indifference; but his daughters entertained the hope that the persuasive and impressive manner of Mother Seton might produce the desired effect. They were not disappointed in their expectations. Having prevailed upon him to visit them at St. Joseph's Valley, he was introduced to Mother Seton, whose deportment, mien, and conversation, although not ostensibly directed to the conversion of his heart to God, exerted a magic influence over him. He remarked to others, after having been in her

company, that he would willingly travel six hundred miles to enjoy a view of Mother Seton's eyes, though she were not to open her lips before him. To herself he candidly acknowledged that he could no longer resist the voice of his conscience, and that immediately on his return home he would prepare himself to approach the sacraments and live in accordance with the dictates of his religion. Many prayers and communions were offered for him at St. Joseph's; and, after having faithfully fulfilled the promise which he had made to Mother Seton, he died in sentiments of the most fervent piety. The impressions produced upon the mind by Mother Seton's manner were deep and lasting, and followed her pupils into the gayest scenes of life, to guard them against the dangers of the world. A remarkable instance of this was witnessed in a young lady who had been educated at St. Joseph's. Having been invited to an evening party, she appeared before the company in a very gay costume, which she had been urged by her friends to wear, but which did not accord altogether with her own sense of propriety. Though mingling in the pleasures of the scene around her, she could not banish the feeling of self-reproach. The admonitions of her former preceptress rushed upon her memory in all their force. Though she was surrounded by every thing calculated to divert her thoughts from the serious, the impressive form of that venerated mistress who had so often cautioned her against the vanities of the world continually haunted her mind; it stood before her, upbraiding her with her fault; and such was the effect of this reproof that she retired from the room, and exchanged her dress for one more becoming the modesty of a Christian.

Mother Seton possessed a particular talent in accommodating herself to circumstances. Her manner, her words, her actions, were just what the occasion required. Every one received from her the proper degree of attention, and in

all her relations, whether with the pupils, the sisters, or persons without, she was governed by those rules of propriety which are the dictates of Christian wisdom. On one occasion, when called to the parlor, she found three strangers waiting to see her,—a clergyman, a fashionable lady, and a poor woman seeking charity. Approaching first the priest of God, she knelt and asked his blessing; she then saluted the lady in a most graceful manner, after which, turning to the beggar, she took her hand, spoke some words of comfort, and promised her assistance, without appearing, however, to do a favor or causing the applicant for alms to feel that she was a dependent.

But in Mother Seton the rarest abilities of mind were blended with the finest qualities of the heart. We have already observed, in the course of this narrative, the tender and extraordinary affection which she entertained for her children. Her estimate of a mother's duty was of the highest and most comprehensive nature. No toil, no sacrifice, was too great when their happiness required it. Hence she devoted herself to this object with an ardor which nothing but the most unbounded love of their true welfare could inspire. When they were near her, she watched over them with the tenderest solicitude; when absent, she followed them in spirit and by her letters, to caution them against danger, to assist them by her wise directions, but, above all, to fix their thoughts upon the great end of their creation. Language seemed inadequate to convey the deep feelings of her soul when she was writing to her children, and especially when counselling them to pursue the path of rectitude and salvation. Her words were then most powerfully expressive, identifying her offspring with herself, or, by the repetition of those which were most significant, she showed how her heart still lingered upon the object which was uppermost in her thoughts and affections.

Her kind disposition and blandness of manner welcomed all to her presence. During the hours of recreation she was generally in her room, engaged in some useful employment; and at this time many of the young ladies and sisters would gather around her, being more delighted with the charm of her conversation than with any other diversion they could have enjoyed. Though always occupied, she was always accessible, and received her visitors with a smile and a cordiality which placed them perfectly at their ease. "My dear Mother," said a sister who had been obliged very frequently to interrupt her one day, "I fear that I disturb you too often." "Not at all," she replied; "the sunbeams are not more welcome through my windows than your well-known step at my door." Toward those who had befriended her she always manifested the deepest gratitude, and repaid to her utmost the favors which she had received. An ungrateful disposition she looked upon as one of the basest qualities that can tarnish the character of a man, and she guarded her children in the most forcible language to beware of so disgraceful a failing. As the friend of others, she was warm in her attachments, yet actuated by the highest and most disinterested motives. The sorrows and afflictions of her neighbor she felt as keenly as if they were her own, and she hastened to pour the balm of consolation into the wounded heart. How truly her friendship and her counsels were appreciated, may be gathered from the high estimate placed upon her letters and the privilege of corresponding with her. Mr. Anthony Filicchi, whose name we have had frequent occasion to mention in this narration, and who was a man of the most enlightened mind and solid virtue, and a particular benefactor of Mrs. Seton, looked upon all the letters received from her as so many holy relics, which he referred to from time to time, and often with tears in his eyes, to awaken the remembrance of former blessings, to animate himself in the

consideration of religious truth and in the pursuit of the great eternal end of the Christian.* Bishop Cheverus, in acknowledging the receipt of a letter from her, in which she had informed him of her severe illness, tells her that he had read it over "twenty times, with increasing emotions of sorrow, affection, admiration, and real devotion. . . I bless the Father of mercies for the happy state of your community, for the health restored to your worthy superior. To him, to the good sisters, to their happy pupils, I beg to be remembered with affection and respect. Their prayers I humbly and earnestly request. I condole with them; they will with me. We cannot help feeling our loss, although those we love and venerate are so great gainers by it. I beg a few lines when your situation permits it. They will be received and preserved as a treasure to the heart of him who in our dear Lord is truly devoted to you." August 11, 1818. A few months after, December 18, the Most Rev. Dr. Maréchal, Archbishop of Baltimore, wrote to her as follows:— "Since my consecration, my dear Mother, I have received many hundred letters. Very few, perhaps none, have given me so much consolation as yours. Surely my flock ought to pray for me: and yet who does fulfil that great duty of filial piety? Imagine that many on the feast of St. Ambrose (December 7) have drunk my health! God bless this good people: they did it, I am sure, through politeness, nor am I so stern as to condemn them entirely. But you, Sisters of

* "Riguardando io le lettere tutte scritte di propria mano della mia venerata sorella di affezione quali sacre Reliquie, che di tempo in tempo richiamo sotto i miei occhi (spesso con lacrime di tenerezza) a mia meditazione religiosa, di gratissime rimembranze, e di personale mia futura eterna Christiana speranza." (Letter of Mr. Filicchi to the writer.) This excellent man, whose eminent social position and generosity of character were equalled only by his practical piety and zeal for religion, died a few years ago at Leghorn.

Charity, how much more enlightened you are! Continue, my dear Mother, to raise your hands to heaven, that the Supreme Pastor of the Church may grant me the light, the fortitude, and the consolation, that are so necessary to me in my awful office; and perform that duty of charity not only while you are in this world but also when your body will be lying in the wood and your soul in heaven.”*

Almost all the young ladies who had been educated in her institution were eager on their return home to continue by an epistolary correspondence that intercourse which they could no longer personally enjoy. On her part, she did not neglect the opportunity thus afforded of performing the duty of real friendship, by administering the most salutary advice. Writing to a young person to whom she was tenderly attached, she says:—“Alas! when shall we all meet again? Only in our God now. Yet how much sweeter is our friendship in absence, with our bright hope before us, than the friendship which goes no farther than the grave? Ours will be so far, far beyond it!” The following extract from a letter to the same person will show how skilfully she adapted her maternal counsel to times and circumstances. “My dear one, it is so sweet to call you so; so often I do it in my heart, and in speaking to your dear ones here who love you so tenderly! Now, this beautiful season of Advent,—do try to take its spirit, my friend; to think of it as the last. You have so many opportunities to love our Jesus in his poor—to make the little Babe so many presents before Christmas comes. You know in our sweet meditations it says, now he is our tender Babe, stretching his arms and offering his tears for us, by-and-by our awful Judge!”

In writing to those who were not members of the Catholic Church, she embraced every occasion of introducing some

* Mother Seton was at this time in a low state of health.⁽³²⁾

allusion to the paramount affair of salvation, and thus evincing that true regard for their interests which a well-ordered friendship inspires. In a letter to one of her former intimates she thus blends the language of affection with that of Christian sentiment:—"Never had your poor friend one thought of you but love and dear remembrances. Your not writing as often as before often comes to my mind with the mixture of uneasiness and the uncertainties of so wide a distance; but never, never with the least diminution of affection, which so far from cooling is softened and endeared by every thought of the past, often, indeed, by things the most indifferent in themselves; and in the true inconsistency of a foolish heart like mine, my tears will often start at the recollection of persons who were noways connected with it at home. So you may be sure those who have so long lived in the very centre of that poor heart retain their place in full possession, with this only difference, that the look is now all for the dear ETERNITY to which I slip along so gently and almost imperceptibly, that, though no evident change of constitution has taken place, I feel the general decay of poor sinking nature enough to shorten my perspective of every scene beyond the present moment. You may be sure the very possibility of seeing our friend is like a foretaste of heaven to me; and if she is only delayed by the fear of not finding entrance in St. Joseph's House, tell her the front door, the back, the side-door which will lead her in the chapel, and all the windows up and down, will open at her approach."

The generosity of Mother Seton's nature was exhibited in her relations with every class of persons. The domestics of the institution found in her one who knew how to alleviate the trials of their situation by a true sympathy and kindness, while the poor possessed in her a benefactress whose benevolence was unbounded and never tired of well-doing

In the early days of St. Joseph's sisterhood, circumstances did not permit the exercise of that munificent charity which now distinguishes that excellent society; but Mother Seton laid its foundations broad and deep in the love of the poor. She sowed the good seed which is now bearing fruit in abundance. Her heart was the home of charity, while her appeals to others in behalf of suffering humanity were irresistible. Returning from the Mountain church one evening in winter, when the weather was excessively cold, she passed a miserable hut, at the door of which stood four or five little children, almost perishing for the want of food and clothing. Her charity was at once enlisted for their relief. Early the next morning she entered the hall where the young ladies were engaged at study, and with tearful eyes she described the wretchedness of those suffering members of Jesus Christ. She depicted their situation with so much feeling that every pupil made a cheerful offering of pocket-money and clothing for their benefit. Quickly, too, was the needle plied by many busy little hands, and before night Mother Seton, accompanied by two of the sisters, repaired to the abode of misery, washed and dressed the children, and administered to the wants of the parents. On her return home, she did not fail to congratulate her pupils on the generous part they had taken in procuring the happiness of a poor family, adding, "Oh, my children, how sweet will be your repose to-night!"

Full of kindness and charity to her neighbor, Mother Seton was rigid and austere to herself. We have already noticed the spirit of self-denial which she exhibited by the mortification of her senses. The renunciation of self was plainly visible in the poverty of her dress, her furniture, and other articles which she used; in her abstemiousness at meals, and in the severe observance of rules. She rose generally with the community, at four o'clock, and, repairing to the choir, she there knelt erect, never sitting or leaning on

any thing, and remained in this posture till after the morning prayers and meditation, which lasted an hour. But her chief aim was to practise that interior abnegation which is at once the principle and end of all exterior virtue, and which consists in the crucifixion of corrupt nature and its subjugation under the dominion of faith. This is the cross which she resolutely took up after the example of her Divine Master, striving always to resist and overcome the views and desires of self, and follow the suggestions of grace. Nor did she find it an easy task to curb her will to the order of Providence, to walk faithfully and with simplicity in the path of obedience, and accept with peaceful resignation the numerous trials which it presented. Frequent and painful were the struggles she had to endure in combating the suggestions of her own mind relative to the line of conduct which her sanctification, the happiness of her children, and the welfare of St. Joseph's sisterhood, seemed to require. The Almighty, who visited her with these interior troubles for the purification of her heart and the increase of her heavenly reward, permitted her to experience an extraordinary dryness in her spiritual duties, and to conceive an almost invincible repugnance to the directions of her superiors. She thus depicts her situation, in a letter to a clergyman:—

“Writing on a table opposite the door of the chapel, looking at the tabernacle, the soul appeals to Him, if this is not a daily martyrdom. I love and live, and love and live in a state of separation indescribable. My being and existence, it is true, are real, because I meditate, pray, commune, conduct the community, &c., and all this with regularity, resignation, and singleness of heart; but yet this is not I; it is a sort of machinery no doubt acceptable to the compassionate Father; but it is a different being from that in which the soul acts. In meditation, prayer, communion, I find no soul; in the beings around me, dearly as I love

them, I find no soul; in that tabernacle I know he is, but I see not, feel not; a thousand deaths might hang over me to compel me to deny his presence there, and I would embrace them all rather than deny it an instant; yet it seems that He is not there for me; and yesterday, while for a few moments I felt his presence, it was only to make me know that hell was gaping under me and how awful his judgment would be." On another occasion she represents herself repeating, "I am atom! you are God! misery all my plea! so few saved! If we are lost, are you less justified? the patience so long waiting, less adorable? And the soul, burying itself in the chaos of mystery, always rested in stupidity within; but without played with children, amused with the sisters, yielding to all minutiae, attentive to all necessities, with the liberty with which a philosopher suffered and endured, lending the machine for the beauty of order; not one spark of grace can the soul discern in it all, but rather a continuation of the original fault, of desire to do, to be loved, to please! and, so far from the simplicity of grace which would turn every instant to gold, it felt ashamed when returned to the tabernacle, as if it had played the fool, or acted like those women who try to please company and show all their ill-humors at home. . . . Yet it might be a grace, for as often he saw it was no more in my choice to hinder these evaporations than to stop the giddiness of my head in a fever; and they (the community) are so loving, so fixed on Mother's every look, clouds or sunshine, so depending, sometimes I would shudder at the danger of such a situation, if it was not clear as light that it is a part of the materials he takes for his work; and so little did he prepare the composition that he knows, if nature was listened to, I would take a blister, a scourging, any bodily pain, with a real delight, rather than speak to a human being—that heavy sloth which, hating exertion, would be willing to be an animal and die like a

brute in unconsciousness! Oh, my Father, all in my power is to abandon and adore. How good he is to let me do that!" In this perplexing state, the thought would often occur to her that she was another Jonas, who ought to be cast out for the safety of those around her. At one time, tortured with a sense of her responsibility in the station she occupied, she would endeavor to devise some means of escaping from it; at another, fearful lest the work of God should fail through her fault, she would resolve to bear up against every difficulty. Thus was her mind harassed by alternate and opposite reflections, which she forcibly and beautifully describes in the following extract from a letter to a priest. "I see myself now in the soul as once in the body fifteen years ago, when two maladies at once rendered all the efforts of physicians fruitless. Whatever they attempted to do for the relief of one complaint was sure to increase the other. My father, who was himself an eminent physician, sent all away, and insisted only on continued use of the warm bath, which really cured me; and no doubt you will spiritually do as he did naturally, and insist on the piscina of penance, though now for the soul, as then for the body, it is hard to get in and out." The remedy to which Mother Seton here alludes was not unprofitably applied. The sacraments were the support of her weakness, and a source of heavenly light amid these passing clouds, inspiring her with that humble submission to the dispensations of Providence which brings peace and comfort to the heart. "It is not the soul that is guilty of all this," she would say in the midst of her sufferings; "the evil spirit is most active, it is true, but the good one sits in anguish at the foot of the cross, looking over all this desolation, adoring, subjecting, abandoning all to him, seeing only him, annihilating itself and all creatures before him, saying amen to the resounding alleluias, and willing any mo-

ment to go into hell itself, rather than add one more offence to the mountain it has laid already upon him."

The interior aridity which thus desolated her soul was of little moment compared with the serious temptations she experienced against the line of obedience. Such was the confusion that at times clouded her mind on this point, arising partly from an inexpressible aversion for the directions of her immediate superior, and partly from the difficulties attending the organization of her infant community, that it required a most powerful grace from above to keep her in the path of duty. However insupportable such a state must have been for one who was accustomed to be ruled by no other sentiment than love, and to be drawn by the ties of divine charity to every living being, Mother Seton bore it with an humble submission to the order of Providence, as the cross to be shared with her heavenly Master, and destined by him to purify her heart, to break down that self which is the great obstacle to his perfect dominion in the soul. While difficulties and contradictions without, and disgust and torpor within, threatened to overwhelm her spirit, she rose upon the wings of faith to consider the glorious end of this passing tribulation. "I am sick, but not dying; troubled on every side, but not distressed; perplexed, but not despairing; afflicted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; knowing the affliction of this life is but for a moment, while the glory in the life to come will be eternal." How she struggled to obtain the victory in this conflict between nature and grace, may be judged from some of her letters to her clerical friends. "I have had a great many very hard trials since you were here," she writes to Archbishop Carroll, "but you of course will congratulate me on them, as this fire of tribulation is no doubt meant to consume the many imperfections and bad dispositions our Lord finds in me. Indeed, it has at times burnt so deep,

that the anguish could not be concealed; but by degrees custom reconciles pain itself, and I determine, dry and hard as my daily bread is, to take it with as good a grace as possible. When I carry it before our Lord sometimes, he makes me laugh at myself, and asks me what other kind I would choose in the valley of tears than that which himself and all his followers made use of." Strongly pressed by temptations against obedience, she was one day ascending the mountain early in the morning, and her little dog tried to follow her. "To drive him back, as he resisted my command," she writes, "I took a stick to threaten. What did the little animal but crouch under the stick and lick the end of it? The stick not moving, he drew a little nearer and nearer, till he reached the feet of his mistress, which he licked with a transport of joy and affection. The poor mistress was so touched by the lesson, she threw down the stick, took the faithful creature in her arms, covered it with kisses and the sweetest tears she had shed for many weeks. 'Yes, O Adored,' she said, 'I too will kiss the stick which is lifted to crush me, will wind round the feet which would trample upon me;' and, opening my prayer-book, the first lines I met were the resolutions of a soul determining on a total abandonment, and saying, among other things, 'I will obey the will of those who are the most distasteful and displeasing to me, and put myself under the feet of everybody.'" The happy fruits of this self-abnegation were ever present to her mind, as incentives to the practice of obedience. "In the hour of manifestation," she says to her former director, "when all this cross-working will be explained, we will find that in this period of our poor life we are most ripe for the business for which we were sent. While the ploughers go over us, then we are safe. No fears of pleasing ourselves, no danger of mistaking God's will. No; if I thought that by investigation and an appeal to superior authority I would

be to-morrow released from this cloud of darkness, yet I would not take one step. And you, my dear master and captain in the way of the cross, you know that my only safe way (I speak for salvation) is to remain quite still with Magdalen. You well know that He who works my fate has no need of any other help from me but a good will to do his will and an entire abandonment to his good providence. Let them plough, let them grind: so much the better; the grain will be the sooner prepared for its owner; whereas, should I step forward and take my own cause in hand, the Father of the widow and the orphan would say that I distrust him. . . . Shall we make schemes and plans of human happiness, which must be so uncertain in obtaining, and if obtained—hush—death!—eternity!—Oh, my father, *sursum corda*—we know better than to be cheated by such attractions. No; we will offer the hourly sacrifice, and drink our cup to the last drop, and we when least expecting it will enter into our rest.”

Thus did the severe trials which Mother Seton had to endure become a most salutary discipline to disengage her heart from earthly objects and fix it on those which are eternal. They produced in her soul a total indifference to what was passing here below, turning all the energies of her being to the accomplishment of the divine will. We cannot give a better idea of this holy disposition which she had acquired than in her own expressive language. “Alone on a rock this afternoon, surrounded by the most beautiful scenery, adoring and praising Him for his magnificence and glory, the heavy eye could find no delight; the soul cried out, O God! O God! give yourself. What is all the rest? A silent voice of love answered, *I am yours*. Then, dearest Lord! keep me as I am while I live; for this is true content,—to hope for nothing, to desire nothing, expect nothing, fear nothing. Death! Eternity! Oh, how small are all

objects of busy, striving, restless, blind, mistaken beings, when at the foot of the cross these two prospects are viewed!" The divine will was the standard by which she estimated all things, the rule which governed her actions, the end of all her aspirations. When, before the final organization of the sisterhood, her prospects for the welfare of herself and her children became involved in a gloomy uncertainty, she wrote to a friend:—"Every thing here is again suspended, and I am casting about to prepare for beginning the world again. . . . But we will be in every case under the refuge of the Most High; and glad indeed would I be if I could inspire your dear soul with as much indifference as is in mine, provided His adorable will be done during the few remaining days of my tiresome journey, which, being made with so many tears and sown so thick with crosses, will certainly be concluded with joy and crowned with eternal rest. Look up: the highest there were the lowest here, and coveted most the poverty and humility which accompanied their and our Master every step of his suffering life. But I do not care for you, but for her in whom you suffer much more than yourself. If our Lord suffered us to bear our misery alone, without affecting the dearest part of ourselves, we would not suffer like himself, whose whole suffering was for us and the injuries endured by his eternal Father. Now, my friend, we are in the true and sure way of salvation for that long, long eternity before us; if only we keep courage we will go to heaven on horseback, instead of idling and creeping along. Our Master is too good to us—that is all I can say—if we even end our lives as he lived, without a place to lay his head. Oh, my mouth waters when I think of that, if he ever grant me so great a favor. But let all be in the order of his providence, neither asking nor refusing. Blessed, a thousand million times, his own beloved and blessed name forever!" Such was the ascendancy of the divine will in her

heart that in speaking or writing her usual exclamation was, "May the will of God be accomplished and exalted forever!" Language on these occasions seemed inadequate for the expression of her feelings, and hence her significant manner of employing the numerals in order to give utterance, as far as possible, to the fervor of her soul. Nor did she submit to the divine will only under those circumstances which demanded but little sacrifice. She understood well that conformity to the will of God cannot be true and sincere if it does not embrace the trials as well as the consolations which he dispenses. She was not one of those who are willing to follow our Divine Saviour to the breaking of bread but refuse to accompany him to Calvary. He traced the way of the cross, by his instructions and example, as the path for his disciples and the only test of a true service to God. For this reason, Mother Seton looked upon Calvary as the rendezvous of all true Christians.

On a certain occasion, when strongly tempted to leave her establishment at Emmettsburg, she took up a spiritual book; and the first passage that met her eye was the narration of that incident recorded of St. Peter, that, on the breaking out of the persecution against the Christians under Nero, his disciples urged him to withdraw for a while from Rome. Through condescension to their wishes, he made his escape by night; but, on going out from the city, he met Jesus Christ, or what in a vision appeared in his form, and he asked him, "Lord, whither art thou going?" Christ answered, "I am going to Rome to be crucified again." St. Peter at once retraced his steps, and remained in the city until he suffered martyrdom. Mother Seton was struck with the applicability of this circumstance to her own situation, and she determined to bear her cross with constancy, in the path marked out to her by Divine Providence. Poverty and tribulation had nothing repulsive for her; she

considered them as the most abundant sources of heavenly blessing and among the best tokens of being favored by the Almighty. She even wished that the troubles of this life should be the portion and inheritance of her children. Speaking to a friend of the trials that God had sent her, she says, "For that I bless him most of all. Where would I be now if he had not scourged and bound me? And in his infinite goodness he may do the same for you. What matter by whose hands? If I get to his kingdom, what matter how? Faith, faith, my dear friend! the Captain marches on. Oh, yes, we follow, we follow!" All the afflictions that befell her,—all the crosses of life, from whatever source they came,—she accepted not only with resignation, but even with joy, as the surest means of her true happiness. One of the chief characteristics of her piety was the love of the cross. She meditated habitually on the sufferings of Christ, to which she had a particular devotion, frequently reading the history of his sacred passion, and always on her knees. For the same reason she chose for her special patrons those saints who were most distinguished for their spirit of penance, as St. Augustin and St. Mary Magdalen.

The renunciation of self which obedience required afforded her, as we have seen, most signal occasions of suffering for God's sake, while the meekness and prudence of true charity, amid contradictions and opposition, equally displayed the triumphs of her patient and silent endurance. She had the greatest delicacy to complain of others, and rather accused herself when the most tried, reproaching herself even with involuntary feelings of dislike. Fully sensible of the obligations imposed by the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," she was ever careful to cherish in her heart the purest sentiments of charity. She asked herself, continually, "Am I in full charity with all?"

The same disposition to imitate the example of her crucified Master inspired her with a most sincere and profound humility. Habitually and deeply impressed with the truth that God despises the proud and regards the humble and demands a strict account of graces bestowed, she feared for herself, lest she might be found wanting in his sight, while at the same time she entertained the most compassionate regard for the ignorant and blind sinner. So convinced was she of her being but nothingness and sin before God, that she was astonished and shocked when praised by others, and felt distressed in being obliged, as superior of the community, to instruct, direct, or reprove those under her charge. She was fully impressed with the belief that her efforts would only spoil the work intrusted to her, and she threw herself entirely upon the divine protection, that God would take it in hand and give it a favorable issue. In the following passage from one of her letters to a clergyman, she depicts in a lifelike manner her spirit of humility. "Your dear Bourdaloue is always the fountain of my Sunday instructions, because I can draw so many little streams to apply direct to our own wants. Poor, poor *pauverina*!* obliged to preach, and against the commands of St. Paul! And if you knew only one-half my reluctance to give an instruction or a catechism, (formerly the heart's delight,) it seems to me even yourself would be tempted to turn away with disgust from the ungrateful culprit; but the Dearest says, 'You shall, you must, only because I will it; trust your weak breast and turning head to me; I will do all. And Sam is so cruel, whenever there is an evident success, he pushes and says, 'See how they are affected! how silent and attentive! what respect! what look of love!' and tries to make distractions in

* *Pauverina* signifies *poor little woman*,—an epithet which her friend Mr. Babade sometimes applied to her, and which she occasionally used herself.

every way. The poor, poor soul don't even look toward him, but keeps direct forward with our Dearest, but with such a heavy, heavy heart at this vile mixture. So, in the refectory sometimes, the tears start and the weakness of a baby comes over me; but our Dearest again says, 'Look up; if you had your little morsel alone, of another quality, no pains of body or reluctance to eat, what part would I have in your meal? But here is your place: to keep order, direct the reader, give example, and eating cheerfully the little you can take, in the spirit of love, as if before my tabernacle. I will do the rest. Abandon all.' Abandon all! All is abandoned. But, pray, pray for your poor one continually."

By the perpetual warfare which Mother Seton carried on against corrupt nature, her thoughts and desires became altogether detached from the things of this life and centred on those of the next. That faith which the apostle defines to be "the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things which appear not,"* was the eminent disposition of her soul; and truly may we apply to her the language which our Divine Saviour addressed to the Canaanite in the gospel, "O woman, great is thy faith!"† Eternity was continually before her eyes, ever on her lips, and still more in her heart. "Eternity!" she writes to a friend, "oh, how near it often seems to me! Think of it when you are hard pushed. How long will be that day without a night, or that night without a day! May we praise and bless and adore forever!" Filled with the thought of the divine greatness and immensity, she was equally struck with the nothingness of all that passes here below. Space and time were forgotten. "What is distance or separation," she wrote to an absent friend, "when our soul, plunged in the ocean of infinity, sees all in

* Heb. xi. 1.

† Matt. xv. 28.

his own bosom? There is no Europe or America there. Our God and our all!" So utterly insignificant did all human things appear to her when viewed in the immensity of God and eternity, that she manifested no vain curiosity in regard to matters of a secular nature. She never made any inquiries relative to political events. Even in the good works of the servants of God she could see nothing worthy of regard compared with the claims of infinite perfection. God alone was great. "He is all;" "God is all;" such were her habitual expressions. All things were weighed by her according to the standard of faith. Crosses and afflictions, prosperity and adversity, health and sickness, life, death, worldly prospects, every thing, was viewed in that bright mirror of religious truth. "I see nothing in this world but the blue sky and our altars; all the rest is so plainly not to be looked at. We talk now all day long of my death, and how it will be, just like the rest of the housework. What is it else? What come in the world for? Why in it so long, but this last, great, eternal end? It seems to me so simple, when I look up to the crucifix. Coffin, patches, grave; what a life, indeed!" She seemed to feel intensely the holy desire expressed by the apostle, "to be dissolved and to be with Christ." She thus writes to a priest the year before her death:—"Oh, my father, friend! could I hear my last stage of cough and feel my last stage of pain in the tearing away my prison-walls, how would I bear my joy? Thought of going *home*, called and by His will! What a transport! But, they say, don't you fear to die? Such a sinner must fear; but I fear much more to live, and know, as I do, that every evening-examen finds my account but lengthened and enlarged. I don't fear death half as much as my hateful, vile self." Heaven she looked upon as the true home of herself and all faithful servants of God; and she was in the habit of alluding to the departure of pious

souls from this world as to their passage home. This thought she constantly made use of to sweeten the cup of affliction and to animate herself under the pressure of earthly sufferings. "We must often," she said, "draw the comparison of time and eternity. That is the remedy for all our trouble. Oh, my friend, how small will the present moment appear when we enter that great ocean! How much we will then wish we had doubled our penances and sufferings while that moment lasted! How we will laugh when we look behind at the troubles we have stopped at, which will then appear in their true light! and that bright and glorious cross which we now drag along through the mud and dirt,—how beautiful and lovely will it appear when we shall find it opens the door of our eternal happiness for us! My dear friend, follow on with courage; you do not suffer alone, you well know; there is but one place of true rendezvous for true souls." So deeply was she impressed with the sanctity of God, and the necessity of acting with the purest intentions in order to offer him a worthy service, that she strove continually to perfect her dispositions and repair the slightest faults, lamenting these more earnestly in the divine presence than common souls do the most serious transgressions. This devotedness to God and his honor caused her to feel most keenly the obstacles so often thrown in the way of divine grace. Speaking of a lady in whom she observed difficulties of this kind, which prevented her from entering the Catholic Church, she says:—"To pray is all I see. She kept my heart so well under the press, showing all her oppositions to the reign of our Jesus, that I spent truly a day of tears and interior cry to Him, to see how they bind his blessed hands, pervert his word, and yet hold up the head in boast that they are true Christians." The same idea of the divine sanctity inspired her with an extraordinary love of holy virginity, and made her almost regret that she had

been a mother. The virginal character in those of her sex, as that of priest in men, was a special object of her veneration.

The mysteries of religion, however impenetrable to our feeble intellect, were the objects of her strong and unshaken belief, because it was enough for her to know that God had revealed them. Accepting with the most humble submission from his Church the truths which it proposed to her veneration, she did not allow her mind to be disturbed by vain speculation on points that do not belong to the faith. She was once appointed by her superior to instruct a young lady whose mind was somewhat tinctured with infidelity, and who started useless questions on the subject of original sin, the incarnation, &c. Mother Seton, while she endeavored with all humility to enlighten her on these points, excited her astonishment when she remarked to her that she herself was "only an adorer of the mystery of the Church, the only ark in the world." As to heathens, savages, sects, and the like, they were "only in her heart for prayer, but never in her brain for what became of them;" or, as she added, "to trouble my faith in his wisdom and mercy, the Father, the most tender Father of all; my immense God; I his atom."

She could never sufficiently express her gratitude to God for having been made a child of the true Church and for the graces which flowed from this first blessing. She once observed to a relative, after a night of watching, "How many times did rapturous joy and adoration fill the whole soul of thanksgiving that I am permitted to dwell in this divine region of superstition, as the Englishman calls it—to be a Catholic! Heavenly mercy! I would be trampled on by the whole world!" On another occasion—the anniversary of the day on which her soul had passed through a violent struggle in its yearnings after truth—she wrote to Mr. Bruté:—"How, my God! O God! Immense God!

will your atom ever forget this Epiphany, 1815? The gratitude of a thousand years' penance would be little after it. My Jesus—our Jesus—my God—O God—your lifted chalice alone can thank! Oh, his kingdom—poor souls unconscious!—there the point of points!"

By the spirit of faith Mother Seton was led to resign herself continually into the hands of God, to whose all-wise and fatherly protection she committed the issue of every affair. Nothing could disturb the inward peace which she enjoyed by this abandonment of herself to Divine Providence. It was her consolation at all times, amid the uncertainties of life and the apprehensions which they beget, to reflect simply that God is God, and to view God in all things. These sentiments were frequently expressed in her letters, and they show that in the exalted idea which she entertained of his perfections, his wisdom, his mercy, his goodness, she found a solution for all the difficulties and a balm for all the sufferings of life. By this constant union with God and confidence in his paternal care, her soul was firmly established in peace, and she displayed a remarkable equanimity, never worried or troubled by passing incidents. The same reliance upon God caused her to seek his aid not only under trials and temptations, but also for the more enlightened discharge of the duties which she had to perform. It was her custom, when she met with any difficulty in the lessons that she was preparing for the class-room, to retire before the Blessed Sacrament, to implore the assistance of Him who is the fountain-head of all true wisdom. Her prayers on these occasions were not in vain.

Such was the ardor of Mother Seton's faith that it shone forth with peculiar effect in the exercise of prayer and in approaching the sacraments. Among her favorite devotions were the prayers of St. Bridget, the *Te Deum* after mass, the *Magnificat*, the Apostles' Creed, the Psalms, and the

Benedicite or Canticle of the Three Children. When she performed these devotions aloud, the fervor of her soul became visible in her countenance. Her whole face was lit up with animation, and the ruddy glow of her features evidenced the burning piety within. In hearing the instructions or assisting at the services of the Church, it seemed to her as if the heavens above were opened and God himself was exercising this ministry in person. When reciting the words of inspiration, she appeared to be almost inspired herself, the language of Holy Scripture arresting all the powers of her soul, as if she heard it breathed forth from the lips of a Moses, a David, an Isaias, or a Jeremias. But the vividness of her faith displayed itself with most remarkable effect in the reception of the holy communion. Her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was most ardent, and she may be truly said to have belonged to the number of those described by the pious à Kempis, who crave with heart and lips to receive their God, the fountain of living waters, and can allay or satisfy their hunger only by feasting with all spiritual avidity and sweetness on his sacred body. Oh, true and burning faith, a proof of the real presence of Christ on our altars! Such was the faith of Mother Seton; for, with the disciples, she recognised her Lord "in the breaking of bread," and her heart glowed within her as he walked with her in the way.* These were precious moments of heavenly blessing, according to her belief, and she therefore taught her children, when young, to unite their prayers with hers whenever she had the happiness to communicate. On her retiring from the holy table, her two youngest daughters might be seen approaching her, one on each side, and reclining their innocent

* "O vera ardens fides eorum, probabile existens argumentum sacræ præsentiae tuæ; isti enim veraciter cognoscunt Dominum suum in fractione panis, quorum cor tam valide ardet in eis de Jesu ambulante cum eis."—De Imitat. Christi, lib. iv. 14

heads on the maternal bosom, to draw from that living sanctuary of the Divinity streams of heavenly grace, while all three poured forth their hearts in praise and thanksgiving to the Almighty.

Impressed as Mother Seton was with the momentous realities of the world to come, and the vanity of present things, she could not but be filled with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Such in fact were the great ends of her entire consecration to the divine service; and when she reflected upon the immense numbers that were ignorant of revealed truth, seated in darkness and in the shadow of death, it was the ardent aspiration of her soul that missionaries should go forth to announce on every side the glad tidings of salvation, while she labored by her prayers and example to advance the kingdom of God at home and abroad. The following note, which she addressed to the Rev. Mr. Bruté, depicts in lively coloring the burning desires of her heart:—"Blessed, your poor little Mother is lost these days past in your letters,—to see man a wild savage—a polished savage—a man in any state, what a savage unless he be in Christ! Oh, blessed, I gasp with desires to Him whom you are now carrying in and on your breast, for your full, whole accomplishment of his blessed will. I glance a fearful look at you and Mr. Cooper, and say secretly, 'If I was one or the other!'—then adore and think I know nothing about it; only it seems to me that those who have light and grace already might be trusted to keep it, and I would not stop night or day till I reached the dry and dark wilderness where neither can be found, where such horrid crimes go on for want of them, and where there is such a glorious death to be gained by carrying them. Oh, Gabriel, if I was light and life, as you are, I would shout like a madman alone to my God, and roar and groan and sigh and be silent all together, till I had baptized a thousand and snatched these poor victims from

hel And pray, madam, say you, why does not your zeal make its flame through your own little hemisphere? True; but rules, prudence, subjection, opinions, &c. are dreadful walls to a burning soul wild as mine. For me, I am like a fiery horse I had when a girl, whom they tried to break by making him drag a heavy cart, and the poor beast was so humbled that he could never more be inspired by whips or caresses, and wasted to a skeleton till he died. But you and Mr. Cooper might waste to skeletons to some purpose, and, after wasting, be sent still living to the glories of the kingdom. In the mean time, that kingdom come! Every day I ask my soul what I do for it in my little part assigned, and can see nothing but to smile, caress, be patient, write, pray, and 'wait before Him.' Oh! my blessed God! that kingdom come!"

Thus did Mother Seton labor for the kingdom of God. The many hearts in which she kindled the fire of divine love within the limits of St. Joseph's Valley, and the precious fruits of charity and piety dispensed far and wide by her spiritual daughters, will bear testimony to the fervor and efficacy of her zeal. For several years before her death it was her custom to ask of God for her Christmas gift, as she jovially termed it,—the conversion of some poor soul that was still wandering in the devious paths of error or was but nominally a member of the true Church. Christmas was the day usually appointed for the first communion of the children, and their saintly superior, with an ingenuity of zeal not less admirable than it was effective, enlisted their youthful hearts in the holy work of offering violence to Heaven. On one of these occasions she observed to the children, the evening preceding the above-mentioned festival, that, if they had taken all necessary care to place their souls in a worthy state for the reception of our blessed Lord, he would not hesitate to grant the reasonable requests of their

pure and innocent hearts. "Pray, then, my beloved ones pray much for your parents; pray for the gift of perseverance; and Mother begs you to pray most earnestly for the conversion of a dear friend of mine in New York, to whom I have never written on the subject of religion. Pray, my dear ones, that this soul may be added to the fold." The children promised to comply with her request. For some time Mother Seton received no letters from the lady in question, although she had been in the habit of writing frequently to her friend at St. Joseph's. But a few months after the prayers of the Mother and children had ascended to the throne of God in her behalf, she despatched a letter to Mrs. Seton, explaining the reason of the interruption in her correspondence. "Be not surprised at my silence," said she; "but you *will* be surprised when I tell you I am a Roman Catholic. While deliberating and examining, I determined not to communicate my new thoughts to you, fearing lest my friends should attribute my change of religion to your influence. I wished that all the glory of this wonderful mercy of God should be attributable to himself alone." Thus did the Almighty reward the fervent zeal and humble prayer of his servant. Several remarkable conversions were known to have occurred precisely at the time when she solicited these favors from the divine goodness.

That the kingdom of God might be extended everywhere in the souls of men, Mother Seton wished most ardently that his priests should be worthy of their sublime and holy calling as "the ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God." As a member of the flock under their charge, she was full of reverence, piety, and submission; but such was her lofty appreciation of the sacerdotal character and office, that she wished most fervently to see in every priest the man of God, fully sensible of the magnitude and holiness of the work to which he is called. "Oh that priests

felt for themselves," exclaims a saintly prelate, whose memory is now in veneration throughout the American Church,* "oh that priests felt for themselves as Mother Seton felt they ought to be! How much did she not suffer in witnessing their imperfections! How sorrowfully, yet how charitably, did she consider their faults!" She was much pained when she heard the word of God announced by clergymen in a manner unworthy of so important and sacred a function. On one occasion she did not hesitate to give a word of friendly advice to a young priest, who had preached very negligently the day before and acknowledged that he had not troubled himself much about it. "Sir," said she, "that awakens my anger. Do you remember a priest holds the honor of God on his lips? Do you not trouble yourself to spread his fire he wishes so much enkindled? If you will not study and prepare while young, what when you are old? There is a mother's lesson." The holy bishop just referred to has left behind him the acknowledgment that no one ever impressed his soul so forcibly as Mother Seton did with the idea of what a true priest ought to be. The following advice she sent to a clergyman in Baltimore, who had a preference for Emmettsburg, exhorting him to that perfect purity of service which excluded even the most natural and innocent gratification. "My heart and soul this week past have been under the press of the beatitude, 'Blessed are the clean of heart, for THEY SHALL SEE GOD.' Oh, my brother, take those words on yours, and in my Sunday dear communion I will beg our God to write them on it. Happy, happy are you to live all for him, every bent of your heart's affections, every power of your soul, turned wholly to him, without even the mixture of the innocent sojourning a while with your old

* Rt. Rev. Dr. Bruté, first Bishop of Vincennes.

father and dear brother.* How much purer is your service where you are, above the mist of earthly attraction! One thing I hope you are convinced of, (I as a wretched sinner know it well,) that, wherever we meet a little prop of human comfort, there is always some subtraction of divine comfort; and, for my part, I am so afraid to cause any such subtraction, that I feel a reserve and fear in every human consolation, that makes them more my pains than my pleasures; yet the liberty of children of God I hope in all. I only mean to say, we should be too happy when the providence of our God keeps us wholly to himself. . . . You are remembered and loved here too much to make it a safe place for you, unless you were sent by God himself without the least agency of your own, and even then I fear my brother would grow lean. Pray for us, I pray. Your own poor Mother."

We should leave unfinished the character of faith so eminently observable in Mother Seton, if we did not record her filial devotion to the Mother of God, the common mother of all faithful souls. She was full of confidence in the intercession of Mary, taught her children to honor and invoke the assistance of that glorious Virgin, and, as a tribute of her veneration, she promised her that her spiritual daughters should ever bear her name. Hence, many members of the community assume the name of Mary when it can be conveniently connected with their distinctive appellation, and all look upon it as theirs, although not mentioned.

By these fervent dispositions did Mother Seton apply herself, especially during the twelve years of her retirement from the world, to fulfil the merciful designs of Divine Providence. She was called in a special manner to a labor of love; to the illustration of that well-ordered charity which the inspired volume teaches to be an unequivocal

* Two clergymen, friends of the one to whom she was writing.

mark of acceptance before God,* the bond of perfection,† and the fulfilment of the law;‡ and her efforts to correspond to this high vocation were generous and unreserved. She renounced the world, and then renounced herself, to become qualified for the holy work to which she was destined, to promote the glory of God in the service of his creatures. For this purpose she purified her heart from every affection and aspiration that did not refer to Him, that she might be a victim of divine love, thinking, speaking, acting, only in accordance with and from the impulse of his holy will.⁽³³⁾ Heaven accepted the sweet perfume of virtue which she thus offered on the altar of charity,—the generous and entire consecration of herself to the honor of Jesus Christ in his poor and suffering members,—and, rallying around her other hearts worthy of co-operating in the noble undertaking, it made her the firm corner-stone of a work which has become a lasting and extensive blessing to the Church in the United States of America. She held herself and her community always ready for the execution of the good purposes of God, and she had the consolation to see the poor instructed and comforted, the orphan sheltered from the frowns of a pitiless world, youth trained up in piety and knowledge, and a numerous community of holy women, who were everywhere the “good odor of Christ,”§ diffusing on every side that light of virtue which, according to his command, must so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven.|| With such a spectacle before her eyes, with so many evidences of the divine blessing attending her, she could hail with joy the close of life, as the termination of her appointed course and the moment of glorious reward.

* John xiii. 34, 35.

† Coloss. iii. 14.

‡ Rom. xiii. 8, 9.

‡ 2 Cor. ii. 15.

|| Matt. v. 16.

“Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, in peace, because my eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples,—a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.”*

From the attack of illness which she suffered in 1818 Mother Seton never entirely recovered. Her constitution had been completely shattered, and, by greater exposure than her delicate health would permit, she contracted, in the summer of 1820, a pulmonary disease which confined her during four months to her room and baffled every effort of her medical attendants. As she approached the term of her earthly career, no change was visible in her dispositions, except that she became more united to God and more disengaged from all created things. Though her sufferings were very great at times, no complaint ever escaped her lips, and it was chiefly her moaning during sleep that indicated the severity of her pains. Such was her attention to improve every opportunity of merit, that she felt distressed at the efforts which the affection of her spiritual daughters suggested for her relief, and submitted to them only by the advice of her director. If nature would sometimes manifest, under the influence of pain, an uneasiness which was altogether involuntary, she reproached herself with it and immediately sought to efface it by the grace of absolution. Notwithstanding the painfulness of her situation, she was ever cheerful, ever ready to receive the visits of her sisters and to give directions relative to the affairs of the community. As to the children of the academy, she delighted to hear them at their innocent sport and to call them into her room to give them some token of her maternal kindness. The children of the poor school were special objects of her inquiring and affectionate regard. While prostrate on the bed of sickness, one of

* Luke ii. 29, &c.

her former pupils, about to enter upon a long journey, called to see her, and before leaving she knelt and asked her blessing. Mother Seton, raising her hand, replied, "God bless you, my loved child. Remember Mother's first and last lesson to you:—seek God in all things. In all your actions submit your motives to this unerring test:—'Will this be approved of by his all-seeing eye?' If you do this, you will live in his presence and will preserve the graces of your first communion. You will never see Mother again on this earth. May we meet in heaven! Three wheels of the old carriage" (a term she often applied to her body) "are broken down, the fourth very near gone; then with the wings of a dove will my soul fly and be at rest. Remember me, and, if you love poor old Mother, pray for her." Perceiving that her young friend was very much affected, she called her back, embraced her affectionately, and said, "Not forever do we part: a few short years, dearest, and we will be united, never, never to part. God bless you again!" These words display the whole spirit of Mother Seton during her illness. Peace, love, confidence, joy,—such were the sentiments that supported her in her last trial and by which she administered comfort to those around her. When she perceived the anxiety of her sisters in regard to her situation, she would try to calm their apprehensions, by saying, "His will be done!" The peaceful quiet which she enjoyed was not the result of a presumptuous reliance upon her own merits; for she had a lively fear of the divine judgments. But her soul was tranquillized by that filial confidence which is inspired by the love of God and the consideration of his infinite mercy.* One of the sisters having expressed the wish that God would grant her the opportunity of entirely expiating her faults during life, that at the moment of death she might fly to the

* "Mercy and judgment I will sing to thee, O Lord!"—Psalm 100.

embraces of her heavenly Spouse, Mother Seton raised her eyes and said, "My blessed God! how far from that thought am I, of going straight to heaven! such a miserable creature as I am!" Another time the same sister inquired how she felt. "I do not suffer," she said; "I am weak, it is true; but how happy and quiet the day passes! If this be the way of death, nothing can be more peaceful and happy; and if I am to recover, still, how sweet to rest in the arms of our Lord! I never felt more sensibly the presence of our Dearest than since I have been sick; it seems as if our Lord or his blessed Mother stood continually by me, in a corporeal form, to comfort, cheer, and encourage me, in the different weary and tedious hours of pain. But you will laugh at my imaginations; still, our All has many ways of comforting his little atoms." To the last, she gave an example of the most faithful submission to the divine will, following as much as possible the spiritual exercises which the rule of the house prescribed. Obedience to the rules was a lesson which she most earnestly inculcated to the sisters, during her illness, as the surest means of sanctifying themselves and promoting the glory of God.

To maintain in her soul this holy disposition of entire submission to the will of Providence, she prayed continually and fervently, and availed herself with the greatest avidity and thankfulness of every aid and blessing that her holy faith could impart. Mr. Bruté, her confessor and director, was constantly at her side, suggesting the most perfect sentiments of resignation, penance, love, confidence, and union with Jesus Christ. His ministry was a source of the most abundant graces to her soul.⁽³⁴⁾ But the happiness of receiving our Lord in the sacrament of his love was the chief object of her pious aspirations. This was her treasure and her support. The bread of angels was administered to her frequently during the week, and on one of these occa-

sions she exhibited that ardor of faith which indicated the almost sensible presence of her God and struck the beholders with astonishment. Such was her joy at the anticipation of the holy communion, that, when the priest entered her room and placed the consecrated species on the table, her countenance, before pale, began to glow with animation. No longer capable of suppressing the lively emotions of her soul, she burst into tears and sobbed aloud, covering her face with her hands. Supposing at first that she feared to communicate, the minister of God approached, and said to her, "Peace, Mother! here is the Lord of peace. Have you any pain? Do you wish to confess?" "No, no; only give Him to me," she replied, with a fervency of manner which showed the burning desire of her heart to be united to Jesus Christ.

During her last illness Mother Seton appeared to realize more than ever the happiness of dying in the bosom of the Catholic Church. Having been asked by one of her spiritual directors what she considered the greatest blessing ever bestowed upon her by the Almighty, she answered, "That of being brought into the Catholic Church." She now experienced all the consolation that this tender mother offers to her children in the most trying hour of existence, and she often spoke with a holy transport of the happiness of dying in her arms, saying, "How few know the value of such a blessing!"

Her symptoms having become very alarming, it was thought advisable to administer the last rites of religion. At that impressive moment all her spiritual daughters were called into the room, and, as she was too feeble to address them herself, the Superior, Rev. Mr. Dubois, performed this office in her name, and thus delivered to the assembled community the last will of their dying Mother:—"Mother Seton, being too weak, charges me to recommend to you at this sacred moment, in her place, 1st, to be united together as true

Sisters of Charity; 2d, to stand most faithfully by your rules; 3d, that I ask pardon for all the scandals she may have given you,—that is, for indulgences prescribed during sickness by me or the physician.” She then lifted up her faint voice and said, “I am thankful, sisters, for your kindness to be present at this trial. Be children of the Church; be children of the Church,” she repeated, with a lively sense of the consolation and grace she was about to receive in the sacrament of Extreme Unction. With the same intense appreciation of the divine blessings did she unite in the ceremony.⁽³⁵⁾ Some of the sisters, with her only surviving daughter,* were always near her; but what were their feelings at the anticipation of the sad bereavement they were soon to experience may be more easily imagined than described. When, at length, the fearful conflict for their hearts arrived, they pressed around the couch of their dying and venerated Mother in fervent prayer and deepest anguish. Mother Seton alone seemed to possess true fortitude in this eventful moment, and to enjoy the most profound peace. Though distress was depicted in every countenance, though she heard the heart-rending sobs of her beloved daughter and saw her swooning away in an agony of grief at her side, she evinced no emotion; not the slightest agitation was visible in her appearance. All was peace, and entire resignation into the hands of God. Raising her hands and eyes to heaven in a spirit of the most humble submission to the decrees of Providence, she repeated the words, “May the most just, the most high, and the most amiable will of God be accomplished forever!” She then requested one of her attendants to recite for her the favorite prayer, “Soul of Christ, sanctify

* Her eldest son was absent on a cruise; the other arrived from Italy during his mother's illness, but, the situation of his affairs hurrying him away, he took a final leave of her, and some time after died at sea.

me; Body of Christ, save me," &c.; but the sister, overpowered by her grief, not being able to proceed, Mother Seton continued the prayer herself. Her last words were the sacred names of Jesus, Mary, Joseph, to whom she yielded her heart, her spirit, her life, to whose care she committed her last agony, and in whose blessed company she hoped to repose forever. After this she lost the power of speech, and it appeared to the sister who was nearest to her that our Lord was in a special manner present at her side, as if waiting to bear away in triumph that precious soul. Thus did Mother Seton pass to her eternal rest, about two o'clock in the morning, on the 4th of January, 1821, in the 47th year of her age.

The funeral obsequies took place on the following day, when, in union with the holy sacrifice of the altar, the many desolate hearts of St. Joseph's community ascended in fervent sighs to heaven for her happy repose. With overwhelming tears and regrets, they bore her remains to their humble resting-place, where they planted the simple cross, the emblem of her virtue, and the rose-bush, the symbol of her immortal crown

"Bend o'er this tomb, fond creature of a day,
 And, sad and pensive, read the mournful lay;
 Or, round the spot, of flowers the fairest strew,
 Flowers that bloom and fade like her and you.
 Here lies—alas! not words nor mimic art
 Can show this sainted soul, the seraph heart,
 The manner bland, the mind serene and clear,
 Which once informed the clay that moulders here.
 Here let the poor, the orphan, come to mourn;
 Let Mercy weep, for this is Seton's urn.
 Here let Religion's sighs and tears be given;
 Ah! no; she smiles again, and points to Heaven."^{*}

* Written by an alumnus of Mt. St. Mary's College.

Since Mother Seton's death, the work of holiness and charity which she commenced has expanded into vast proportions, and is the admiration of our country and of the world.* Her children seeing this, have risen up and "called her blessed." Her children in the order of nature remember, with filial gratitude and love, the lessons of sanctity which she endeavored to impress upon their youthful hearts; they bless her memory, and aim at being worthy of so illustrious a parent. Her children by education recall with grateful sentiments the happiness of having enjoyed her enlightened and maternal care; they declare her praises, and, with them who still reap the benefits of her institution, they offer their gifts at St. Joseph's shrine,—the pledges of their love and veneration. Her children by charity—the poor, the afflicted, the destitute orphan, the victim of disease, all the children of misfortune—rise up to publish her glory. With thanks to heaven, they pronounce her name as that of their true benefactor, their enduring friend. But, above all, her children in the order of grace proclaim her blessedness. They look upon the world with all its fascinating objects,—its riches, its pleasures, its vain admiration and applause,—and then turn with disgust from these dazzling but treacherous allurements, to choose for their portion the humility, charity, and mortification of their holy foundress. They know that "religion clean and undefiled with God and the Father is to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation and keep one's self unspotted from this world;"† that an essential mark of the elect is to assist the poor and suffering members of Jesus Christ, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to harbor the stranger, to visit the sick;‡ in fine, that they who "instruct many to justice shall shine

* For further details of its history, see first edition of this work.

† St. James, i. 27.

‡ St. Matt. xxv. 35, &c.

as stars for all eternity."* Hence they cherish the memory of Mother Seton, and, as an incentive to emulate her holy example and aspire to her glorious reward, they have inscribed, on the wall of the humble chamber in which she expired, the following memento:—

“Here, near this door, by this fireplace, on a poor, lowly couch, died our cherished and saintly Mother Seton, on the 4th of January, 1821. She died in poverty, but rich in faith and good works. May we, her children, walk in her footsteps and share one day in her happiness! Amen.”

• Dan. xii. 3.

APPENDIX.

Sister Rose White elected Mother-Superior—Missions established during her term of office—New building—Wonderful cures—**Mr. Dubois** appointed Bishop of New York—**Rev. Dr. Deluol** Superior-General of the Sisters—**Sister Mary Augustine Decount** elected Mother-Superior—Missions—The cholera—**Sister Rose** re-elected—**Rev. John Hickey** Superior-General—Missions during Mother Rose's second administration—Additional building—Erection of a new church—**Sister Mary Xavier Clarke** elected Mother-Superior—Missions—**Mr. Deluol** Superior-General—Death of **Sister Rose White**—Her character—Other buildings erected for the academy and sisterhood—**Sister Mary Etienne Hall** elected Mother-Superior—Missions—Orphan asylum—Monument to **Mother Seton**—Chapel of Our Lady of the Valley—Union of **St. Joseph's** sisterhood with the Congregation in France established by **St. Vincent of Paul**—**Rev. Mariano Maller** Director of the United States Province for three years, then appointed Director and Visitor of the Province in Brazil—**Rev. Francis Burlando** holds the office of Director for twenty years—**Mother Regina Smith** Visitatrix—New Missions and Establishments during her Administration—**Mother Ann Simeon Norris** Visitatrix—New Missions and works of charity—**Mt. Hope** Retreat—**Mother Ann Simeon's** death—**Mother Euphemia Blenkinsop** Visitatrix—New Missions—Additional buildings at **St. Joseph's**—**Rev. F. Burlando's** death—**Rev. F. Guédry** Director resigned and **Rev. Alexis Mandine** appointed to the office—Statistics.

THE great work of which **Mother Seton** laid the foundation, and which had already produced the most happy results for religion and society before her departure from life, has continued ever since that period to increase in usefulness, by the instruction of youth, the promotion of piety and the relief of suffering humanity. Some notice of these eminent services is necessary to fill up the picture of that vast amount of good which has been the effect of her charity and zeal.

To fill the vacancy in the office of Superior, an election was held on the 25th of January, 1821, which resulted in the choice of Sister Rose White, who had been appointed successively to conduct an orphan asylum in Philadelphia and New York. Her sound judgment and administrative talent joined to fervent piety and sweetness of manners, indicated her as a person well qualified to succeed Mother Seton. At the time of her election she was acting as sister-servant at the asylum in Philadelphia, and as soon as circumstances permitted she set out for Emmetsburg, where she arrived on the 20th of March and entered upon the duties of her new office. The sisterhood now numbered nearly fifty members, seven or eight of whom were employed in the above-mentioned cities. The important benefits derived from their charitable labors were becoming daily more extensively appreciated, and numerous applications were made to obtain their services. During the period of Mother Rose's first administration, an orphan asylum with a free school was established at Baltimore and in Washington city, a benevolent school was opened at Lancaster and Frederick, and the sisters took charge of the Infirmary connected with the medical department of the University of Maryland. The increasing prosperity of St. Joseph's Academy, which counted about seventy pupils, made it necessary to provide ampler room for the accommodation of the community. The sisters and scholars all occupied the one building which had been originally erected for their use, and which was far from affording convenient space for their present purposes. To supply this want, a large three-story edifice of brick one hundred feet long and fifty wide, was commenced in the spring of 1826, and was sufficiently advanced in the summer of the following year to be occupied.

Shortly after the commencement of this improvement, St. Joseph's House, which from its birth had been blessed with the constant smiles of Heaven, became the object of its more visible and extraordinary favors. On the 10th of June, one of the sisters who had been reduced by an accumulation of disease to the very verge of the grave, was suddenly restored to health, immediately after receiving the holy communion. For thirty-six days she had not been able to retain the least particle of food on her stomach; and whenever she attempted to take any nourishment, it was ejected with such violent sufferings as to create the apprehension of immediate death. The physicians having exhausted all the resources of their art, and the case having been pronounced desperate, she was advised by Mr. Dubois to make a novena or nine days' devotion, in honor of the holy name of Jesus, in union with Prince Hohenlohe, who on a previous occasion had announced that he would pray on the 10th of each month for the intentions of those living out of Europe. On the last day of the novena, she received the Blessed Sacrament at the hands of the Rev. Superior, and all her morbid symptoms instantly disappeared. On the 10th of August, another case of disease, but of a much more aggravated character, was also suddenly cured by performing a similar novena in union with Prince Hohenlohe. Mother Rose was overwhelmed with mingled emotions of gratitude and fear, by these wonderful evidences of the divine favor. While she could not but rejoice at such signal manifestations of the Almighty's goodness in behalf of her community, she knew that they were an admonition to her and her sisters to cherish the spirit of humility, the only certain means of becoming useful in the hands of God for the execution of his merciful designs. "My

God, thy will be done," she exclaimed in a letter to Archbishop Maréchal. "I feel frightened at such marks of tenderness. What will become of us if we do not advance in humility? My dear and most reverend father, I know not what to say, except that I am a miserable sinner, and a most ungrateful child. Yet I trust our Jesus has his faithful ones among us."

These auspicious events were still fresh in the grateful recollection of the sisterhood, when it was announced that Mr. Dubois, the enlightened director and superior, who had watched so carefully over its interests, who had been so true a friend to the institution, who had labored so long and so zealously to form its inmates to the spirit of their sublime vocation, was called to another sphere of action, having been appointed to the vacant bishopric of New York.⁽³⁶⁾ However painful on their part the separation that was to take place, it was to be felt still more severely by the students and professors of Mt. St. Mary's College, of which Mr. Dubois had been the founder, and which he had raised from the humblest beginnings to the grandest scale of usefulness. Though far advanced in life he had but recently erected, as an addition to the college buildings, a large edifice of hammered stone, nearly one hundred feet long and three stories high; which, however, was not quite finished when it was destroyed by fire in the spring of 1824. But Mr. Dubois's characteristic fortitude and zeal never abandoned him. Even while the raging element was doing its work of destruction, he determined to put up another building of larger dimensions and better plan. In this he was not disappointed. By an appeal to his personal friends and the friends of education, he succeeded in accomplishing his object, and in the summer of 1826 he took possession of the new edifice with a numerous band of pupils, and with that

heartfelt satisfaction which arises from the consciousness of having achieved a magnificent work, in defiance of the most formidable obstacles. It was a monument worthy of being left behind him, to attest his ardent zeal and indefatigable efforts in the cause of religion and education. Mr. Dubois received the episcopal consecration in the autumn of the same year. As a bishop, he was active and untiring in his endeavors to promote the interests of the Church, and amidst the labors of his declining years, it was a source of the greatest consolation to him to have the co-operation of clergymen whom he had educated himself, and to behold around him Sisters of Charity, whom he had trained in the spirit of their exalted vocation, instructing the poor and tending the helpless orphan. He lived also to see a collegiate institution established in his diocese, "founded on the plan, governed by the rules, and directed by the children of Mt. St. Mary's." This able and apostolic prelate was called to the recompense of the faithful servant on the 20th of December, 1842, in the 79th year of his age.*

He was succeeded in the general superiorship of the sisterhood by the Rev. Louis R. Deloul, professor of theology in St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore. The following year, July, 1827, Sister Mary Augustine Decount was elected to preside more immediately over the community, in the place of Mother Rose White, who had held office for two consecutive terms and was not re-eligible. Mother Augustine Decount was born in Philadelphia, Pa., Oct. 8th, 1786. Her parents were good, pious Catholics. Being gifted with remarkable musical talents and a fine voice, she taught music in one of the first French acad-

* For further details in relation to Bishop Dubois, see the eloquent discourse on his life and character, delivered by the Rev. John McCafrey, D.D., at Mt. St. Mary's Church, January 24th, 1843.⁽⁸⁷⁾

emies in her native city, and, as a consequence, she was obliged to mingle much with the gay world, in which she was greatly admired, and her society was much sought. However, she listened with docility to the admonition of the beloved disciple: "Love not the world, nor the things of the world." She felt a powerful attraction to a life of retirement, but she could not decide. In this perplexity, she had a remarkable dream—that a venerable priest, whom she had never seen before, told her that she should leave all to follow Jesus Christ, and devote herself to his service. Some years after, on her arrival at St. Joseph's, when Mother Seton, according to custom, took her into the chapel, to pay her respects, first, to "The Master of the House," dwelling in the Tabernacle, the "first object that attracted her attention was a picture of the very priest she had seen in her dream—a portrait of St. Vincent, which is still hanging in the community room. Then she was confident that she was doing the will of God in her regard. She arrived in the Valley July 31st, 1817, bringing with her a niece, who became a most efficient member, as all will admit who were acquainted with Sister Martina. On that day, the society of the Sisters of Charity was precisely but eight years old. Having no support but that derived from the school, Sister Augustine was a great acquisition, particularly in the musical department, and most zealously did she devote herself to the teaching of instrumental and vocal music in the academy. Besides, she was a person of mature judgment and experience, willing and capable to assist in the great work. She was remarkable for regularity, order, and a great consideration for the feelings of others, combined with an innate politeness and affability of manner, which were extended even to the youngest members of the community. All she did was

well done, for all was hallowed by the pure intention of pleasing God. During Mother Augustine's administration, which lasted for the same period, the valuable services of the sisters were widely extended, by the formation of various establishments of charity and education in different parts of the United States. Free schools for the instruction of youth of the poorer class were opened at Harrisburg, Albany, Cincinnati, Wilmington (Del.), New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Boston, Alexandria (Va.); asylums for the protection and support of destitute orphans were commenced at Albany, Cincinnati, New Orleans, Georgetown (D. C.), Brooklyn, Philadelphia, and New York; academies for the education of young ladies were established at New York, Alexandria, and Washington city; while sisters were sent forth to administer relief to their suffering fellow-beings, in hospitals at St. Louis, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. The self-sacrificing devotion which they displayed in the year 1832, and still more recently, when that scourge of nations, the Asiatic cholera, swept over the land, will never be forgotten. During that period of terror and desolation, when the entire country was held aghast at the irresistible advances of the pestilence, moving from city to city, from house to house, and baffling all the resources of human skill; when whole populations fled before its ravaging power and the terrible suddenness of its destruction, the Sisters of Charity heroically offered their services to face the deadly infection, and administer relief and consolation amid the scenes of suffering and death. The civil authorities of Philadelphia were the first to invoke their aid; and no sooner was the request presented, than thirteen heroines were despatched to that city, eager to rush to the assistance of those from whom the rest of the

world seemed to fly with horror. The scene at the Mother-house on this occasion was sublime. The council having assembled, a favorable determination was immediately taken, and a selection made of those who were to start. Joy at once beamed upon the countenances of those who had been appointed, while they who remained behind, looked with pious envy on those upon whom the happy lot had fallen. A similar application was made in Baltimore for the services of the sisters, and it was met with equal heroism.* Regardless of self and with an entire devotedness to the welfare of others, they entered the haunts of pestilence, bending over the dying bed when friends and relatives were afraid to approach it; angels of mercy, soothing by every artifice of tender charity the pains of disease, while they held before the sufferer the symbol of redemption and raised his hopes to heaven. Several of the sisters fell martyrs to their noble charity; and to commemorate their deeds of generous devotion in the cause of humanity, monuments were erected over their remains by municipal authority; while to their surviving associates public thanks were decreed in testimony of their exalted virtue.⁽³⁸⁾

Mother Augustine died on the 27th of July, 1870. Her remains repose in the little cemetery of the Valley.

The year following the ravages of the cholera, Sister Rose White was again elected to the government of the society. At this period the Rev. John Hickey was Superior-General, having succeeded Mr. Deluol, who had been appointed to the charge of the ecclesiastical seminary in Baltimore.⁽³⁹⁾ During the second term of Mother Rose's superiorship, female academies were established at Norfolk and Vincennes; schools were opened at Richmond,

* Baltimore Gazette, October 17, 1832.

Utica, Conewago, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Pottsville, Vincennes, and Martinsburg; orphan asylums were commenced at Martinsburg, Pittsburg, Philadelphia, and St. Louis; and hospitals were undertaken in Baltimore and Richmond.

While the sisters were thus extending the sphere of their charity abroad, improvements were going on at the Mother-house, for the better accommodation of the increasing numbers that sought admission within its walls. In 1836 was commenced a large brick edifice, seventy-two feet long, forty-nine wide, and three stories high, connecting with the eastern extremity of the main building, and running at right angles with it in a northern direction. Not long after its completion, another undertaking was begun, to supply a want which had been long felt by the community—a chapel of ample dimensions for the religious services and devotional exercises of the house. The site chosen for the new edifice was that which Mother Seton herself had designated twenty years before. All the preparations for the work having been made, the ceremony of laying the corner-stone took place on the 19th of March, 1839, the feast of St. Joseph, the principal patron of the institution, and in less than two years this elegant structure was ready for dedication to the worship of God. The solemn rite of consecration was performed by the Most Rev. Archbishop Eccleston, assisted by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Whelan, Bishop of Richmond, and a number of other clergymen, and in presence of a large concourse of persons, on the 6th of May, 1841. One of the most impressive parts of the ceremony was the procession, by which the relics, to be deposited in the altar, were conveyed to their place of destination. In the van appeared the young ladies of the academy, one hundred and sixty in number, all

dressed in white, with veils of the same color, preceded by a banner of the Blessed Virgin borne by three of the scholars; next walked the sisters, numbering about one hundred, two by two; then the musical band of Mt. St. Mary's College with its pupils, the students of the seminary in surplice, and the Rev. clergy in chasuble; after these followed the urn containing the holy relics, mounted on a beautifully ornamented frame which was borne by four priests; lastly marched the bishops in cope and mitre, with their respective assistants. During the procession, appropriate airs were performed by the band, alternately with the chanters, who sang the *Te Deum*. The rite of consecration being ended, a pontifical high mass was celebrated by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Whelan, during which the Rev. Dr. Moriarty delivered a discourse suitable to the occasion. This beautiful church fronts the western extremity of the academy, at a distance of about seventy feet. The style of its architecture is Tuscan. It is a spacious building, one hundred and twelve feet long and ninety-one wide, with a lofty steeple, and embracing at the rear end two wings, one of which serves as a vestry-room, the other for persons connected with the institution and strangers who wish to attend the divine service. The body of the church is reserved for the sisters and the young ladies of the academy. The façade is very appropriately set off with a finely-sculptured statue of St. Joseph, and bears a Latin inscription, which states that the edifice, erected at the expense of the Daughters of Charity, was dedicated by them to the glory of God in honor of their chief patron.⁽⁴⁰⁾ As you enter the front door, on the left, is a recess containing an altar commemorative of the seven dolours of the Virgin Mother, which are exhibited by a well-executed group in composition. This

group was presented to the chapel by a pious nobleman of France, to obtain a share in the rich blessings which God so readily grants to his cherished spouses. In the recess on the right is an altar sacred to St. Philomena, which the piety of former pupils has raised and decorated with costly gifts, not only as a tribute of grateful veneration, but as a pledge of their participation, in the valued prayers and recollections of preceptresses, remembered and beloved. In the spacious chancel of the church rises a marble altar of the purest white and of matchless elegance, and elevated high above it, in the niche of a canopy constructed of the same rich material as the altar, stands a well-sculptured image of the Blessed Virgin, with the child Jesus in her arms. Above the tabernacle, on either side, is seen a cherub in the posture of profound awe and adoration before the holy of holies. The interior of the chapel contains, moreover, several paintings of merit.⁽⁴¹⁾

At the period of its dedication, Mother Xavier Clark presided over the institution, having been elected in July, 1839. Mother Xavier, Catharine Eugenie Mettèyer, was born in the island of San Domingo, about the year 1790 or '91. Her parents were wealthy planters, holding a high rank in the island, to which they had emigrated from France a few years previous to the birth of their daughter Eugenie. They were among the most prosperous and opulent of the colony, and for many years fortune was lavish of her favors in their regard, but this prosperity was succeeded by the most severe trials.

The life of Mother Xavier was truly a checkered scene. At her birth, her parents enjoyed all the happiness that wealth and rank can give; scarcely was she eighteen months old, when the storm of adversity plunged them into the greatest affliction. An insurrec-

tion having broken out among the negroes in the French colony, more than two thousand whites perished within two months, and the Mettèyer family escaped the general massacre only through the fidelity of their slaves, the little Eugenie being miraculously preserved by her nurse.

These insurrections occurring frequently, the inhabitants were kept in constant dread. Mother Xavier, speaking of her young life, often said she was a child of revolution. In a subsequent outbreak, her father, one of the best and kindest of masters, was poisoned by a favorite servant. Then the surviving members of the family left the island for New Orleans, where, at the age of seventeen, she became the wife of Captain Clark. Soon after her mother died, and Madam Clark removed with her husband to New York. There she often met her own servants in the streets. At nineteen she was left a widow, a stranger in a strange land. Then she became acquainted with a most excellent, pious French lady, who soon became a sincere and special friend.

One day, in the parlor of this friend, Madam D., she picked up a Testament, and began to read. A sudden light flashed upon her mind, and, like St. Paul, she cried out, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

She was ready for every good work. Being requested to join the choir of St. Peter's Church, she was too happy to consecrate to the praise of God that exquisite voice that had been so much admired, which might be compared to the warbling of birds, in its rich, sweet melody. (At this time Madame D. had engaged the young widow to assist in her academy, which was the first in New York.) Many years after her entrance into the community, her vocal powers were a source of pleasure to all. Mother Rose, whose heart was so alive to pious emotions, would sometimes say to those around her,

“Did you ever hear a voice so full of piety and unction as Sister M. Xavier’s?”

Mother Xavier’s beautiful and eventful life would fill volumes. It is preserved in the annals of the community; but, as our space is limited, we cannot glean any more from the rich field which it presents. “She lived the life of a saint,” died the death of a saint, and now shares the eternal bliss of the saints.

During her administration, which lasted six years, an orphan asylum and hospital were commenced in Baltimore; in the same city the domestic department of St. Mary’s College, and that of St. John’s College at Fordham, N. Y., were placed under the charge of sisters; an asylum and school were established at Mobile; a preparatory school for young boys about a mile from Emmettsburg; an asylum and school at Cincinnati; an asylum and two schools at St. Louis; an asylum and school at Washington city; an asylum and school at Donaldsonville, and a hospital at Detroit.

In 1841, the Rev. Mr. Hickey, Superior-General of the sisterhood, resigned his office, and was succeeded by the Very Rev. Mr. Deluol, of St. Mary’s Seminary, Baltimore. About the time of his accession to the government of the society, it lost one of its earliest and most efficient members in the person of Sister Rose White, whose name has been already mentioned. Her sterling qualities, particularly her firmness and prudence in governing others, without losing their confidence and affection, may be estimated from the fact of her having been appointed to the charge of the first two institutions that were undertaken abroad by the sisters of St. Joseph; and also from the circumstance of her having been elected, as often as she was eligible, to the office of Mother-Superior. She was employed at different in-

tervals in several other situations, and lastly at Frederick City, where she became sister-servant soon after her retirement from the superiorship in 1839. Though she usually looked well, her bodily sufferings had been great for several years, but did not prevent her from devoting herself without reserve to numerous and fatiguing duties. After her arrival in Frederick, her health rapidly declined, and at length she sank under the violence of a bilious affection on the 25th of July, 1841. The death of Sister Rose was deeply felt by all who knew her, especially by the members of the community to which she belonged, whose grief was only soothed by the recollection of her many virtues, and the hope that she would remember them in heaven. During a long time, her maternal heart was sorely tried by severe domestic afflictions; yet they always found her resigned to the will of God, and, however painful the circumstance, her countenance rarely betrayed the emotions of her soul. Many pages might be filled with the narrative of her patience and submission under the sufferings which she had to endure; the great confidence which she manifested in Divine Providence; her tender devotion to the Mother of God; and her unbounded charity and zeal for the orphan and the poor. She was a lady of the most engaging manners, with the sweetest temper, and a heart overflowing with goodness. Ever mindful of her obligations as a Sister of Charity, she was full of piety, faithful to her rule, and an example of every virtue to those around her; yet she was always cheerful, amiable, and kind. She possessed the secret of winning hearts; every scholar under her care loved her as a mother. To the sisters, her associates, she was equally endeared. Often, during the hours of recreation, did she entertain them with the most interesting details of

the labors and privations which had been undergone at the commencement of the sisterhood; and with the stores of her retentive memory and her happy flow of words, she could rivet the delighted attention of her hearers by these allusions to their early history. Sister Rose was called to her reward a few weeks after the death of one of her dearest and most valued friends, the Rt. Rev. John B. David, coadjutor of the Bishop of Bardstown. He had been her spiritual director before her connection with the sisterhood, and he was afterwards the second Superior-General of the society. In their correspondence, they had mutually edified each other by dwelling on the anticipation of the pleasure which friends, bound together in this life by the ties of virtue, will experience in meeting hereafter in heaven; and now they were both summoned, within a brief interval, to meet before God, who had been the common object of their ardent love and fondest hope. It may not be uninteresting or un instructive to those whom Sister Rose has left behind her, to know the sentiments which she and her distinguished friend entertained on this subject. He thus writes to her, January 14, 1835: "Your old father receives with a grateful heart your amiable salutation and the expression of your kind wishes in the beginning of this new year. O truly, if there is a time for spiritual friends, that is to say, souls united together in our blessed Jesus, to form those charitable wishes for one another, it is when these revolutions of years admonish them of the rapid approach of that blessed eternity towards which they are hastening together. Truly, my beloved daughter, next to the desire we ought to entertain of being soon united forever to the sovereign object of our love, that of being united to our dear friends ought to be uppermost. The same

reflection now occurs to my mind, which you expressed in the letter I received from you, when last at St. Joseph's Valley, from Washington: 'that, if we enjoy so great a pleasure in seeing our dear friends from whom we had been long separated, even in this vale of tears, though only for a short while, and with the sad necessity of parting again soon from them: what will that pleasure be when we meet in heaven?' The same reflection, I say, now occurs to my mind. If we feel such satisfaction now, in thinking of that happy eternity in the company of our dear friends, what will it be when we find our desire realized? If the anticipation is so sweet, what will be the moment of the reunion, a reunion that is never to end? It seems to me, that the sweetness of that anticipation comes from the spiritual union which actually unites us together in our beloved centre. That sweetness flows from the love of Jesus, to whom we are really united by divine charity and the holy communion, so that we may, even in this life, really find one another in that sanctuary of divine love, and already begin that enjoyment which will be consummated when we meet in heaven. So that we begin here the song which we shall continue to sing during eternity; 'behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!' Blessed unity! one with God, and one together; all consummated in one, as our blessed Saviour asked of his Father after his last supper. O what encouragement, especially for those who are favored with the happy call to live in a religious community, to entertain among themselves the bond of charity and perfect unity! Let us then cherish now that blessed union; let us make every effort to advance in that holy exercise of love. This season invites to it. Let us be very assiduous in that stable, at the

foot of that manger, at the knee of our holy Mother, holding in her arms the Divine Babe, shivering with cold, yet a furnace of love; shedding tears, yet filling with joy the hearts that love him. How he loves us and offers himself for us! How he hastens to show that love, by shedding already his blood in his circumcision, and giving us a pledge that he will shed the whole of it, by taking the sacred name of Jesus! O that this sweet name should be deeply engraved in our hearts! What heavenly balm it would pour into all the powers of our soul! How happy should we be, if we had nothing in our mind but Jesus; nothing in our memory but Jesus; in our will but Jesus; in our imagination but Jesus! Jesus should be everywhere in us, and we everywhere in Jesus. Let us pronounce often that adorable, amiable, salutary name. But how shall we be able to pronounce it as we ought? St. Paul assures us, that no one can say, 'Lord Jesus,' but in the Holy Ghost, that is, by the impulse of divine love. Ah, it would require a tongue of fire to pronounce it worthily. Let us beg our holy Mother, who was the first to pronounce it in this world, and so often repeated it with inexpressible love and delight, to teach us how to pronounce it well and often."⁽⁴²⁾

Although two spacious edifices had been erected to meet the wants of St. Joseph's sisterhood and academy, the increasing prosperity of the institution rendered it necessary to provide additional room. For this purpose, a large building, fifty-seven by sixty-nine feet, and three stories high, was commenced in 1841, connecting with the eastern extremity of the academy and running at right angles with it in a southern direction. It is surmounted with a cupola and belvedere, which command one of the most extensive and delightful prospects that can greet

the eye. Having mentioned the different buildings appropriated to scholastic purposes, we shall briefly state the particular uses of each. The main edifice is distributed into rooms for recitation, the cabinet of natural sciences, the library, dormitories, etc., and in the lowest story are the important arrangements of the culinary department. Another building in the rear, contains the refectory, infirmary, bathing establishment, and a large hall for drawing, painting and embroidery. The last mentioned edifice has three grand divisions: a study-room, a hall for public exhibitions, and one for the exercises of vocal and instrumental music.

A few years after its erection, in 1844, another extensive structure was undertaken for the exclusive accommodation of the sisters and novices, and was completed in little more than twelve months, having been occupied in September, 1845. It stands east and west, connecting the academy and the chapel, with lateral projections to the south, inclosing on three sides a court-yard seventy feet by forty in extent. The new residence of the sisters is two hundred and thirty-two feet in developed length, and forty in width, with two stories and a roomy attic, and is constructed of brick and cut stone, colored of a light slate or gray. It is after the conventual style of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with embattled parapets; high-pitched roof with dormers, surmounted by a belfry thirty feet high; the windows of the second story square, with transom forming a cross; the lower windows mullioned with hood-moulds; the lateral walls broken by buttresses; and with porches to the first and second stories, running along the north wall. The building is truly Catholic in its external appearance. It was designed and its erection superintended by a gentleman who has given much attention to the study of Christian

architecture.* The interior parts of the edifice are well adapted to their sacred uses. The lower and second stories are severally fourteen feet in height. On the first is a cloister running around the entire court-yard and communicating with the chapel, and also the public rooms for the use of the community, among them the superior's apartment and chapter-room. The other stories are occupied as dormitories, and for the infirmary, refectory and other purposes.†

Shortly before the occupation of this building by the community, Sister Mary Etienne Hall was elected Mother-Superior, July 21st, 1845. During this same year the white house, which had been originally built for the purposes of the institution, and which for some time had been used exclusively by the sisters, was removed to another location, northwest of the chapel, in order to make room for the larger edifice just described, and was converted into an orphan asylum. The first and darling wish of Mother Seton was to serve the poor and the helpless; and it has so happened that the first building erected for the Sisters of Charity, and which formerly served for the combined objects of sisterhood and academy, is now appropriated exclusively to the support and education of the destitute orphan. About forty children are occupants of this neat and venerable house, under the immediate care of the sisters, and enjoy every facility for obtaining the benefits of a solid and religious education. Such of them as evince a particular talent, are taught those branches which will qualify them for the office of governess.

Actuated by a sense of grateful veneration for Mother Seton, the government of the sisterhood has erected a

* Eugene Giraud, Esq.

† U. S. Catholic Magazine, vol. v., p. 221; vol. vi., p. 497.

handsome marble monument over her remains, which was commenced in 1845. Its plan and decorations are in the Gothic style. On the front, facing the south, is the inscription, "To the memory of E. A. Seton, Foundress;" on the west side are the words, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints;"* on the east, "The just shall live in everlasting remembrance;"† and on the north, "The just shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."‡ On the grounds in front of the academy, another structure has arisen, a monument of youthful piety and virtue. It is a small Gothic oratory, in the pointed style, erected in 1845, by contributions from some of the former pupils of the academy, who requested at the same time that it should be called "The Chapel of Our Lady of the Valley." As soon as it was commenced, the resident scholars seconded the design, and they still continue their offerings for its adornment. Its interior arrangements and decorations are splendidly beautiful, and reflect high honor upon the gratitude and piety of the Catholic pupils who erected and who now adorn this elegant shrine of our Blessed Lady. Besides these improvements at the Mother-house, much has been done within a few years past to enhance the appearance of the place, by the planting of trees, and laying off the premises in a tasteful manner and attractive to the eye.

Since Mother Etienne has been superior of the society, the following important establishments have been undertaken abroad: a school at Baltimore; an orphan asylum at Wilmington, Del.; an orphan asylum and two schools at Albany; an asylum, school and hospital at Troy; an asylum, school and hospital at Buffalo; an asylum and school at Detroit; an asylum and infirmary at Milwaukee;

* Psalm 116.

† Psalm 111.

‡ Matth. xiii. 43.

an asylum and school at Natchez; a hospital at Donaldsonville; an asylum and school at Norfolk; a school at Boston; a school at St. Louis, an asylum in the same city for more advanced orphans, who are taught trades; and also an asylum for poor girls who are out of a situation, where they are provided with work until they find a suitable employment. Of the establishments under the charge of the Sisters of Charity, Mount Hope Institution at Baltimore, chiefly for the insane, may be mentioned as one of the principal, and as an instance of their munificent and devoted labors in behalf of their suffering fellow-creatures. This property is owned by the sisters, who, since the purchase of it in 1844, have made most extensive additions to the buildings, and such alterations as have enabled them to introduce all the latest improvements for the benefit and comfort of the patients. The institution stands on an eminence which commands an extensive view of the adjacent country. The adjoining grounds have been laid off with special reference to the good of the afflicted individuals who live in the house. Its interior arrangements are also particularly directed to promote their welfare; the rooms are spacious and airy, the walls are relieved with paintings and other objects calculated to attract attention and divert the mind; in a word, the whole establishment presents more the appearance of an abode of domestic ease and refinement, than of an institution forbidding and repulsive in its character. In regard to the moral treatment of the insane, the whole system may be said to consist in kindness and employment. The latter is necessary to divert the mind of the patient from its morbid delusions, while the former is equally so to consult at all times his comfort and advantage. In this respect, houses for the insane under the direction of the sisters are peculiarly blessed.

Kindness and benevolence are the direct fruits of that charity which they profess, and cannot be found in the same degree in uneducated hirelings. "But it is also highly important," says Dr. Stokes, "that besides the possession of these rare qualities, the attendants should be familiar with the habits and manners of respectable life. Can any greater injury be inflicted on a sensitive female lunatic, for example,—one heretofore accustomed to good society,—than to find herself, on her recovery, limited to the companionship of a common attendant? Can anything be conceived better calculated to disgust and increase the excitement of a convalescent of refined and tender feelings, than to be subjected to the rude and jocose familiarity, or, it may be, the rougher behavior of low and ignorant keepers? Sir William Ellis well remarks, 'a wife, a sister or a daughter exhibits an alteration in manner which indicates the existence of diseased action in the brain—there is a morbid sensitiveness of feeling—it is essential that she should at once be taken from her home and intrusted to strangers. Can any one doubt the advantage of securing as her companion a lady of tender feelings, of refined and cultivated mind, and who has such an acquaintance with the disease as to enable her carefully and judiciously to apply, under the direction of a professional man, proper medical and moral treatment? Is there a husband, a father or a brother, who would not hail as a benefactress, a female so endowed, who would take the charge of his relation?' In the sisters we have found associated a combination of qualities admirably adapting them for this responsible and delicate duty. By their exalted piety, by their controlling sense of responsibility to the all-seeing God, by their refined taste and cultivated minds, they possess the very attributes most necessary to constitute faithful, effi-

cient and skilful attendants on the insane. In a word, they possess, in an eminent degree, all those endowments of the mind and heart, requisite to insure the fulfilment of all the requirements of that *law of humanity and kindness*, which should be the pervading genius of every lunatic asylum."* Though the insane constitute the greater portion of those who are received at Mt. Hope, other patients suffering from general diseases are also admitted. Many indigent persons likewise enjoy the benefits of the institution, living on its bounty without making any compensation in return. From the last report of the institution, for the year 1851, we learn that there are twenty charity patients in the house. The same document informs us, that "the whole number of persons who in nine years have sought to avail themselves of the benefits of this institution, laboring either under some form of mental malady, or of mania a potu, or of some kind of general disease, has been two thousand and forty-eight. Of this number, one thousand two hundred and three have undergone treatment in the department for the insane, and eight hundred and forty-five in the department for general diseases. Of the above aggregate number, there have been discharged one thousand eight hundred and twenty-eight—of which number one thousand one hundred and sixty-five have recovered, eighty-six have died, and five hundred and seventy-seven have been discharged in various conditions, some greatly improved in health and habits, and others as harmless and incurable." During the year 1851, the whole number of patients treated in the house, was three hundred and seventeen, of whom seventy-nine were in the department of general diseases.†

* U. S. Catholic Magazine, vol. vi., 1847, p. 489. † Appendix C.

Among the institutions which have been mentioned in the preceding pages, as having been conducted by the Sisters of Charity, several have been discontinued, and others have ceased to be under their direction, owing to various circumstances which rendered it expedient, in the judgment of superiors, that the services of the sisters should be withdrawn. Pay-schools and other institutions, which were undertaken by the sisters years ago, when urgent reasons seemed to require this modification of their rule, have in a great measure been abolished, as these reasons in many cases no longer exist. It has been thought advisable, by such reforms, to give to the operations of the society, as much as possible, that sphere and direction which belong to the congregation established by St. Vincent of Paul. This policy was the more necessary, as a union with this congregation was earnestly desired and fondly expected by the sisterhood at Emmettsburg. The most important event connected with the recent history of the society in this country, is undoubtedly its incorporation into that ancient and venerable congregation which has existed for upwards of two hundred years. We have seen that from the very commencement of the community at Emmettsburg, a colony of French sisters was expected to aid and initiate it in the practice of the rules. Since that time frequent applications were made, for the purpose of effecting a union between the society in France and that in the United States; but they were always unsuccessful, until a similar petition was more recently presented in the spring of 1849, by an American prelate, at the request of the Superior-General, the Very Rev. Mr. Deluol, and with the approbation of the Most Rev. Archbishop of Baltimore. The following summer, a still more explicit letter of application was presented

by the superiors, through the Rev. Mariano Maller, who at that time was on a visit to Europe. When he returned to America, in the month of October, he was the bearer of an answer favorable to the request of the sisterhood at Emmettsburg. Shortly after, Mr. Deluol resigned the office of Superior-General, and at his request Mr. Maller entered upon its duties as a provisional substitute. At that time the union with the society in France was not complete; but it was fully established on the 25th of March, 1850, when the sisters in this country renewed their vows with that formula which is used by the society of St. Vincent of Paul. Since that period several members of St. Joseph's community have visited Europe, to obtain an insight into the spirit which prevails there among their associates. The following year, on the 8th of December, the feast of the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the sisters at Emmettsburg assumed the habit which is common to those in France, and which differs much from that previously used in this country, especially in the head-dress, which is a white linen bonnet with a wide projection on each side.* Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph have thus become associated, by a holy fellowship, with the Daughters of Charity, servants of the poor, forming one society with them, having the same constitutions, rules, government and spirit. Thus also have the members of the respective sisterhoods in America and on the other side of the Atlantic, mutually drawn upon themselves and upon their charitable labors an immense increase of heavenly blessing, by the additional prayers and services that are now enlisted in the same cause.

* This head-dress in French is called *cornette*, and is nearly the same as that first worn by the Daughters of Charity, after their institution by St. Vincent of Paul.

The society throughout the world embraces nearly one thousand institutions, which are generally houses of charity, viz. : hospitals, almshouses, orphan asylums, free schools, industrial schools, etc. The number of sisters in these different establishments throughout the world exceeds twenty-five thousand and thirty (25,030). In this country they form a province, which has an ecclesiastical superior, the Rev. Mariano Maller, under the title of "Director of the Daughters of Charity," and a chief sister whose title is "Visitatrix of the Daughters of Charity," and who is also local superior of the central house at Emmetsburg.*

Rev. Mariano Maller was eminently fitted for the position of director of the sisters. His clear discernment in the guiding of souls was remarkable, and his charity and untiring zeal gave the promise that he would direct the American province for many years, at least until the new order of things would be properly established. Providence designed otherwise. In the March of 1853, he was removed to Brazil, S. America, where he acted as visitor and director to the two families of St. Vincent in that province. This transfer was made by the Superior-General in Paris, Very Rev. J. B. Etienne, who at the same time appointed Rev. Francis Burlando director of the sisters in the United States.

Mother Etienne Hall, after filling the office of Mother and Visitatrix for ten years, was replaced by Mother Regina Smith, who had presided over the Charity Hospital for upwards of twenty-four years, where she displayed great prudence, firmness, and kindness in her

* The Superior-General of the Congregation of the Mission or Lazarists, is *ex officio* Superior-General of the Daughters of Charity; and hence their direction is confided, when practicable, to a clergyman who is a Lazarist

difficult position, which prepared her for the still more responsible one of visitatrix. During her administration, and with the co-operation and wise direction of Father Burlando, the community increased in numbers, and many new and important establishments were commenced. Day-schools were opened in Baltimore, Jefferson, La.; La Salle, Ill.; Richmond, Va.; Alton, Ill.; Elmira, N. Y.; Detroit, Mich.; Santa Barbara, Cal.; an infant asylum and hospital in Philadelphia; hospitals in Milwaukee, Mobile, Rochester, Norfolk; an infant asylum in Baltimore; an insane institution in St. Louis; an institution in Boulogny, La., etc. Mother Regina's health had been on the decline for some time, and in the year 1860 she resumed the charge of the Charity Hospital, to the great joy of the people who had grieved for her absence of nearly six years. But a brief space of time elapsed after her return to the first field of her labors, when she was called to her reward and eternal rest.

Mother Ann Simeon, who had filled the office of Treasurer of the Community, was appointed by the superiors in Paris to replace Mother Regina as Visitatrix. Having been a member of the council at the Central House in the United States for many years, and being thoroughly acquainted with the workings of the community—at a time, too, when the Republic was suffering from the sad effects of the civil war—she was admirably adapted to fill the office at such a crisis. Wisdom, prudence, and amiable simplicity of manners characterized her; besides showing a great business tact, her appreciation of the beauties of nature and literary tastes⁽⁴³⁾ were remarkable, as we may judge from her correspondence, conversation, and some spontaneous effusions from her pen, breathing piety and a singular devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Many and various works of charity

were commenced during her administration. Infirmaries, civil and military hospitals were opened in Richmond, Washington, Alton, Ill., Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia; an institution for deaf and dumb; an insane asylum in Buffalo; "Louisiana Retreat" in Boulogne; "Mt. Hope Retreat,"⁽⁴⁾ near Baltimore; infant asylums in Washington; industrial and educational schools were inaugurated in New Orleans, Washington, Chicago, San Francisco and San Bautista, Cal., Toronto, Canada West, Germantown, Albany, Lowell, Mass., Virginia City, Nevada; a seminary at Los Angeles, Cal. Mother Ann Simeon died January 16th, 1866, and was replaced by Mother Euphemia Blenkinsop, the present visitatrix of the province in the United States.

Besides the experience of a mission life, Mother Euphemia had been a member of the council, and assistant to the visitatrix at the Central House for upwards of eleven years, so that she was fully initiated in the duties of her new and responsible position. Twelve years have elapsed since her appointment by the superiors in Paris, during that time many new works have been commenced and many events have occurred, alternately shading and brightening the landscape. Day-schools were opened in Mobile and Whistler, Ala., Keokuk, Iowa, Dedham, Mass., Chicago, Richmond, Natchez, Petaluna, Cal., St. Joseph, Mo., Troy and Syracuse, N. Y., New Orleans, Petersburg, Staunton, Portsmouth, Va., Emmettsburg Village; infant and orphan asylums have been founded in Boston, Carrollton, La., San Francisco, Cal., Jefferson, Texas, Washington, Reading, Pa., Milwaukee, Saginaw, Mich.; hospitals, infirmaries and houses of providence for aged and destitute in Chicago, Lowell, Mass., St. Joseph, Mo., Detroit, Evansville, Ind., Syracuse, Virginia City, Nevada, Baltimore. Many improvements

have been made at St. Joseph's within the last twelve years, and the Central House has attained magnificent proportions, by the erection of a large building with mansard roof, a belvedere affording an extensive view of the country, and with all modern conveniences of gas and steam. The interior of the edifice comprises a handsomely frescoed distribution hall, drawing and painting room, a cabinet of curiosities, dormitories, class-rooms, etc. This building, which connects with the other parts of the academy by wide and cheerful corridors, was planned and superintended by Rev. Francis Burlando, C. M., who for twenty-five years had given his services to the community, first as chaplain, afterwards as director and local superior of the United States Province. While the spiritual and temporal interests of the community seemed to have attained a most happy status under the wise direction of Father Burlando, the Valley was shrouded in grief by his unlooked for death from a stroke of apoplexy, which occurred on Feb. 16th, 1873; sudden it was, but not unprovided. On the very day of his death he offered the holy sacrifice at the usual community hour, gave a sermon at the second mass, and presided at the organ during vespers. But the hand of death had already marked his victim, and before the close of the day so well begun, he was stricken down in the midst of his *confrères* as they were repairing to their domestic chapel for prayers. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors, and their works follow them." His death was a sore trial to the community in general, who mourned his loss as that of a father. Father Burlando was replaced by Rev. Felix Guédry, C. M., from Cape Girardeau, Mo., who, being called to Niagara, was succeeded in office by the present

director, Rev. Alexis Mandine, C. M., pastor of St. Stephen's Church, New Orleans.

The rapid and varied transition of events at this period of the present administration, at one time conflicting, anon cheering, lends interest to the sketch, as the clare-obscure gives effect to the picture. The death of Rev. Jean B. Etienne, C. M., Superior-General of the two families of St. Vincent on both sides of the Atlantic, reached the province by cable, filling the hearts of his Western children with gloom for the loss of one who had so efficiently accomplished the duties of his generalship for thirty-one years. In a short time after, the demise of his worthy successor, Rev. Eugene Borée, C. M., was announced. Mother Euphemia had made the acquaintance of both during her visits to the Mother-House in Paris, and was happy to be the recipient of their confidence and wise direction. Rev. Antoine Fiat, C. M., holds at present the weighty responsibility of Superior-General,

In the year 1875, the Valley was brightened and honored by a visit from His Eminence the newly-created Cardinal McCloskey, accompanied by the Roman prelates, twelve bishops and archbishops and a number of priests. The reception of the august visitors took place in the distribution hall of the academy; the pleasant memories of that visit will form a delightful page in the annals of the community.

Soon after, the sickle of death garnered another to the matured sheaves of his granary. Archbishop Bayley of Baltimore, and nephew of our venerated Mother Seton, died October 3d, 1877, at his former see in Newark, N. J. He had frequently expressed the wish, and made the formal request, to be buried near his sainted aunt at St. Joseph's. Mother Euphemia had the modest little

monument enlarged and remodeled, to be in readiness for the sad occasion.

In the evening of Oct. 9th, 1877, when the autumn haze was gilded by the rays of the setting sun, the solemn cortege of bishops, priests, and representatives of different orders, religious and secular, with a number of visitors from the neighboring cities, alighted from the special train carrying the venerated remains of the deceased prelate. The procession formed in the avenue; the Miserere was chanted by hundreds of voices until it reached the monument in St. Joseph's cemetery, where now rests all that is earthly of the good bishop in the same vault with his sainted aunt, Mother Seton.

Another event that was the source of joy and consolation to the community, was an official visit made by Rev. Mariano Maller, C. M., the first director in this country after the affiliation to the Mother-House in Paris. As has been previously stated, Father Maller was called to other fields of labor in Brazil and Spain at a moment when it was judged that his services were indispensable in the United States. After an absence of twenty-four years, his return was hailed as special Visitor by the two families. The increase of numbers and works of charity was most gratifying to him, as he was deeply interested in the American Province.⁽⁴⁵⁾ After a sojourn of several months in the United States, attending to the spiritual interests of the two families, he returned to Spain, to the regret of both families.

Within the last fifteen or twenty years the Valley has greatly improved, not only in the number and style of buildings erected, but in its surroundings, which resemble a vast cultivated garden, relieved by devotional spots throughout the grounds, so that one could make a pious pilgrimage in walking through its shaded avenues.

The chapel of "Our Lady of the Valley," on the academy grounds, has been renovated through the generous piety of former pupils; a shrine in a grove of oaks known as "Our Lady of the Field," with its legend, guards the orchards and meadows; a rustic chapel of St. Joseph; a life-like statue of St. Vincent; "Our Lady of Victory;" a small chapel of our "Lady of Lourdes" beautifully frescoed, shed a holy influence around, not only on the inmates of St. Joseph's, but on innumerable visitors. At last the enclosed little cemetery in the woods is reached, where, in the middle of the silent city of the dead, rises the white memorial chapel containing the remains of the mitred prelate, the marble slab at its base designating the last resting-place of the late Director, Rev. F. Burlando, and Mother Seton, reposing with her two hundred daughters, awaiting the final day when the spirit will again reanimate the tabernacle of clay, and soul and body will rejoice to hear the invitation of the heavenly spouse, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

NOTES.

(1)—p. 14.

DR. BAYLEY'S father was of a good family, settled near Lynn-Regis or King's Lynn, Norfolk county, England. He came to America on a travelling tour; but, having formed the acquaintance of a Miss Lecomte, of a Huguenot family at New Rochelle, New York, he married her, and remained in this country.

(2)—p. 20.

The Setons came from Scotland, and are descended from the family of the Lords Seton, now represented by the Earl of Winton. Mr. William Seton, whose son married Miss Bayley, was the first cashier of the Bank of New York after its organization,—a post to which he was appointed notwithstanding his well-known partiality for the English cause. Mr. Brissot de Warville (*Travels in the United States*, 1788, considers this circumstance an evidence of the high reputation which he enjoyed for integrity. Mr. Seton was also distinguished as a man of education and of elevated and generous character. He was on terms of friendship with Talleyrand-Perigord, Mr. Otis, and other great men of the times. To him also Monsieur de Crevecoeur addressed his letters, which are known under the title of "*Lettres d'un Cultivateur Américain*," 3 vols. 8vo.

(3)—p. 48.

The following portraiture is to be found among Mrs. Seton's papers, in her own handwriting, and most probably refers to her father.

"His voice is peculiarly adapted to cheer the desponding and encourage the trembling sufferer who shrinks with fastidious delicacy from any of the remedies of the healing art. Nor is its influence

less salutary to the being who, shaken by the tempests of the world, yet struggles to brave them and support a claim to reason and fortitude. Nature has endowed him with that quick sensibility by which, without any previous study, he enters into every character; and the tender interest he takes in the mind's pains as well as the body's, soon unlocks its inmost recesses to his view and fits it to receive the species of consolation best adapted to its wants. It may be said of him, as of the celebrated and unfortunate Zimmerman, that he never visited a patient without making a friend." This outline of character, drawn by the pen of Mrs. Seton, is not less creditable to her as an elegant writer than honorable to her father as a distinguished ornament of the medical profession in America.

(4)—p. 102.

Mrs. Seton thus describes, in a letter, the last hour she passed in Leghorn:—"Oh, think how this heart trembles! Mrs. Filicchi came, when the stars were yet bright, to say we would go to mass, and she would there part with her Antonio. Oh the admirable woman! As we entered the church, the cannon of the Piomingo, which would carry us to America, gave the signal to be on board in two hours. My Saviour! My God! Antonio and his wife—their separation in God and communion! Poor I, not! But did I not beg him to give me their faith, and promise him ALL in return for such a gift? Little Anna and I had only strange tears of joy and grief. We leave but *dear ashes*. The last adieu of Mr. Filicchi, as the sun rose full on the balcony where we stood, and the last signal of our ship for our parting, shall I ever forget? Now, poor Antonio is tearing away, and I hastening to you and my angels."

In the statement here made by Mrs. Seton,—that she prayed to obtain the *faith* of her Catholic friends,—she no doubt spoke of the happiness of being fully in communion with the Church, by the reception of the sacraments. In this sense only is the above-mentioned statement reconcilable with the words of her journal, from which, as well as from other testimony, we learn that she was now convinced of the truth of the Catholic religion.

(5)—p. 111.

Although Mr. Hobart labored so strenuously to uphold the errors of the Protestant system, his arguments do not appear to have had

any weight in strengthening his own private views on the subject. At a subsequent period, when he was even Bishop of the Episcopal Church in New York, however much he may have commended himself to its people by a certain zeal for their religious interests, he was far from being assured that he was leading them in the way of salvation. In 1820, Mr. George Edmund Ironside, formerly an Episcopalian, but then a Catholic, published a pamphlet entitled "Observations on Bishop Hobart's charge, entitled 'Corruptions of the Church of Rome, contrasted with certain Protestant errors,' in a letter to that prelate." And in this pamphlet, Mr. Ironside, after defending various points of Catholic doctrine and practice, and stating the reasons why the assaults against Mr. Kewley, Mr. Barber, and himself, had not been noticed, says:—"But now, when you, who have more than once expressed your wish to pass the end of your days in the bosom of the *Roman Catholic Church*, come forth armed with all the dignity and influence of office, it is necessary that you should meet with an answer."—(p. 43.)

(6)—p. 158.

"Reverend Francis Matignon was born in Paris in 1753, was ordained priest in 1778, and received the degree of Doctor of Divinity at the Sorbonne in 1785. He landed in Baltimore on the 24th of June, 1792, in company with three other French priests—namely, Mr. Mareschal, afterward Archbishop of Baltimore, (who, although ordained in France on the eve of his departure, said his first mass in Baltimore;) Mr. Richard, for many years missionary at Kaskaskia and Detroit, and in 1823 delegate from Michigan to the Congress of the United States; and Mr. Ciquard, formerly of the Seminary of Bourges. Rejoicing in the acquisition of a priest so admirably suited to the metropolis of New England, Bishop Carroll appointed Dr. Matignon to take charge of the church in Boston, who arrived there and entered on the duties of his ministry on the 20th of August, 1792." See *United States Catholic Magazine*, vol. viii. See this work, *ibid.*, for an interesting sketch of the early history of Catholicity in Boston.

For an account of the life and character of Cardinal Cheverus, see the work of Rev. J. Huen Dubourg, translated into English by Robert M. Walsh. Philadelphia: 1841.

(7)—p. 161.

The institution at Georgetown was commenced in 1791, under the immediate auspices of Bishop Carroll, by clergymen who had been members of the Society of Jesus. For a period of nearly a century and a half prior to the Declaration of Independence, the Jesuits had been the only heralds of the true faith in Maryland and Pennsylvania, out of which Catholicity was little known in the Colonies and had no resident missionaries. Before that time, penal laws were almost everywhere in force against the professors of the ancient faith. For an account of the early labors of the Jesuits in Maryland and elsewhere, the reader is referred to an interesting narrative, entitled *Sketches of Father Andrew White, &c.*, in the Catholic Almanac of 1841, by B. U. Campbell, Esq., and to *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Archbishop Carroll*, by the same writer, in the "United States Catholic Magazine," vol. iii. and following. These memoirs evince considerable research, and will be consulted with equal pleasure and profit by the student of ecclesiastical history. In 1806, the company of Jesus was re-established in this country by a special privilege from the Holy See, which had been previously granted in 1801 for its restoration in Russia. The names of the reverend fathers who availed themselves of this permission in the United States were Robert Mollineux, Charles Neale, Charles Sewall, and Sylvester Boarman, all of whom had belonged to the ancient society before its suppression in 1773. The first-mentioned of these clergymen was appointed Superior, subject, however, to the General in Russia. A novitiate was opened at Georgetown, and the society was soon reinforced by members from Europe. On the 7th of August, 1814, Pius VII. re-established the company of Jesus throughout the world, to the great joy of all the friends of religion and letters. The following year, May, 1815, Georgetown College was raised by Congress to the rank of a university, and it has continued ever since to be a flourishing seat of learning.

(8)—p. 179.

By "the Protestant doctrine with regard to faith" Mrs. Seton no doubt understands here the opinions which she had heard expressed by her former pastor, Mr. Hobart, and others, in reference to

the conditions of salvation. It was the sentiment of the high-church party at that time, as it is now, that the Roman Catholic Church, the Episcopalian Church, &c. are different branches of the Church of Christ, and that the established means of salvation are to be found in them, but not out of their communion. She did not fail to detect the inconsistency of such views among Protestants, and the self-condemnation which they necessarily imply. For, if the various sects that have rejected Episcopacy and other tenets of the ancient faith are on that account heretical the Episcopalian Church is chargeable with the same guilt for having repudiated doctrines which were equally of faith prior to the Reformation. When Mr. Hobart, therefore, contended that certain Protestant sects were not "right," or were out of the way of salvation, he evidently passed sentence against his own denomination; for, intrinsically, Episcopalianism is not different from Lutheranism or Calvinism. They are all the same in principle, in having thrown off the authority of the parent Church, which is the only "pillar and ground of truth."

(9)—p. 189.

Mr. Filicchi at the same time enclosed the following letter to his agents in New York, directing them to supply Mrs. Seton with any funds she would call for. In a spirit of charity, however, and not to expose the harsh conduct of some of her relatives, (now passed from life,) she did not deliver the letter. Its publication, however, at this distant period, is due to the noble character of Mr. Filicchi.

"November 3, 1806.

'GENTLEMEN:—

"Christian religion, founded in charity, is so well understood by some of your neighbors as to allow themselves the privilege of substituting vexation and persecution for the consolation and relief due to virtue in distress. I refer to my most respected convert—my virtuous, unfortunate friend, Mrs. W. M. Seton—as the persecuted person. The persecutors are her relations, her pretended friends, and religion, in the shocking inconsistency of their brains, is the pretence for vexation. I profess, and will evince, thank God, far better principles. In addition to the orders left with you on my departure from America, you are requested to furnish Mrs. Seton with whatever further sum she might at any time call for, to support herself and family. Perhaps she may resolve to seek for tran-

quillity or retirement with us poor Roman Catholic fools; and we shall not be at a loss to find an asylum for them all at Gubbio, or somewhere else. In that case, I would beg of you, my worthy friends, to lend her the necessary assistance, for which due thanks and full responsibility are most cheerfully offered to you, gentlemen, by

“Your obliged humble servant and friend,

“ANTHONY FILICCHI.”

(10)—p. 202.

St. Mary's Seminary in the city of Baltimore is under the charge of clergymen who are members of the society of St. Sulpitius. This society of priests was established in France, in 1641, by the Rev. J. J. Olier, for the purpose of educating aspirants to the ecclesiastical state in the knowledge and virtues of their sacred calling; and it derived its name from the parish of St. Sulpice, in Paris, where it was founded. At the time of the French revolution, the Sulpitians had charge of several ecclesiastical seminaries in France, and of one in Montreal, where they also employed themselves in parochial duties. The following circumstances connected with the origin of the institution in Baltimore may not be uninteresting to the reader.

The project of forming a Sulpitian establishment in the United States is due in the first instance to the wise forethought of Rev. Mr. Emery, Superior-general of the society at the period of the French revolution. When he perceived that the National Assembly in 1790 threatened the destruction of all religious institutions in France, he feared for St. Sulpice, and thought of seeking a refuge for the society elsewhere, in order to prevent its total extinction in case it were suppressed in that country.* Having learned, the same year, that the Rt. Rev. Dr. Carroll, Bishop-elect of Baltimore, had gone to London for the purpose of receiving the episcopal consecration, he sent the Rev. Mr. Nagot, his assistant, to England, to confer with him in relation to the employment of Sulpitians for

* According to a statement of Rev. Mr. Dillet, *État de l'Église Catholique ou du diocèse des États-Unis dans l'Amérique Septentrionale*, the idea of establishing the society somewhere out of France was first suggested to Mr. Emery by Rev. Mr. de St. Felix, superior of the Seminary at Toulouse. This manuscript of Mr. Dillet is in the library of St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore.

the direction of an ecclesiastical seminary, in case it was his intention to establish such an institution at Baltimore. The proposition was gladly accepted by Dr. Carroll, who promised to select a house for the Sulpitians as soon he returned to America.

The individuals selected for the new establishment were Rev. Francis Charles Nagot, *Superior*, Rev. ——— Levadoux, *Procurator*, and Rev. John Tessier and Rev. Anthony Garnier, *Professors of Theology*. Having chartered a vessel, furnished their own provisions, and engaged a captain with his crew, they embarked from the port of St. Malo on the 8th of April, 1791, accompanied by five seminarists and the Rev. Mr. Delavau, a canon of St Martin of Tours.

They arrived in Baltimore on the 10th of July. The ecclesiastical seminary was now commenced, and in 1793 a few boys were admitted for their education. This latter undertaking, however, was soon interrupted.

(11)—p. 213.

Journal of Mrs. Seton from New York to Baltimore, in a letter to her sister-in-law.

“10 o'clock, Thursday, June 9, 1808.

“My own Cecil would scarcely believe that we are only now passing the light-house, thirty miles from New York. All the fatigue and weariness of mind and body past—the firmament of heaven so bright—the cheering sea-breeze and merry sailors would drive old care away, indeed, had I the company of the five dearest beings who bade adieu *in the little room*. Your darlings play and eat till the motion of the vessel makes them sick, and then sleep away as soundly as possible. Poor Ann suffers all the while she does not sleep. Every one is so kind! A very mild, modest young man came down before we had been half an hour on board, and said ‘Madam, my name is James Cork; call on me at all times—I will help you in every thing;’ and so it is. Oh, sweet mercy, how kindly you are mixed in every cup! how soothing to look up and think of it all! Again and again this poor heart is offered in every way he will make use of it. How small a tribute for the daily debt! My Cecil, dear, dear friend of my soul, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday are past, my dear one, with many a prayer, many a sigh—rocking and rolling without getting on. Ann in sufferings every way—very low-spirited—refusing to go on deck—the ladies on board, Mrs Smith and her daughter, so good to us—coaxing us with almonds and raisins, (you remember

poor sister's human affections.) K—— and Rebecca are not half so sick as Ann; said our vespers during a squall—very fervently, you may be sure. This morning we are again in sight of land, and near Cape Henry. Imagine a mattress forming a seat on all sides, good Mrs. Smith and her daughter one end—poor Ann, whom we have forced on deck, and the two darlings, all singing, 'Where and oh where is my highland laddie gone?'—sometimes begging to go back to Cecil, sometimes stretching their sight toward land, where they look for William and Richard. Mother's heart is firm and steadfast, confidence looking straight upward. Oh, how many, many times has it prepared for death since we came on board! how ardently does it commit its three darling sisters to Him, its only hope!

"*Tuesday.*—After rolling and dashing all night, my own love, with both little dear ones in my narrow berth,—the hand held over to Ann, who sleeps beneath me,—praying every ten minutes and offering the life so justly forfeited,—here we are flying up the Chesapeake. A fairer wind and lighter hearts never went through it, I believe; the girls are singing, and eating almonds and raisins—sending ships overboard to New York. The sun is setting gloriously, my dearest; are you looking at it? My soul flies up with the *Miserere*—it is wrapt round yours and dear Zide's—for our own Hache it sends the sigh. To-morrow do I go among strangers? No. Has an anxious thought or fear passed my mind? No. Can I be disappointed? No. One sweet sacrifice will unite my soul with all who offer it; doubt and fear fly from the breast inhabited by Him. There can be no disappointment where the soul's only desire and expectation is to meet His adored will and fulfil it. In forty-eight hours I shall be offering the sacrifice of thanksgiving and fervent love to *all*, my darling, darling Cecil. You will be in my heart to meet Him. Who can speak the wonders of that hope?

"*Wednesday evening.*—Once more good-night, sweet love, aboard the Grand Sachem, not yet in Baltimore Bay. Hope is on the wing, expecting to-morrow morning. What are you doing? All the darlings looking up to Cecil—happy, happy child, whom God employs! how contrasted to the giddy round of beings who play away their happiness, both present and eternal! Go on, favored of Heaven! its eternal blessings be with you, my own!

"*Thursday morning, 9 o'clock.*—Since eleven last night we are at the wharf, but cannot quit the vessel until our things are entered at

the custom-house. It rains very hard. How poor mother's heart beats! the hand trembles, too. In one hour we will be at St. Mary's. How often has the soul visited his sacred presence on the altar!—not one solitary altar, but the many we will soon see! My Cecil, my soul's sister, there is no distance for souls united as ours.

"*Thursday evening. Corpus Christi.*—My dear, dear, dear, dear, all I can tell you is, a carriage conveyed us to the seminary—the organ's solemn peal first, then the bursting of the choir. This was the moment of the consecration of Mr. Dubourg's chapel. We entered without a word, prostrate in an instant. St. Michael's* voice resounded the *Kyrie Eleison*; human nature could scarcely bear it. Your imagination can never conceive the splendor, the glory, of the scene. All I have told you of Florence is a shadow. After mass I was in the arms of the loveliest woman you ever beheld,—Mr. Dubourg's sister,—surrounded by so many caresses and blessings; all my wonder is how I got through it—the feelings confounded with wonder and delight.

"*Friday evening.*—Received my (our) all—oh, how fervently! So much, all combined, turns my brain. Mass from daylight to eight—my dwelling the most complete—almost joining the chapel. Vespers and benediction every evening—every heart caressing us—the look of love and peace on every countenance—St. Michael always with us, talking of you. He will soon write you. I go with him on Monday to Georgetown for my darling boys. Hush, my soul! Cecil, my Cecil, that soul cries out for *you*—it cannot do without you—it must claim you in life and in death. There is a little mount behind the chapel called Calvary—olive-trees and a cross. At the foot of it are four graves. 'There is your rest,' said Mr. Dubourg, as we passed it this morning—it must be yours, my lovely, dear sister; prepare the way. Eliza! Harriet! is it possible? Blessed Lord, pity us!"

(12)—p. 216.

Mrs Seton probably referred here to the distance from her residence to the place where she had landed on her arrival at Baltimore.

* By this name Mrs. Seton and her sister designated the Rev. Michael Hurley. He had one of the most musical voices that can be imagined, the charm of which was not less delightful in the sacred chant than in the pulpit.

Although the city at that time was far from covering the space which it now occupies, there was not more than half a mile of vacant ground or forest between her house and the thickly-settled part of the town. The population was then about 46,000. The only Catholic churches which it contained were St. Peter's, since removed; St. Patrick's, rebuilt; St. John's, since replaced by St. Alphonsus; and St. Mary's chapel, just then completed. The foundation of the present Metropolitan church had been laid in 1806; but it was not dedicated until the year 1821.

(13)—p. 236.

This house stands between the kitchen and the workroom. The school was soon after removed to another log-house opposite, which was erected for the purpose. To this a frame building was added, and subsequently, at the west end, a second building of logs. In this block were comprised for many years the academical halls of Mt. St. Mary's College, and a portion of it is still standing. A writer in the *United States Catholic Magazine*, vol. v., 1846, p. 37, thus alludes to the early improvements at that place:—"Mr. Dubois, who loved an elevated site commanding an extensive prospect, intended at first to build on the brow of the hill, a short distance in front of the church, and he had prepared the ground for the purpose; but he was wisely persuaded by Mr. Dubourg to choose the better site below, where he would have command of the ample supply of water from the spring, and, like a ship in a snug harbor, be protected by the mountain both on the north and west from the winds of winter. For several years he was occupied in erecting his two rows of log-buildings in the midst of a dense thicket and on the margin of an almost impassable swamp. A clearing was made to the south by cutting away the forest-trees; but for several years their stumps remained to decorate the college play-ground. Farther south a garden was prepared and an orchard planted. A large amount of money and labor was expended in breaking these grounds into terraces, levelling them, freeing them from rocks and stones, and otherwise improving them." "Sometimes," says the same writer, "the seminary assumed the appearance of a manual-labor school, when the older pupils and their teachers gathered in the harvests of the farm, or labored, with their venerated president at their head, in clearing, levelling, and improving the grounds about

their college. This was generally, however, regarded as recreation, and sweetened by many an artifice which the good old gentleman knew how to employ in order to convert toil into pastime."

(14)—p. 236.

This seminary had been opened in 1806, on the feast of the Assumption of the B. V. Mary, by the Rev. Mr. Dillet, a Sulpitian. It was situated five miles from Hanover, and about two from Abbotstown, near the foot of a ridge called Pigeon Hills. Some years after, the property became a retreat for the students of St. Mary's Seminary and College in Baltimore, during the summer vacation, and was admirably suited to the purpose. The buildings were spacious and commodious, surrounded by fine gardens and extensive orchards, and in the midst of a country remarkable for its salubrious atmosphere and offering many facilities for agreeable pastime and healthy amusement. This place continued to be the resort of the seminarians and collegians until the year 1849, when it was exchanged for the more convenient locality of St. Charles College, about fifteen miles from Baltimore, on the Frederick Road See *État de l'Église Catholique*, by Dillet, already quoted.

(15)—p. 241.

At this period (1809) there were only three institutions in the United States—besides that just commenced at Baltimore—which offered to the female sex an asylum from the world for the more assiduous cultivation of Christian perfection:—the Ursuline Convent at New Orleans, the Carmelite Convent in Charles county, Md., and the community of ladies at Georgetown, D. C. Of these, only the first and last-mentioned afforded facilities for the education of young ladies.

The Ursuline Convent at New Orleans was founded in 1727, while Louisiana was a French province, and it gave the benefits of a sound education to almost all who received a liberal course of instruction in that part of the country, until the year 1791, when this employment was shared by emigrants from St. Domingo. The nuns had also charge of a hospital and orphan asylum.

The Carmelite order of the reform of St. Theresa was established in this country, in 1790, by the Reverend Charles Neale, who

brought with him from Europe four nuns, three of whom were Americans and one an English lady. They took possession of their house, near Port Tobacco, Charles county, Md., on the 15th of October. They fast eight months in the year, wear woollen clothing, and sleep on straw beds. They recite the canonical office, and offer up their prayers, fasts, and other good works, for the benefit of souls, and particularly for those who labor in the vineyard of Christ. They never eat meat except in case of necessity, when the physician prescribes the use of it. Owing to a curtailment of their means of support, the Most Rev. Archbishop Whitfield advised them, in 1831, to remove to Baltimore and open a school for the instruction of young persons belonging to their sex. They accordingly transferred their establishment to that city on the 13th of September, the same year. The Rev. Abbé Herard deserves mention as one of the principal benefactors of this excellent community. He did much toward the erection of their present choir and chapel, and left them an annuity of several hundred dollars for the support of a chaplain. There are generally about twenty-five sisters in the house. Their school was discontinued in the beginning of 1852. For further details respecting the origin and progress of the Carmelite Convent, see *United States Catholic Magazine*, vol. viii., 1849, pp. 24-38.

The Visitation Convent at Georgetown owes its origin, in a great measure, to the zeal of the Reverend Leonard Neale, afterward Archbishop of Baltimore. In the year 1797, Miss Alice Lalor associated herself with two other ladies in Philadelphia, under the direction of the Rev. Mr. Neale, to form a pious community. Her two companions having been carried off by the yellow fever, she went, in 1798, to Georgetown, where she boarded for a short time with a community of Poor Clares, who were then established in that place. With the aid of two other ladies, she purchased a small frame building, and opened a school for girls. The provisional rules of the house were those of the Visitation order established by St. Francis of Sales; but it was not until the year 1816 that the sisters were recognised by the Sovereign Pontiff as a community of the Visitation rule. In that year Archbishop Neale obtained for them the privilege of taking the solemn vows of the order.

The ladies of the institution have always conducted a female academy. Several foundations have been made from this very

useful establishment, which had risen to a high degree of prosperity. At Baltimore, St. Louis, Mobile, Wheeling, Frederick, and Washington City, are flourishing academies under the direction of the sisters of the Visitation. Another foundation was recently made at Mt. De Sales, near Catonsville, about five miles from Baltimore, which promises by its admirable situation to attain a high degree of prosperity.

The society of Clarists, mentioned above, continued in Georgetown until the year 1805. The superior died about that time, and the two remaining members returned to Europe. While here, they taught a school as a means of support; but they suffered much from poverty. On one occasion they were so much pressed for want of the necessaries of life that they were obliged to sell a parrot to procure food.

(16)—p. 269.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Cheverus was consecrated Bishop of Boston, on the 1st of November, 1810, by the Most Rev. Archbishop Carroll, in St. Peter's Cathedral, Baltimore. The Sovereign Pontiff Pius VII. had raised Baltimore to the rank of a Metropolitan See on the 8th of April, 1808, creating at the same time four suffragan bishoprics, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Bardstown. The Rev. Luke Concannon, a Dominican, was appointed to the first; Rev. Michael Egan, a Franciscan, to the second; Rev. John Cheverus, a secular priest, to the third; and Rev. Benedict J. Flaget, a Sulpitian, to the fourth. The apostolic letters, however, by which these important arrangements were made for the advancement of religion in the United States, did not arrive until two years after, owing to the difficulties arising from the troubled state of Europe. Dr. Concannon never reached his see, having died at Naples, in July, 1810, on the eve of his departure for America. Bishop Egan was consecrated in St. Peter's Cathedral, on the 28th of October, of that year, by the Most Rev. Dr. Carroll, and on the 4th of November Bishop Flaget was consecrated by the same prelate, in St. Patrick's Church on Fell's Point.* On the latter occasion Bishop Cheverus preached, and paid a well-merited compliment to the venerable metropolitan, and to the society of St.

* That Bishop Flaget was consecrated in St. Patrick's Church appears from the printed documents of that time.

Sulpitius He saluted the former "as the Elias of the new law, the father of the clergy, the conductor of the car of Israel in the New World. *Pater mi, Pater mi, currus Israel et auriga ejus.*" To the latter he applied the eulogy "which fell from the lips of Fénelon on his bed of death, at that moment when a man flatters no more:—'I know nothing more venerable and more apostolical than the order of St. Sulpitius.'"† The American hierarchy now consisted of Archbishop Carroll, his coadjutor the Rt. Rev. Leonard Neale, Bishop of Gortyna *in part*, and the three prelates above mentioned. Before separating, they adopted a series of regulations for the good of religion in their respective districts, among which were the following:—

"When any portion of the Holy Scripture is quoted in prayer-books or other works of piety, the Douay version, and no other, is to be used.

"Priests are admonished of the obligation of recording the baptisms, marriages, and interments, which they perform, in books kept for this purpose.

"According to the spirit and general practice of the Church, the sacrament of baptism should be administered in a church, in those places which have one.

"The perquisite or fee to be offered to clergymen, when they are requested to celebrate a low mass, is fixed at half a dollar.

"All pastors of souls are admonished that they strive, by public and private exhortation, to withdraw their flocks from the love of dangerous amusements, such as the theatre, balls, &c., and that they forbid them to read such books as would expose their faith or morals to perversion, and that they especially prohibit the indiscriminate use of novels.

"All priests in the exercise of the ministry are warned not to administer the sacraments of penance and the holy eucharist to those who are publicly known to be free-masons, unless they promise that they will keep away from the lodges of the society, and will never profess themselves in any way connected with it."

The statistics of Catholicity in the United States, in the year 1810, may be given as follows:—One Metropolitan and four Episcopal Sees; one archbishop and four bishops; about seventy priests, and eighty churches. There existed at the time three theological

† Life of Cardinal Cheverus, p. 85.

seminaries,—viz. : St. Mary's, Baltimore, the novitiate of the Jesuits at Georgetown, and that of the Dominicans at St. Rose's, Kentucky ; three colleges for the education of young men, connected with the establishments just mentioned, and a preparatory seminary at Emmetsburg. There were four houses which offered an asylum to females for the practice of the evangelical counsels, in three of which an academy was conducted for the instruction of young ladies. But this Catholic force was chiefly concentrated in the States bordering on the Atlantic coast. With the exception of six priests in Kentucky, and seven or eight farther west, the clergy were all stationed east of the Alleghanies. Rev. Stephen T. Badin, who had been sent to Kentucky in 1793, had labored indefatigably, and mostly alone, in that part of the country, and prepared the way for the arrival of the new bishop. Mr. Badin was the first priest ever ordained in the United States.*

(17)—p. 295.

CONFIRMATION OF THE RULES.

“I have read, and endeavored before God attentively to consider, the constitutions of the Sisters of Charity, submitted to me by the Reverend Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpitius, and I have approved of the same, believing them to be inspired by the Spirit of God and suitable to conduct the sisters to religious perfection.

“† JOHN, *Archbishop of Baltimore.*

“*Baltimore, January 17, 1812.*”

“After having read the constitutions of the Sisters of Charity with great attention, and approved of every thing contained therein, I have presented them to the Most Rev. Archbishop Carroll for obtaining his approbation, and at the same time I have confirmed and hereby again confirm the nomination of the Rev. John Dubois for their Superior-general. In witness of which I have here set my hand, on the 17th of January, 1812.

JOHN TESSIER.”

(18)—p. 307

The words of St. Felicitas to her children should be deeply engraved upon the memory of every Christian parent. She and her seven sons were arrested for the faith, in the year 150, during the

* See “Sketches of Kentucky,” by the Very Rev. Dr. Spalding.

persecution of Antoninus Pius. The Roman prefect endeavored to prevail upon her to sacrifice to the gods, by appealing to her maternal sympathies. But she nobly answered that to pity her children for undergoing the martyr's death would make her the most cruel of mothers. She then turned to her seven sons, and with heroic courage said to them, "My sons, LOOK UP TO HEAVEN, where Jesus Christ with his saints expects you. Be faithful in his love, and fight courageously for your souls." Thus, as St. Gregory remarks, did she invigorate the hearts of her children, by inculcating the love of Heaven, that she might bring forth spiritually unto God those whom she had carnally given to the world.

The history of the generous mother of the Machabees is equally worthy of admiration. See 2d book of Mach., chapter vii.

(19)—p. 321

A vow is a promise, deliberately made to God, of doing something that is good or more agreeable to him. As a promise, it differs from a mere resolution, and induces an obligation under sin of fulfilling what has been promised. "If thou hast vowed any thing to God, defer not to pay it; for an unfaithful and foolish promise displeaseth him."—Eccl. v. 3.

That vows are agreeable to God is plain from innumerable passages of the Old Testament; and in the New we read of St. Paul that he had a vow—Acts xviii. 18; and the same apostle, speaking of widows who had bound themselves to chastity, says:—"Having damnation, because they made void their first faith:" 1 Tim. v. 12. Vows, when prudently and lawfully made, are beneficial, by fixing the inconstancy of our mind and placing us under the necessity of doing good. They also perfect the offering we make to God; for, by a vow we give him not only the action we perform, but also our liberty in regard to it.

A simple vow is a promise made to God without any solemnity recognised by the Church. A solemn vow implies the tradition and consecration of oneself to the Divine service according to a prescribed form, and in the name of God accepted by the Church. This latter vow is made when a person enters into holy orders, or when he makes a religious profession in an order approved by the Church. The solemnity of a vow, according to the more common opinion of

theologians, is determined by the canon law, which requires for this end the following conditions:—1. That the religious order in which the vow is made be approved by the Church as perfectly regular; 2. That the vow be accepted by the proper superior in the name of the Church; 3. That there be an absolute tradition and acceptance of the entire person, by the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience; 4. That the person making the vows have completed the sixteenth year of his age and one year of his noviceship.—Concil. Trident., sess. 25, ch. 15 de Regul. See Bouvier, *Instit. Theolog.*, vol. iv. p. 285, &c.

He who binds himself by solemn vows cannot validly marry, possess property, &c.; but this inability is not contracted by him who makes a simple vow; he is only obliged, under pain of sin, not to marry, &c.

(20)—p. 330.

One morning during Whitsun-week, Mother Seton, being on her way to the infirmary, where one of the sisters was sick, was met by a pupil who presented her a rose. Finding the invalid in a slumber, and unwilling to disturb her, she placed the flower near her, and then left the room. The sister soon after awoke, and, perceiving the rose, she sat up in her bed and penned the following lines, which she sent to Mother Seton:—

“The morning was beautiful, mild, and serene;
All nature had waked from repose;
Maternal affection came silently in
And placed near my bosom a rose.

“Poor nature was weak, and had almost prevailed
The wearied eyelids to close;
But the soul rose in triumph, and joyfully hailed
The sweet queen of flowers—the rose.

“Whitsuntide was the time, ’twas the season of love;
Methought the Blest Spirit had chose
To leave for a while the sweet form of a dove
And come in the blush of the rose.

“Come, heavenly Spirit, descend on each breast,
And there let thy blessings repose,
As thou once did on Mary, the temple of rest,
For Mary’s our mystical rose.

“Oh, may every rose that springs forth evermore
 Enkindle the hearts of all those
 Who wear it or see it, to bless and adore
 The hand that created the rose!”

(21)—p. 334.

Alluding to those who commenced this benevolent work, the writer in the *Catholic Herald* says:—

“It is impossible, at this distant period, to furnish the names of all the gentlemen who are entitled to the honor of having originated this charity; but it is known that James O. Ellus was then an active participant, and for many years an earnest co-operator, in the undertaking. The orphans whose protection they assumed were for some time boarded with a person with whom an arrangement to that effect had been made; and much difficulty was frequently experienced, from the limited number of contributors, in providing the means requisite for their support.

“In the year 1806, a meeting consisting of not more than six gentlemen was held in the *Little Chapel* of St. Joseph's, with the object of more perfectly organizing the association which had been formed. Among them were John F. Soares, and Joseph Eck, who was subsequently the first secretary of the Board. The writer did not attend that meeting, but was at the next succeeding meeting, and was then enrolled among the *founders* of that institution. On the 18th of December, 1807, an act of incorporation was obtained, and the house on Sixth Street, northerly adjoining Holy Trinity Church, was rented from Adam Primruer, for the use of the institution, where it was continued till recently, when the spacious building at the corner of Seventh and Spruce Streets was erected by the Managers. It appears, from a report written by the Most Rev. Archbishop Hughes in March, 1830, who was then a member of the Board of Managers of this institution, that in the year 1811 the house and lot where the asylum then stood were purchased, and cost, including subsequent improvements, \$6,927.28.”

(22)—p. 347.

These collections of sentences were called “virtue-books,” and were in use among the members of a pious community composed

of some of the pupils. A virtue was selected every day by each one as the object of her particular attention, and in the evening she examined how far she had succeeded or failed in the practice of it. The following is a specimen of those collections

“The spring is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our grove. Arise, my love, and come away! Hasten to the arms of your Jesus, and fear nothing.—Divine Union and Repose.

“Do you love? Have no other will but that of your Beloved. Abandon yourself to him, and cast all your care upon him. He has said it; he will never leave you or forsake you.—Trust and Love.

“‘I have loved you with eternal love,’ says your Beloved, ‘and laid down my life for your sake. Come, then, follow me.’ Answer him, ‘Yes, dear Lord, even unto death.’—Courage and Love.

“Be not grieved and afflicted if your good intentions fail you. Know your kind Master accepts even your desires, and what you would do if you could.—Confidence and Peace.

“Finish the work your Father has given you to do, and remember, after putting your hand to the plough you must not turn back.—Fidelity.

“While you try to do the will of your Beloved, do not forget him in the performance of it. You know he is a jealous lover, and wishes to have your whole heart.—Love of the Divine Presence.

“Do not your Lord’s work negligently, nor yet be over-careful. All he requires is fidelity, and leave the rest to him. Patient labor shall have a great reward.—Patience and Fidelity.

“The light affliction of a moment will obtain for you a weight of eternal glory. Suffer, then, with love, and rejoice to be counted worthy to share with your Beloved.—Love your Cross.

“Do good while you have time, and redeem the past. But give not away your oil, or the Bridegroom may come and find your vessel empty.—Watch continually.

“Arise, and go to your Father. Confess you have sinned against Heaven and before him. A contrite heart is his delight, and the soul which trusts in him shall not be confounded forever.—Repentance and Penance.

“Accept the will of your sweet Lord sincerely in all things, and all your pains shall turn into pleasure. Love will turn your lead to gold, and your thorny crown to unfading roses.—Love, love, love

“Possess your soul in patience. Let not your heart be troubled

The sun will not always be under the cloud. He soon will shine the brighter for having been hid a while.—Courage and Confidence.

“Do not try to get down from the cross, for the cross and your Jesus are inseparable. The way you walk in is covered with thorns, but it leads you direct to his throne.—Courage and Faith.

(23)—p. 368.

As an evidence of the remarkable piety and purity of soul of Miss Rebecca Seton, it is worthy of remark that she and two of her companions had formed an agreement among themselves, that whoever would die first would use her influence with God to obtain for the others the grace of dying happily at an early age rather than live at the risk of their eternal salvation. She was the first summoned from life, and her two pious associates followed her rapidly within a brief period of each other.

(24)—p. 373.

An association was formed in New York, in 1817, under the title of the New York Roman Catholic Benevolent Society, the object of which was to support and educate orphans. It appears that Messrs. Francis Cooper and C. Heeny were the principal movers in this undertaking among the laity. Among the most valued friends of the institution was Madam Lerew, whose husband was a wealthy merchant of New York and a trustee of St. Peter's Church. This lady took a deep interest in the success of the establishment; and, when some difficulty had arisen in regard to the management of its affairs, she stated that she would rather undertake to pay all the expenses of the institution herself than see it fail. With the blessing of God it continued to prosper, until it reached its present degree of prosperity. For upward of twenty years it was under the charge of Sister Elizabeth Boyle, as sister-servant, who had been previously the assistant of Mother Seton in the government of the society. In one of her letters Mother Seton calls her “dearest old partner of my cares and bearer of my burdens.”

(25)—p. 375.

Before Mr. Seton embarked, the Rev. Mr. Bruté, his former protector and constant friend, addressed to him the following advice, in French, which may be read with advantage by all young men:—

“Mt. St. Mary’s, February 15, 1818.

“MY DEAR FRIEND:—

“Love God above all things. Serve him and observe his holy law at the risk of every sacrifice. To obey and please him is the duty of our whole life, under whatever circumstances we may be destined to follow its rapid course to eternity. The Almighty must have taken you under his special care, to preserve you faithful until now amid trials that might have extinguished in your heart the sentiment of his love and fear. He will support you and keep you to himself, becoming your light, your strength, your perseverance. Let your soul be continually uplifted to him; seek him with the love and simplicity of a child; examine in every thing his will, learn it with an upright mind, and embrace it with courage,—yes, with courage, my friend. How much will you be in need of resolution, surrounded by a crowd of persons who are in general so little accustomed to regulate their life by the principles of religion, or even of sound reason!—alas! alas! accustomed rather to despise openly and merrily the strict maxims of religion, even in things the most important! Oh, have courage! Let your prayer be daily help:—short, perhaps, but more fervent than ever, since your wants and dangers will be more pressing than ever. How can you sustain yourself without prayer? How can you calculate upon the assistance of God, if you neglect and forsake him first—him who is your Father, your sovereign Lord? if you abandon him for the sake of men or the things of this life, or cease to please him, in order to please those the more who have forsaken him and who make this the condition of their friendship and esteem? Oh, no, never! Can you not conciliate your duty toward man, and even his favorable regard, with your obligations to God as a Christian and a Catholic? Most assuredly you can, if you resolutely will it; and it is certainly your duty to have this efficacious will whenever circumstances may require it. It is your duty. Should this word, so sacred in the service of men, and which so readily emboldens them even to the sacrifice of life, be less decisive in favor of God? Should it not, on the contrary, be infinitely more so? Undoubtedly; for what comparison between God and man, between time and eternity, between the obligations of the soul and the conventionalities of this world? I have said that you can always conciliate your relations to God with those which you owe to men. Thousands of virtuous persons before you have done it, though engaged in the trying life which

you have embraced. Does not a generous Christian profess in every thing a uniform fidelity to all the duties of his state? and, if they expose to danger, does he not surpass every one else in the magnanimity with which he regards the loss of life? Does he not possess, for living in peace with his friends and equals, all the resources of a sincere charity, of a soul free from pride, solicitous to observe in their regard a uniform deportment, and to show itself always obliging, sociable, cheerful, even, and pleasant, amid the duties of a profession which is so arduous and calls for so much energy? Must not the avoiding of all haughtiness, of all insincerity, of all offensive action and language, make itself remarked in so many ways that it will be impossible not to love, esteem, and respect one who is so anxious in every thing to manifest toward all that respect, love, and indulgence, which are the dictates of a good heart and a truly Christian soul? Excuse this last expression of zeal on the part of a friend who is so ardently desirous of showing you, to the end, the sincerity of his sentiments in your regard. Supply by your own reflections what will not have been sufficiently explained to you. Follow whatever will appear to you the true course which you should pursue in life—that life so much exposed in the profession upon which you have entered! If a fault escape you, return immediately and with humility and love to your God—the God of all consolation,—open your heart at once to Him who can heal your spiritual wound; and, oh, my friend, avail yourself with fervor of every opportunity to become reconciled with Heaven, by approaching the sacraments which in the providence of God you may be able to receive. If you seek this grace with sincerity, you will find that it will be almost always in your power to obtain it. Alas! if it is hard enough to resign oneself when it is not at hand, embrace it when it is offered; and, if it fail, oh remember the obligation, more urgent than ever, of desiring to make your peace with God and of expressing the most sincere and lively regret for the fault you may have committed. Never forget this, especially in the moment of danger. What lamentable folly, to reject the fear of the Lord and the interests of an immortal soul that is about to appear before him! Adieu, adieu! Please to think of a friend who will never forget you, and who begs you to keep this paper in memory of him.

“S. BRUTÉ.”

(26)—p. 376.

In October, 1812, the Rev. Mr. Dubourg left Baltimore for New Orleans, where, as prefect apostolic, he undertook to regulate the affairs of the Church, which were then in a distracted condition in that part of the country. New Orleans had been erected into an Episcopal See in 1793, and a bishop appointed for the government of the diocese, which embraced at that time all the country west of the Mississippi, under the name of the Louisianas. The see having become vacant in 1801, by the translation of the Bishop Don Luis Penalver y Cardenas, a successor was appointed the following year, who, however, died in Rome before coming to this country. In 1804, Louisiana became a territory of the United States; and, some time after, Bishop Carroll was charged with the administration of its spiritual concerns. Mr. Dubourg, on his arrival there, found religion in a deplorable state, owing chiefly to the want of pious and zealous clergymen: and on the restoration of peace, after the battle of New Orleans, he embarked for Europe with a view to increase the resources of the diocese. He had not been long in the Eternal City when he was appointed Bishop of New Orleans, at the instance of Archbishop Carroll. Consecrated in September, 1815, he spent nearly two years on the other side of the Atlantic, collecting funds and enlisting laborers for the American mission. On his return to the United States he was accompanied by a band of clergymen, who were eager to share with him the toils and privations of his arduous ministry. The ceremony of his installation took place on the 4th of January, 1818, at St. Louis, which he had selected as a temporary residence. What were the difficulties he had to contend with, and the courage with which he met them, may be gathered from the following passage in one of his letters:—"As I could not penetrate into the capital of Louisiana without exposing the sacred character with which I was invested, I thought it more prudent to commence the attack at those points of my diocese which were the least ably defended. . . . For this reason the vast territory of Missouri was the first theatre of our labors; and here we had to contend with obstacles of every kind,—profound ignorance of religion and the prejudices arising from it, universal corruption, the disregard of every thing like principle, absolute poverty, not having even whereon to lay my head, and more than fifty persons

depending on me for their support. Retiring into the forest, we there raised with our own hands a spacious cabin to shelter us from the weather, and laid the foundation of another edifice." In 1823, the bishop established his residence at New Orleans, after having introduced in Missouri several flourishing institutions for the training of clergymen and the education of youth of both sexes, and effected a general improvement in the state of things throughout the vast district under his charge. The following year he obtained the assistance of a coadjutor,—the Rt. Rev. Joseph Rosati, who resided at St. Louis, which subsequently became an Episcopal See. Circumstances, however, having combined to render the situation of Bishop Dubourg a source of considerable vexation, he accepted an appointment to the See of Montauban in France, of which he took possession in the autumn of 1826. Subsequently, in 1833, he was transferred to the Archbishopric of Besançon, and the same year, December 12, he terminated his career of eminent usefulness, at the age of sixty-five.

He was succeeded in the presidency of St. Mary's College by the following gentlemen:—

Rev. J. B. F. Paqueit, from Oct. 18, 1812, to Dec. 18, 1815.

Rev. Simon G. Bruté, from Dec. 18, 1815, to June 3, 1818.

Rev. Edward Damphoux, from June 3, 1818, to Aug. 23, 1822.

Rev. Louis R. Deluol, from Aug. 23, 1822, to Sept. 1823.

Rev. E. Damphoux, from Sept. 1823, to Sept. 1827.

Rev. Michael F. Wheeler, from Sept. 1827, to Feb. 11, 1828.

Rev. E. Damphoux, D.D., from Feb. 14, 1828, to Sept. 1829.

Rev. Samuel Eccleston, from Sept. 1829, to Sept. 1834.

Rev. John Joseph Chanche, from Sept. 1834, to March 1, 1841.

Rev. Gilbert Raymond, D.D., from March 1, 1841, to Sept. 1849.

Rev. Oliver L. Jenkins, from Sept. 1849, to Sept. 1852.

Since the last-mentioned date the Collegiate department at St. Mary's has been discontinued.

(27)—p. 379.

In the summer of 1818 the Rev. Mr. Cooper, who on his return from Italy had been ordained priest at Baltimore on the 15th of August, was appointed to the pastoral charge of the congregation at Emmetsburg; but he remained there only nine months. He

afterward exercised the holy ministry in South Carolina. Through love for his Divine Master he undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, after which he returned to his native country, and was employed in different situations in the dioceses of Baltimore and Philadelphia. In 1832 he went to France on account of his health, and settled himself at Bordeaux, attracted thither by the friendship of Cardinal Cheverus, who had a high regard for him and subsequently breathed his last in his arms. By his munificent contributions to religious and charitable objects, Mr. Cooper had reduced himself almost to a state of indigence; still did he contrive from his scanty means to relieve the distressed. His piety was fervent and unaffected, and, with the dignity of his personal appearance and the calm expression of his features, was calculated to produce a salutary effect upon those whom he sought to win to the practice of religion. He was the instrument, in the hands of God, for reclaiming many Catholics from the neglect of duty, among whom were several distinguished merchants and members of the bar at Bordeaux, who before had been supposed to have scarcely any faith in the Christian religion. Nor was he less successful in opening the eyes of those whom the prejudices of birth or education withheld from the communion of the true Church. Among the conversions due to him, under God, may be mentioned that of the American Consul at Bordeaux, who is now a priest and exercising the holy ministry in the diocese of Philadelphia. Mr. Cooper terminated a life of good works by a saintly death, on the 16th of December, 1843.

(28)—p. 381.

Dr. Matignon died on the 19th of September, 1818,—a day of inexpressible grief to Bishop Cheverus, who omitted nothing to testify his affectionate regard for his venerable associate. The obsequies were performed with the greatest solemnity, “The body,” says the biographer of Cardinal Cheverus, “was carried in procession through the streets, amid hymns of wo, and he himself, with his mitre on his head, followed the coffin attended by his congregation. The inhabitants respected the ceremony, however unusual in their eyes, honoring by their silence, and the perfect order they preserved, the grief of M. de Cheverus and the memory of his friend. The ensuing day, all the journals of the city, far from

saying aught against the ceremonial, tendered their thanks to M. de Cheverus for having augured so well of the good spirit of the inhabitants of Boston, and known how to appreciate the sentiments of reverence which they felt for his departed associate."—(p. 111.)

(29)—p. 384.

In 1803, eight priests and seventeen lay-brothers of the Trappist order came to America, and were afterward joined by three other priests and several lay-brothers of the same institute. The year of their arrival they settled at Pigeon Hills, near Hanover, Pa., when, after a sojourn of twelve months, they removed to the State of Kentucky, on Pottinger's Creek. Here they were established until the spring of 1809, observing all the austerities of their rule and edifying the community by their holy life. They also conducted a school for the gratuitous instruction of boys, which was the first Catholic school of any note in Kentucky. But the climate not being favorable to the observance of their rigid rules, five priests and three lay-brothers fell victims to disease. This circumstance, with the desire of Father Urban, the superior, to labor for the welfare of the savage tribes, induced him to move his community still farther west. They accordingly fixed their residence at Florissant, in Missouri, where they remained one year, and then crossed over to the State of Illinois, to locate themselves on a farm which had been presented to them by a Catholic of that country. Here they settled around a cluster of Indian mounds, one of which is called *Monks' Mound* to this day. Though much exposed to danger in this place from the marauding Indians who infested the country, their establishment was never molested. But the climate here was not better adapted than that of Kentucky to the practice of their rule, two priests and five lay-brothers being carried away by sickness.

These particulars respecting the first establishments of the Trappists in the United States we have condensed chiefly from Dr. Spalding's *Sketches of Kentucky*, p. 167, &c., where they are related with many interesting details. But the distinguished author has not mentioned several other places where the Trappists attempted to settle themselves after having retired from Monks' Mound. To supply this omission we will quote here a passage from the biogra-

phical notice of the Rev. Mr. Moranvillé, by B. U. Campbell, Esq., and published in the *U. S. Catholic Magazine*, vol. i. p. 623.

“After some efforts to effect their purpose in the West, which various causes combined to frustrate, they went to St. Mary’s or Charles county, in Maryland. Unaccustomed to the climate, and pursuing their rigorous rule in unwholesome locations, their health failed; and, as it became necessary for them to withdraw from the lower counties, they were induced to come to Baltimore, and Rev. Mr. Moranvillé invited them to remain with him. Father Francis Xavier, a priest of the order, died on the passage thither. Rev. Mr. Moranvillé had the body of the venerable servant of God interred behind the church, at the foot of the Calvary, and immediately received the survivors into his own house, where he entertained them for some time, renting a small house adjoining the churchyard, to furnish additional accommodations; and here the Trappists remained temporarily, until the indefatigable pastor arranged a plan for their more suitable accommodation. The large house and extensive garden opposite St. Patrick’s Church, known as Whitehall, was rented for the Trappists, and they were installed in their new habitation with a view to the permanent establishment of their order. Their devout deportment became a source of edification to the congregation of St. Patrick’s, whose pastor, with his wonted zeal, succeeded in inducing several of the more fervent to unite with these good monks in their pilgrimage along the strait and narrow way that leads to salvation. The Trappists, after remaining in Baltimore about two years, removed to New York in 1814, which city, it was thought, offered a more eligible location and a more extensive field of usefulness. Their plan was to unite the instruction of youth to the ordinary exercises of their order, and they took possession of an establishment previously occupied by the French Consul, about four miles from the city, and issued a prospectus. Their constant friend, Mr. M., was with them in New York, explaining their plan and bespeaking the favorable interest of the public in their behalf. The superior, however, to the surprise and regret of Mr. M., suddenly determined to abandon the contemplated settlement in the United States, and arrangements were commenced to return to Europe; leaving to the election of the Americans who had joined the order, but were not bound by vow, either to accompany the elder members in their return or to withdraw from the order. Two

of the more youthful members of St. Patrick's congregation determined to go to Europe, and the others, being persons advanced in years, who were ignorant of the French language, were induced to leave the order. The good pastor, who had continued near the children of his flock, to encourage and counsel them in all their difficulties, remained with them to the end, and, when the final arrangement was completed in New York, conducted his novices back to Baltimore, and, all of the females having determined to solicit admission among the Sisters of Charity, he accompanied them to Emmetsburg, made known their wishes, and saw them favorably received into the House of St. Joseph's."

The order of La Trappe is a reform of the Cistercian monks, founded originally by St. Stephen and St. Bernard in the twelfth century, and following a very austere rule. In the course of time, the Cistercian monks having degenerated from their primitive fervor, several attempts were made to revive among them the true spirit of their institute, but chiefly by the Abbé de Rancé, in the sixteenth century. This clergyman was of an ancient and wealthy family, and was unfortunately misled into the dissipation of the world; but, touched by the grace of God, he determined to renounce its vanities and to devote himself to a penitential life. With this view he retired to the abbey of La Trappe, which he held *in commendam*,—that is, for his support,—and made his profession there as a Cistercian monk, in 1664. Contemplating with grief the sad decline of the order, and possessing all the qualities which would enable him to execute the work of reform, he resolved to undertake it, and by his exhortations and example he succeeded in inducing his brethren of La Trappe to practise faithfully the rigid discipline of their institute. Those who embraced the reform of De Rancé were thence called Trappists, to distinguish them from other houses of the Cistercian order that did not adopt the strict observance. Several other Trappist establishments were founded in France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, and exhibited the brightest examples of virtue. Some of them still flourish, displaying that heroic self-denial and austerity of penance by which the monastic life was distinguished in its most fervent days. See *Sketches of Kentucky*, by the Very Rev. Dr. Spalding, p. 162, &c.

The Trappists have now two establishments in the United States—**one near Dubuque, Iowa, and the other near New Heaven, Nelson**

county, Ky. The latter is an abbey, properly so called, having its abbot with the title of Rt. Reverend, who was consecrated by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Spalding in 1851. For further particulars see *Metropolitan Catholic Almanac*, 1852, pp. 112, 148, and preceding numbers of the same work.

(30)—p. 390.

The following is the hymn alluded to in the text:—

- “Jerusalem, my happy home,
 How do I sigh for thee!
 When shall my exile have an end,
 Thy joys when shall I see?
 Jerusalem, &c.
- “No sun or moon, in borrowed light,
 Revolves thine hour away;
 The Lamb on Calvary’s mountain slain
 Is thy eternal day.
 Jerusalem, &c.
- “From every eye he wipes the tear
 All sighs and sorrows cease;
 No more alternate hope and fear,
 But everlasting peace.
 Jerusalem, &c.
- “The thought of thee to us is given,
 Our sorrows to beguile,
 T’ anticipate the bliss of Heaven
 In his eternal smile.
 Jerusalem, &c.”

As an instance of Mrs. Seton’s originality of thought and power of illustration, we will furnish here the introduction to a letter which she wrote to Rev. Mr. Bruté, when on his way to Europe in 1815, and before she had heard of his arrival in that country:—

“Whitsun Eve, at the foot of St. Mary’s Mountain, from whence the thousand streams of remembrances coming down with the silent heavenly dews, which ‘to the whole world give excess of joy,’

says our divine preface. The God of our heart sees what passes in mine on such a festival of desires, remembrances, and realities, with its unutterable cries to the *lux beatissima* which is to pervade so intimately every faithful heart. You understand fully. The hope that you will be at his altar and there receive the olive of peace from the mystic Dove, or, if yet shut up in your ark, the abundance he will pour,—either overflows the soul of the poor American mother with torrents of desires for you in this season of graces. Your share will be without measure, if the poor sinner is heard.”

The subjoined extract from a letter to a clergyman in Baltimore, refers to the scene at St. Joseph's sisterhood early on the morning of Christmas, 1811, and is a beautiful expression of her lively faith:—

“Between the adoration of midnight and the mass of four o'clock. What moments, our father! Our happy retreat ended, the flame of love ascending, every innocent heart beating—they who had communed before preparing and desiring as if for the first time, and the meltings of love going from mother to children and from children to mother! At half-past eleven she called them from their short slumber, or rather found most of them watching for her. Come!—gratitude and love resounded in a moment through all the dormitories, from young and old; even dear Annina, lying in her cold sweat and fever, joined the loud chorus. The altar dressed by our truly angelic sacristans Vero and Betsy, adorned with the purest taste, and blazing with lights made by their virgin hands—oh, my father, words have but little meaning. Our Venite, Glorias, Te Deum, and Ave—you can understand. All we wanted was *Vere dignum et justum est* we were so often delighted with in former days.* Peace to memory! Let all be hushed as the darling Babe when he first laid his dear mouth to the sweet breast of his mother;—but the *vere dignum* will sound in my ear, my heart will follow it. Well, I stop, adore, and listen.”

(81)—p. 390.

With the exception of some letters, a few instructions, meditations, and scraps of poetry and prose, Mother Seton has left us

* Mr. Babade, to whom this note was addressed, had a voice admirably adapted to the ecclesiastical chant, high, melodious, and commanding, and he knew how to make use of it.

original compositions. Her translations are the following, all from French works —

1. Life of St. Vincent of Paul, in 4to.
2. Life of Mademoiselle Le Gras.
3. The Antiphons of Advent, by Avrillon.
4. St. Ambrose's Treatise on Virginity.
5. Interior Peace, by Lombez.
6. Various passages from the works of Berthier
7. Portions of St. Theresa's works.
8. Parts of Dupont's Meditations.
9. Commencement of the Life of St. Ignatius.
10. Letters.
11. Passages from Père Judde.
12. A portion of the Conferences of St. Vincent of Paul.
13. A portion of the Conferences of St. Francis of Sales

(32)—p. 396.

Archbishop Neale having closed his career at Georgetown, in the District of Columbia, on the 17th of June, 1817, the Rev. Ambrose Maréchal, of the Society of St. Sulpitius, and Professor of Theology in St. Mary's Seminary at Baltimore, was appointed by the Holy See to succeed him. He was consecrated on the 14th of December of the same year, by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Cheverus, Bishop of Boston.

For a notice of Archbishop Neale, see *United States Catholic Magazine*, vol. iii., 1844, p. 505; for an account of Archbishop Maréchal, see the same work, vol. iv., 1845, p. 32.

(33)—p. 420.

It may not be uninteresting to the reader to know the estimate which the Rt. Rev. Dr. Bruté had formed of Mother Seton's merit and virtue. The penetrating mind, solid judgment, and holiness of life, for which he himself was distinguished, with the favorable opportunities which he possessed of ascertaining her true character, must also entitle his opinion on this subject to high regard. He was acquainted with her for ten years before her death, and during most of that period he saw her nearly every day; the remainder of the time he maintained an uninterrupted correspondence with

her by letters. During the last two years and a half of her life he was the confessor of herself and her community. Among his papers we find the following notice of Mother Seton:—

“In the first place, I will say, as the result of my long and intimate acquaintance with her, that I believe her to have been one of those truly chosen souls (*ames d'élite*) who, if placed in circumstances similar to those of St. Theresa or St. Frances de Chantal, would be equally remarkable in the scale of sanctity. For it seems to me impossible that there could be a greater elevation, purity, and love for God, for heaven and for supernatural and eternal things, than were to be found in her. But we must leave to the Almighty his adorable designs and the proper estimate of the degree of approximation of her heart to his. Though we see in her more faults or apparent weakness, and less of the extraordinary, than are witnessed in the lives of great saints, yet who but the Lord himself can judge to what extent the difference of circumstances should be considered for the determination of her comparative merit?

“‘Dear Mother’, I would sometimes say, after having conversed with her about eternity, &c., ‘I will live fifty years yet, and you twenty-five, at least. She would shrug her shoulders at this imagination, always contending that she would die soon. Once I drew a little picture, representing two aged persons leaning on their staff, near a cluster of graves, one saying to the other, ‘Do you remember twenty-five years ago?’ Our Lord has ordered things differently. In fact, neither she nor I wished to have a single desire on that point,—neither the desire to live, or to live in the same place. On the contrary, she told me that her joy before God would be to see me in China, in regard to which I had sometimes expressed to her my feeble thoughts, which would have pleased her more had they been more generous and more faithful. At other times, she rather reproached me for entertaining such foreign thoughts, instead of yielding myself with a good will to the providence of God, in those places and occupations to which he called me at the time.

“Nothing could be more grand or more vast than her views of things. Nothing could exceed her readiness for sacrifice; and she could not comprehend how one, especially a clergyman, could consider any thing as a sacrifice in the service of God. Her views, however, were not exaggerated, but characterized by a true wisdom,

and extremely averse to all vain speculation or building castles in the air. Oh the noble and right mind! Soul ardent and humble at the same time! Oh, how deeply impressed was she with the only greatness of God, and the real nothingness of the pretended greatness of his servants, beholding, adoring, and praising in their works the will of God alone! 'He is all! God is all!' she would say continually; or a motion of the shoulders, the eyebrows, or lips, without uttering a word, would express the feelings of her soul, when she heard any one speak with rapture of the saints, without looking chiefly to God, the *Dieu Seul* as explained by Mr. Boudon."

(84)—p. 423.

A few weeks before her death, Mr. Bruté placed in her hands a scrap of paper, with the following sentiments written on it:—

"My good Mother, your poor physician of the soul does not see you much, as he does not wish to fatigue you. He has no cause to fear, knowing that the heavenly Physician, the Beloved, the Spouse, the only desire of your heart, is continually present: present in the love, confidence, *abandon*, which he inspires—*abandon* the most tender and most unreserved. Present in the continual acts of penance, humility, dependence, and resignation to suffer every thing in union with Him, with his cross. Present in the peace, the tranquil joy, which he imparts; in the total disengagement which he teaches; in the grace of every moment, pain or comfort, which he dispenses. 'For all flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof,' O Mother, O Josephine, 'as the flower of the grass;' but 'the word of our God,' his grace, his love, 'liveth and remaineth forever' Oh joy, oh sweet abandon to him!"

Mr. Bruté remarks that those words of the Lord to Edom in the forty-ninth chapter of Jeremiah, verse eleven, "Leave thy fatherless children: I will make them alive: and thy widows shall hope in me," were admirably illustrated in the sentiments of Mother Seton, abandoning her children, her community, all, to the good providence of God. "How beautifully," he says, "does this passage express her magnanimous faith on her deathbed! My Lord, I have seen it, felt it: express it I cannot, and I suffer immensely in not being able to do so; for it would be a source of so much edification if it could be communicated such as I FELT it."

(35)—p. 425.

The character of Mother Seton's faith and piety, toward the close of life, reminds us of what is related of the illustrious St. Theresa. Her biographer informs us that, just before receiving the holy Viaticum, she said to her religious, "My daughters and ladies, pardon the bad example which I have given you. Do not imitate her who has been the greatest sinner in the world, and who has been the most neglectful of her rules and constitutions. I entreat you, my daughters, for the love of God, to observe them with great perfection, and to obey your superiors." These words were uttered with so much feeling and tenderness that all present melted into tears. When the priest of God entered her cell, to administer the Blessed Sacrament, her countenance became quite animated, and, her eyes fixed on the sacred host, she exclaimed, "O my Lord, the wished-for moment has at length arrived; it is time to see each other. My Lord, it is time to go! Let me set out on a fortunate day, and thy will be accomplished. The hour is now come for quitting this exile, when my soul will enjoy with thee what it has so much desired." After having received the last sacraments, she repeated very often, "At length, O Lord! I am a child of the Church!" and she found in this reflection a source of indescribable consolation.—*Vie de Ste. Therese*, by Collombet, 12mo, p. 279.

(36)—p. 432.

The Rt. Rev. John Conolly, second Bishop of New York, died in that city on the 6th of February, 1825. When the See became vacant in 1810, the Sovereign Pontiff was an exile from Rome and held in captivity by the ambitious Napoleon. In consequence of this state of things, the diocese of New York remained without a Bishop until the Holy Father returned to his dominions in 1814. Dr. Conolly, who then resided at Rome, was appointed to that See. He was a native of Ireland and a member of the Dominican order. His labors for the good of religion were incessant, and were marked by great prudence and piety.

A few years after the appointment of Dr. Conolly to the See of New York, that of Philadelphia, which had been vacant since

the death of Bishop Egan in 1814, was filled by the accession of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Conwell, who took possession of it in 1820. The same year, Charleston and Richmond were erected into Episcopal Sees, and the illustrious Dr. England named to the former; the incumbent of the latter was Bishop Kelly, who remained but a short time in this country. In 1821 the diocess of Cincinnati was formed from that of Bardstown, and the Rt. Rev. Dr. Fenwick, a Dominican, appointed to the charge. Thus, at the period of Mr. Dubois's accession to the See of New York, there was one Metropolitan and eight Episcopal Sees and one Vicariate in the United States; one Archbishop and nine Bishops, one of the latter being the coadjutor of Bardstown, another the coadjutor of New Orleans, and a third Vicar Apostolic of Florida.

(87)—p. 488.

Before Mr. Dubois retired from the institution at Mt. St. Mary's, all connection between it and the society of St. Sulpice, except in the way of Christian feeling and intercourse, had ceased. Messrs. Dubois and Bruté left the Sulpitians in 1824. Mr. Dubois's successor in the presidency of Mt. St. Mary's Seminary, was the Rev. Michael Dubourgo Egan, an eleve of the institution, and a clergyman of sound judgment, tender piety and great gentleness of manners. He was followed in the same office by the Rev. John B. Purcell, the present Archbishop of Cincinnati, under whose administration the college was chartered in 1830. Subsequently, the Rev. Francis B. Jamison and Rev. Thomas R. Butler presided over the institution. The actual President is the Rev. John McCaffrey, D.D., under whose wise direction the seminary has enjoyed a uniform prosperity. The church on the mountain has been enlarged, a chapel annexed to the college, and an additional building put up for the convenience of the students, ninety-five feet long, sixty feet wide and four stories high. Another structure of vast dimensions is now in progress for increasing the accommodations of the establishment. Since 1851, only Catholic boys, or such as may be instructed in the Catholic religion, are admitted into the college. The number of pupils for several years past has amounted to one hundred and thirty.

(88)—p. 486.

Resolutions passed by the Board of Guardians of the Almshouse at Philadelphia :

“Philadelphia, May 20, 1833.

“At a meeting of the Board of Guardians, the following preamble and resolutions were adopted :

“Whereas a written communication has been received by this Board from the Rev. John Hickey, Superior of the Sisters of Charity, intimating, for reasons therein stated, that it is his intention to recall the sisters now in the Almshouse, as soon as this Board shall have had time to supply their places; and whereas it is proper that some testimony should be borne to the zeal, fidelity and disinterestedness which these amiable philanthropists have exhibited; therefore

“*Resolved*, That this body entertain a deep, lasting and grateful sense of the generous devotedness, the serene and Christian kindness, and the pure and unworldly benevolence which have prompted and sustained the Sisters of Charity attached to this institution, during the trying period of pestilence and death, and afterwards in the midst of constant suffering and disease.

“*Resolved*, That the invaluable services of these amiable women have been productive of lasting benefit to this institution, in the admirable and energetic measures which they have introduced for the relief and comfort of the sick and afflicted, and entitle them to the warmest thanks and gratitude of the whole community, which has been benefited by their labors.

“*Resolved*, That this body, in parting from the Sisters of Charity, regret that the rules and habits of the order to which the sisters belong, do not admit the acceptance of any reward, as it would give them pleasure to bestow such a testimonial as might serve partially to express the grateful feelings which they entertain.

“*Resolved*, That in permanent testimony of our feeling in this regard, the above resolutions be recorded in the minutes of this Board.”—*Niles' Register*, June 1, 1833.

Resolutions adopted by the City Council of Baltimore, in January, 1833.

“Whereas it becomes a grateful community at all times to mark and approve examples of public devotion and virtue, more

particularly when, in seasons of general distress and affliction, the dispensations of a mysterious wisdom are only to be met with a becoming patience, piety, and courage—

“And, whereas in a recent afflicting dispensation, through which an all-wise Providence may have designed to humble and purify the hearts of his people, when pestilence and death were at our family altars, the Sisters of Charity were conspicuous in the labor of love, as strangers flying to our succor in distress, and encountering death as the price of their self-devotion—

“And, whereas Sisters Mary Frances (Boarman) and Mary George (Smith), members of the said sisterhood, while attending the sick in the cholera hospitals in this city, during the prevalence of the late epidemic, fell a sacrifice to, and died in the exercise of these, the noblest principles of social virtue; be it

“Resolved by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, That as a memorial of the gratitude of the city, a monument be erected to the memory of the said deceased sisters, as a record of and a just tribute to their exemplary piety, humanity, and self-devotion.”—*Baltimore Gazette*, January 26th, 1833.

This monument stands in the Cathedral Cemetery.

(39)—p. 436.

Since the resignation of the Very Rev. Mr. Nagot, first superior of the seminary, in 1810, the Very Rev. John Tessier had presided over the institution. The Very Rev. Mr. Deluol held the office until the autumn of 1849, when he was succeeded by the Very Rev. Francis Lhomme, the actual superior of the seminary. The average number of students in the institution is twenty.

When Mr. Hickey assumed the spiritual direction of the sisterhood in 1830, Mr. Bruté was relieved from that portion of his arduous duty. A few years after, in 1834, he was consecrated the first Bishop of Vincennes, and entered upon a new field of labor. His situation at the commencement of his administration, and the success that attended his exertions for the good of religion, are thus described by the Rev. Dr. McCaffrey:

“At Vincennes he found himself in the most trying circumstances. He was a stranger, poor and alone. He saw around

him little more than the wreck of the Catholic faith and discipline of the original settlers. Looking abroad, he beheld indeed an immense field for labor; but the ground was almost unbroken. Everything was to be commenced, and all was to be effected by himself. Destitute as he was of every human means of success, he applied with courage to his allotted task, and while he freely exposed himself to 'the heat and burthen of the day,' he prayed with fervor and confidence to the 'Lord of the harvest, that He would send laborers into his harvest.' In less than eight months he had travelled more than a thousand miles on horseback, over roads almost impracticable; had visited every part of his extensive diocese, and was as familiar with the minutest circumstances regarding its missions and those of the West in general, as if the whole of his valuable life had been devoted to them exclusively. He then proceeded to Europe to procure the succors which he needed. More than twenty missionaries accompanied him on his return, and he obtained from the charity of our Catholic brethren in the old world, considerable resources for establishing schools, building churches, founding an asylum for destitute orphans, and celebrating the holy mysteries with becoming dignity. . . . There was no station in his diocese which he did not visit repeatedly. At home he was at once the Bishop, the pastor of the congregation, the Professor of Theology, the father of his family (for so he always designated his ecclesiastics), the benefactor of the poor, and the affectionate friend of all. In a short time he had opened a college, established at his own expense a free school, and founded another for girls together with an orphan asylum, under the superintendence of the Sisters of Charity. In order to carry on these various schemes of beneficence, and actuated by a spirit of humility and self-denial, he submitted to many privations which his declining health could ill sustain. The Bishop, clergy, seminarians and scholars of the college occupied the same house, took their meals in the same refectory, and in every respect constituted but one family. He reserved no privileges to himself; he would have no advantages or comforts which he could not share with all. His labors were so multifarious and burthensome, that they would scarcely be credible to those who did not know his wonderful activity of mind and powers of endurance. In addition to the

occupations I have already mentioned, he taught theology in his seminary, gave lessons in French in one of his academies, furnished a large amount of historical and antiquarian information to the literary societies of Vincennes, wrote twice a month to every priest in his diocese, and maintained an extensive correspondence with almost every part of Europe and America. It is but a short time since he took possession of his Episcopal See. He found a single priest and but two or three churches in his diocese. He has left twenty-three missionaries in it, and in every town almost, besides many stations in country places, a temple has risen or is rising up to the honor of the living God." *

This man of God, whose motto was to "spend and be spent himself" for the salvation of souls, terminated his valuable life (too short, alas!) on the 28th of June, 1839, aged sixty years.

(40)—p. 438.

The following is the inscription on the church.

Omnipotent. Deo.
 Sacrum.
 Puellæ. Charitatis.
 In honorem.
 Josephi. Sanctæ. Genitricis. Sponsi.
 Ædem. a. solo. suâ. impensâ. factam.
 Et. collatitiâ. cultorum. stipe. erectam.
 Libentes. merito.
 Dedicarunt.
 XIV. Kalendas. Aprilis.
 Anno. M. D. CCC. XXXIX.

The word *dedicarunt* in this inscription, must have been intended to signify the offering made to God of the building, at the time of laying the corner-stone; for the above-mentioned date is that of blessing the first stone, not that of the consecration of the church. The expression of this latter date would be, II Nonas Maii, Anno M D. CCC. XLI.

* Discourse on the Rt. Rev. Simon Gabriel Bruté, by the Rev. John McCaffrey, D. D., delivered at Mt. St. Mary's Church. The reader is referred to this oration as an eloquent and impressive sketch of the character and labors of that distinguished man.

(41)—p. 439.

The bell which hangs in the steeple of St. Joseph's Church, is one of the many articles of this description which were brought to this country from Spain during the ascendancy of Espartero, when human progress found another illustration, so common with our political radicals, in the spoliation of the Church and her holy institutions. Several of these bells were for sale in Baltimore, and in the selection of one of them for the sisterhood at Emmettsburg, a singular coincidence presented itself which deserves to be recorded. In order to judge of the tones of the different bells, the Rev. Thomas R. Butler, agent of the institution, stationed himself at some distance from the place where they were suspended. They were now rung one after the other, and were distinguished by the numerical order in which they were sounded. Mr. Butler having chosen one that appeared to him adapted to the purpose, found upon examination of the inscription which it bore, that it had been cast in the year 1809, the very period at which the sisterhood was established at Emmettsburg; also, that it had been dedicated in honor of St. Joseph, who was the chief patron of the institution and chapel in the Valley! Thus, at the very time that St. Joseph's community was commencing there, a bell was prepared for it in a far distant land, with an appropriate inscription, and destined to be brought hither, after thirty-two years, upon the completion of the sacred edifice that was to receive it. But St. Peter tells us, "that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."—2 Peter, iii. 8.

(42)—p. 445.

As we have already stated, the Rev. Mr. David accompanied Bishop Flaget to Kentucky in 1811, and among the happy results of his labors in the West for the good of religion, was the institution of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth. In 1812 the ecclesiastical seminary of St. Thomas was commenced and placed under his direction. The duties of these two institutions did not prevent him from giving all due attention to the wants of the congregation at Bardstown, which was also under his charge. He still continued these various services after his elevation to the episcopacy in 1819, when he was consecrated Bishop of

Mauricastro *in partibus* and coadjutor of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Flaget. He presided over the Society of Nazareth with wisdom and success, for the space of twenty years. But the infirmities which he suffered, obliged him at an advanced age to retire in a great measure from these various labors. In his retirement he translated some pious works, and spent much of his time in prayer, meditation, and preparation for death. Thus did he render his days full in the sight of God, and dispose himself for the summons that called him from life. His death took place on the 12th of June, 1841.

For a more particular account of Bishop David, see *Sketches of Kentucky*, by Dr. Spalding.

(48)—p. 455.

A short time after Mother Ann Simeon had pronounced her holy vows, she once, in the fulness of her heart, gave expression to her feelings, and penned the subjoined touching stanzas :

TO JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

O Jesus, my Saviour, my heart's only treasure,
 Thy beauty has won me, I long to be thine;
 No longer can aught to this bosom give pleasure
 But to say with the spouse, My Beloved is mine.

With thy favorite, John, to repose on thy bosom,
 Forgetful of all save thy presence so dear;
 To know dearest Jesus, that thou art my portion,
 And thus in the bliss of thy spouses to share.

And oh! what a pledge of thy love thou hast given,
 Thyself on our altars by night and by day;
 'Tis here that we find a sure foretaste of heaven,
 A glimpse of that glory which ne'er will decay.

For when, dearest Jesus, before thee I'm kneeling,
 Thy angels are 'round, thy Spirit descends,
 And my soul, quite absorbed, seems to lose every feeling
 But that of thy presence. while lowly she bends.

(44)—p. 456.

William H. Stokes, M. D., in his thirty-fifth annual report of Mt. Hope Retreat, says:

“The location of Mt. Hope Retreat is itself exceedingly favorable to health. It is situated on a broad extended plateau, near six hundred feet above tide, and its surrounding grounds afford rare facilities for drainage. Then again, in all the hospital arrangements, the strictest regard is paid to hygienic considerations, such as good ventilation, plenty of light, an abundant supply of good water, and special attention to proper temperature throughout the building;—and as contributing, in no small measure, to the favorable results flowing from the strict observance of these sanitary measures, the thorough cleanliness maintained in every part, the comfortable beds conducing to sound, regular sleep, and a generous supply of food, exert an influence which we will find it difficult to estimate. At the close of the last year, there were in the Retreat three hundred and one patients— one hundred and thirty-four males, and one hundred and sixty-seven females. During the year 1877, one hundred and two have been admitted, or thirty-seven males and sixty-five females, making a total number of four hundred and three under treatment—one hundred and seventy-one males and two hundred and thirty-two females.”

(45)—p. 459.

GENERAL STATISTICS

Of the Sisters of Charity of the Province of the United States for the Year 1878.

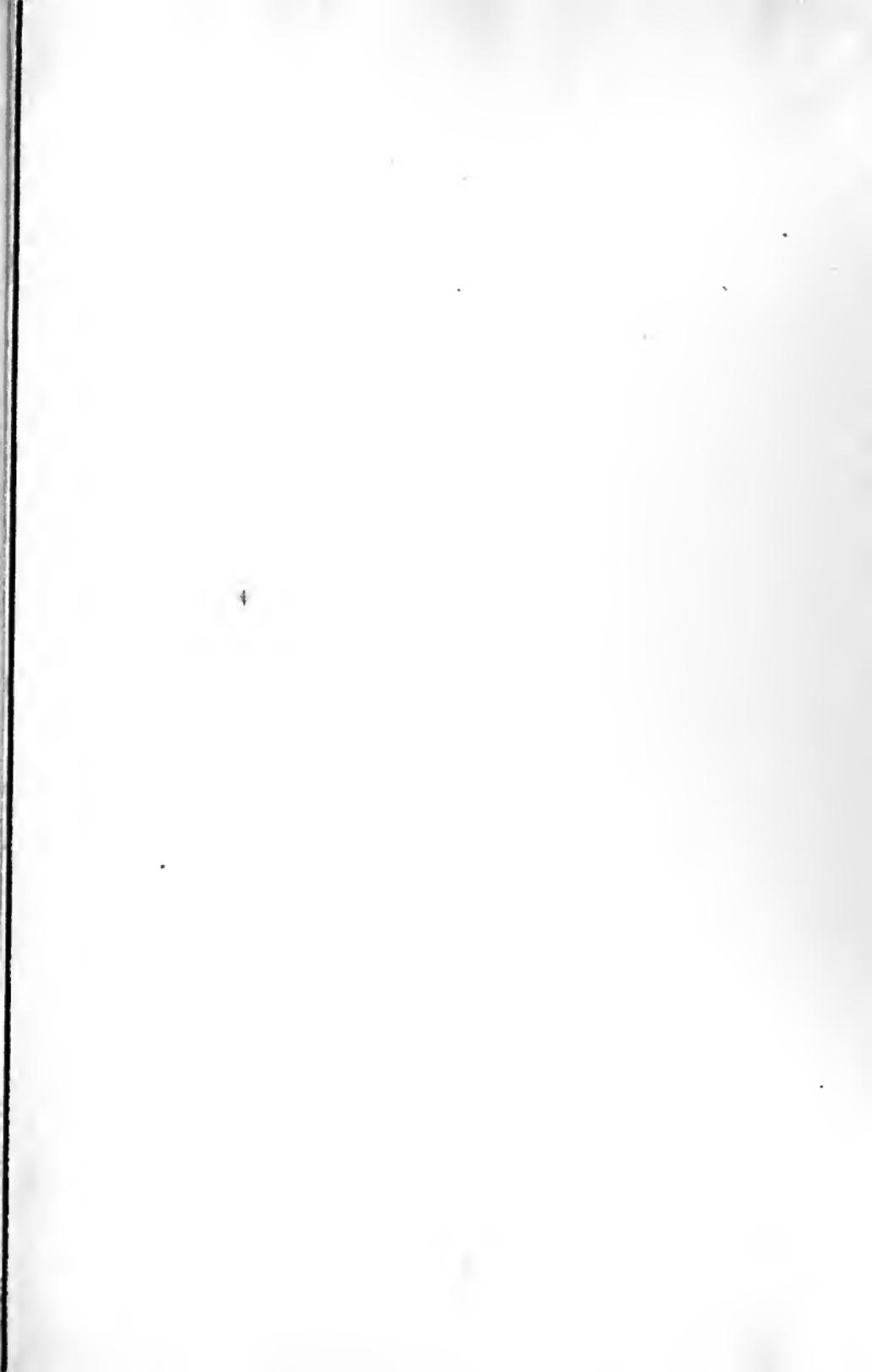
Name of Place.	Name of Establishment.	Sisters.	Orphans.	Infants.	Widows.	Patients.	Insane.	School Children.	Poor visited and assisted.
Albany, N. Y.....	St. Vincent's Asylum..	9	209						
Albany, N. Y.....	St. Joseph's School.....	9						120	
Albany, N. Y.....	St. John's School.....	5						152	
Albany, N. Y.....	St. Mary's School.....	7							
Alton, Ill.....	St. Joseph's Hospital....	3				99			
Baltimore, Md.....	St. Vincent's Hospital..	16				263			
Baltimore, Md.....	Mount Hope Retreat....	56					403		
Baltimore, Md.....	St. Agnes' Hospital.....	12				224			
Baltimore, Md.....	St. Mary's Asylum.....	11	139						
Baltimore, Md.....	St. Joseph's School.....	6						175	
Baltimore, Md.....	St. John's School.....	12						325	
Baltimore, Md.....	St. Vincent's School....	11						300	
Baltimore, Md.....	School Im. Conception..	8						240	
Baltimore, Md.....	St. Vincent's Inf. Asy..	9		262		52			
Baltimore, Md.....	St. Joseph's H. of Ind'y	9	47					51	
Boston, Mass.....	St. Vincent's Asylum..	12	170						
Boston, Mass.....	Carney Hospital.....	14				525			156
Boston, Mass.....	Home for Dest. Child'n	10							
Buffalo, N. Y.....	St. Vincent's Asylum..	11	130						
Buffalo, N. Y.....	Hosp. of Sis. of Charity	13				1179			
Buffalo, N. Y.....	Infant Asylum.....	8		207	5	122			
Buffalo, N. Y.....	Providence Lunatic As.	9					174		
Boulogny, La.....	St. Vincent's School....	4							
Chicago, Ill.....	St. Columba's School....	8						451	
Chicago, Ill.....	St. Patrick's School....	10						360	
Chicago, Ill.....	St. Joseph's Hospital....	9				290			
Carrollton, La.....	Half-Orphan Asylum..	7	30					70	
Dedham, Mass.....	St. Mary's School.....	4						84	
Dorchester, Mass..	St. Mary's Infant Asy..	5		240		37			
Detroit, Mich.....	St. Vincent's Asylum..	8	128						
Detroit, Mich.....	St. Mary's Hospital....	8				500			
Detroit, Mich.....	Michigan State Retreat	11					96		
Detroit, Mich.....	House of Providence...	6		101		65			
Donaldsonville, La.	St. Vincent's House....	9							
Emmitsburg, Md.	St. Joseph's Academy*	194							1000
Emmitsburg, Md.	St. Euphemia's Day-Sc.	4						140	
Emmitsburg, Md.	Day-School on the Academy premises (for children of the mountain parish)....	2						40	
Evansville, Ind.....	St. Mary's Hospital.....	5				360			
E. Saginaw, Mich..	St. Mary's Hospital.....	4				107			
E. Saginaw, Mich..	St. Vincent's Or. Home	3	27						
Keokuk, Ia.....	St. Vincent's School....	7						123	
La Salle, Ill.....	St. Vincent's School....	4	4					150	
Lowell, Mass.....	St. Peter's House.....	6						110	
Lowell, Mass.....	St. John's Hospital....	8				256			
Los Angeles, Cal...	Charitable Institution	15	31					202	
Los Angeles, Cal...	Los Angeles Infirmary	8				501			
Milwaukee, Wis....	St. Rose's Asylum.....	8	100					300	130
Milwaukee, Wis....	St. Joseph's Asylum....	8	25						
Milwaukee, Wis....	St. Mary's Hospital....	6				382			
Milwaukee, Wis....	St. Vincent's Inf. Asy..	3	40						

* Connected with this Academy there are also 101 boarders.

GENERAL STATISTICS—(Continued.)

Name of Place.	Name of Establishment.	Sisters.	Orphans.	Infants.	Widows.	Patients.	Insane.	School Children.	Floor visited and visited.
Mobile, Ala.....	St. Mary's Asylum.....	10	12					109	
Mobile, Ala.....	Providence Infirmary..	5				91			
Mobile, Ala.....	City Hospital.....	9				686			
Mobile, Ala.....	St. Vincent's School....	5						100	
Natchez, Miss.....	St. Mary's Asylum.....	11	71						
Natchez, Miss.....	St. Joseph's School.....	6						89	
New Orleans, La....	Charity Hospital.....	26				6748			
New Orleans, La....	St. Joseph's School.....	7						237	
New Orleans, La....	Hotel Dieu.....	10				679			
New Orleans, La....	N. Orleans F. Orp. Asy.	13	131						
New Orleans, La....	St. Vincent's Inf. Asy..	12		269		2			
New Orleans, La....	St. Simeon's School....	15						177	
New Orleans, La....	St. Eliz. H. of Indus'y.	18	157					106	
New Orleans, La....	Louisiana Retreat.....	11							
Norfolk, Va.....	Hosp. of St. V. of Paul	13				613			
Norfolk, Va.....	St. Mary's Asylum.....	6	32					116	
Philadelphia, Pa....	St. Joseph's Hospital..	13				588			760
Philadelphia, Pa....	St. Joseph's Asylum..	8	234						
Philadelphia, Pa....	St. Vincent's Home.....	9		166					
Petaluma, Cal.....	St. Vincent's School....	6						175	
Petersburg, Va.....	St. Joseph's School....	6						114	
Portsmouth, Va....	St. Joseph's School....	5						200	
Richmond, Va.....	St. Joseph's Orp. Asy..	13	53					227	
Richmond, Va.....	St. Patrick's School....	6						150	50
Rochester, N. Y....	St. Mary's Hospital....	15				602			
Reading, Pa.....	St. Catharine's Asy....	4	40						
San Francisco, Cal.	R. Catholic Orph. Asy.	18	290						
San Francisco, Cal.	Mount St. Joseph's....	11	220	61	9	10			
San Francisco, Cal.	St. Vincent's School...	14						422	
Santa Barbara, Cal.	St. Vincent's Institut'n	10	60					150	
Santa Cruz, Cal....	Sch. of the Holy Cross.	9	16					80	
St. Louis, Mo.....	St. Mary's Asylum.....	10	154						
St. Louis, Mo.....	St. Ann's Asylum.....	13		306	111	25			
St. Louis, Mo.....	St. Philomena's School	13	84					299	
St. Louis, Mo.....	St. Vincent's School....	12						150	
St. Louis, Mo.....	H. of the Guard. Angel	8	58						
St. Louis, Mo.....	St. Louis' Hospital....	20				869			
St. Louis, Mo.....	St. Vincent's Institut'n	19					288		
St. Joseph, Mo.....	St. Joseph's School....	4						71	
Staunton, Va.....	St. Francis' School....	4						120	
Syracuse, N. Y....	St. Vincent's Asylum..	11	141					140	
Syracuse, N. Y....	St. Joseph's House of Providence.....	8	140			30			
Troy, N. Y.....	St. Vincent's Asylum..	8	186						
Troy, N. Y.....	St. Vincent's Asy. Sch.	6						250	
Troy, N. Y.....	Troy Hospital.....	11				426			435
Utica, N. Y.....	St. John's Asylum....	12	124					135	
Virginia City, Nev.	St. Mary's School.....	11	91					250	
Virginia City, Nev.	St. Mary Louise's Hosp	6				194			
Washington, D. C..	School Im. Conception	6						230	
Washington, D. C..	St. Vincent's Orp. Asy.	15	131						
Washington, D. C..	Providence Hospital..	12				1046			
Washington, D. C..	St. Ann's Asylum.....	10		128		16			
Washington, D. C..	St. Rose's Indus'l Sch..	4	27						
Wilmington, Del...	St. Peter's School.....	9	54					100	
Whistler, Ala.....	St. Vincent's School....	3						43	
TOTALS—No. of Establishments, 106		1179	3576	1780	125	17587	1095	7333	2651

25,030 Sisters of Charity are employed in works of charity throughout the world.









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