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LIFE OF  
THE VERY REVEREND MOTHER BARAT.

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ROEHAMPTON :  
PRINTED BY JAMES STANLEY.





R<sup>D</sup><sup>E</sup> MÈRE BARAT

Fondatrice de la Societe du Sacré Cœur de Jesus

BX  
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M3B33 THE LIFE OF

THE VERY REVEREND MOTHER  
MADELEINE LOUISE SOPHIE BARAT,

FOUNDRESS

OF THE

Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

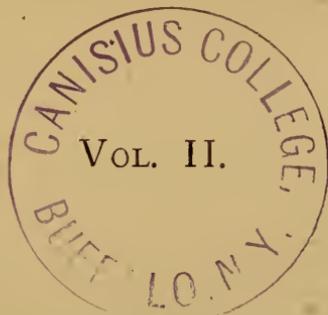
BY

M. L'ABBÉ BAUNARD,

*Aumônier du Lycée d'Orléans,  
Docteur en Théologie, Docteur ès Lettres.*

TRANSLATED BY

LADY GEORGIANA FULLERTON.



ROEHAMPTON.

1876.



## AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION.

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WE write the history of one who has lived in our own days. Eleven years have hardly elapsed since the day when, on the feast of the Ascension, 25th of May, 1865, the Lord called to Himself the chosen soul whom we wish to depict in this book as one of the most beautiful souls which this century has produced.

And yet the world has known but little of her. Even now there are numbers of persons who are not even acquainted with her name, for she took as much pains to conceal herself as people in general do to put themselves forward. But so pure a light has not been vouchsafed to us for the purpose of remaining, in the words of the Gospel, under a bushel. More than a hundred houses of education and of prayer disseminated all over the world by the servant of God, a Community of more than four thousand nuns offered by her to Jesus Christ, an incalculable number of children in every class of life educated by her means in the Old and in the New World, do not constitute her chief claims to our veneration. She was greater even than her work, and what speaks highest in her praise and attracts us most is the halo of pure, sweet, and energetic humility which surrounds her memory. Fresh tokens of that eminent

sanctity have converted that prestige into a sort of worship. No sooner had Mother Barat disappeared from the world, than the footsteps she had left in the track of time were studied, her words collected, and her spirit found, if we may so speak, in the innumerable letters she had written. Filial piety watching around her grave held in religious veneration every trace of her passage through life. Multiplied graces, blessings of every kind, and extraordinary interventions, redoubled this confidence. The Church became interested in the question, for the idea arose that this dawning light might prove the harbinger of one of those beneficent stars which God has placed in heaven, the Scriptures say, to enlighten the earth. It has accordingly set on foot preliminary investigations, and is collecting at Rome and at Paris the most important amount of evidence in the expectation that these scattered rays may eventually be united and form a glory for the saintly head of the spouse of Jesus Christ.

We may thank God the present century, with all its aberrations, is not shorn of the greatest of all glories, that of producing saints. Father de Condren, who lived at the time of the wars of religion and at the eve of the stormy era of the Fronde, considered "that the number of saints in his days was as great, though more hidden than in the first ages of Christianity." We could perhaps hardly venture to make the same assertion with regard to our times, so conspicuous are scandals of impiety, so apparently universal the triumph of the wicked. And yet if we look back at the three first quarters of this last century and glance at the various sets of apostles, of prelates, of combatants, of

men of action, of men of prayer, of virgins and of Christian women who have successively devoted themselves to the service of Jesus Christ, what a strength of sanctity there must be in the tree which produces such fruit. With what wonder and edification we read the histories of our holy contemporaries, of our martyrs and our virgins, those detached biographies which reveal to us their interior lives as well as their outward actions, and show us that they equalled in Christian eminence the noblest souls of other days. We cannot enumerate them; but we wish at least to point out that our degenerate age, with all its miseries, has not been wanting in instances of every kind of heroism; heroism of faith, heroism of purity, heroism of charity, heroism of penance and self-sacrifice. And then, seeing that sanctity is, according to its definition, virtue carried to a sublime degree, we feel justified in saying that by the infinite mercy of Jesus Christ, the record in the book of life of our era will not be deficient in names unknown to the world, but destined perhaps to enrich the future annals of the Church.

The saints of our epoch possess two characteristics which are clearly preceptible in their histories. One is their devoted and tender zeal for the *centre of the truth*, the holy Roman See; the other their most ardent and generous love for the *centre of charity*, the Heart of Jesus Christ. They all bear inscribed on their foreheads, to speak like St. John, "the name of the Holy City,"\* *Rome*; they are her sons, her apostles, her soldiers, and, if needs be, her martyrs.

\* "Scribam super eum nomen Dei mei, et nomen civitatis Dei mei novæ Jerusalem et nomen meum novum" (Apoc. iii. 12).

And they also have written in burning characters in their souls, "the new name of God," as the same Apostle says. The strength and the beauty of their piety lie in their deep devotion to the Sacred Heart. I call it a deep devotion, because it is indeed the essence of Christianity. Who can deny that the love of God, of which the Heart is the symbol, is for us Christians the governing law, the universal formula which explains everything? In fact there is but one dogma, and that is that God loved us, as St. John says: "We have known and have believed the charity, which God hath to us."\* All the mysteries of the Faith, Creation, Revelation, the Incarnation, Redemption, the Eucharist, Holy Communion, all proceed from that one source. It is the key to all else. In the same way morality is comprised in one duty, which is to love God, and others for God. Christian faith and Christian law amount to this, God's love for man, and man's love for God and Christianity is, in short, the tie between the Heart of the Creator and the heart of the creature. And so in these latter days, our Lord, in order to bring back faith to its centre, and virtue to its source, thought it enough to show His Heart burning with love for man, and to say to the heart of man: "Thus have I loved thee and thus shouldst thou love." The whole of the Gospel is in these words. Everything was comprised in that sacred symbol, which is understood by the simple, admired by the wise, and adored by saints. What men dare to call superstition is real worship in spirit and in truth; what they venture to stigmatize as something new

\* 1 St. John iv. 16.

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is simply what St. John calls "the eternal Gospel." From the day when the Heart of Jesus was manifested to the Blessed Margaret Mary, the progress of this devotion had been constant but slow. In order to kindle the sacred fire in Christian families it was requisite to light the holy flame in the hearts of the young; God provided for this need. It was on the morrow of the day, when at the foot of the scaffold, the prisoner King; Louis XVI., cast his very Christian kingdom in the Heart of Jesus Christ, that our Lord, accepting as it were the dying Sovereign's legacy, inspired a zealous and holy priest with the thought of preparing His reign in our days, by the promotion of Christian virtue among women, and to raise up an army of virgins for the accomplishment of that object. The mystery of love had been revealed to a cloistered and contemplative Order, Providence seemed to commit its propagation to a teaching and active Institute. This explains Mother Barat's vocation and mission. Her generous heart had no thought of self; it was wholly and entirely devoted to the Sacred Heart. In her interior life she was Its disciple; this was the origin of her sanctity. In her exterior life she was Its apostle; that was her work. Those two words sum up the history of the servant of God.

The first thing we perceive in it is the wonderful fact of a soul deified, so to say, by the strength of Divine love. According to that saying of St. John of the Cross: "To love is to be transformed into what one loves. To love God is to be transformed into God." We witness in Madame Barat the miracle of this Divine transformation. Jesus is certainly the Being most present, most alive, most

active in her soul ; and so this book, if it is to be worthy of her, must be full of Him. She thinks and speaks only of Him. She acts through Him alone and knows no other joy than His Presence. "It is no longer she who lives, but Christ who lives in her;" not to annihilate but to animate her, not to depress but to exalt her. Oh, no, saintly souls are not like the Dead Sea, which no breeze ever stirs and amidst whose stagnant waters nothing living can exist. More justly can they be likened to the lake of Genesareth, often agitated by storms, but which owns Jesus as its Lord, and waxes calm under the hand which the winds and the waves obey. Perpetually governed by God, Madame Barat reflected in her pure mind and tranquil heart the fairest loveliness of earth and sky. Her intellect, enlightened from on high, saw clearly and embraced widely what it witnessed here below ; it penetrated into the depths of souls, it entered into the secrets of their lives. Even the mysteries of this world did not escape her. Many of her just and delicate appreciations, her modest and clear discernment as to contemporary affairs, will be found in accordance with the dispassionate judgments of posterity. From that region of supernatural light she never descends even to the smallest things without gilding them, as it were, with a ray of sunshine. Faith and wisdom inspired her words, wit and brightness adorned them. They remind us sometimes of the good sense of St. Jane Frances of Chantal, sometimes of the unction of Fénelon, sometimes of the playful charm of St. Francis of Sales. She was gentle without weakness, firm without stiffness. Her humility was ever striving to hide her rare gifts, and

innocence and simplicity gave to her manly virtues and solid qualities, the attractiveness which belongs to the childlike spirit of the Gospel. Her heart, full of God as it was, loved all He has made great—the Church and the souls of men; but at the same time she had tender feelings towards the smallest things He has created. She delighted in conversing with simple persons, she was passionately fond of children, and almost worshipped the poor. Her heart overflowed with tenderness towards every living thing. She loved the country, cared for animals and plants, and took an interest in the grass that grows to-day and to-morrow is cast into the oven, in the sparrow that falls to the ground, in the lily of the field and the seed hidden in the earth. The spirit of the Gospel is in the words her lips utter and in what her pen writes. The light of heaven is in her countenance and mercy rests in her hands. It seems as if the Heart of her Divine Spouse was dwelling in hers. The gifts of nature and of grace are so combined in her that she awakens in others the wish to be holy, and those who see her are inclined to feel what the sister of St. Francis Borgia, a nun at Madrid, said of St. Theresa, “God be praised that He has made us acquainted with a Saint whom we all can imitate. There is nothing extraordinary in her conduct; she eats, she sleeps, and laughs like other people, without affectation, without formality, without ceremony; and yet it is easy to see that she is full of the Spirit of God.”

But Madame Barat was not only the disciple, she was also the apostle of the Sacred Heart. Her apostolic life had a double object: the direction of her daughters, and

the education of children. In both cases the love of the Divine Heart is the fire which, like our Lord, she wishes everywhere to kindle, and her only desire is that it may inflame every one.

Her interior work, the religious training of her daughters, consists in casting souls in that sacred mould. This forms the subject of her conversations and of her letters, which together supply a series of spiritual instructions in which the highest lessons are conveyed in the simplest form. Sacrifice is always the essence of her teaching, for what is religion if not sacrifice? But love makes everything easy. "It lends," as St. Bernard says, "its unction to the cross, and even to bitterness itself a superhuman sweetness."\* Hence the joyousness which marks Madame Barat's direction and the generous facility with which her daughters suffer and die, a feature in their characters which is clearly shown in this work. She governs her Society, this great teacher of souls, as God rules the world, by the power of attraction. The Heart of Jesus is its centre. She makes of that Heart the principle, the model, the help and the reward of the commands she gives, the virtues she requires, and the sacrifices she exacts. Her authority is only the reign of that spirit of love, and her first rule the words of the Divine Master—"Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart."

More as mother than Superior, she influenced souls by her deep respect for them. No one ever had a more delicate moral tact or a more amiable way of giving orders.

\* "Ecce scitio quia vere crux nostra inuncta est. Sed, ut ita dicam, amaritudo nostra dulcissima" (St. Bernard, Sermon. i. *De Dedicat. Ecclesiæ*).

She possessed the art of attracting and winning souls by what the prophet calls "the bonds of charity." To see, to listen to her, to receive a line from her, to get her blessing, or only a smile or a look, is enough; everything then becomes easy. Like the angel sent from God, she strengthens souls for the conflict between nature and duty; the chalice is accepted, the *fiat* uttered. They ascend to Calvary, those she has trained, and they fasten themselves to the Cross; "for love," says the Scripture, "is strong as death." They are ready, and will if necessary cross the ocean, they will courageously tread the steep paths of life. The yoke has grown easy and the burthen light. "Love does not walk, it flies," as the *Imitation* says. Such is the generous scope of Madame Barat's spiritual direction; such is the spirit of that doctrine to which we feel inclined to apply Father Faber's words, and say, "I do not pretend to say it is easy to be a saint, but I do maintain that saints are the easiest masters we can have, because they are more like Jesus than other men."\*

Madame Barat's exterior apostolate presents to us another picture relating to the diffusion of her Order and the propagation of its works throughout the world. Chosen for this mission by a mercy, which she knows not otherwise how to account for, the humble Foundress says of herself: "It must be that I being nothing God is all." She leaves Him to act, and only takes care to follow His inspirations and obey His orders; thus the Society is formed, advances, and extends. Souls called from the most different places and positions meet and unite, foundations are made, houses

\* *All for Jesus*, ch. vi. p. 181.

established, rules drawn up, the Community increases, visible and sometimes striking evidences of providential interventions direct the undertaking. Then comes the inevitable hour of trial. At two different times everything seems hopeless ; but Madame Barat knows that the most hopeless moments are God's moments. One of her maxims was : "When we are abandoned by everybody, then we must abandon ourselves to God." Neither obstacles, nor revolutions, nor persecutions, shake her confidence. "Let us think only of God," she writes, "let us cling to Him alone ; and then if God wills it let the world fall to pieces. Our peace will not be disturbed. We shall rest in the depths of a boundless confidence."

In the end this confidence was fully rewarded. The result of each of these struggles was to strengthen the Society of the Sacred Heart ; and the Old and the New World, peopled with its Communities, attest the power of that confidence in God, which, according to St. Bernard, is the divine and grand peculiarity of saints : "They venture to do great things because they have great souls. They succeed in everything they undertake, for the stronger is their faith the more signal are the graces it obtains. Each step taken in trust is a step towards the blessings promised by the Lord. Then the Divine Spouse sees and meets these generous souls, unites them to Himself and deals magnificently with them."\*

\* *Magna audent, quoniam magni sunt ; et quæ audent obtinent, magna si quidem fides magna meretur. Et quatenus in bonis Domini fiduciæ pedem porrexeris, eatenus possidebis. Istiusmodi magnis spiritibus magnus occurret Sponsus, et magnificabit facere cum eis* (St. Bernard, *Serm. 32 in Cantic.*).

We should not have undertaken to write this book, the object and the spirit of which I have thus described, if the end of it had been the glorification of a religious order, however deserving of esteem. I may add that the Order of the Sacred Heart would not have allowed its original history to be withdrawn from the obscurity which it prizes, if it had not had in view the glory of the name of Christ. I shall never forget the earnest words of the saintly Mother Gœtz, late Superior General of the Society, when she intrusted to me this work, the accomplishment of which she did not live to see. "It must be made evident that all this is no work of ours: it is the Divine Heart alone which has done all. You must leave us in our utter littleness, and only exalt the name of Jesus."

Few histories have been supplied with more abundant and valuable documents. The filial reverence of her daughters had long been engaged in collecting the words of Madame Barat and the facts of her life in journals kept both at the mother-house and at the novitiate. Some attempts at a consecutive narrative have also been made before and since her death. They have guided our researches by preparing for us the road we had to tread, and we acknowledge ourselves indebted to their assistance. The second series of documents we have drawn from are the reminiscences, the deeds of foundations, the circulars, the biographical notices, and the *annual letters*, in which the lives of the principal Sisters and Daughters of the Foundress are related, and form so fair a crown for her. A third series of papers consists of letters and narratives concerning Madame Barat, which have been tested and

completed by the testimony of those most intimately acquainted with her, and who have given us the greatest knowledge of her character. But of all these treasures by far the most valuable is the collection of seven or eight thousand letters, which during a period of sixty-five years, that is from 1800 to 1865, give an almost daily account of her actions, and let us into the spirit of her conduct, the secret of her graces, the lights vouchsafed to her, and the continual progress of her sanctity. They afford us a living picture of the writer, and enable us to listen as it were to the throbbings of her heart.

Thus composed, it may be almost said that Madame Barat's history will be her *life written by herself*. We have, of course, been obliged to select amongst so many rich materials, for how can everything be told with regard to so long and full an existence. "I regret all that I omit," as Montaigne says. At any rate I have neglected nothing to secure that everything stated in this work should be strictly accurate, having submitted it to the most minute and most friendly revision. If in spite of so much care even the smallest error has crept into these pages, I beg the reader to point it out to me, so much do I agree in opinion with St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, who says: "Truth is so pure that if it is even in the least degree mixed with error, it can no longer be called truth." This ought to be the rule with all historians.

Another duty I considered due to historical accuracy, and that was to visit the principal places where Madame Barat's life was spent. In this way I followed her footsteps in France and in Italy. I went to Rome not so much

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to search for reminiscences as to seek a blessing on my work at the feet of Pius IX., whom Madame Barat had so much venerated. I begged his Holiness to bless this book as he had already vouchsafed to bless another book of mine. Need I then say that a delicate fidelity to the doctrine and the spirit of the Holy See of Rome has been the first law observed in this history. For a Catholic and a priest who has seen the successor of St. Peter wearing the bonds which our Lord announced to His apostles, fidelity to the Pope is not merely a duty which faith demands, but a spontaneous impulse of the heart in favour of a sacred cause, for which it seems but little only to speak or to write in days when so many banished and imprisoned bishops, priests, religious, and nuns are suffering readily and joyfully in its behalf.

Now that this work is written, the question arises whether this is an appropriate time for its publication, and this may seem doubtful. It will appear at a moment when our country is preoccupied with a question of life and death and gathering round the balloting urn which is to decide its fate. At such a time, how can even the most serious minds be interested in the annals of a convent and the history of a woman? But although we do not pretend to have written a book particularly called forth by actual circumstances, sanctity such as we have described is not so foreign to the vital question of the day as might appear at first sight. When a guilty society is threatened perhaps with a new deluge of fire, it is not quite irrelevant to count the just ones in its bosom, for we know that ten such weigh more than a thousand others in the balance

of God. Some one has said, "that saints consecrate the world." I add that they preserve it. They are the true, the only *conservatives* of a world that turns them into ridicule, and in fact owes them its preservation, as in the field of the householder the tares are spared on account of the good wheat which they try to destroy. It is to them that the Lord has said: "You are the salt of the earth." The worth of a country depends in His estimation on the number of saints it has produced. This is so much the case that on the day on which earth no longer sent saints to heaven would be the one marked for its destruction.

It is to them also that God has said, "You are the light of the world." They alone are the promoters of real progress, because they alone advance the cause of goodness. They march onward whilst others wander, they *edify* in the true sense of the word whilst others pull down, they are here below the instruments of life, others are more or less instruments of death. Love, prayer, example, and sacrifice, of which they are the perpetual exemplification, are continually offering a contrast to our crimes. They protest against them on earth and they make up for them in the sight of heaven. *Quid mundo nisi ob religiosos?* our Lord said to St. Theresa; and when the Pope, St. Gregory, reckoned up the last hopes for Rome and the empire attacked by barbarians, he calculated on the number of souls consecrated to God, which the city held as a defence.\*

\* "Harum talis vita est ut credamus quia si ipsæ non essent, nullus nostrum jam in loco subsistere, inter Longobardorum gladios, potuisset" (St. Greg. pap. lib. vii. epist. 27. t. ii. p. 872).

Let us, then, hope on. "Lift up the eyes of your soul," St. Bernard says, "and look on the nations. Do they not appear like dried up weeds fit to be cast into the fire, rather than whitening harvests? How many, which seemed to promise fruit, when you come to examine them are only wild brambles; nay, rather old decrepit trees which produce nothing, or at best acorns wherewith to feed the swine." It was thus St. Bernard\* spoke of the age in which he lived. We are inclined to say as much for our own, and yet the century which followed his was the great thirteenth century, the century of St. Louis. It is not that we indulge flattering illusions. We do not shut our eyes to the difference of times. We are not blind to the evil of our days and its probable consequences. We know and we dread the ever-renewed obstacles that the free will of man enables him to oppose to the constant goodness of God. We see the nations rising against the Lord and Christ on the Cross. The earth trembles at this moment as it trembled in the hour of the agony of Jesus. We say with the Prophet, *Terra tremuit*; but we still hope as he does that it will wax calm and rest when He rises again, *et quievit cum resurgeret Dominus*. Between the time of the Agony and the time of the Resurrection the Heart of Jesus may be opened again, and blood and water flow from the wound. Water to purify and blood to reanimate us. This is indeed our only means of salvation, but there are no limits to God's power, and when we see "that all flesh has corrupted its way," and we are tempted to fear and to despair, we think of the words written during a retreat the very year of Madame Barat's

\* St. Bernard, *De Consideratione*, lib. ii. cap. vi. n. 12.

death by one of the holiest martyrs of our recent furious outbreaks. "Will not the adorable Trinity, looking down on this world of sin, repent of its work and ordain another deluge? No; but there will be a new deluge, a deluge of love. The Blood of our Saviour will rise forty feet higher than the highest mountains. All the iniquities of the world will be drowned, and the sacred tide will not ebb, and the holy ark of the Church will go on floating on the ocean of grace, and saving men unto the end of the world. O love of God! Come, Lord Jesus, come!"\*

*Orleans, Feast of the Presentation of Jesus Christ,  
February 2nd, 1876.*

\* Père Olivaint, *Retraite de 1865*, t. i. p. 238.

# CONTENTS.

## CHAPTER I.

*Mother Barat at Turin and at Rome. Her cure and the graces she received.*

1832—1833.

	PAGE
Incidents of the journey . . . . .	I
Arrival at Turin. Mother de Limminghe . . . . .	2
Mother Barat is cured . . . . .	5
Her retreat and its fruits . . . . .	6
Deaths of Mothers Louise de Varax and Lydie Chobelet . . . . .	7
She promises obedience to Mother de Limminghe . . . . .	8
Her journey to Rome . . . . .	11
She is visited by Gregory XVI. . . . .	12
The convent of Santa Rufina . . . . .	13
She visits Madame Baudemont and Madame Copina . . . . .	14
The principal monuments of our Faith . . . . .	15
Audience with the Holy Father . . . . .	17
Holy Week in Rome . . . . .	19
Installation at Santa Rufina . . . . .	20
Mother Barat receives a Papal Brief . . . . .	22
Foundation at Parma . . . . .	23
Her retreat at Chambéry. Return to Paris . . . . .	25

## CHAPTER II.

*Renewal of the works of zeal. Fourth General Council. Visits and Foundations. Mother Barat's apostolic journeys.*

1833—1836.

Fourth General Council . . . . .	27
Decisions as to education and religious observance . . . . .	28
Suppression of Sainte-Marie at Grenoble . . . . .	29
Mother Barat visits the North and West of France . . . . .	31

	PAGE
Insurrection at Lyons . . . . .	33
Foundation at Charleville . . . . .	34
The "Dames de St. Pierre" join the Sacred Heart . . . . .	36
Foundation at Jette-Saint-Pierre . . . . .	39
Death of Mother de Gramont d'Aster . . . . .	41
Mother Barat visits St. Joseph at Marseilles . . . . .	42

## CHAPTER III.

*The Novitiate of Montet.*

1836.

Mother Henriette Coppens . . . . .	47
Mother Barat's visit to Montet . . . . .	50
Her conferences . . . . .	51
The novices. Clémence de Caumont . . . . .	52
Sisters de Nicolay and de Bouchaud . . . . .	53
Joséphine Gœtz. Pauline de St. André . . . . .	54
Foundations at Nantes. Tours and Pignerol . . . . .	58

## CHAPTER IV.

*The Roman Novitiate at the Villa Lante.*

1836—1838.

Mother Barat visits Parma, Loretto, and Rome . . . . .	60
Her audience with Gregory XVI. Sufferings of the Church . . . . .	61
Purchase of the Villa Lante . . . . .	62
The Roman Novices. Sisters Baviera, Simoni . . . . .	64
Theresa Colonna . . . . .	66
Mother Barat's life at the Villa Lante . . . . .	67
The cholera. Seven deaths at the Trinità . . . . .	68
Holy Deaths in the Society . . . . .	69
The victims of the cholera . . . . .	70

## CHAPTER V.

*The Novitiate of the Rue Monsieur.*

1838—1839.

Mother Barat's affection for Postulants . . . . .	75
Her respect for vocations . . . . .	77
Union of the contemplative with the active life . . . . .	78

	PAGE
Her disinterestedness with regard to dowries . . . . .	80
Mother Eulalie de Bouchaud . . . . .	83
Mother Barat directs the novices . . . . .	84
Her instructions on the love of God, on zeal . . . . .	85
The apostolate of charity . . . . .	87
The apostolate of prayer and zeal . . . . .	88
Father Varin's instructions . . . . .	91
Father de Ravignan's instructions . . . . .	92
Foundation at Toulouse . . . . .	93

CHAPTER VI.

*The Council General at Rome. The Decrees. The opposition.  
Mother Barat's meekness.*

1839—1840.

Proposed changes in the Constitutions . . . . .	95
Question of the Superior General's residence . . . . .	96
Convocation of the Council . . . . .	99
Additional decrees added to the Constitutions . . . . .	101
The Mother General's residence fixed at Rome . . . . .	102
Close of the Council. Father Varin's protest . . . . .	103
Opposition from within and without the Society . . . . .	106
Mother Barat's patient charity and magnanimity . . . . .	109
The Decrees submitted to trial . . . . .	112
Death of Mgr. de Quélen . . . . .	113
Mother Barat presides a foundation at Loretto . . . . .	115
Death of Sister Elizabeth at Pignerol . . . . .	116
Her return to Paris. Her gentleness is her strength . . . . .	117

CHAPTER VII.

*The Council of Lyons. Opposition of Mgr. Affre and threats of the  
Government. Decision at Rome, and unanimity in the Sacred Heart.*

1840—1843.

Mother Barat's efforts at conciliation . . . . .	118
Her illness and union with Christ crucified . . . . .	119
Fruits of her visits to the north . . . . .	120
She returns to Rome. Advice of Gregory XVI. . . . .	121
Death of Mother Audé. Mother Barat Superior at the Trinità . . . . .	122

	PAGE
She convokes a Council at Lyons and goes there . . . . .	124
Mgr. Affre opposes the Assembly . . . . .	125
Generous offering of Mother Galitzin . . . . .	127
The Council adjourned. Threats of the Government . . . . .	128
Mother Barat returns to Paris. Her struggles . . . . .	129
Her meekness. Her recourse to God . . . . .	130
Appeal to Rome. The new decrees are suppressed . . . . .	133
Unanimity restored . . . . .	135

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Foundations in Europe, Africa, and America. Mother Barat's visits in England, France, and Italy.*

1840—1845.

Development of the Society . . . . .	138
Mother Galitzin visits America. Foundation at New York . . . . .	139
Resignation and abnegation of Mother Duchesne . . . . .	139
Mother Duchesne amongst the Indians . . . . .	140
The novitiate transferred to Mc'Sherry's town . . . . .	141
Foundation in Canada. Saint Jacques de l'Achigan . . . . .	142
Death of Mother Galitzin . . . . .	143
Foundation at Algiers. Mustapha . . . . .	144
Foundation at Laval. House of "La Croix" . . . . .	145
Foundation at Montpellier. Mother de Mandon . . . . .	146
Foundation at Nancy. House of "Nabécor" . . . . .	147
Foundations at Saluzzo and Padua . . . . .	148
Foundation at Lemberg in Galicia . . . . .	149
Foundations in Great Britain. Mother Goold . . . . .	150
Houses of Roscrea, Berrymead, Cannington . . . . .	151
Mother Eliza Croft . . . . .	151
Dr. Morris, Bishop of Troy . . . . .	153
Mother Barat visits England . . . . .	155
Death of Mother Ducis . . . . .	156
Spirit in which Mother Barat undertook foundations . . . . .	157
Her journey to Rome. Genoa. San Pier d' Arena . . . . .	158
Her stay at Rome. Fresco of <i>Mater Admirabilis</i> . . . . .	159
Her last interview with Gregory XVI. . . . .	160
Journey through the Apennines. Sant' Elpidio, Loretto . . . . .	161
Death of Father Barat . . . . .	165
Death of Mother Geoffroy . . . . .	166
Mother Barat's first visit to Kientzheim . . . . .	167

CHAPTER IX.

*Conflans. Joys and sorrows.*

1842—1847.

The house of Conflans . . . . .	169
The novitiate transferred there . . . . .	170
Mother Barat's life at Conflans . . . . .	172
Her zeal for the soldiers at Charenton . . . . .	173
Her instructions to the novices. <i>Give all to have all</i> . . . . .	175
Marie Lataste . . . . .	178
Death of Mother Eulalie de Bouchaud . . . . .	180
Holy deaths in the Society . . . . .	181
Deaths of Mgrs. Frayssinous, de Beauregard, and Tharin . . . . .	182
Mother de Charbonnel at Conflans . . . . .	183
Father Varin's instructions to the novices . . . . .	184
Election of Pope Pius IX. . . . .	187
Foundation at Sarria, near Barcelona . . . . .	188
Foundations at Bourges and Rennes . . . . .	188
Foundations at Montfleury, near Grenoble . . . . .	189
Foundation at Gratz, in Styria . . . . .	189
Miraculous cure of a novice . . . . .	190
Mother Barat at the Rue de Varennes . . . . .	192
Her sufferings. Death of Mother Eugénie de Gramont . . . . .	195

CHAPTER X.

*Banishment of the Sacred Heart from Piedmont. Revolutions in France and perils at Rome. Visits of the Mother General. Holy Deaths. Death of Father Varin.*

1847—1850.

Religion attacked on all sides . . . . .	197
Proscription of the Sacred Heart at Montet . . . . .	199
Attacks against the Society . . . . .	200
Expulsion from Turin, Pignerol, and Saluzzo . . . . .	201
Banishment from Parma and Genoa . . . . .	203
Insurrection of 1848 in Paris . . . . .	204
Mother Barat's universal charity . . . . .	204
Death of Mgr. Affre. His regrets . . . . .	209
Mother Barat's visits in the provinces . . . . .	210
Purchase of the Abbey of Marmoutier . . . . .	211
Her retreat there . . . . .	213

	PAGE
Siege of Rome, 1848 . . . . .	215
Deaths of Mother Gonthyn and Marie Lataste . . . . .	218
Deaths of Mothers Cherubini, d'Astros, and Soudan . . . . .	219
Deaths of Mothers de Saint-Alouarn and d'Hendrecourt . . . . .	219
Deaths of Mothers Goold and Deshayes . . . . .	220
Death of Mother Agarithe de Varax . . . . .	221
Death of Father Varin . . . . .	221
Mother Barat refuses the title of Foundress . . . . .	224

## CHAPTER XI.

*The celebration of the half centenary of the Society at Rome. The Seventh General Council. The crowning of the edifice. Visits to the principal houses of the Society. Mother Barat at Paris and at Conflans.*

1850—1853.

Mother Barat goes to Rome . . . . .	225
Celebration of the fiftieth anniversary . . . . .	227
She strives to hide herself . . . . .	227
Audience with Pius IX. . . . .	228
Completion of the Constitutions . . . . .	230
Seventh General Council at La Ferrandière . . . . .	232
She wishes to resign her office . . . . .	233
Visit to Marmoutier—Mother Theresa Mailluceau . . . . .	235
Visit to Kientzheim—Familiar conferences . . . . .	237
Visit to La Ferrandière . . . . .	239
Mother Barat promotes simplicity in the school at Paris . . . . .	241
Her continual prayer . . . . .	242
Dr. Récamier, his death . . . . .	243
Mother Goetz, Mistress of Novices . . . . .	244
Father de Ravignan at Conflans . . . . .	246
Father Barrelle at Conflans . . . . .	247
Mother Barat's instructions to the Novices . . . . .	248

## CHAPTER XII.

*Development of the Society in the Old and the New World.*

1851—1853.

Mother Barat exhorts her daughters to save souls . . . . .	251
Foundation at Orleans—The Chartreuse . . . . .	251
Mother d'Avenas—her training . . . . .	252

	PAGE
Foundation at Layrac, near Agen . . . . .	254
Foundation at Moulins—Belle Croix . . . . .	256
Foundation at St. Brieuc and Calais . . . . .	257
Foundation at Blumenthal in Holland . . . . .	259
Mother Gertrude DeBrou . . . . .	259
Foundation at Warendorf—Attempt at St. Gall . . . . .	260
Foundation at Riedenbourg in the Tyrol . . . . .	262
Foundation at Milan—Attempt at Palma . . . . .	263
Transfer from Berrymead to Roehampton . . . . .	264
Foundations at Armagh and at Dublin . . . . .	265
Development of the Society in America . . . . .	267
Mother Cutts, Mother Vicar . . . . .	269
Eastern Vicariate—Numerous foundations . . . . .	270
Death of Mother Duchesne . . . . .	272
Foundations at Santiago in Chilli . . . . .	274
Fruits of Mother Barat's humility . . . . .	275

## CHAPTER XIII.

*The mother-house at the Feuillantines. Madame Barat's last visits.  
Death of her first companions.*

1854—1857.

Transfer of the mother-house to the Feuillantines . . . . .	276
Cure of Mother Desmarquest . . . . .	277
Definition of the Immaculate Conception . . . . .	279
Consecration of the Society to Mary Immaculate . . . . .	280
Visit to Kientzheim . . . . .	282
Mother Barat ill at Metz . . . . .	283
Yellow fever in Louisiana . . . . .	284
Threatened secular inspection at Chambéry . . . . .	289
Mother Barat opposes it . . . . .	290
The school at Chambéry closed for four years . . . . .	292
Foundation at Angoulême—The Doyenné . . . . .	292
Foundation at St. Ferréol, near Besançon . . . . .	293
Journey through Germany—Strasbourg . . . . .	293
Universal veneration paid to Mother Barat . . . . .	295
Last visit to Kientzheim . . . . .	297
Death of Mother de Charbonnel . . . . .	297
Last days and death of Mother Emilie Giraud . . . . .	298
Visit to Saint Pierre-lès-Calais . . . . .	300

	PAGE
Visit to Lille. Mother Barat venerated as a saint . . . . .	301
Her exhortation to the Children of Mary . . . . .	301
Death of Mother Theresa Mailluceau . . . . .	302
Last visit to La Ferrandière . . . . .	303

## CHAPTER XIV.

*The work of the Probation. Mother Barat's affection for her daughters.*

Utility of the Probation . . . . .	304
In what the probation consists— <i>Reparation—Preparation.</i> . . . .	305
Mother Barat's instructions to the probanists . . . . .	305
The profession. Mother Barat's parting words . . . . .	309
Her affection for her daughters . . . . .	310
Her maternal care of their health . . . . .	312
Her tenderness towards the sick . . . . .	314
Her interest in the families of her nuns . . . . .	315
Her sympathy for their sorrows . . . . .	317
Her goodness towards the Lay-sisters . . . . .	319
Her consideration and charity for them . . . . .	319
Purity and sanctity of her affections . . . . .	323

## CHAPTER XV.

*Rue Cassini. The mother-house built on the Boulevard des Invalides.  
Mother Barat's mode of government.*

The Society of the Sacred Heart expropriated from the Feuillantines	325
Foundations at Perugia and Posen . . . . .	326
Foundations in America—at Havannah . . . . .	328
Foundations at Chicago and Talca . . . . .	329
Foundation at Chamartin in Spain . . . . .	330
New mother-house. Boulevard des Invalides . . . . .	330
The chapel blest by Mgr. Morlot . . . . .	331
Mother Barat's constant correspondence . . . . .	332
Her government, organization of her houses . . . . .	334
Her consideration in commanding . . . . .	336
The principle of abandonment and obedience . . . . .	337
She maintains the spirit of prayer . . . . .	339
Firmness and gentleness in Superiors . . . . .	340
Temporal administration . . . . .	341
Her manner of correcting and reforming . . . . .	343
Vigour of her reproofs . . . . .	344
The saints' system of government . . . . .	347

CHAPTER XVI.

*Mother Barat's exterior direction. Two of her pupils in the world.*

Mother Barat's care for her former pupils . . . . .	348
Her affection for the Countess de la Grandville . . . . .	349
She pities, consoles, and directs her . . . . .	351
Madame de la Grandville falls ill . . . . .	352
God alone is to be loved . . . . .	353
Mother Barat comforts her in affliction . . . . .	354
Madame de la Grandville's numerous good works . . . . .	355
Her last years and death . . . . .	358
Mother Barat adopts a forsaken girl . . . . .	359
Pride of Julia. Mother Barat's influence over her . . . . .	360
Her letters, her indulgence and patient charity . . . . .	361
Julia goes to America, her perverse ingratitude . . . . .	364
Julia is married—fresh efforts of Mother Barat . . . . .	366
Julia's Christian death . . . . .	368

CHAPTER XVII.

*Events in Italy. War in America. Mother Barat's work completed.  
Eighth General Council.*

1859—1864.

War in Italy . . . . .	369
Expulsion of the Society from Milan . . . . .	370
Final suppression of the house at Parma . . . . .	371
The house at Padua is preserved . . . . .	372
Mother Barat's prayers for the Holy Father . . . . .	373
Castelfidardo. Expulsion from Loretto . . . . .	374
The Society banished from Sant' Elpidio and Perugia . . . . .	374
Holy deaths in the Society . . . . .	376
Madame Louise Mallac . . . . .	377
Mother Barat's zeal . . . . .	378
War in America . . . . .	378
Convocation of the Eighth General Council . . . . .	379
Subjects of its decrees . . . . .	379
Mother Barat asks to resign—she is refused . . . . .	380
Mother Goetz Vicar-General . . . . .	380
Close of the Council . . . . .	384
An act of charity . . . . .	385

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*Consummation of Mother Barat's sanctity. Her love of God.*

Divine love—its effects . . . . .	387
Mother Barat's spirit of poverty . . . . .	387
Her corporal penances . . . . .	389
Her horror of pride. Humility her characteristic virtue . . . . .	390
Her ardent love of God . . . . .	394
She sees God in all things . . . . .	394
Her recollection and union with God . . . . .	395
Her love for the Blessed Sacrament . . . . .	398
Her Communions . . . . .	399
Her devotion to our Lady and the saints . . . . .	400

## CHAPTER XIX.

*Consummation of Mother Barat's sanctity. Her boundless charity.*

Mother Barat's affection for the Church . . . . .	402
Her respect for bishops and priests . . . . .	403
Her esteem for other religious Orders . . . . .	404
Her zeal for the salvation of souls . . . . .	405
Conversion of one of her nephews . . . . .	407
Her zeal for the souls in Purgatory . . . . .	408
She honours the poor—her care for servants . . . . .	409
Her liberal alms—perseverance of her charity . . . . .	411
Her increasing love of children . . . . .	414
Her care of animals and plants . . . . .	415
Her supernatural gifts . . . . .	417
She is regarded as a saint . . . . .	418
She is visited by M. l'Abbé Gratry and the Count de Montalembert . . . . .	419

## CHAPTER XX.

*Last days and death of Mother Barat.*

1864—1865.

Portrait of Mother Barat . . . . .	421
Death of Mother Gertrude DeBrou . . . . .	423
Mother Barat's longing for heaven . . . . .	423
All must be given to God . . . . .	425
The last Easter—her instructions . . . . .	425

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	PAGE
Sunday of the Good Shepherd . . . . .	426
The "cradle" at Amiens is pulled down . . . . .	427
Her last letters. The rendezvous in heaven . . . . .	428
Farewell to the children . . . . .	429
Sunday before Ascension—she foretells her death. . . . .	430
Letter to Mother Mayer . . . . .	430
She has an attack of congestion of the brain . . . . .	432
Last Sacraments—signs of consciousness . . . . .	433
Last blessings—She receives the blessing of the Holy Father . . . . .	434
Her death . . . . .	435
Her funeral at Paris and Conflans—Her tomb . . . . .	436
Her testament . . . . .	437
Testimony paid to her sanctity . . . . .	438
Mgr. Parisis' discourse on her life . . . . .	439
Conclusion . . . . .	440



## CHAPTER I.

*Mother Barat at Turin and at Rome. Her cure and the graces she received.*

1832—1833.

ON the 22nd of May, Mother Barat and her companion began their journey to Turin by the road to Nice. At the bridge of the Var, which was then the frontier of France, they were much surprised at being stopped as if they were suspected persons. Mother de Limminghe was taken to the military post, to the house of the Mayor, and to the office of the Sardinian Consul, escorted by an increasing crowd of children and idle people. In spite of all their explanations, it seemed likely that the two nuns would be detained. It was only after midnight that the Commissary of Police, touched by Mother Barat's gentle and open manner, consented to their departure. The reason of this was that the Duchesse de Berri had just landed in France, and orders having been sent to all the frontiers to arrest her in case of her appearance, the Custom-house officers had done Mother de Limminghe the honour of taking her for the Princess.

The passage of the Colla di Tende, between Nice and Turin, was a very trying one in those days. The road, at first hemmed in between two walls of rock, led to the foot of a precipitous mountain, which it took several hours to cross. It was covered with snow at that moment, and the travellers had to ascend the steep acclivity at a foot's pace. On reaching the summit they found that it would

be impossible to accomplish the descent except in sledges. Twenty-two men, who had been sent on for the purpose, took off the wheels of the carriage and dragged it themselves on the snow with a fearful rapidity, amidst the rocks and along the edge of the precipices. Mother Barat, who could not put her foot to the ground, was obliged to remain inside the vehicle, whilst her companion walked, with the help of sticks, knee-deep in the snow. They had to hurry on, for the post-master, who acted as guide, declared that a storm was gathering, and it did indeed burst forth with fury just as they reached the valley. Mother Barat wrote on her arrival at Turin, "God and His good angels have greatly protected us during this dangerous journey: at last we have reached our place of shelter, well and in safety."

It was God's will that the house of Turin should prove the means of restoring new life to the Superior General. From the moment of her arrival she felt as if there were a peculiar spirit of holiness in the place—something that gave her an inexpressible feeling of peace and rest. "Faith and prayer are in such honour here," she wrote; "rest might be found if one could forget one's own country, but the number of those I love in it are perpetually carrying back my heart and my thoughts to France." And in another letter she says: "I am in the midst of a religious family visibly blest by our Lord. They are all such true religious, and their Mother is so fervent. After all, it is only wise to aim at the highest perfection, for the end is approaching; and why should we spare ourselves so much? It would be mere folly. It is, alas! enough that your Mother should give into it. Let her daughters at least be wiser."

The Convent of the Crucifix was indeed in every respect well calculated to gladden the eyes of a saint. Its Superior, Mother de Limminghe, whom we have hitherto only casually

mentioned, belonged to one of the best families of Louvain. Her father, the Count de Limminghe, had been a prisoner under the Reign of Terror, and again under the Empire. His daughter made at that time, child as she was, a promise, that if that dear parent was restored to her, she would consecrate her life to God in religion. She did see him again, but soon afterwards he and his wife died at Nice on their way to Italy. They were supposed to have been poisoned by a wretch who took possession of their fortune. Thus deeply tried at an early age—for she was then only twenty—the orphan girl brought back her two brothers younger than herself to the Château de Gentinnes, where their aunts were living. These melancholy events imparted to Mother de Limminghe's character a sort of gravity and sadness which it never entirely lost. Her piety was deep and earnest, and her favourite devotion was to Our Lady of Sorrows. She would have wished to consecrate herself at once to God and the religious life, but the education of her brothers obliged her for some years to remain at home. It was in the month of February, 1813, at the age of twenty-one, that she entered the Order of the Sacred Heart at Dooresele, Ghent. We have already seen how, through her efforts and persuasion, the Sisters of that house sought and effected a reunion with the mother-house. This had been the first reason of Mother Barat's attachment to her; but the principal link between them was their common attraction to an annihilation, of which the Incarnate Word of God is the highest type, and the model on which both of them conceived and regulated the obligations of the religious life. Mother de Limminghe was held in high esteem by all the Society, and was supposed to be favoured with singular lights and graces. In her humility, Mother Barat rejoiced at the opportunity of holding intimate converse with so holy a soul.

She also particularly noticed in the house at Turin a young religious, Madame Clara Quirin, who was then preparing to make her final vows. There was nothing brilliant about her or her teaching, but her sanctity edified the whole Community. The pupils were excited by her example to love and to serve God with no ordinary ardour. One young girl, Darie de Filippi, was heard to exclaim, in her childlike simplicity, on the day of the Compassion of the Blessed Virgin: "We will perform to-day so many acts of virtue, that Mary will not have time to think of her Sorrows." Another innocent soul, Elodie de Panissera, already full of that ardent love of God which was soon to consume her life, used to say to her mistresses when they called her out of Church: "You drag me out of heaven."

By the side of these highborn children, Mother Barat saw those of the poor, educated with equal zeal by her daughters. This always gladdened her heart and drew forth her most earnest commendations. The spiritual director of this Community was a religious whom she had particularly noticed in his childhood at Amiens. Most Catholics who have lived at Rome in recent years must have known and appreciated as a spiritual guide Father Philippe de Villefort. It was he that Mother Barat rejoiced to find at Turin. She says in a letter dated the 4th of June: "I go to confession here to Father de Villefort. I predicted to him when he was only twelve years of age that I should do so some day. I have just fulfilled my prophecy, which made him smile. He is so serious, that this is a rare occurrence."

The Mother General felt herself in Paradise, and the only drawback to the joy of the Community was her infirm state. They resolved to besiege heaven with prayers, and during the first days of June a novena to Our Lady of Sorrows was begun. The pupils crowded round her altar

with that simple faith which it seems as if God could never resist. So great was their confidence, that they wanted no medical assistance to be sought for; but Mother de Limminghe was afraid that this would be to tempt God, and the Chevalier Rossi, the surgeon of the Court, a learned and Christian practitioner, was sent for. He declared that there was in the foot of the Mother General a dislocation of the bones, which appeared to him incurable. Prayers continued, however, to be ardently poured forth, and in the middle of June, M. Rossi, without saying anything, attempted one day to operate on the foot. In one instant his skilful hand succeeded in resetting the bones, and a few douches, he declared, would complete the cure. But on the following day Mother Barat could already walk a few steps, and she wrote: "God be praised, I am saved from the baths! Thank our Lord and the Blessed Virgin. They work so many miracles in this country where faith reigns in all its purity, and, I may add, in this house where the Mother of God is so supereminently loved. One can see that she loves it in return, so great is the fervour and so many the gifts vouchsafed to it."

The doctor signed an attestation of this cure, in which he declared that he had been merely the instrument of divine mercy. Mother Barat, entirely delivered from her crutches, wished to commemorate, in a solemn manner, her gratitude for the intercession which had obtained for her this favour. Accompanied by Madame de Limminghe, she went to the villa of the Marchesa di Barol, where she placed an *ex voto* before the image of the Blessed Virgin.

This villa, called the Casino, which is about two miles and a half from Turin, had been given up to the religious of the Sacred Heart by their noble benefactress. It became the favourite residence of the Mother General, for it was one of the spots where, to use the words of the

*Imitation*, "the air is purer, the soul more free, heaven nearer, and God more present to the mind than in other places."

Mother Barat thus describes it: "Nothing can be more secluded than this magnificent country house where our nuns spend the summer with their pupils. There is not much land about it, but everything is beautiful, the buildings, the walks, the arrangement of the gardens and the manner in which everything is cultivated. The alleys and the trees are finer than those of our house at Paris. They intersect lovely meadows watered by little streams. The conservatory is so immense that the former owner used sometimes to ride in it on horseback; the evergreens so numerous and so tall that I never remember to have seen any to be compared to them. It is a delightful solitude, the only sound we hear is the song of the nightingales. I purpose making my retreat here, and to stay over St. Mary Magdalen's day; it will be a happiness to spend her feast in a *Sainte-Baume*."

We cannot wonder that a retreat in such a place flooded Mother Barat's soul with lights on her own soul, on God, and on eternity. To the same religious, Mother Grosier, she wrote at that time: "My dear Henriette, I have discovered in myself during my retreat fresh needs and fresh miseries. The eye of God searches deeply, who could endure it if the veil of His mercy did not soften its power." And to another she says: "I envy those women who are truly valiant, and who act only from pure love. We are fools if we want anything but God and the Cross! They open to us the Heart of Jesus; can we find peace and repose anywhere else? It is a fatal mistake to expect it, but so few persons yield themselves up entirely to the guidance of the Holy Ghost. And yet depend upon it, to give oneself entirely to God is easier than to remain in a miserable half-and-half state. Instead of swimming

between two tides which is difficult and dangerous, let us hasten to plunge into the stream. Once in the current, the Holy Spirit will impel us forward and we shall safely reach the port."

That blessed port of eternity had just received several of her dearest daughters. Mother Louise de Varax had died in Paris at the beginning of that year. Weak in health as she was, this courageous nun had borne the anxious responsibility of the government of the school during the troubles of the Revolution. Mother de Chastaignier, one of the first recruits of the house of Les Feuillants, soon followed her to the grave, and also Mother Lydie Chobelet, "one of the most beautiful and holy souls I have ever known," Mother Barat wrote at the time of her death. "Oh, how many successive crosses!" she exclaims, "and how speedily time flies. It fills one with astonishment, the days pass so quickly that I feel as if I were going to bed every minute!" And again: "I have lived and thought for more than fifty years, and this half century has vanished like a dream, the little which remains will pass with equal rapidity. Is it worth while then to care about the inn where we stop for a moment, instead of preparing for ourselves a good and beautiful abode hereafter even at the cost of present sacrifices?"

The agitations of her native land she looked upon with the compassionate serenity with which a traveller on the mountain heights sees the storm and the clouds sail under his feet. After receiving the news of the chivalrous rising of the Royalists in the West, the heroic struggle of the Château de la Pénissière, and the bloody conflict at the cloister of Saint-Méry, she wrote: "Oh, why do our brethren, when life is already so short, furiously strive to shorten it yet more? Let us pray that they may desire peace, and above all, what alone can give peace, those Christian virtues they know so little about." When we see the

Spouses of Christ answering the discordant cries of anarchy by their tears and their prayers, the words of the prophet seem realized: "The angels of peace shall weep bitterly."\*

On coming out of her retreat Madame Barat wrote to her nephew Stanislaus: "Our rulers are seized with blindness. God, God alone can save us! If only men would pray, would acknowledge their need of Him! But no, pride takes the place of everything in this century. What an awakening there will be for those men so wise in their own eyes, and in reality so foolish; for is it not an extraordinary folly to pretend to do without Him, who has created us and who holds our fate in His hands? O my friend, be then amongst the few who are wise. Fear and love Him above all to whom we look for true felicity. There is too much misery in this world for it to be dear to us."

Between the two political systems, one of which has for its motto "forward," and the other "backward," there is a third and a better party which cries "upward." That last party is that of God's saints, and Mother Barat belonged to it.

But her residence and her retreat at Turin had matured in her mind a resolution of a practical nature and relative to her own sanctification. She intimated this project to Mother de Limminghe in the following manner: "I have something in store for you. Not a small burthen I can assure you, but with virtue the trial will be easier. I smile at the thought of it, so do not be afraid, and do not even think of it. It will be our secret." This secret she soon disclosed to her friend. The Mother General, who suffered from feeling that she was obliged to govern others and had no one herself to obey, determined to place herself under obedience to Mother de Limminghe for everything which concerned her personal conduct. Obedience was one of

\* Isaias xxxiii. 7.

Madame Barat's dearest virtues, she looked upon it as one of the principal forms of humility and charity. "Be obedient even to folly," she had written a little before to one of her daughters. "Let that nail rivet you to the Cross. No other bond will unite you so closely to our Lord." It was accordingly decided that she would never take any step regarding her own individual conduct without Mother de Limminghe's permission. We see this by her letters. She says: "When I am in doubt I consult you in spirit, I feel as if you answered me and I go on." "I do all that you desire me as to prayer, rest, &c. I try to eat and to sleep, and I do so reasonably. Do not be anxious." Secretly she resolved that during the journey she was about to take, her dear directress should accompany her, so that she might act at every moment under obedience.

In spite of all her efforts to hide her virtues, Madame Barat's character inspired the deepest veneration to all who came in contact with her at Turin. The Marchesa di Barol, who ranks among the heroines of charity of that epoch, all but worshipped the Mother General, who likewise held that lady in the highest esteem. The Queen of Sardinia, Mary Theresa, the Duchess of Lucca, who was afterwards married to Charles II. of Parma, the young Maria Christina of Savoy, who was about to adorn the throne of Naples with the virtues of a saint, all sought out the servant of God and looked up to her with admiration.

Her reputation for wisdom and sanctity was so established in that country, that one day in the middle of August the lord of a neighbouring village and the parish priest brought to her a girl of twenty-five who was supposed to be endowed with supernatural gifts. She did not eat, drink, or sleep, prayed all night, wore on her head a crown of thorns, and also pretended to have received revelations from the Blessed Virgin, who, according to her statements, had ordered her to build a church on a mountain in that

locality. She had begun accordingly to carry up stones to that spot. Mother Barat examined her with charity and prudence, she felt some misgivings about this saint, whose eyes, she said, were always bent on the ground, but whose tongue did not seem to be under equal restraint. At the end of the week the mystery was solved. When left alone the fast of this girl was not only broken, but she drank even more than she ate. The proofs of her deception were overwhelming, but did not prevent some pious persons, and even religious, obstinately refusing to be convinced. "So much," as Mother Barat said, "are people inclined to believe what is extraordinary." Her own simple, submissive, and solid faith preserved her from these sort of illusions. In answer to the account of some facts of this description, she wrote one day to Mother de Gramont: "I declare to you that I shall only believe in revelations when you write to me that you have had them yourself. In that case let me hear of them at once. But as it is, I am more incredulous than ever. That is all I can say."

Cured as she was, the Superior General felt it difficult to tear herself away from the house in Turin. The nuns wanted to keep Mother Barat, and the children quite worshipped her. A story is told of one of the young mistresses complaining to Mother Barat very seriously of the bad behaviour in church of two little culprits of four years of age. She laughed at her indignation, and on the following Sunday begged that the offenders might be placed on a seat just under her own stall. Elated at this honour, they mixed up with their prayers all sorts of childish gestures and playful pantomimes. Their mistress was on thorns, and twenty times thought of taking them out of church. She said so afterwards to the Mother General, who answered: "I don't see why. For my part, I felt as if those two babies were little lambs frisking at our Lord's feet. May they long remain in their sweet innocence. Oh! if God

were as severe with us, how often He would turn us out of His sacred presence !”

Meanwhile Mother Barat was preparing to start for Rome, where an important work was awaiting her. A circular letter addressed to all her daughters, and dated on the 31st of August, announced to them her departure, and thanked them for their prayers for her recovery, which was then complete. It ended with the following exhortation : “ How can we, my dear daughters, in this time of calamity, think of anything but appeasing the wrath of the Lamb, and compensating the Sacred Heart of our Lord for the injuries with which it is satiated. Oh, do not let us be of the number of those faithless spouses of whom He complained to one of His beloved servants ! What would not be our guilt in that case, we upon whom He has showered so many blessings ! For can we ever forget that during that terrible infliction which spared neither age nor sex nor rank, we were miraculously preserved ? At the same time, we cannot flatter ourselves that our tribulations are over ; let us try to avert, or at any rate to prepare for them, by the holiness of our lives and an ardent love for our Lord. We shall thus win the graces we need for the attainment of the double end of our vocation, our own sanctification, and the salvation of the souls intrusted to us.” Mother Barat left Turin in the middle of October, 1832, taking with her Madame de Limminghe. They stopped at Loretto some hours, too short hours she thought, “for months would hardly have sufficed to satisfy the devotion excited by the holy house.” She went to Communion there, and on the 25th arrived in Rome. The principal object of her journey was the establishment of a Roman novitiate. This was one of Father Rozaven’s most earnest desires, and the Holy Father also wished it. A colony from Middelburg and Turin, under the direction of Mother Desmarquest, and increased by some postulants, had been temporarily received at the

Trinità dei Monti. But as, according to agreement, the Trinità was a French establishment, and was always to remain such, it was necessary to seek another abode for the Roman novices. Thanks to the generosity of a rich widow, the Marchesa Andosilla, and the protection of the Sovereign Pontiff, the convent of Santa Rufina, in the Trastevere, was purchased for that purpose. It was there that the novitiate was to be definitively established as soon as the Mother General arrived in Rome.

Immediately after that arrival she received a first and very special proof of Pope Gregory XVI.'s paternal kindness. Having accidentally scalded her foot, and being in consequence confined to her room, on the 29th of October she was sitting gazing, as she said herself in one of her letters, on the dome of St. Peter's, seen from the height of the Trinità dei Monti, and engrossed with the multitude of thoughts which it awakened in her mind, when she was told that the Holy Father, hearing of her arrival and of her accident, was coming up to give her his blessing. "I cannot describe to you," she wrote, "my feelings when I saw that venerable Pontiff enter the little room adjoining my cell. I could not master my emotion, but it affected me in a sweet manner, for I heard only words of kindness and sympathy." She tried to kneel down, but the Pope raised her up, and made her sit by his side. "I have greatly at heart the prosperity of such a useful, edifying, and *well governed* institute," he said, and uttered those last words with marked emphasis.

This commendation was remarkable on the lips of a Pope who, when he was Cardinal Capellari, had voted in the Commission for the Examen of Constitutions for the simple *Lauda*, or brief of praise. But placed in a higher position, light had been given to Gregory XVI. to recognize in the Sacred Heart a peculiarly providential and well-timed Institution. One day, as he was conversing on the subject with

Padre Massa, he said to him: "Having received myself a monastic education, there are certainly many things in this Society which I should not have approved of. But that rule has been divinely inspired, and I would not change a single word of it. God's finger is there."

The Supreme Pontiff not only admired the Institute, but most highly esteemed its Superior, rejoiced that she had come to Rome, and said: "It is the proper place for you, the Generals of all the Orders are here." It might have been supposed that these words contained an intimation that the Holy Father wished her to fix her residence in the Eternal City. Mother Barat hastened to reassure on that point her communities in France. "It has been quite understood," she wrote, "that it would be a disadvantage, at any rate for the present, and all our friends admit the necessity of my return to Paris in the spring. This has been a real victory, which I cannot help being pleased at."

As soon as Mother Barat's scald was healed, she visited Santa Rufina. In the part of Rome beyond the Tiber, a little above the river, there is an old church, said to have been built on the site of the house inhabited in the third century by the Virgins Rufina and Secunda, who suffered martyrdom under Gallienus. In the first years of the seventeenth century, two pious pilgrims, Françoise Montieux, a Parisian, and Françoise de Gourcy, a native of Lorraine, obtained from Clement VIII. leave to form there, under the name of Ursuline Oblates, a congregation devoted to the instruction of children. Mother Barat, looking back to the former occupants of the convent, exclaimed: "What good they did! How many religious virtues they practised! How many children they educated during the course of those two hundred years!" The Order had, however, become all but extinct.

Gregory XVI. was anxious not to let the work of education perish with it, especially in that part of the city

where fidelity to the Popes had been transmitted from father to son amidst the vigorous race of the old Sabines. It was principally with that view that he had given Santa Rufina to the Sacred Heart. The Mother General fully entered into his ideas, and wrote on the morrow of her first visit to that house: "It is a better one than I had been led to expect; with a little garden which we can make, it will be tolerable. The court is fine, and a fountain plays in the centre, which adds to its beauty. Later on, it will do for a poor school and a second class boarding-school, for if God blesses our novitiate, it will be established elsewhere."

Part of the house was left to the few remaining Oblates during their lifetime, with a pension for their support. Mother Barat paid them a visit, and wrote that they seemed very pious, and that their Superior gave her the idea of a saint. "I feel so sorry for them," she adds. "What have we done more than these good nuns have done that God should preserve and protect us in so remarkable a manner?"

A still more delicate feeling of charity prompted her to be the first to call on two of her former daughters who had not acted kindly by her in past days, Madame Baudemont and Madame Copina. The first had been Superior, and the other Mistress of Novices at Amiens during the painful crisis which took place in that Community. Having previously announced her visit in a courteous letter, she went on the 24th of November to that house of St. Denis fraught with such sad associations. About thirty scholars barely supported the two disconsolate mistresses. "They suffer," Mother Barat wrote, "and they suffer courageously. It was on that account that I wished to see them, and to show by my manner that I in nowise resent the past." She cordially embraced these ladies, spoke to them of the Mothers they had known in France, made delicate offers of assistance, and pressed them to come and see her. Touched and delighted with her kindness, they called her their

*Mother*, and some days afterwards Madame Baudemont wrote to her: "My good Mother and friend, we are quite cheered by the pleasure which the sight of your face, your kind words, and kind manner have given us. I feel it most especially, and I shall ever continue to love you in our good Master. Let us pray a great deal for each other, and may heaven bless your work, which tends so much to the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls."

The Mother General renewed also her intercourse with Madame Louise Naudet. In her case there was no drawback to the pleasure of meeting. Her old friend still looked upon her as the little Sophie of thirty years ago, and treated her with a familiarity which excited surprise. "She is unlike any one else," Mother Barat said, as she quoted some of the names by which Madame Naudet called her. But she was only amused at being treated like a child.

There had been a time, as she said herself, when the historical memories of Rome and the marvels of art contained within its walls would have moved to its very depths the soul of Mother Barat. Not one of them would have failed to interest her highly cultivated mind and ardent imagination. But now her thoughts soared higher, and she wrote to one of her nephews: "Everything vanishes and disappears. This very city is the best proof of it. It is strewn with ruins. Nowhere can we feel more strongly the vanity of this world. God alone is great and unchangeable. In this place I say it with greater strength and conviction than ever."

But far otherwise impressed by the reminiscences of Christian Rome, she readily acceded to the Holy Father's suggestion that she should visit the principal monuments of its faith. Before the Confession of the Prince of the Apostles she poured forth fervent prayers for the Church. Another time she went to Santa Maria Maggiore, the Scala Santa, San Giovanni Laterano, Santa Croce in Jerusalemme,

the Coliseum, the Forum, and the Mamertine prison. At the Scala Santa, as she was about to ascend it on her knees, she turned to her companions and said: "At each step I shall pray to our Lord for one of the houses of our Society." The sight of the Coliseum inspired her with an ardent desire for martyrdom. She kissed that soil, watered with the blood of the confessors of the faith, and could hardly tear herself away from the spot where the wild beasts tore in pieces the martyr St. Ignatius, and so many other generous followers of Christ. "There is so much to see in this city," she wrote some days afterwards: "it is not without reason that it bears the name of the Holy City. What treasures it contains! But, alas! it is not the sight of so many relics which constitutes sanctity. The Cross, my child. It is the Cross we must take up, that matchless gift of God."

Soon she refused to leave the Trinità dei Monti even for these holy excursions. "If I were inclined to sight-seeing," she wrote, "I should have by this time seen a great many things here, but I prefer solitude, and find nothing to compare to it. So I now refuse all invitations and, except that when I go and take leave of the Holy Father I shall visit St. Peter's once more, I shut myself up till my departure." But this resolution did not prevent her being sought out by a number of French families driven out of their own country by political events or by the cholera; Rome was filled with these exiles. Old friends of the Society, Mgr. Frayssinous, M. l'Abbé Trébuquet, Father Druilhet and Father Loriquet also were there. Eminent ecclesiastics such as Cardinals Lambruschini, Fesch, Pedicini, Zurla, Weld, Odescalchi, and Pacca, successively visited the Mother General, and were all impressed by her modest sanctity. Her companion, Mother Desmarquest, wrote: "Wherever she is, her greatness of soul is evinced in a charming manner. She is looked upon as an angel and

venerated as such; every one seems glad to make her acquaintance, and as soon as people know her their prejudices against the Society vanish." But Mother Barat herself deprecated this flow of visits. "I should like," she said, "to be alone everywhere and always. But here, what crowds of people there are to see; this city is the centre of the whole Christian world." As far as was possible she secluded herself at the Trinità dei Monti, and devoted herself to her novices.

On the 27th of December, feast of St. John the Apostle, Mother Barat had given the habit to ten postulants. Father Massa had preached a retreat to them, the Abbé Trébuquet was giving them conferences, she herself addressed to them admirable instructions in Italian; delighted with their progress she wrote: "God blesses the novitiate; the Roman novices are particularly edifying; they do not run, they fly in the path of perfection, in the full spirit of the Institute; the only difficulty is to moderate their ardour. Really Italy is still, as ever, a land of saints. Would that I, too, may not have vainly trod this holy soil."

Anxious to establish her daughters at Santa Rufina, but fearing that the size of the house would soon be insufficient, Mother Barat would have wished to add to it the buildings of an old adjacent monastery, which was used as a manufactory of tobacco. It was with the view of obtaining this permission that the Superior, accompanied by Mothers Desmarquest and Armande de Causans and the Marchesa Andosilla, presented herself on the 1st of February at the audience of the Holy Father.

Her request was refused, at any rate for the present. The Holy Father explained in the kindest manner the obstacles which existed to this concession. Otherwise Mother Barat was delighted with her audience. "With what benignity the Sovereign Pontiff received us," she wrote. "He is indeed the representative of Jesus on earth. His

goodness filled our hearts with consolation." In the course of the conversation the Marchesa Andosilla said that the Superior ought to be chained to Rome. "No," the Pope replied, "the Generals of Orders must not be chained." This was an important remark, for it quieted one of Mother Barat's anxieties.

The principal object of the audience having been disposed of, the Sovereign Pontiff spoke to the Mother General of her houses in America and then of the Church in France and its calamities. "How many cares beset His Holiness," she wrote just after this audience. "We must help him in all the little ways in our power; dutiful children must share the sorrows of their Father." However, in the midst of all the evils produced by impiety in France, a symptom of renewal of faith had given signs of better things, and the Holy Father mentioned it as such to his daughters.

A deputation of about seventy young men, medical and law students, had recently gone to Mgr. de Quélen to say that, tired of scepticism, they begged him to organize a system of religious instruction corresponding to the necessities of the day. The Archbishop gave this mission to one of his priests, and it was already bearing fruit. This small beginning was later on transformed into a vast apostolate by Fathers Lacordaire and De Ravignan. The Holy Father recommended this dawning hope to the prayers of the servant of God.

The great interests of religion were indeed ever foremost in her thoughts, and engaged her intense solicitude. The affair of the Abbé de Lamennais was then at its height, and he had just left Rome, smarting with wounded pride. Mother Barat under Father Rozaven's direction warned her daughters against the proselytism of the remaining adherents of that self-willed man. When she read some time afterwards Lacordaire's beautiful letter on the Holy See, she wrote to him a letter of congratulation, to which he attached great

importance, as coming from a person very intimate with the Holy Father.

The same feelings of zeal induced her to urge the Cardinal de Rohan to return to his diocese of Besançon. She had soon afterwards the grief of hearing that this dear friend had died, overcome by the excess of his apostolical labours. His last words to his priests were : " My brethren, I am nothing, less than nothing ; pray for me." Mother Barat felt deeply the death of one whom she called " our dear Duke and Father."

He could not read the letter she had written to him, but in his delirium her name was one of the last words he uttered. During Holy week the Mother General's devotion to the Church and to the Pope seemed if possible to increase. By a special favour His Holiness gave her the use of a little tribune which opened on the Vatican. There she saw him humbly washing the feet of twelve poor pilgrims. She wrote that he was so deeply recollected that she could not look at him without emotion, and united her own prayers with those she hoped he was then addressing to God for France. Just opposite to them was a picture of our Lord washing the feet of His Apostles, whilst under their eyes in the chapel they saw the Holy Father, renewing after the lapse of so many centuries this mystery of humility.

Mother Barat could not help turning to a foreign lady who was sitting by her, and saying : " What a proof we have before our eyes of the perpetuity of the Catholic Church. How can heretics and schismatics help being converted when they witness that magnificent chain which begins with our Lord Jesus Christ and includes His actual Vicar, Gregory XVI. ?" The lady seemed taken aback by this exclamation, and her only answer was, " Pray for me." Mother Barat heard afterwards that she was a schismatic, and to her great joy was subsequently informed that she had been received into the Church. In speaking of the Mass celebrated by

the Holy Father on Easter Day, and of the benediction *Urbi et Orbi* descending on forty thousand heads assembled in the square and the vicinity of St. Peter's, the Mother General expresses the strong feelings of faith which this spectacle awakened in her heart; but considering herself out of place in the midst of that crowd, she says to her nephew: "I would have willingly surrendered to you that privilege, preferring as I do my solitude to everything else." She wrote to Mother de Limminghe: "The Cardinal Vicar has sent me his palm, blessed by the Holy Father. Cardinal Lambruschini and another prelate did the same. You know what I feel about these honours. I cannot help thinking at such moments of the *Sepolte vive*, though in fact I care very little about all that. Oh, how much we are bound to be saints! I cannot tell you how these honours and marks of esteem make me suffer. People suppose that we deserve them, and in reality we are so unworthy of them."

On the 28th of March, feast of the Compassion of the Blessed Virgin, the Roman novitiate had been consecrated to our Lady of Sorrows. On that day the Superior, reminding them of all she owed herself to the holy Mother of God and of the duties imposed upon them by this consecration, said to her novices: "Above all, do not forget that in placing ourselves under the patronage of the Queen of Martyrs you select to be martyrs also. Thus shall you be true and worthy spouses of Jesus Christ crucified."

Continual obstacles and interminable formalities had delayed the transfer of the novitiate to Santa Rufina. Mother Barat wrote: "Things go on in this country at a snail's pace. We Frenchwomen die of it. It needs the patience of a saint." And then she adds: "Our Master wants me, I am sure, to repress my eagerness. I hope I shall always accept His will gently and submissively, even when it costs me most effort." When at last everything was ready the Cardinal Protector proposed that, according to

the Roman custom, the removal should take place with great ceremony in procession through the streets. The Mother General trembled at this prospect. "Only imagine," she wrote to Mother Grosier, "our all going on foot, with candles I suppose in our hands, and the Cardinal with the chaplains leading the way. Just picture to yourself this sight." She urged that the great distance between the Trinità and Santa Rufina made it very difficult to follow this custom and it was accordingly dispensed with, to her great joy, for she felt as if she would have died of shame on the road. A preparatory retreat was preached at the Trinità dei Monti by a servant of God, whose name appears then for the first time in this history, Father Barrelle, who was at that time Spiritual Prefect of the Roman College. He took as a theme for this retreat the words: "To be nothing and to have nothing." Mother Barat mentioned in all her letters that he had given them an excellent retreat. This Father became one of her greatest cooperators in the spiritual work of the Society.

On the 5th of May, the eve of their removal to Santa Rufina, she congratulated her daughters on the happiness of being called to teach the poor schools of that locality. "Blessed are you," she said, "to be chosen for this work of evangelizing the poor. The Trastevere is the poorest part of this city, and people look down on the children of what they call a despicable populace. Far from us such a thought; even as regards history, they are the descendants of the old Roman race, and have shown themselves lately again worthy of their origin, by their brave defence of the Pope. And in the eyes of faith how great is their nobility! Hidden and buried indeed like the grain of wheat in the ground or like a precious stone incrustated in a rock. Be it yours to extract the gem. You will find in those children the elements of great sanctity, a little kindness will go a great way in winning their hearts. Your work must be specially one of

charity, and Jesus the Father of the poor and the lowly will bless it.”

The removal was effected in silence, without any ceremony and by successive detachments. A temporary chapel received the Blessed Sacrament, the church having to be repaired and blest. Mother Barat was present at the first Mass said in the house, and remained there some time. She left Mother Desmarquest in charge of the novitiate. It was painful to her to part with her dear friend, and she wrote on this occasion : “The sacrifice is great, for so many proofs of friendship have gone on increasing my affection for her, but in this life and in our Society we must accept to die at every moment. Happy when we can say that, natural life once immolated, it is no longer we who live but Jesus, His good pleasure, and His life that live in us.”

On the 29th of May a farewell audience was granted by the Pope to Mother Barat. She told him what an honour and a happiness it would be to her to possess a few lines written with his own hand. Two days afterwards Gregory XVI. going beyond her hopes, addressed to her a long Brief, in which, after recalling the approbations given to the Society by his predecessors, Leo XII. and Pius VIII., he said : “It is with all our heart that we bless the work which our well-beloved daughter has founded with so much labour, and governs and watches over with so much wisdom.” Then dwelling on the services rendered by the Society of the Sacred Heart, he concluded as follows : “It is on this account that, availing ourselves of the Mother General’s residence in Rome, we have given her in this letter a testimony of our satisfaction. We wish it to be to herself and her daughters an incitement to bless, in all humility of heart, their Divine Spouse for the good He vouchsafes to effect by their means. At the same time may this pledge excite them still to advance by the grace of God in the path of virtue, and in the fulfilment of the

duties of their state. We recommend ourselves to their prayers, and we give to the Mother General, her daughters, and their pupils, our Apostolic Benediction. Given at Rome, near St. Peter's, the 1st of June, 1833.

On the 3rd of June the Superior began her homeward journey. France had never been for one moment out of her mind. "Our Lord lavished mercies on us at Rome," she wrote, "but my principal mission is in my own country, and it is therefore with the greatest pleasure I return to it."

She stopped for a while at Parma, where the Archduchess Marie Louise, ex-Empress of the French, was finding consolation in her altered fortunes in devotion to good works. She warmly welcomed Mother Barat, and showed her a convent where she was anxious to establish a house of the Sacred Heart. It was just opposite her house, surrounded by a fine cloister, and decorated with frescoes by Correggio on mythological subjects, which the Mother General, in spite of all her charity, could not understand being tolerated in a religious house. She agreed at once to surrender these halls to the school of painting which coveted them. Supposing the convent to be uninhabited, she was going through the remaining part of the building, to judge how far it could be made available for her purpose, when she suddenly came across a few elderly women in a half religious half secular dress. They were the last inmates of the convent, who vegetated in this corner of the house leading an idle and aimless life. Having heard the object of Mother Barat's visit, they gathered round her and implored to be permitted to die in that place. The Mother General told the Duchess of Parma that nothing should induce her to accept the foundation if these poor women were not provided for. This was accordingly arranged in an ample manner. The poor creatures, first in their anxiety and then in their gratitude, kept pursuing Mother Barat in the churches and even at Mass, embracing her and pouring

forth their supplications and their gratitude. She could not help feeling that in that house there had no doubt once been saints, that it had probably lost its fervour, and this was its end; "and we," she added, "who are only just beginning, shall we be always faithful?"

The school of Parma was to be reserved for the daughters of noble families. As a compensation, Mother Barat stipulated that a poor school should be annexed to it, and then promised to send some of her nuns in the following spring.

On the 12th of June she left Parma and went on to Turin, and then to Chambéry, where she made a memorable retreat. For some time past her humility had persuaded her of its urgent necessity. She wrote as follows to Mother Grosier: "I must acknowledge for the glory of our Lord that most of the members of the family of the Sacred Heart are advancing in the way of love, zeal, and fidelity. I do not mention all those who are making progress, but I could tell you, if you chose to believe me, of one who remains far behind. Pray for her, my daughter. The Lord knows who it is, and will apply to her your charitable remembrance. When we think that Jesus and Mary have suffered so much for us and without having deserved to suffer at all, it gives courage to those who have so much to atone for. You know that this is particularly the case with me."

The Mother General had taken for her temporary director the Abbé Favre, a missionary priest, very austere himself, and who led others with proportionate severity. Having given free scope to his penitent's attraction to penance, she indulged in it, if we may use such an expression, amply; gathering, for instance, prickly leaves out of the garden with which she made herself a belt. The Sister who waited upon her found it out and took away this instrument of torture, but Mother Barat substituted for it an iron

belt, and the blood which stained her clothes revealed the rigour of this penance. The poor Sister could not restrain her tears. But never had the presence of our Lord been so manifest and so sensible to Mother Barat, and when her companion, Madame de Limminghe, called her away from the tabernacle before which she was immersed in contemplation, she would exclaim: "Oh, He was uniting me to Himself so sweetly." The Abbé Favre used to wonder at this extraordinary love for mortification, and said: "We have a saint here who is as fond of penance as we are of sugar."

On the 18th of July the Mother General wrote a circular letter announcing the convocation of the Fourth General Council of the Society for the 29th of September, the Feast of St. Michael. After communicating to her daughters the Brief of the Holy Father, she said: "It is time for us to understand our obligations. It is time to correspond with the desires of the Heart of Jesus for this little Society which is so dear to Him, upon which He lavishes so many favours, and which He protects by incessant miracles. Indeed, my dear daughters, we ought to be making gigantic strides. The humdrum course of a semi-perfect life which might have sufficed under other circumstances, cannot answer in these times. The craving to save souls and to assist the Church must produce in our hearts burning desires to help it. Nothing impresses so strongly the sense of that zeal for perfection which we ought to have, as the sight of the grief of the Sovereign Pontiff, Supreme Head of the Church. We cannot hope to produce fruit in the souls of others if we are not ourselves united to Jesus Christ, the sole fount of life and salvation."

Visits to the houses of Lyons, La Ferrandière, Besançon, Montet, and Metz, delayed Mother Barat's arrival at Paris till the middle of September. She had written to Mother de Gramont: "Above all things, my dear Eugénie, no cere-

mony for my reception ; I know that you are glad to see your Mother again, and that is enough." On the 12th of the month she arrived at the Hotel Biron after two years' absence. She had left it crippled and suffering, and returned to it entirely cured. There was a burst of joy at the sight of the Mother General, and all the inmates of the house, nuns and children, followed her to the chapel singing the *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes*.

It was indeed the Lord who during those two years had turned everything that had happened into blessings for the Society, even its tribulations, even Mother Barat's sufferings. She had thus expressed it herself: "I do little, but I suffer, I pray, and the Master acts. You know that He likes to create His greatest works out of nothing, and to carry on His operations in the silence of the night. If we understood this, how we should hide, how we should annihilate ourselves! *Quoniam magnificata est super nos misericordia ejus.*

## CHAPTER II.

*Renewal of the works of zeal. Fourth General Council. Visits and Foundations. Mother Barat's apostolic journeys.*

THE six years which followed Mother Barat's restoration to health and her return to France were employed in zealous endeavours to make up to the Heart of Jesus for the ravages of impiety. The Council General, which met at Paris in September, 1833, was employed in organizing these works. "It was an unspeakable consolation thus to meet again," the Mother General wrote. "We had been afraid that this might never have been the case."

On the 30th of September, Mother Barat in a conference strongly urged on her councillors a close union with our Lord the Father of lights, and dwelt on those words of Holy Scripture, "Come ye to Him and be enlightened;"\* and on the same day Father Varin came to excite them to gratitude for all that God had done for their Society. On the 4th of October, Mgr. de Quélen spoke to the congregation of the law of progress and the law of stability in religious institutes, and explained that what concerns faith is immutable, but that what regards discipline may be modified according to the requirements of God's glory and the advantage of souls. Neither this council nor any of the succeeding ones, had, of course, the same importance as those hitherto held. The laws of the Society had now been finally fixed by the sanction of Rome, and all that remained was to secure their observance, and such was the object of the acts of this council.

\* Psalm xxxiii. 6.

Without entering into details as to its operations, we shall touch on the view it took of the duties of the Sacred Heart amidst the new order of things. To obviate, for instance, the possible reproach that in their schools what was showy was preferred to what was solid, the council studied "the means of forming the pupils to habits of simplicity, order, economy, and a taste for the useful." These were Mother Barat's own expressions. The system of studies was likewise revised and perfected, with the assistance of Father Loriquet, and nothing was neglected which could be considered as an improvement. "It is a mistake to cling too much to routine," Mother Barat said in one of her letters, "it is a weakness. When souls are in question, what does God care for a pen or a pencil, a bit of wood, or a bit of paper. Souls, souls, at any cost." Religious observance was also more rigorously enforced. Those nuns whom the world sometimes accused of retaining the spirit of ladies of rank under their monastic veils had nothing more at heart than to multiply and enforce the rules of poverty, humility, and enclosure. One of them, Madame de Limminghe, proposed that the use of the particle *de*, which, according to French custom, indicates noble birth when placed before a person's name, should be suppressed in the case of members of the Society. This motion was negatived simply on account of the irregularity which such a change might have caused in legal documents.

This council was also called upon to take a decision on a question which greatly grieved Mother Barat, and that was the suppression of the house at Grenoble. Not only had the school of Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut degenerated from its former splendour, but the town had set up a claim to what had once been its property, and threatened to erect barracks, which would have completely overlooked the convent. Mother Barat had communicated her fears to

Mother Duchesne, who wrote to her as follows in 1832: "What has been the fate of my dear house? I must have become very unworthy of St. Francis Regis' protection, that he no longer exerts his influence. But I still will hope." This hope, alas! was doomed to disappointment, and the sad news of the decision the council had arrived at was thus communicated to her by the Mother General: "My dear Philippine, you will easily believe that your name is often mentioned in our conversations during the sitting of our assembly. How could we ever forget you? It has been with great sorrow that we have found ourselves compelled to suppress your house at Sainte Marie, which you loved so dearly. It has been a matter of necessity. The town lays claim to it. Pray for us very much." Mother Duchesne wrote in answer that this disaster had fallen like lead on her heart. "I could sooner forget my right hand," she said, "than that delightful spot, and I weep over it with more reason than Jeremias over Jerusalem." The complete ruin she apprehended was not however consummated. The Sacred Heart was indeed obliged to abandon a place full of sweet recollections, and the Society has never ceased to regret its loss, but the convent was not destroyed. The Ursulines established themselves in it some time afterwards, and have remained there to this day, to the great satisfaction of the nuns of the Sacred Heart.

On the 31st of October the elections of the council took place. One of the most important of them was that of Elizabeth Galitzin as Secretary General, and from that time forward she exercised an important influence in the Society. Writing to recall her from Rome, Mother Barat thus announced to her this nomination: "I hope you will receive the news of your promotion with all humility. Indeed this office is more wearisome than honourable. Its chief advantage will be the opportunities it will afford you of practising patience."

Another important election was that of an Assistant General for America. For some time past, Mother Barat had been receiving very afflicting news from that country. In Missouri, at St. Charles, St. Louis and Fleurissant, Mother Duchesne and her daughters were wearing away their lives in apparently fruitless labours. Lower Louisiana was devastated by the cholera, and there the Sacred Heart had suffered from its ravages. Six nuns and an orphan girl had died in Mother Audé's house, who displayed on that occasion heroic courage. But after fourteen sleepless nights spent by the bedside of her dying companions, broken hearted and ill herself, she sighed for what seemed to her afflicted spirit the only remedy, rest and consolation, Mother Barat and France. She wrote to her Superior: "You are my only joy. Some time spent with you would strengthen me, refresh my soul, and enable me to suffer with better heart. My good and dear Mother, will you not grant me to go to you?" But she added: "I wish, however, to have no other will than yours up to my last sigh; and if that sigh is to be one of suffering, still I shall die happy, feeling that I am obeying you." The Mother General's answer was summed up in the words: "God alone." "Jesus wants you to love Him without any one to lean on or look to but Himself. Think of St. Francis Xavier in the island of Sancian, and do not be afraid. The goodness of God will supply your every need." But whilst she was leaving her daughter the merit of a complete sacrifice, Mother Barat was planning in her own mind that Madame Audé should be appointed at the close of the council, Assistant for America, and consequently summoned to France. This was accordingly done; and in her answer to that announcement, the newly-elected Assistant wrote: "Is it really true, my dear Mother, that soon I shall see you? That in a short time I shall not be expecting but enjoying that happiness! Oh, if there is any one really

happy on earth, your Eugénie will then be that person!" Her departure from St. Michael's caused universal regrets. She had made the foundation, and it had prospered under her care.

After the close of the council, the Mother General began the round of those visits which her infirmities and the state of public affairs had too long delayed. She scarcely interrupted them until the Council of 1839.

On the 13th of November, she went to Beauvais, then to Lille, then to Amiens, returned to Paris on the 24th of December, and left it again on the 7th of February, first to go to Mans, and afterwards to Poitiers, Niort, and Bordeaux. Wherever she went her daughters received her with tokens of veneration, which she was inclined to find fault with. She used to say on these occasions: "I know indeed that it is our Lord whom you honour in the person of your Superior, but it is very meritorious to discern that good Master when thus disfigured."

At Poitiers she had the opportunity of ministering consolation to the interior trials of Mother Grosier, one of her first companions. "You have suffered so long, my dear Henriette," she wrote to her afterwards, "that I rejoice at the peace which now fills your soul. It is more Divine when it is not sensible, for then our Lord's action is more distinct from what is merely natural. Crosses, absences, derelictions, purify the soul and prepare it for a closer union with its Spouse. It is therefore a real advantage to experience this suffering, provided we are faithful to the last degree."

At Niort, she said to Mother Giraud: "The times are growing worse. Faith diminishes every day. Faith, that most precious of all blessings! Oh, do imprint it deeply and strongly in the hearts of your daughters and of the children, those children for whom Jesus has suffered so much. You know to what trials it will be exposed in the world. But

above all things remember that in order to inspire others with faith our own hearts must be full of it. Kindle then by prayer that blessed light !”

And in another letter she writes: “I have left you in good dispositions. Give an excellent example to your daughters, especially as regards solid virtues. That is what some of them want. But a good will, animated by the love of God, will vanquish all obstacles. ‘Love,’ the Psalmist says, ‘absorbs the flames of hell. Charity triumphs over them.’ Oh, how much we are to be pitied if we do not understand that Divine secret. Everything would be easy to us but for the obstacle of our cowardly and inconstant nature. Let us hasten to get rid of it, my child.”

At Bordeaux she took pains to train the new Superior, Mother Buesen, to whom she said: “What you must do, my child, is to make use of energy in your government, but above all things to win the confidence of your daughters.” Her Superior’s visit was also a consolation to Mother de Lalanne, whose old age and deafness only deepened in her that peace which made her feel “that with her soul full of God she wanted nothing but silence and love.”

From Bordeaux she went to Lyons, where she arrived on the 6th of April. The Association of the Children of Mary, founded during her former visit, was the first object of her solicitude. The day after her arrival she presided at a meeting of the associates, and the children maintained by the congregation were presented to her. This was indeed a happy moment for Mother Barat. She was delighted at the sight of these little girls, and spoke to them in that lively and engaging manner which was peculiar to herself. Then turning to their Benefactresses, she said: “What a numerous and charming family Mary has given you! These children do not owe you so much as you owe to them, for they afford you the means of doing good, the greatest and best kind of happiness. Do not, I beseech you, seek happiness

of another sort in the pleasures of the world, it is not to be found there."

This peaceful day preceded a very different one. In the year 1831, Mother Barat had arrived at Lyons the day after an insurrection. She came there this time on the eve of a far more formidable conflict. It broke out on the 8th of April. A large number of workmen took possession of the heights which overlook the town, and carried on for four whole days a sanguinary struggle with the troops, marked by a courage worthy of a better cause. Shut up with her Sisters in the Rue Boissac, hearing nothing day and night but the sound of the tocsin, the firing of guns, the fall of the houses, and the savage shouts which resound in the streets of a city given up to revolution—ignorant as to the fate of Paris and the provinces, which were reported to be in full insurrection, Mother Barat's heart was filled with anguish. It was only on the 14th that General Aymar's army succeeded in re-establishing order. On that day, the Mother General wrote to Mother de Gramont: "My dear Eugénie, how I suffer! never has my poor heart been so severely tried! Imagine if you can the horrors of this conflict! For six days we have been surrounded by troops and artillery—for Bellecour is the head-quarters of this little army. Day and night we have listened to the incessant roar of cannon and the sound of the guns keeping up a deadly fire. The days of July, which we thought so terrible, were nothing in comparison. The city presents a dreadful aspect. Conflagrations are still raging, and whole streets destroyed by the ravages of the artillery. It is impossible to conceive a greater animosity. I had never found myself in the midst of such an affray, and cannot recover it. If we had fallen into the hands of those insurgents, the enemies of social order, we should have been lost. The Blessed Virgin has saved us. We did pray to her very hard."

On the 5th of May Mother Barat returned to Paris. One of her first cares was for her orphans, the number of which had increased, and consequently the necessity of a more spacious establishment. It was decided that the orphanage should be removed to Conflans, the village where she had taken refuge during the days of July. In the meantime, Mother Audé arrived in Paris, on the 26th of June. Mother de Gramont d'Aster came there also. This was the last time Mother Barat saw her. Mother de Charbonnel and some other Superiors happened to be at the same time at the mother-house, and several foundations proposed to the Society were discussed and resolved upon. After three months' residence at the Hotel Biron, the Mother General accompanied by Madame de Limminghe resumed her journeys. The first she took was for the purpose of a foundation.

At Charleville, in the Ardennes, a Community had been founded two centuries before by a young girl of noble family, Jeanne Idelette de Morel, for the education of poor children. The Dames de la Providence, as this Community was called, had courageously gone through the revolutionary crisis. They had all refused to be secularized, and, emigrating together, had resided at Chimay, Rotterdam, Brussels, and at Essen in Westphalia, where they earned their livelihood by needlework; the aid of that Providence under whose patronage they had placed themselves did not fail them in their need. Mother Jacquemard, an energetic and brave woman, after guiding her daughters during the trying years of exile, had brought them back to France in 1802, and established them at Charleville. After her death, Mother Justine de Gerlache, a person of eminent virtue, belonging to a family which maintains to this day its traditionary attachment to religion, became Superior of the Congregation. The pupils of these religious ladies were increasing daily in number, but that of the nuns diminishing.

A branch of their Society, the Dames de Sainte Sophie at Metz, had already joined the Sacred Heart. The Sisters of Charleville thought of doing the same, but it was a hard trial to Mother de Gerlache to accept the extinction of an institute, endeared to her by all the sufferings it had gone through. She struggled against it as long as she could. But the Superior who succeeded her, Mother Terneau, made up her mind to propose a union with Madame Barat's Order. The answer of the Mother General was as follows: "I have felt for a long time past the greatest esteem and attachment for your Congregation. I have learnt from our Sisters at Metz to appreciate it: the excellent spirit which they brought from their mother-house leaves me no doubt of the consolation and the benefit which our Society will derive from the union you propose. I am therefore inclined to go at once to Charleville, in order to bring it about as soon as possible." She went there on the day after the Assumption, 1834; and in the journal of that Community we find that she soon won the hearts of her new daughters by her maternal kindness, and instructed them in the spirit of their new vocation, especially in the diligent practice of mental prayer. In the following autumn Mother Prevost was placed at the head of the novitiate which these Sisters had to make, and which they went through with great fervour, Madame de Gerlache, at the advanced age of sixty-three, setting them the example.

This union was recognized by the Government in the course of the following year. "The Heart of Jesus has overcome every obstacle," Mother Barat wrote to her new daughters. "You belong to the Sacred Heart now, in the sight of God and in the eyes of men. Thanks to our good God and Mary our Mother." Later on, when the holy Mother Granon was sent to them as Superior, Mother Barat wrote again: "Endeavour all of you to become interior; it is the best way of arriving at the knowledge of our Lord.

When He is known, then He is loved—and when He is loved, then everything becomes easy. Oh, how I shall pray that God may enlighten you with that wonderful light, and give you the strength to walk in the way of perfect love.”

An important and still more evidently providential incorporation of a religious congregation with her Order soon afterwards called the Mother General to the south of France. A Community of teaching nuns, called “*Les Dames de St. Pierre*,” founded in the first instance at Grenoble by Madame Pierrette de Bourcet de Lassaigne, had subsequently established a second house at Marseilles in the Barony of St. Joseph, under the care of the Foundress’s niece, Mdlle. Louise de Bourcet, who was a person of eminent virtue. At Sainte Marie d’en-Haut she had made acquaintance with Mother Theresa, Mother Aloysia, and then with Mother Barat. The Sacred Heart from that time forward had been to her the ideal of religious life. Having proposed to her Sisters to seek a union with it, and finding that some of them objected to this step, she yielded to their opposition. But this disappointment and the delay of her most cherished hopes preyed on her health.

In the month of August, 1832, the Mother General had to write: “Our poor Louise is dying.” And in the following month: “I will send you a letter from my dear Louise. What an angel she is! We shall lose her. She is dying of grief.” In the height of her fever the prayer, “To be united to the Sacred Heart,” rose to her lips. It was the cry of her heart. She often kissed her crucifix and exclaimed: “O my God, give me the Sacred Heart or heaven.” To one of her companions, Madame Vincent, she said: “My dear friend, I am sinking fast. Like Moses, I shall not see the promised land. Only one thing I had cared for in this world, and that was to unite you with the

Sacred Heart!" She expressed an earnest wish to be received into that Order before her death, and Mother Barat sent her immediately the cross of the professed nuns. But by the time it arrived Louise de Bourcet had expired, and her last words were: "No more regrets! No more fears! I am going into the bosom of God." Mother Barat wept at the tidings of her death, and said: "We were not worthy of possessing that chosen soul." But what in life this holy religious could not compass was effected by her death. The union was petitioned for, and the Mother General looked upon it as a sacred legacy from her beloved daughter. She chose as the instrument of this work one who was to her a sort of second self. Mother Audé, since her return from America had hoped to remain for a long time with the Mother General, but such hopes and wishes were never taken into account by Mother Barat when the good of souls was in question, and she insisted on Mother Audé's taking charge of the house at Marseilles. The climate she told her was desirable for her health; but above all, the interests of the Heart of Jesus called for this sacrifice. The humble and tender-hearted Eugénie took it into her head that this appointment was a banishment—that her dear Reverend Mother had ceased to care for her, and that this was the result of her numerous defects; upon which, Mother Barat wrote to her: "What a strange idea that your defects would weaken my affection for you! Is Jesus Christ disgusted with us on account of our miseries? Does He not set us the example of loving the weak and the helpless even more than others. And besides all that, am I not far more full of faults than you are, and still you love your Mother?"

However, soon after Madame Audé's departure, the Mother General prepared to follow her to Marseilles, and from every place where she stopped on her way to the south wrote to give her hopes of her speedy arrival. But such was not the will of God. So many fatigues had

exhausted the Foundress's strength, and on the 15th of January, 1835, Mother Barat had to write from Lyons: "I am kept here by an attack of influenza, which gives me distressing nights. I will start as soon as I can." She could not finish this letter, and became dangerously ill. This was the case almost every winter, but in this instance a violent fever threatened her life, and she remained for three months at La Ferrandière in a most critical state. In May she was able to leave her bed, but the weather was too hot for a journey to Provence in her weak state, and the doctors ordered her to recruit her strength in the quiet solitude of Montet, and afterwards at Besançon.

Meanwhile Mother Audé found at Marseilles the cholera, which she had so courageously encountered in America. "God does indeed will you on the Cross," the Mother General wrote. "Alone at St. Michael's you had to endure the terrible effects of this scourge, and you come back to Europe in order to fall in with it again! But I hope and believe that Jesus and Mary will protect you. I think the Sacred Heart will preserve you. He does not usually give us to drink a second time the same chalice."

The contagion approached the house of St. Joseph only near enough to evince the self-devotion of its Superior. Eight to twelve hundred persons were dying every day in the town, and the Sacred Heart appeared to be so wonderfully spared that the parents of the pupils entreated Mother Audé to keep them at school. Madame Barat wrote to her, "Consecrate at once all your inmates to Mary. Suggest to Mgr. d'Icosie to order a procession to Notre Dame de la Garde, and let a vow be made to the Blessed Virgin Protectress of Marseilles." This advice was followed, and the house of the Sacred Heart preserved. One of the Sisters was indeed attacked by the cholera, but Mother Audé lodged her in her own room, nursed, and cured her. When the epidemic subsided a deputation of the pupils

went to Notre Dame de la Garde to hang up an *ex-voto* in thanksgiving for their preservation.

When the danger was at an end, Mother Audé joined the Mother General at Lyons and returned with her to Paris, where she remained till the legal recognition of the union of the Marseilles house with the Sacred Heart was made. Another parting had then to be accepted, and she returned to her post. "If our good Master wills this trial for us both," wrote her beloved Superior, "we must let Him have His way, dear Eugénie, and hold our peace."

A circular letter from the Mother General announced to her Society her complete recovery. "On the one hand," she said, "we cannot but feel glad to be permitted to work on according to God's will for the promotion of His glory; but at the same time we cannot refrain from exclaiming, in bitterness of soul, Why, oh why does He prolong our days on this earth, where He is so grievously offended? But far be it from us to have any other will than His." Her stay in Paris was short. On the 26th of June she resumed her travels, and wrote to Mother Emilie: "Pray that this life which God gives back to me may be entirely employed for the glory of the Heart of Jesus. Were it not to be so, far better would it have been for me to die." The year before, on her way back from Charleville, Mother Barat had stopped at Brussels and taken into favourable consideration the question of a foundation in its vicinity. At a distance of a league from the town a large property, comprising woods, fields, and arable land, stood in a village called Jette-Saint-Pierre. She had bought it, and under Mother de Charbonnel's direction a large house had been built there. Madame Barat came to preside at the opening of a temporary chapel, where the feast of the Sacred Heart was solemnized. One of the conditions of the Founders was that the school should be reserved for the children of noble families. She wrote on that occasion, "You will

easily understand that I regret this stipulation, for I can say with truth before God that I prefer the poorest works. But we owe our assistance to all who need it, and it is that class which needs it most. Then, if the Heart of Jesus vouchsafes to bless this foundation, we can make another for children of the middling class. That is my chief object."

In the meantime a poor school was opened at Jette, and the wives and daughters of workmen came on Sundays to listen to instructions on Christian doctrine. They thought this a good way of learning French, and it was to this circumstance that the Superior, Mother Theresa de Wall, alluded in one of her letters. "You will have seen in this device one of the nets thrown by 'Jette-Saint-Pierre.' You are perhaps aware, dear Reverend Mother, that our village takes its name from a picture in the parish church, which represents St. Peter throwing his net at the word of his Divine Master. We venture to hope that this great Saint will help us to devise salutary ways of entrapping souls, and that a miraculous haul will be our reward."

On her return to Paris Mother Barat devoted herself to a work which she considered as the centre of all her other works. This was the establishment of the mother-house and the novitiate in a separate house from the Hotel Biron. Not far from it, in the Rue Monsieur, and only divided from its gardens by the Rue de Babylone, stood a mansion belonging to the Marquis de Nicolay. Mother Barat asked him to let it to the Sacred Heart, and took possession of her new residence on the 10th of July, 1835. She established herself there for ten months with the novices. Later on we shall speak of the novitiate of the Rue Monsieur; now we have to follow the course of Mother Barat's exterior and apostolic work, only mentioning that it was during that interval she heard of the death of Mother de Gramont d'Aster. Her end was that of a Saint. Having made all

her last dispositions, she said to her secretary, "Now everything is ready. I have only to suffer and to give myself up to God." Her sufferings were long. "God makes me die by slow degrees," she ejaculated; "soon it will be my heart only that will be able to say *fiat*." To the very end she was occupied about the children and the poor. Her last words were, "Oh, we must suffer in order to love truly. Nothing troubles me now. I feel an indescribable peace. *Quemadmodum cervus. . . Lætatus sum in his. . .* O Jesus, I am thine, entirely thine. Take thy servant. . . More, more suffering and more love. O my Jesus, let us depart! Jesus, Mary, take me, bear me away in your arms!" Then, just before expiring, she said, "I am well—very well. I am going to sleep." Thus at seventy years of age, on the 14th of January, 1836, died this servant of God.

Mother Barat felt deeply her loss and the affliction of her two daughters. "If I live on," she wrote, "I shall see every year our dearest friends depart, and have to mourn over the loss of our best supports. They die, indeed, as they lived, like saints, and leave us great examples."

The memory of Mother de Gramont d'Aster's sanctity has remained in veneration in the Society of the Sacred Heart, and miraculous cures have been attributed to her intercession.

The Mother General had yet to visit her dear Saint Joseph of Marseilles, and on the 17th of April, 1836, she wrote as follows: "This morning we have kept the feast of the Good Shepherd. The approaching departure of the wretched Shepherdess saddened the flock. It is not a pleasant thing for a shepherdess to leave her sheep." On the following day, accompanied by Madame de Limminghe and a Lay-sister, Marie Patte, she was on her road to the south. On the 25th they arrived at Lyons, and on the 28th at Avignon. Between Nissan and Narbonne the heavy rains had made the Rhone overflow; the plains were under

water, the bridges broken, the roads submerged, the mistral blowing with a terrific violence. Marie Patte, trembling from head to foot, said to the Mother General, "If I was not with you, Reverend Mother, I should be very much frightened, but I am not afraid of anything when I am with you." "This was exactly," Mother Barat remarks, "what I said to our Lord with rather better reason." On the following day they reached Vernet, a house in the country where the Sisters from Perpignan were established. On the 26th they arrived at Marseilles. Mother Barat's reception was so enthusiastic and so joyful that the coachman who had driven her to the door kept asking, "But who is this lady? They could not do more if she was a saint from Paradise." When Mother Audé presented to Madame Barat all the former nuns of Saint-Pierre now belonging to the Sacred Heart, she said, "Alas, there is one missing!" She could not forget her dear Louise de Bourcet, and those words went to the hearts of those who were still lamenting her loss.

The extreme poverty of the chapel painfully struck Mother Barat. "My first feeling," she said, "as I adored our Lord in that poor little sanctuary, was that of David when he exclaimed, 'My God, I will not rest until I have found Thee a habitation.'" Measures were immediately taken to erect a better chapel in the left wing of the house.

She was pleased at finding the Community happy and united under the excellent government of Mother Audé. She was also delighted with the place, and wrote, "I think this the most beautiful of our convents. It unites everything—a beautiful view, a lovely situation, everywhere an abundance of pure sparkling water, cascades, meadows, alleys, groves, vineyards, cornfields, fruit trees—and the house itself is large and well distributed."

The magnificent panorama of the town and port of

Marseilles and the heights of Notre Dame de la Garde, overlooking the blue waves of the Mediterranean, delighted her eyes and raised her heart to God. It reminded her also of the holy Bishop Belzunce, and the first miracle of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. "A house of the Sacred Heart," she said, "does indeed befit this place. Marseilles ought to have been the cradle of our Society." She loved to walk with her nuns in that beautiful enclosure, or to gather them around her under the shade of what they called "the olive-tree of peace," or in a little wood which re-echoed with the hymns they were wont to sing. But even there she had to mourn over the loss of a young and most promising novice, Louise Félicité Joyant de Couës-nongle. She was a great-niece of the heroic Victoire de Saint-Luc, who was condemned to death under the Reign of Terror for having painted and distributed pictures of the Sacred Heart. Doomed to the scaffold with her father and mother, she asked to precede them, and said, as she mounted the fatal steps, "You showed me how to live, I will show you how to die." Her niece, trained in the Convent of Quimper by Mother Theresa, had edified by her innocence and virtues the house in Paris. Now, dying at Marseilles, she seemed only to wait to be blessed by the Mother General before her *départure* from this world. "What a loss for Saint Joseph!" Madame Barat wrote. "I had reckoned so much on the zeal of that child; I cannot express the sorrow I feel." Louise Félicité made her vows on her death-bed, and said one morning to the Infirmarian, "Go and tell Reverend Mother that the hour has come, but do not let her be anxious: I am going to heaven." She died at the age of twenty-one on the 4th of June, eve of the feast of the Sacred Heart.

Mother Barat feelingly expressed her regret at leaving Marseilles. "How much pain it has given me," she wrote on the 15th of July to Mother Audé; "how hard I found

it to part with that dear little family of Saint Joseph, so endeared to me since I have known it more intimately. Tell them how much I feel this. The knowledge of their excellent religious spirit, which is entirely that of the Sacred Heart, is a consolation to me in the midst of my sorrows." After visiting Aix, Avignon, Annonay, La Ferrandière, and Chambéry, Mother Barat arrived at Montet on the 17th of August, and interrupted for a while the course of her fatiguing travels in order to devote herself to the novitiate, which had existed for four years in that place under the direction of Mother Henriette Coppens. In the next chapter we shall see her at work amongst the novices.

### CHAPTER III.

#### *The Novitiate of Montet.*

1836.

ON the 11th of September, 1832, when Mother de Charbonnel had left Montet and appointed Mother Coppens as Superior, the latter spent the whole morning before the tabernacle in tears. She looked at her family of novices, and could not help exclaiming: "O my God, what can I do with such young things!" "We shall grow, Mother," her daughters replied, and they kept their word.

The novitiate of Montet has left indelible recollections in the hearts of all those who have inhabited that retired convent, almost buried in snow during one half of the year, and where months elapsed without a single visit interrupting the solitude of the place. The pensions of a few chosen pupils more or less maintained the poor Community. There was a gratuitous school for the children of the village, and the Sisters worked themselves in the garden. Their wants were easily supplied. M. l'Abbé Picau, a very learned and pious man, but completely ignorant of the things of this world, was the chaplain of the convent. He preached well, but in too high a style of oratory: Mother Coppens told him so one day. "M. l'Abbé, your sermons are very fine," she said, but what simple women like us require is to hear about God and our duties, and nothing more." The good Abbé was struck with the remark, and conceived so great an esteem for Mother Coppens that he became her disciple in the interior life, and from that time forward he effected great good in the novitiate.

The Bishop of Friburg, Mgr. Tobie Yenny, often came to Montet to visit, to exhort, and to bless the Daughters of the Sacred Heart. The gentleness of his disposition and the unction with which he spoke reminded those who heard him of the character and writings of St. Francis of Sales. His instructions were not like sermons, but simple conversations on the virtues of the religious life. Once, when he was going to the pilgrimage of Einsiedeln, he asked the novices what he should ask for them of our Lady of the Hermits. They all with one accord answered, "Obedience."

It was indeed the virtue most sedulously practised at Montet; it made the meanest employments acceptable. On one occasion a stranger was amused at finding a postulant of high birth, and wearing still the smart gown she had brought with her, struggling with a stick in her hand to keep in order four pigs committed to her care.

The Jesuits were the ordinary preachers of the Community. Besides their college at Friburg, they had a residence on the borders of the Lake of Neufchâtel, where they spent their time of probation, and occasionally rested from their apostolic labours. Father Varin and Father Druilhet came to this place at different intervals and resumed their ministrations at the Sacred Heart. There, also, an eminent man had just terminated his third year of probation—one who had abandoned a worldly career, full of promise of future success, to join the Society of Jesus, and who by his preaching and his direction, his eloquence and his sanctity, was destined so wonderfully to serve and edify the Church of France. Father Xavier de Ravignan was often sent by his Superior to the nuns at Montet. Mother Henriette used to call him the "Grand Master of her novices." It is mentioned in their journal "that his modest dignity, his calm and profound recollection, were in themselves a lesson, they indicated so clearly a heart full of God and nothing else." A retreat preached by this servant of God, in 1834, made a

great impression on the novitiate; but the one given by Father Varin was still more remarkable in its effects. He had at first refused to undertake this task, and was on his way back to his house at Estavayer, when he suddenly changed his mind and retraced his steps. "The Blessed Virgin," he told the nuns, "has desired me to give you the Holy Exercises. She will lend me her powerful help." And indeed that retreat was marked with wonderful results of all sorts. The preacher was struck with the fervour of this chosen Community, and said to Mother Barat when he returned to Paris: "You possess a hidden treasure at Montet."

The treasure which he thus spoke of was the Superior, Mother Henriette Coppens. She was at that time forty-eight years of age, and her life presented many evidences of a Divine interposition. Her father, Bernard Coppens, and her mother, Marie Valcke, worthy tradespeople of Ghent, had brought her up in the practice of solid and religious virtue and the habits of activity, order, and industry, which belong to the old-fashioned Flemish race. Under a calm exterior and an outward framework, so to speak, of unswerving regularity, Henriette had a warm heart and an energetic soul, capable of the most entire self-sacrifice, and early inclined to devote itself to Jesus Christ. Her mother, who became a widow during her childhood, loved her eldest daughter with a passionate affection and more than all her other children. This feeling was amply reciprocated, and they could hardly bear to be separated, even for a few hours. When Henriette began to feel that she was called to the religious life, the sight of her mother's grief affected her so much that she fell ill and was nearly dying. She related in after life that on St. Nicholas' day, the 6th of December, 1813, after receiving the last Sacraments, she remained two days in a state of apparent unconsciousness, and that during that time she felt herself transported into heaven and placed

between St. Theresa and St. Augustine. She felt it impossible to take any of the remedies which a nursing Sister presented to her, for fear of losing the bliss of that extraordinary ecstasy.

After a recovery which was deemed almost miraculous, and many struggles, tears, and prayers, Henriette at last entered the house of the Society at Dooresele, where her friend and relative, Eulalie Gonthyn, and her countrywoman, Antonia de Limminghe, soon followed her. Her novitiate was spent in such transports of joy and sweet tears, that she reproached herself afterwards for having given way too much to these feelings of sensible love. "Every day," she said, "her handkerchiefs were saturated with tears." She became Mother de Peñeranda's assistant, and in 1823 re-entered the Sacred Heart at Paris. Some years afterwards Mother Barat gave her to Mother Desmarquest as Submistress of novices, but it was in the novitiate at Montet that her merits became most conspicuous. "Mother Henriette governs this house in an admirable manner," was the testimony of her Superior in 1831, and she adds: "I have only to thank God for the good direction which by her means He vouchsafes to this little flock."

The chief characteristics of this Mother were her sound good sense and perfect uprightness of heart. • Calm and cold in manner, like most of her country people, she at first inspired awe, but when she was once known the feelings of confidence entertained for her were unbounded. Her exterior appearance corresponded with the perfect purity of her soul. To her love of poverty and simplicity she joined a spirit of order and cleanliness which in her case seemed almost a virtue. The spotless neatness of everything about her made her Sisters call her "The Ermine."

Whilst her hands were incessantly employed, it was evident that her heart was free from all earthly preoccupations, and that she turned to God at every moment with an

ease and facility which showed that such was the continual bent and current of her thoughts. It was no more an effort to her to lift up her mind in prayer, than it is for the stream to flow into the sea.

Jesus Christ was her life. Often and often she was found in her room on her knees, with her face leaning against the little window in her cell which opened on the tabernacle. But for her to love Jesus was to obey Him by the strict fulfilment of her duties. St. Vincent of Paul used to say: "The perfection of love is not in ecstasies, but in the accomplishment of God's will;" and this was Mother Henriette's rule. "To live without choosing, to hold to nothing, to suffer, and to embrace the Cross, to be always ready to say Yes or No—always yes to grace, always no to nature"—these were the maxims she impressed on her daughters and invariably followed herself.

Sometimes the recreations were spent in the "Thébaïde," a shady and pleasant valley, watered by a running stream surrounding a little island, where in a grotto stood an image of the Blessed Virgin. There Mother Henriette used to ask her novices questions on subjects which would not have been unsuited to the conferences held by St. Augustine, his mother, and his disciples in the solitude of their villa at Cassiacum. "Who will tell me," she inquired one day, "in what the true happiness of a soul consists?" One said, "In the love of our Lord:" another, "In the accomplishment of His will, or in the Cross, or in heaven;" but Mother Henriette was of opinion that "true happiness lies in the absence of desires." It was always her wish to see her novices light-hearted and cheerful. "We must be in good spirits," she used to say, "in the house of God. God loves cheerful hearts. Souls are like plants, it is when they expand and open that they receive most abundantly the dew of heaven and become fruitful."

On certain great holidays novices and pupils accom-

panied by their mistresses climbed up the hill and went into the woods of oak and fir which formed part of the convent property. Preceded by a donkey carrying a load of provisions, the happy party ascended to a height they called Mount Tabor, which commanded a magnificent view of Alpine glaciers on one side, whilst it overlooked on the other a valley peopled with herds, dotted with white châteaux, and further on the three beautiful lakes of Neuchâtel, Morat, and Geneva. A harp, the traditional accompaniment of such excursions, was carried with them on these occasions, and the sound of hymns and holy songs resounded amidst the stillness of the mountain scenery. One who had taken part in these rural and religious festivities declared that "when Office was said under the trees, and the waters and woods, the snow, hills, and mountains, were called upon to praise the Lord, it seemed as if all those fair works of creation lying at their feet or towering above their heads, were answering to the invitation addressed to them by the inspired Psalmist.

It was on the 19th of August that the Mother General arrived at Montet, accompanied by Madame de Limminghe. She insisted on spending the first recreation with the novices. "I like a small party," she said; "come, my dear children, let us speak of our Lord." But as soon as the Community heard that she was gone to the novitiate, a rush to it took place, and the number of those crowded into the room was so large that chairs enough could not be found. Many of them had to sit on their heels like Carmelite nuns.

Afterwards the Mother General assembled her flock sometimes in the little wood of the Thébaïde, or in the garden, or on the island, or near a grotto they called Manresa, and as they listened to her earnest words the novices said that their hearts burnt within them, inflamed by love for Jesus Christ. Once she asked them if they understood the meaning of the words our Lord said to St. Theresa :

“Seek thyself in Me,” and explained the necessity and the intense happiness of forgetting and losing oneself in God. Another day she commented on the parable of the fig-tree, and spoke of the labours of Jesus, the divine and patient gardener of our souls, and also of the miserable fate of the tree which fails to bring forth fruit. But in the retreat which Mother Barat began by a beautiful conference on the 10th of September, 1836, she chose as her text that sentence so well adapted to the place and to the time: “I will lead her into solitude and speak to her soul.” “You hear those words,” she said: “my children, they constitute a positive promise. God will speak to you Himself, provided that by fidelity, detachment, and self-abandonment you prepare in your heart a solitude. Prepare it, my daughters; make ready that desert; let every sound be hushed, for the Lord is nigh unto us. Lend your ears to His voice, and whatever may be the sacrifice He asks of you, answer with generosity, “My heart is ready, O Lord! my heart is ready!”

That retreat was a very fervent one, and when at the end of eight days the *Te Deum* was sung and that it was permitted to break silence, Mother Barat gave the signal for it by exclaiming, “How good God is!” She wished to speak to each of her daughters in private, and determined on that account to stay some time at Montet.

Sixty religious, postulants, novices, and professed nuns filled the house. It was a great school of religious life. Thanks to its solitude, its poverty, and probably also to those special graces which God bestows on souls which consecrate themselves to Him in the midst of public trials and calamities, it so happened that valiant souls were trained in that novitiate, many of whom were afterwards called to occupy important posts or to give great examples of virtue in the Society.

One of the novices whom Mother Barat had taken most notice of in her last visit to Montet was Clémence Caumont.

She was the beloved daughter of a wealthy family of Rouen, which the revolution of July had driven to Friburg, where her brothers were educated at the Jesuits' College. Clémence, whose first inclination had been to the Carmelite Order, became acquainted with the Sacred Heart at Montet. When she returned to France she was introduced into the most brilliant society, was much admired, and received several advantageous offers of marriage, but she at once declared her intention of consecrating her life to God alone. Her parents, who could hardly bear to part with their beloved child, had the courage to take her to Montet. Mother Coppens relates that her piety, generosity, spirit of poverty, and delicate charity soon won for her the name of "Angel of the novitiate." But at the end of two years it became evident that she would soon take her flight to heaven. On her bed of suffering she was often heard to exclaim: "O Mary, it was love which gave thee thy cross! Oh, let the Cross give me love!" On the morning of the Octave of the Assumption, August 22nd, 1834, as she was reviving from a fainting fit, the dying girl said, "O Sister, did you see what I saw?" then, joining her hands, she smiled, and in her twenty-fifth year departed from this world. She had made her vows on her death-bed. There were few of her children whose loss was more acutely felt by Mother Barat.

Many of Clémence's friends and companions in the noviceship are still living, and we may be permitted to speak of two sets of sisters very dear to the Mother General, and who were, so to speak, the foundations of the house at Montet.

The three daughters of the Marquis de Nicolay reaped the fruits of the hospitality their father had given to Mother Barat, and became nuns of the Sacred Heart. The eldest of them thought herself called later in life to an exceptional mission, and, adopting the habit of St. Francis, travelled to the Holy Land, where she revived the Sanctuary of Emmaus.

But at the time we are speaking of she was deeply impressed by the sanctity of her Superior, and her unremitting efforts towards perfection. Aymardine and Marie de Nicolay labour to this day in the Society. Mother Barat appreciated the sacrifice their generous father had made in giving them up to God, and wrote as follows to Sister Aymardine on the day of her clothing, the 2nd of February, 1834, "Your excellent father, like a new Simeon, is about to present you to God, and your pious mother is likewise surrendering her Isaac, for you know how dearly she loves you. Our Lord will accept with gladness that threefold offering. But your sacrifice must be the most complete in imitation of Jesus Christ, the great Victim, who on this day offered Himself up to His Father. Pray for yourself, and pray for your parents also, that He may repay them a hundredfold for what they do in giving you up to God. I shall have to offer as a sacrifice my absence from Montet; for what happiness it would have given me, my child, to lead you to the Altar!"

The other set of sisters who succeeded one another in the novitiate at Montet were the daughters of a pious family at Lyons. In the spring of 1830, Emma, Eulalie, and Eliza de Bouchaud had all asked to be received into the Society at La Ferrandière. Their father had said, "You are at liberty to follow your vocation. It is not for me to place myself between God and you." But as he was broken-hearted at losing his children, the Superior thought that this blow should be softened to him, and that the eldest of his daughters ought to remain with him till she had provided for the education of her little sister Wilhelmina, then seven years of age. Sister Emma came to Montet later on, and used to say, "I grieved at being separated from my parents, but it was that child that was always lying across my heart." Mother Barat never ceased to respect and bear in mind the Christian-hearted father who had made that generous gift to her Society. Writing twenty years afterwards to the same

religious she said : " What a joy it will be to me to find one day all your dear relatives in heaven ! Yours was indeed a truly patriarchal family. A Christian household of that sort is so seldom seen now-a-days. It is a blessing for you to have belonged to it, and that blessing was the origin of your vocation, as it will be the cause of your eternal felicity."

But amongst all these novices the most remarkable and at the same time the most unnoticed was no doubt a young Alsatian called Joséphine Gœtz. It is not without emotion that we mention her name for the first time in this history. She was born at Strasburg, her family were worthy and religious people. At the age of three years she lost her mother, whose place was supplied by an excellent aunt, Mdlle. Odile Gœtz, who educated her little niece in strong and earnest Christian principles. At the school of the Sacred Heart at Besançon, Joséphine had been distinguished by abilities which always secured to her in everything the first place, and a superiority of character which gave her an undisputed ascendancy over her companions. Unfortunately she was too well aware of this, and at that time pride and a spirit of self-assertion marred her great gifts. But she had an innate sense of all that is right, true, good and beautiful, and this was her salvation. God appealed to her heart and bestowed on her graces which transformed her. She began ardently to love Jesus Christ, and that love impelled her to modify her own character with all the strength of soul which she was possessed of. Joséphine humbled, submitted, and mortified herself in every possible way and almost to excess. " I do really belong to God now," she said at that time to one of her mistresses. Mother Barat's arrival at Besançon in 1832, without her knowing it, decided her vocation. " I shall never forget," she afterwards said, " the impression she made upon me the first time I saw her. It was like a supernatural influence which took hold of me and penetrated into the depths of my heart."

On the following day, the feast of the Assumption, as she was coming out of the chapel, she said to one of her friends: "The Lord has just vouchsafed to me in my Communion an overwhelming grace." That grace was a religious vocation. She was seventeen years of age, and after six months' experience of the world came back to Montet with no other desire than to be forgotten by everybody. Mother Coppens discovered, however, the merits of the new novice, and seems even to have had a presentiment as to her future destiny. When, in a very dangerous illness, Joséphine's life seemed to be in danger, the Superior was heard to exclaim in a voice broken by sobs: "Did I then deceive myself when I thought the Lord told me that this soul was destined to do great things for His glory?" It was indeed true this chosen soul was to be raised high in the Society in proportion to her own desires for humiliation, and it was her own successor that the Mother General without knowing it had found at Montet in the person of that perfect novice.

On the same day that Joséphine Goetz took the habit of a Choir Novice, another Sister remarkable for nothing but her extreme simplicity received that of a Lay-sister. She was only known as Sister Elizabeth, was often reprovved for her clumsiness, for she was not at all handy, and accepted these reprimands with a humility which indicated no ordinary amount of virtue. Two years had elapsed since she had been sent to Montet. Nobody had an idea who she was and whence she came. These circumstances remained a profound secret between Madame Barat and herself.

In 1834, a person of about thirty years of age called on the Mother General and begged to be received into her Society as a Lay-sister. When asked to mention her name she said it was "Pauline de St. André de la Laurencie de Villeneuve," but that she wished to bury it for ever in

obscurity. Néré in the Charente-Inférieure was her birth-place. She had been withdrawn from her home in early childhood in order to preserve her from the contamination of evil example. Her aunt, Mdlle. de la Laurencie de la Thibaudière, placed her at the convent-school of the Ursulines at Saint Jean-d'Angély. An excellent and brilliant education, the charm of her manner and the amiability of her disposition procured for her successes in society which gave great satisfaction to her aunt. Pauline submitted to her wishes, but her heart was set on higher things. After carefully educating her young sister and securing her by her own intelligent and unremitting exertions a sufficient dowry and a good marriage, she went to a neighbouring convent and asked to be received as a simple Lay-sister. Her motives were not understood, and she then made the same request at the Sacred Heart in Bordeaux. The Superior of that house referred her to Mother Barat. To her the postulant secretly revealed the misfortunes of her family, and told her that ever since the day of her First Communion, when she had felt an impulse to consecrate herself to God, she believed herself called to expiate the faults of her kindred by becoming the servant of the servants of Christ. This was one of those extraordinary inspirations in which Mother Barat always dreaded to discover some illusion. But on the other hand, she could not but be touched by the delicacy of feeling and the magnanimity evinced by this desire of self-sacrifice. She received the postulant, gave her the name of Elizabeth, and in order to shield her more effectually from observation, sent her to Montet.

She found her there in 1836, and wishing still further to try this soul entirely known to herself alone, she put it to her whether well-educated and well-informed as she was, it might not be her duty to employ the gifts she had received for the glory of our Lord. Elizabeth ventured

to ask in reply whether our Lord had not glorified His Father by His own annihilation, and the Mother General assenting to this question, she said: "Well, Reverend Mother, my desire and my vocation are to glorify Him in the same manner." Mother Barat, deeply affected by these words, blest this generous novice, but wishing to examine her still more closely herself before permitting her to make her vows, she took her to Chambéry, whence she was to follow her to Turin. "We shall meet there," she said, and Elizabeth gaily replied: "Yes, we shall meet, Reverend Mother, and with the help of God, I shall succeed in converting you to my ideas, which will not be a small triumph."

On the 3rd of October, Mother Barat left Montet, She passed through Chambéry, and on the 20th of October arrived at that Convent of Turin which she was wont to call "her garden of delights." The King and Queen of Sardinia used often to visit the school. "We have no children of our own," they said, "and so we adopt those of the Sacred Heart." But these royal favours were not quite to Mother Barat's taste, and once when the Sisters were describing to her one of the King's visits, she archly replied: "His Majesty had better take care. If he visits our houses so often, I shall soon go and review his troops."

At Turin she resumed her earnest study of Sister Elizabeth's dispositions. The latter wrote to a priest who had formerly directed her: "It is impossible to fancy a more worthy representative of our Lord than this Reverend Mother; if I only happen to meet her for an instant it rejoices my heart." Another time she said: "Our Mother General wants to make sure that I shall always be in the same frame of mind. She will not let me pronounce my vows till she is entirely convinced that I am not ruled by my imagination, but that I simply obey the will of God in following what seems a singular vocation. I hope that

she will soon be convinced. I am always happy and my soul full of the energy that grace alone can give." The words which follow are a proof of this: "I foresee that in my new novitiate I shall enjoy numerous humiliations. That and the happiness of being under the eyes of our Mother General are the only joys I desire."

At last Mother Barat gave way. It was decided that after a few more months of trial the novice would be permitted to make the vows of a Lay-sister, which she accordingly did on the 10th of February of the following year, feast of the Wounds of our Lord. Death alone revealed the secret which was sealed in that act of consecration.

The Mother General remained two months at Turin. One of the pupils of that time relates an instance of the way in which she used to take advantage of every little circumstance to convey spiritual instruction. The parents of this young lady sent her one day a beautiful aloes, which had just blossomed in their garden. She called together all the school and said: "See, my dear children, this wonderful flower which one of your companions has brought me. How beautifully white it is and how sweet its perfume! But it blossoms only once in a century and lasts only one day. This flower is a true image of our lives. Life is but one short day and then comes death!"

From Turin Mother Barat sent Mother Dumazeaud and Mother Desmarquest to purchase a property called l'Eperonnière, at Nantes, where Mgr. de Hercé had invited her to make a foundation. It was on the very spot where, during the Reign of Terror, the Vendéans, guilty of wearing on their hearts the image of the Heart of Jesus, were arrested, condemned, and shot. L'Eperonnière with thirty-five acres of land was bought, and Mother Mailluchau took possession of it in the name of the Sacred Heart.

At Tours there had been several attempts at union,

in the first instance with a Community of Ursulines founded by Mdlle. Pulchérie Chobelet, and afterwards with a Community called of the Holy Ghost. Both these negotiations having failed, Mother Barat in 1836 purchased a house in the Rue des Prés, and established there a little colony with Mother Deshayes for its Superior, but this foundation did not flourish until, as we shall relate further on, it was transferred to another place.

A more important establishment at the outset was that of Pignerol. Mother Barat sent there at the beginning of December three nuns from Turin to visit an old monastery called l'Abbadia. They found it in bad repair indeed, but most beautifully situated at a quarter of a mile from the town. It was bought and put into order, and the following summer Mother Barat sent there a detachment of her daughters under the government of a very holy nun, Mother Clara Quirin. Sister Elizabeth was also of that party.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *The Roman Novitiate at the Villa Lante.*

1836—1838.

ON the 6th of December the Mother General announced to the Society that important reasons, which chiefly related to their houses in Rome, required her presence for a while in the capital of the Christian world. She left Turin on the 15th of December, and in the first instance visited her house at Parma. A Genoese Count, who was about to enter the Society of Jesus in Rome, heard that the Mother General of the Sacred Heart was going to that town, and thought it a great honour to travel in the same carriage with Mother Barat and her companion. "He really thinks he is travelling with *saints*," she wrote. "He will be taken in, at any rate as regards myself. Pray that he may not have been altogether deceived." They had to stop at Modena, where the reigning Duke who, wanted a foundation in his capital, received her with extraordinary honours. They made no other halt except at Loretto, and on the 11th of February arrived at Rome.

We know that Madame Barat looked on Gregory XVI. as a saint. Again at that time we find her writing: "He is our Holy Father in every sense," and after she had had, on the 26th of February, an audience of the Pope: "What kindness, what interest in our Society he showed! I asked his blessing for us all, and he gave it with so much affection that I felt quite overcome." But what affected her most during that visit was the expression of

suffering in the face of the Sovereign Pontiff. "I am deeply affected," she says, "with the sorrow or rather the anguish of heart of the Holy Father at the evils which desolate the Church."

It was indeed a trying time for a Pope, for the Father of the Faithful. Secret societies were organizing conspiracies in Italy, which were destined to overthrow all the Governments of Europe, and in almost every nation the Church was threatened, harassed, persecuted, or despoiled. The sight and sound of these various and accumulated calamities roused all the zeal, all the sympathy, all the ardour for reparation and atonement which always consumed the heart of the servant of God whose life we are studying. To this kind of participation in the state of public affairs she incessantly urged her daughters. That and that alone was to be their part in politics. "Otherwise," she tells them, "our duty with regard to the State is to be silent, to wait, and to pray."

Many a valiant combatant on the side of religion was then arming for the struggle. Some of them were at Rome receiving, as it were, their watchword from the Holy See. Mother Barat's letters often make mention of the Abbé Lacordaire, who had just spent in the Eternal City eighteen months, which decided his vocation. The Abbé Guéranger, another vigorous champion of the Church, had just been named by the Pope Abbot of Solesmes; Father de Géramb Abbé of la Trappe, and the Abbé Haffreingue of Boulogne-sur-Mer. Mother Barat was not behindhand in the apostolate which those generous soldiers of Christ were organizing. Her first work on her arrival in Rome was to enlarge the school of Santa Rufina, and then to open an infant school for the multitude of little half naked neglected children, who swarmed in the streets of the Trastevere; but her principal business was to find a habitation for the novices, whose health was suffering from the close atmosphere and over-

crowded state of the house of Santa Rufina. She was soon able to write: "We have just bought a house with a large garden and excellent air, and we shall remove there our dear little flock. Consequently we shall have three establishments at Rome. Santa Rufina will continue its work amongst the poor: the new house will be for the novitiate, and when we can we shall add to it a school, for there is plenty of room. You will understand that our help, such as it is, will be useful at this moment to that infant establishment. When it is fairly started, we shall turn our steps to France, and what a happiness it will be to meet again." "On a fine spring morning," as one of the novices of that period poetically relates, "our Mothers brought home with them such a beautiful bouquet of flowers that they seemed to have been gathered in Paradise." As it happened, they had been picked in the garden of the house purchased that very day, the first Friday in May, for the Sacred Heart. It was a beautiful villa, belonging to Prince Borghese, and called the Villa Lante, from the Duke of that name, one of its former possessors. The Mother General was still wavering about the purchase, when her eyes happened to glance at a little group representing Our Lady of Sorrows. She showed it to Mother de Limminghe and said: "This makes me decide upon it." And some days afterwards she wrote: "There we shall breathe fresh air. The view is beautiful, and overlooks the whole City of Rome on the best side. We are close to the Vatican. We look down on the Cupola of St. Peter's. Our alleys and gardens are lined with orange and lemon trees laden with fruit." Indeed, even at Rome, it would be difficult to find a more beautiful situation than that of the Villa Lante. It stands on the Janiculum, between the Longara and the top of the hill, and against the walls of the town on the same level as the Porta San Pancrazio. The magnificence of the view is equalled by the interest of its associations. To the right is

seen the height where St. Peter was crucified and died blessing Rome and the world. To the left, the Vatican and the Dome of St. Peter's exhibit the triumph of the Cross. The garden of the convent is close to the terrace of Sant' Onofrio, where Tasso wrote just before his death. "I came here not only to enjoy the purest air at Rome, but to carry on with the pious hermits of this monastery conversations which I hope we shall continue in heaven." The most ancient of the Basilicas consecrated to the Mother of God in Rome, the Church of Santa Maria in Trastevere, stands just below the Villa Lante by the side of the Tiber, which slowly flows across the plain, where St. Paul without the Walls stands in the midst of a desert. Beyond the city, with its myriads of streets, palaces, and churches, diversified by ruins and groves of trees, the Roman Campagna displays its wide horizon, the broken lines of its aqueducts and its nameless tombs awakening thoughts of the nothingness of earthly greatness, whilst in the distance the blue mountains of the Latium seem to point to the skies. Such was that abode of which Father Barrelle said that it had the whole of the heavens overhead and Rome under its feet. It faces the Trinità dei Monti; and Gregory XVI. used to declare that those two houses on each side of Rome were the bastions of the Sacred Heart raised up for its defence.

The villa was composed of two separate parts: below, a large uninhabited palace in bad repair, which was called in the Trastevere "the old Palace of the Ghosts." Above, there was a pavilion which could not hold more than twenty-five persons; the novices were to inhabit it until the palace could receive them. They moved into it on the 7th of June. Mother Barat had preceded them. She spent there fifteen months, which remained one of the holiest, the dearest, and the saddest remembrances of her life. "It was at Rome," she said, alluding to that period, "that I spent the most precious moments of my religious life." "We

live here completely secluded from the world," she wrote. "We only hear the sound of the church bells, and you may imagine that there are plenty of them at Rome." In one of her letters at that time she says, in answer to the accounts which had been sent her of the establishment of the first railways in France, "Before this earthly globe is entirely cut up by these iron roads it will have returned to chaos. The fall of Babel and the confusion of tongues will overtake the world at the time when it least expects it. Oh, let us, who have been nurtured in the faith from our earliest days, lay up treasure where the rust does not consume."

In the depth of this solitude the constant subject of Mother Barat's meditations was the self-annihilation of the Incarnate Word. She spent hours in prayer in the tiny chapel, plunged in the thought of her own nothingness; or, in deep recollection, communed with our Lord as she walked in the Alley of Laurels, on the side of the Gate of San Pancrazio. Every one respected her retirement, and she emerged from those periods of contemplation with wonderful lights as to God and her own soul. Mother de Limminghe, to whom she voluntarily submitted all her conduct, and to whom she used to accuse herself of her slightest faults, was wont to say that God was so near to her that in the light of His presence she discovered in herself atoms of imperfection. To some of her daughters who had addressed to her compliments on her feast of St. Mary Magdalen she wrote in answer: "O my daughters, how miserably you are governed. It is fortunate that our Lord does not want any one to do His work, and that the less of man there is in it the more there is of God. If He wanted to make use of uselessness, I assure you that He could not have made a better selection."

It was in that spirit of sweet, bright, unaffected humility that Mother Barat directed her novices. Twelve young girls belonging to some of the first families in Italy gave her

great hopes for the future of the Society in that country. In allusion to their number Mother Barat said: "I can say to you as our Lord said to His Apostles, 'The harvest is great, but the labourers are few.' However, as He converted the world with the aid of twelve fishermen, He can make use of you to spread the knowledge and love of His Sacred Heart, not only in your native land, but in other countries also."

Indeed, amongst those that we may venture to name, there were several novices preparing to become real Apostles. One of them was the goddaughter of the Countess Mastai, mother of Pius IX. From her earliest childhood Catherine Baveria had been intimate with that pious family, whose home like her own was in the town of Sinigaglia. She had been brought up by the Franciscanesses, and had once thought of joining that Order, but a religious at Ancona assured her that it was to the Sacred Heart she was to consecrate herself. Neither he nor his penitent knew at that time that there was an Order specially devoted to the worship and the apostolate of that Divine Heart. It was a pupil of the house of Turin who brought it to Catherine's knowledge. She had just taken the habit, on the 20th of March, 1836, when Mother Barat arrived at Rome. The Mother General admired in this novice a soul entirely devoted to our Lord, and in life and in death closely united to Him. Catherine died on Good Friday, the 14th of April, 1865. Ursula Simoni was likewise a remarkable novice. At the age of seventeen she had entered the house of Santa Rufina, recommended by Cardinal Lambruschini. She had a thoroughly generous soul. Even in the days of her novitiate she had sighed after the American missions, and when that object had been attained, raised her hopes to martyrdom. It so happened that a martyrdom of charity was vouchsafed to her. She died at the age of thirty-three in Louisiana, having with extraordinary self-devotion exposed herself to every risk during a fatal epidemic. She said to the priest,

who was deeply affected at the sight of so beautiful an end, "Do not weep for me, reverend sir, but promise me that you will propagate all your life the Devotion to the Sacred Heart."\*

Whilst speaking of some of the novices of the Villa Lante, we cannot omit to mention one whom the Mother General dearly loved. Theresa Colonna belonged to that illustrious family, the memory of which is specially and inseparably connected with the battle of Lepanto. What Mother Barat liked in her was a singular warm-heartedness, a frank openness, and the quick and sparkling qualities of her mind, but she foresaw that her impetuous and exuberant nature would find it very difficult to submit to discipline. In one of her letters to Mother Galitzin she says: "Theresa is so petulant. Will she ever go on to the end? God only knows. She is clever, full of capacity, and as innocent as a child, but at the same time she is like gunpowder, and capable of blowing up and setting on fire everything about her." But Mother Barat never bent the Rule for the sake of retaining any one in her Order, however great might be her own affection for the individual, and Theresa Colonna was not professed. But though she never entered the religious family of her dear and venerated Mother, she always remained her friend, kept following her about in Italy and in France, and never liked to stay long anywhere except in houses of the Society. She used to say, "If she could have been dispensed from the rule of silence, she would have belonged to the Sacred Heart."

All these young girls, whatever their rank might be, shared the plain, simple, countrified mode of life of their Superior. Mother Barat entered into all the details and

\* Mgr. Martin, Bishop of Natchitoches, to whom these words were addressed, was in Paris in the summer of 1875, and spoke of Madame Ursula Simoni with the utmost regret and admiration. Father Manfredini in Rome, who had appreciated her merits and her sanctity, wished her life could be written.

interests of the property which surrounded the Villa Lante, and looked after the lemon trees, the vines, the flower garden, and even the animals belonging to the place. In several of her letters we find her inquiring about the health of Pollux, a poor old dog which she had left lame and ill. "I am sure he suffers," she said, "and yet these poor animals have never sinned." In the autumn, she and the novices worked in the vineyard and gathered the fruit in the orchard on the hill near the Gate of St. Pancrazio. They sat down on the grass to take their meals, or in the arbour of the garden near the Terrace of St. Onofrio, where tradition says that St. Philip Neri used to instruct his disciples. The Mother General related passages from the life of this great Saint, or other pious stories. Her Roman novices said that their sister-novices in Switzerland and Paris would be very jealous if they could see them at those moments sitting round their venerable Mother and listening to her teachings.

That life would indeed have been a happy one for Mother Barat, had it not been for the sad news which reached her from every side. On the 27th of May, 1837, she wrote to Madame de Gramont: "What a year this has been! People are afraid here that the continual rain and hail will destroy the crops. And seeds of discontent are already sown amongst a people too easily agitated. God chastises us, we do indeed deserve it, but we are only at the beginning of our troubles." Her previsions were correct, and alarming reports justified these fears. The cholera was at Naples and advancing towards Rome. On the 10th of July, she wrote that it was only at fifteen leagues distance, and described the feelings of faith of the whole population, the translation of the miraculous Image of the Blessed Virgin from Santa Maria Maggiore to the Church of the Gesù, the Mass which the Holy Father had celebrated in that church, with tears streaming down his face, the pro-

cessions, the innumerable communions and conversions, the prayers every evening before the Madonnas in the streets, the candles burning at those lowly shrines, and the hymns in Mary's honour.

Towards the end of August, the number of sudden deaths increased to such a degree that it was no longer possible to doubt as to their nature. The cholera was devastating Rome, and especially the Trastevere. Shut up at the Villa Lante by the anxious solicitude of Madame de Limminghe to whom she had promised obedience, the Mother General was reassured by the knowledge that her poor and crowded house of Sta. Rufina had not been attacked. As to the Trinità dei Monti, she fancied it out of the reach of contagion, and in this belief wrote to France that the three Roman houses had been preserved from its ravages. At last she heard the terrible news which had been kept from her. Six of her daughters had died at the Trinità during the week after the Assumption, and a seventh was at the last extremity. It was Cardinal de Latil, Archbishop of Rheims, who announced to her these sad tidings. They well nigh broke her heart. She felt it sinking within her, as the successive names of her departed daughters were uttered. She wrote at that time, "God strengthened me, and struck like Job in the person of my children, I made the same act of resignation. I am calmer now, but what nights I spend! Now that this scourge has crossed the threshold of our doors, which in Europe at any rate had not yet been the case, I tremble for all our Communities within its reach. My anguish will be prolonged I fear, for this terrible disease penetrates everywhere and defies all prevision."

At almost the same moment she received the news of the death of several of her friends in France. The Abbé Perreau had departed this life, and in him the Sacred Heart lost one of its greatest benefactors and most faithful friends. At Metz a highly gifted mistress of studies,

Mother Mathilde Lefebvre, died at the age of thirty-six. She said to the physician, who seemed distressed at her hopeless state: "Why are you concerned? Death for a nun is nothing but the spring of a child into its Father's arms." At Beauvais a devoted religious, Mother Julie Demelin, was sinking under excess of work. One of her Mothers perceiving it, said to her, "Sister Julie, you seem determined to go to heaven." "Yes," she answered, "and by the shortest road I can." The Blessed Virgin opened the door for her on the morrow of the feast of her Assumption. At Aix three of the Sisters died in one week. One of them, Madeleine Prévost, feeling that her end was near, prepared everything for it as if it had been for another person; made her bed, laid out her clothes, "so that all might be ready when she was called for." Then, giving herself up to prayer, she united her soul to Christ. At the last moment, opening her eyes, she said, "Oh, how beautiful! how beautiful! I am sent for," and immediately expired.

But the most remarkable of these deaths was that of Ferdinande de Saint Pierre, a novice in the house at Paris. After offering up her life for the salvation of a young man whom Dr. Récamier had recommended to her prayers, she heard that he had made his confession in his last moments, and she expired herself on the 19th of August. When her sufferings were at the worst, she raised her eyes to heaven with a beaming triumphant expression and exclaimed, "Long live Death!" and then, blessed by Father Varin, sank back and died.

Mother Barat hardly knew whether to mourn or to rejoice over the accounts of these most touching deaths. She wrote at that time to Mother de Rozeville: "God forbid that the shadow of a murmur should cross my mind. But what a heavy cross! So many souls who only stay on earth long enough to teach us to appreciate them. Jesus

hastens to gather these innocent flowers, which the noonday sun might have tarnished. . . . We must resign ourselves, my dear Mother, and be only too happy to expiate our faults by the bitterness of the Cross." In a previous letter she had said to the same nun: "We have so many urgent needs, and death continues its work of destruction. But there is this consolation, that thus we found in heaven. Let us work then for that eternal foundation, and not complain if it increases every day. Ah! may it then be said of us also, 'Blessed are those who die in the Lord.' When we have once died to ourselves in this life that other death is consoling, and we can say like Suarez, 'I did not think it was so sweet to die.'"

The Roman novices who witnessed their Mother's sorrows, wrote to her letters to express their intense sympathy with her griefs, and promised to make up to her for the loss of so many of her daughters, by devoting themselves, as those dear sisters had done, to the welfare of the Society. Mother Barat gives herself the description of what she felt during her first visits to the Trinità dei Monti and to Sta. Rufina after those days of affliction. "At Sta. Rufina," she says, "I did not indeed miss any of my children. But when they took me into the infant school what a sight met my eyes! Tears impeded my utterance. I was shown a number of poor children between the ages of three and twelve, who had lost both their parents, had been abandoned in the streets, and taken in by charitable neighbours, themselves in the utmost poverty, and with their own families to provide for. The little orphans were lying heaped together on straw mattresses, like coveys of birds. I could not help crying." But it was not tears alone that she gave to these children. "I told our Mothers," she goes on to say, "that we must not show ourselves less compassionate than these poor families. Our Sisters are indeed crowded to excess and overwhelmed with

debt, but that does not signify; we must take them, we cannot let them suffer unaided. When our large house is finished we shall lodge them there, but in the meantime we must take charge of the most friendless of these little ones. Oh, how many wants there are! and no one to give the bread of the body and the bread of the soul to these children. Well, our Divine Master will help us. We must pray, and become saints and perfect religious, and Jesus will not let himself be vanquished in generosity. Those whom God has spared must offer themselves up without reserve. A double amount of virtue will enable us to do a double amount of good, and to do it better than before."

The next day several of the orphans were established in their new Mother's house. The novices relate that a little tiny creature of three years of age called Philomena, and five or six other little girls, had been fetched from the school of Sta. Rufina by the Mother General, and installed in the convent.

The Mother General's visit to the Trinità dei Monti was still more sad. She says: "Two little girls of nine to twelve years of age begged at the door of our carriage. 'Why are you not at school, my dears?' I asked. 'Our mistress is gone to heaven,' they answered, 'and there is no school now.' Fancy the anguish I felt. The first class of the pupils had lost its teacher, and so had the poor school. And what a loss for those girls who had been trained to industry and solid piety! I urged the immediate reopening of the classes with a division of hours. But nothing will ever equal the zeal and ability of that dear Sister now in heaven."

Amongst those whom Mother Barat most deeply regretted was Pauline Bellefroid, a native of Liège, who had been at the head of the school, and in whom the religious spirit was so strong that she could not even understand how any one could have another object in view than the glory of

God and the salvation of souls. And also Adélaïde Babad, who on the day of the Assumption had written the following note to her Superior : " During the whole of this day, which has been the last of my monthly retreat, I remained at the feet of our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, offering myself for all that the future may bring with it. I felt such a boundless confidence in our holy Mother, and such an ardent desire to see her soon in heaven. And so it occurred to me during all these last days to offer myself to her and to her Divine Son as a victim, if such were needed, to save from the cholera Rome and the houses of the Society. Again, this morning at Mass, I thought that it would be a cheap way of purchasing heaven to give my life for those who would then be able to go on gaining souls for God." Her death was accordingly that of a happy victim. " *Sù sù, al Cielo !*" she exclaimed, raising herself up on her dying bed, " let us go to heaven. Oh, how I long for heaven, and how slowly it comes !" But beyond all others perhaps did Mother Barat mourn over the loss of a Milanese of French extraction, Amélie Jourdan, whose devotion to poor children had been unbounded. Before expiring she took the hand of Mother Faux and kissed it three times. " Once," she said, " for the Mother General, once for her own Superior, and then for the Sister who was so tenderly nursing her in her agony. She prophesied that she would be the last victim of the cholera in that house, and she died on the straw on which she had been laid in the first moments of her sudden illness. The three Lay-sisters who had preceded her into eternity, and the charitable infirmarian who had nursed them, all died in an equally admirable manner. Mother Barat said that those seven deaths seemed to have pierced her heart like the seven swords which had transfixed the bosom of the Mother of God, and she promised our Lady of Sorrows to make for a whole year a special prayer for their souls.

Exhausted by all this mental suffering, and ill with fever, Mother Barat sought in God the only remedy which could relieve her. "I enter into retreat to-night," she wrote on the 26th of October. "I shall remain in solitude for eight days at least. My body and my soul equally need that repose. I have suffered so much in Rome. It has been the expiation of a sinful and long life, for my life is now beginning to be a long one."

The winter was a trying time for her. She was confined to her room by illness, but the presence of God made up for every privation. The novice who attended upon her during the time that Sister Marie was at Mass used to hear her thus apostrophizing the birds placed in her cell that they might cheer her by their singing. "How happy you are, little creatures of God, never to have offended your Creator. You perfectly accomplish His intentions in creating you, and I, poor wretch, offend Him every day. Come, little birds, sing the praises of our God, to make up for the outrages and blasphemies of ungrateful men. Praise Him also for me, who am not as worthy to do it as you are." And when the birds of the neighbourhood awoke her with their warbling, she used to say: "How right you are to arouse this lazy creature, who sleeps instead of praising God as you do. And yet He gives you nothing but a little seed, and to me He gives Himself to be my food, and I love Him so little!"

In the midst of her sufferings the indefatigable Superior was incessantly occupied with her three houses; repairing the old palace of the Villa Lante, filling up by the arrival of nuns from France the gaps which the cholera had made at the Trinità dei Monti, and then providing for the needs of the new orphanage at Sta. Rufina. This work of charity brought her into close intercourse with Princess Borghese, of whom she speaks in all her letters with feelings of religious friendship, to which were superadded those of

deep sympathy when, soon afterwards, a succession of terrible bereavements afflicted this noble family. As soon as she was able to leave her room the Mother General gathered around her the novices. On the 13th of November, the feast of St. Stanislaus Kostka, she said to them, at the close of an exhortation which she had hardly strength to utter, "Be fervent like St. Stanislaus, and I shall be the happiest of Mothers." In one of her letters she exclaims, "Would I could be but a shadow of St. Theresa! Would that God would grant us some effectual props! Let us pray, let us become holy. Who knows if our Lord will not speak?"

Thus ended the year 1837. The beginning of the ensuing one was spent partly at the Villa Lante, partly at the Trinità. The early spring had made the villa a perfect garden of delights, but, as Mother Barat wrote at that time, it was not this sort of fascination that would detain her, and in spite of all the advantages of beautiful Italy she left it without effort. Nothing in her estimation could be compared to a person's native land, the home of their dearest affections. Her wish was to end her days amongst the companions of her early Religious life. Accordingly, on the 16th of May, leaving Mother de Limminghe at the Villa Lante, and Mother Hippolyte Lavauden at Sta. Rufina, the Superior General left Rome and travelled to Paris, through Parma, Turin, Chambéry, and Autun. At La Ferrandière she was again seriously ill, and it was with difficulty that she reached the mother-house on the 17th of August, 1838.

## CHAPTER V.

### *The Novitiate of the Rue Monsieur.*

1838—1839.

THE first words which Mother Barat addressed to her novices in the Rue Monsieur were these: "My dear children, I have lost my legs and my voice, but I felt I had still a heart, and that heart has been longing to get here. Too much perhaps, and it may be on that account that God has so often delayed me on the road, I then always said to Him; 'Do what Thou wilt, my Lord, but if I am to die, would it might be in Paris.'"

Some stanzas had been composed for her arrival, but she stopped the singing and said: "I do not require to be told of your affection my dear children; I too love you very much and yet I cannot sing." Then to show them what she was thinking of, she added: "O my children, if I had the gift of miracles none of you would ever die."

She took up her abode in this novitiate, and carried on there with the same zeal the work to which she had devoted herself at Montet and Rome. The following passages from her letters show us what were her ideas as to the admission of postulants. She wished them to be numerous, and begged everywhere for prayers for that intention using the words of our Lord, "The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few." When she was absent the names of the new-comers were always forwarded to her. We find her writing to Madame Eulalie de Bouchaud, then Mistress of the Paris novitiate: I am much pleased with the list of

your postulants and novices, and to think that at any rate I shall know them. I am very glad that they are so numerous. May the Heart of Jesus double that number, and oh, above all things, may it be given to them to be great, generous, devoted lovers of the Cross! We do not want narrow-minded, cold-hearted souls, that care only for their own interests. Such elements would only impede the work of the Lord." Mother Barat had the most reverential feeling about vocations, looking upon them as the word expresses it as calls from God, seeds sown by heaven, which must indeed grow and bring forth fruit on earth, but be very delicately dealt with by men. She would not suffer her nuns to attract persons to their Order in any other way than by their own example, and the sight of the happiness they found in the service of our Lord. She strictly forbade them to speak of or to insinuate to their pupils anything on the subject. She once wrote to a Superior: "You talk too much of vocations, at any rate you allude indirectly to the subject. This is an old fault of yours: do pay attention to it."

She gave it as a rule that those who came to offer themselves as postulants, were to be received in a cordial and open-hearted manner, but not with too much eagerness. "The choice" she said, "must be left to God."

She herself, on such occasions, united in a remarkable manner that cordiality and that discretion which she recommended. She received such applicants simply and kindly. Many of them have declared that there was something in her smile, or in her manner of laying her hand on their heads which made them feel at once that from that moment forward, they belonged for ever to the Sacred Heart. The first word from her lips, revealed to many a young soul the secret of her destiny, and solved every previous doubt. But on the other hand, nothing could exceed the reserve with which in many instances she acted from the fear of

interfering with the workings of God, the caution and delay with which she admitted certain candidates, or even in some cases declined to receive them at all.

In her letters to postulants, many of which have been preserved, we find evidences of this spirit of circumspection. A young girl had written to her that she wished to be a nun in order to save her soul, by declining a proposal of marriage which had been made to her. Mother Barat replied: "You must not refuse this proposal of marriage for no other reason than the fear of losing your soul by marrying; other motives are required which relate to the interior of your conscience; but I am afraid, my dear Marie, that worse than imprudent things have been said to you about marriage, which have given rise in your mind to misconceptions and false ideas. People can perfectly save and sanctify their souls in that state of life. How many married saints the Church has canonized!" Generally her practical conclusion was to advise those in doubt to make a good retreat, or at any rate faithfully to consider the subject in prayer, and with a generous spirit of indifference to accept the will of God.

This deep reverence for the Divine intentions on a soul, made her often decide that those who consulted her had vocations for other orders. One of her daughters having expressed a great wish that her own sister should enter the Society of the Sacred Heart, Mother Barat said: "Pray for her, but do not think too much about it. If she is called to the Visitation, it is better she should follow her attraction to so holy and admirable an Order which we shall always venerate. Refrain from all anxiety on the subject." Another having told her that one of her nieces had decided on becoming a Carmelite, she wrote: "As it is evident that her vocation is not to the Sacred Heart, she could not make a better choice. The Carmelite Order is such a magnificent one! the first in the Church! Everything in it is perfect.

Yes I will indeed pray that that soul may be faithful to our Lord, no matter where it may be His will to call her." In Italy one of her own nuns acknowledged to Mother Barat that her original desire had been to become a Carmelite, that it was the want of a dowry which had prevented her admission, and that she could not help regretting it. Her kind Superior immediately wrote to the Prioress of the Convent in question, and offered to pay herself a pension for this religious, who was accordingly accepted. A young girl, who had been brought up at one of the houses of the Society in the South of France, was hesitating between the Order of the Sacred Heart which was very dear to her, and that of the Sisters of St. Vincent of Paul. She made a journey to Paris on purpose to consult Mother Barat, who told her that she felt quite convinced that God wished her to be a Sister of Charity. This advice was acted upon, and the sequel proved that Mother Barat had been truly inspired. But at the same time that she respected vocations, she wished sufficient light to be thrown on the subject, and did not hesitate to point out to those who are called to the direction of souls, the great advantages the Sacred Heart enjoys in the combination of the active with the contemplative life, and how it answers to the double attraction which some persons experience in their desires of the religious life. In writing to Madame Galitzin, she dwells on this important point: "It is a great mistake to suppose that it is only souls called to the active life which are suited to our Institute. If there was an absence amongst us of the contemplative life, the other would soon become a mere shadow, a body without a soul, and then what good should we do? Instead then of discouraging persons who feel attracted to a life of prayer, we ought gladly to accept them. We can consecrate them to interior employments and to the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament." She liked to think that religious persons, who were obliged, on account of the

weakness of their health, to leave Carmelite Convents, were happy at the Sacred Heart, its spirit being founded on prayer and the interior life. "The Carmelite spirit," she was wont to say, "ought to be planted in the Sacred Heart, like a beautiful tree in the midst of a fruitful garden." In 1828 she expressed the following wish, which was indeed her life-long desire: "An order which unites the contemplative with the active life, has a powerful grace which admirably sustains its activity. This is what I feel inwardly urged to establish in our Society ere God removes me from this world. The interior life will thus be maintained in it. I entreat the Heart of Jesus to attract to us a great many souls devoted to prayer. Then I shall be able to say my *Nunc dimittis* for it is always in this sense that I have understood our Society."

Entirely occupied by the supernatural side of attractions and vocations, Mother Barat would have thought it wrong to be influenced by considerations of rank, fortune or particular affection. Once only in her life she owned to having had a somewhat too natural desire of this kind with respect to a young person most highly gifted in every way, whose birth, fortune, education, talents, apparent piety, and good dispositions, seemed to promise that she would do great things for the glory of God and the Heart of Jesus. There seemed no doubt about it. But still, with her usual humility, Mother Barat accused herself of not having consulted our Lord enough before receiving this lady, who, after beginning well, became one of her greatest crosses, and ended by leaving the Society. She wrote as follows, when a princess had also just left them: "What we want are more simple persons, not of such high birth. These great people do not succeed with us. If they had remained, perhaps pride would have gained ground amongst us. Oh, let us remain in our littleness! It is the state the Word made Man chose for Himself. We shall find in it treasures for earth and for heaven." This being her way of thinking, we are not

surprised to find that about dowries she was most disinterested. She used to rejoice in the thought that from the first foundation of her Society no one had been excluded from it on the score of want of fortune. She ascribed to that fact the blessings which had been vouchsafed to it and the help it had always received from Providence. To Mother de Rozeville, the Superior at Amiens, we find her writing: "I think you must not refuse the young person you speak of on account of her want of fortune, if only she has a real vocation. Our good Master shows that He does not wish us to rely on birth or on talents. We must enter into His charitable views, and accept willingly those who are poor. Let us make sure that they love virtue, that is the spirit which will sustain the Society far better than human means."

Nothing could exceed the kindness, delicacy, and humility, with which she spared the feelings of portionless postulants. To one of them who was expressing her gratitude for this generosity, she said: "It is but fair that we should receive others on the same terms that we were ourselves received. I was admitted under the same circumstances." Another was saying to her: "Was it not enough, Reverend Mother, that having guessed as you did how poor my parents were, you would receive nothing from them during the last year of my schooling?" The Mother General would not let her go on, but kissing her said: "Yes, my child, you owe much to our Lord, I know you feel it and I can rely upon you." A novice, who did not know Mother Barat, came in great trepidation to be examined by her on the eve of her vows. After several other questions, the Superior General asked her if she had any means of her own. She could not help trembling as she answered, "none." "And what are your talents? Are you well-informed?" "Reverend Mother, I have no talents and no information. I bring nothing into the Society except numerous imperfections and good health."

The poor child was quite afraid to look up, and felt as if this avowal would be fatal to her hopes. But Mother Barat's kind smile soon reassured her. "That will do, my child," she said, "I am satisfied with that and your self-devotion. You will work with us all the more humbly, only be faithful, and rely on your Mother's affection."

Some one was once reproaching Mother Barat for her too great disinterestedness, and saying that the Society suffered from it: "Money! Money!" she exclaimed, "has that ever been made a difficulty at the Sacred Heart?" The person who had provoked this burst of indignation, said she well remembered the jump she gave from her chair as she uttered these words. There was one earthly consideration which made her sometimes urge a delay in the reception of a postulant. This was when a sacred duty had to be fulfilled in a person's own home. One of her daughters relates that ardently desiring to enter the religious life, she had simply submitted to Mother Barat the position in which she stood; her answer was decisive. She was to remain with her aged father, whose infirmities required her care; later on she would join the Society, "I shall assist at your clothing," the Mother General said with a smile. When another postulant told her that she was the eldest of nine children, she exclaimed: "But then, my dear child, your mother must want you at home. You ought not at present to leave her;" and she only yielded to the assurance that such was not the case. Her heart used to ache for the parents who gave up to her their dearest treasures, and she thanked them for their generosity in the most touching manner. But when she met with persons who for worldly motives insisted on sacrificing the liberty, the happiness, and perhaps the salvation of their children, she felt indignant at such tyranny, compassionated the daughters, and sometimes predicted domestic sorrows, which often did overtake those who thus had set their will against God's.

She was full of maternal kindness to the postulants. "We must love them," she said to the novices, "for if you are the flowers they are the buds of the Society." She strengthened them in their trials, their sorrows, and their uncertainties, and had a singular gift, not only to discern vocations, but to confirm them. She said to Louise de Chollet, who was so weak that she feared her health would prevent her being received at the Sacred Heart: "Never fear, my child, you will be received, you will stay and do much good in the Society." Another had almost made up her mind to return to the world. The Mother General kissed her and said: "Ah, my child, what would have been our fate, if our Lord had turned His back on the Cross!" From that moment the soul of this young girl was bound for ever to the crucified Heart of Jesus. Sometimes, only the sight of the servant of God effected a similar change. One of the nuns relates that she came to the novitiate wishing to be a Carmelite, and prejudiced against the Sacred Heart. Its name she liked but nothing else. Mother Barat they told her had arrived. What do I care about Mother Barat? she thought, and went to hide herself behind a pillar in the chapel. As she was weeping and praying there, the Mother General happened to pass near her. Suddenly she was filled with an indescribable feeling of veneration, which made her inwardly exclaim: "She is a saint, another St. Theresa." This impression remained for ever in her mind, and her inclination for Carmel was transferred to the Sacred Heart.

These details give us an idea of that novitiate of the Rue Monsieur, so dear to Mother Barat; her dear white flock, as she called it, which present or absent so continually occupied her thoughts. The house itself was admirably adapted to a life of religious seclusion. It stood at the furthest extremity of the Faubourg St. Germain, having on one side a court and a quiet street, on the other a large

garden and the wide alleys of the Boulevard des Invalides. The wings of the house contained a number of small cell-like rooms, which made Father Varin say, that Providence must have always meant that house to be occupied by the Sacred Heart. The chapel was in the centre of the building, and projected into the garden. The Mother General wrote to the good Marquis de Nicolay, from whom they rented this mansion: "Even in the midst of Paris we enjoy perfect solitude in this place. Peace, strict observance, and consequently happiness, are our portion. To you, after God, we are indebted for these blessings. I never can forget it, and when I see that troop of fervent young girls kneeling in their quiet chapel, how can I help thinking with gratitude of our benefactor, or omit to pray for him most earnestly."

The Mistress of Novices whom Madame Barat had appointed to help and at times to supply the place of Mother Desmarquest, was a nun of only thirty-two years of age.

In 1830, when M. de Bouchaud's three daughters asked to be admitted into the Society, and that the Superiors were considering the question as to which of the sisters should remain with her father, it was observed that one of the young girls kept aloof in a state of profound recollection, which struck one of the Mothers. "That one," she said, "does not want to be attended to. She is conversing with our Lord on the subject." That interior soul was Eulalie de Bouchaud. At the end of her novitiate she was placed at the head of the school at Montet, and afterwards made Mistress of Novices at Paris. Clever, refined, high-minded, and remarkable for the angelic purity of her countenance, the only defect of this young religious was, at first, an exaggerated diffidence of her own powers, which made Mother Barat write to her: "You carry reserve and timidity too far. You must become a little more self-reliant; not from pride, but for the glory of the Sacred Heart. I per-

fectly understand, my dear child, that it is an effort and a sacrifice to resist the attraction to withdraw into one's own nothingness and think only of God and one's soul. But ask Him to help you, and in a few weeks you will let me know what progress you have made in holy boldness."

Mother Barat took special pains to train this Sister, inquired into her spiritual state, and entreated her, however pressing might be her occupations, to give herself time for her devout exercises and even to add to them an hour more of prayer on Sundays and holidays; and then she says: "When we have to spend ourselves a great deal on others, we must frequently resort to the fountain head. Otherwise we only draw a drop or two at a time, and can scarcely moisten the roof of our parched mouths. Jesus is the only source which can superabundantly quench our thirst." And again, to the same nun she writes: "Redouble your zealous efforts for that dear little white flock, which is all our hope. I can apply to it the words of our Lord to His Apostles, "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt lose its savour wherewith shall it be salted?" Seek solid virtue for yourself and your novices; solidity is not often met with. We think that we seek Jesus, but, alas! it is too often ourselves that we substitute unconsciously for our Lord instead of being transformed into Him. How great is the difference!" And in another letter: "Your flock must be generous, and prepared for every kind of sacrifice. Let your daughters take as their model Jesus in His humility, His nothingness, His crucifixion. They will thus arrive at perfection, and become worthy spouses of the Heart of Jesus."

One of the novices of that time speaks of the way in which the Mother General shared the daily life of her beloved little flock, of her presiding at their meals, and of the way in which she enlivened their holidays and recreations. She says the hours they spent listening to her instructions always

seemed too short. Sometimes it was in the garden that these conferences took place. As soon as she appeared on the steps looking towards the boulevard, they gathered round her, some sitting at her feet, and others kneeling; and whatever was the subject of discourse which came uppermost, she ended by making it turn towards God as naturally as a stream tends to the ocean.

If she found them at work, Mother Barat used to say: "My dear children, how I like to see you working under the eyes of our Blessed Lady. But are you not tired? Come and rest a little." And if any of them out of shyness remained at a distance, she told them to draw near, and said: "Come close to me; I do not like to look on empty spaces;" and then she made those words the theme of her discourse. "The heart of man," she said, "is not meant to be empty, and it remains always empty until God fills it. Is it not fair that Jesus who died to gain possession of the hearts of His creatures should have the best place in those hearts? Which shall it be?" she asked. "The centre," they all exclaimed; and it was agreed upon that that should always be His place in the novitiate.

She sometimes inflamed the zeal of her hearers by relating the history of the first beginnings of the Society. Her talent for narrating gave a great charm to those details. One day she described to them the foundation of Poitiers, and exclaimed: "Who will give me back my dear novitiate of the Feuillants? You, my children, will do so." "If the happiness of the religious life were known to the world," she said, "it would be jealous of us and would invade our solitude. It would be as in the days of the Fathers of the Desert, when the wilderness depopulated the cities." One of her sayings was: "The novitiate is the ante-chamber of heaven." Another, that the heart she wished her novices to have was "that of a judge in their own regard, of a child towards God, and of a mother

towards their neighbour." She generally ended the evening recreation by making aloud the preparation for the next day's meditation, and lost no opportunity of exhorting the novices to the practice of humility and a love of the hidden life. "Apply them," she said to the Superior, "according to the measure of their health and strength, to the humblest and most common employments. Those who dislike them have not the real religious spirit." She used to tell her daughters to grind down nature in themselves as corn is ground under the mill-stone. One day that a party of novices were leaving Paris for the recent foundation of Jette-Saint-Pierre, she said to those that remained behind: "My children, the novitiate is the mill of the Society. Grain comes there from all sorts of different places; and when it has been well ground, away it goes and more comes in. Oh, yes, the corn is thoroughly crushed, the flour well sifted here and separated from the course bran! It must be of the very finest description and as white and pure as possible in order to be worthy of Jesus the Bread of Life."

It was love which she looked to for the accomplishment of this work, and strong expressions were wont to fall from her lips on that subject. One day that Mother Grosier, who was then at Paris, was saying to the novices that, as she had been longer than any of the others in the Society, she had nothing now to look forward to except heaven or purgatory. Madame Barat exclaimed: "My dear Mother, I know only of one purgatory for a spouse of the Sacred Heart, and that is the love of our Lord and a zeal for souls." "Oh, indeed, you must admit," Mother Grosier replied, "that love is a very sweet purgatory!" "I own it is sweet to love," Madame Barat rejoined, "but love has its torment. Is there anything more terrible than to see the Spouse whom we love offended?"

And dwelling on that thought, she spoke of our Lord going about with His hands full of graces which the world will not accept. "But you at any rate, my daughters," she would add, "open the door to Him. Jesus Christ ought to be made happy at the Sacred Heart. O Love! Love! you are not loved!" she kept saying with St. Magdalen of Pazzi. "Well, if the fire of love is extinguished on earth, God and men ought to find it burning at the Sacred Heart."

Once, on the eve of the Assumption, she described in a conference the three best ways of dying. To die in the love of God is the death of the righteous; to die for the love of God is the death of the martyrs; to die of love for God is the death of the Blessed Virgin. These sublime kinds of death were the object of her ambition. When some one was speaking of a certain prophetic promise made to the Society of the Sacred Heart that it would be given to it before the end of time to shed its blood for our Lord Jesus Christ, Mother Barat owned that she would willingly come back to earth in order to enjoy that privilege. The novices then gave free course to their imagination, and conjured up the idea of a sort of millennium, during which their holy Mother, like a monk in a certain legend, would remain asleep until the moment of that bloody conflict. But they declared that she must promise to live to a hundred years of age before entering on this wonderful sleep. That condition seemed to her hard.

The apostolate of charity was earnestly carried on in the Paris novitiate. Madame Barat had not only annexed to the house a poor school, but she had also established a workroom for those of its scholars who had made their First Communion. It was her conviction that no real good can be effected amongst the poor without an establishment of this kind; and writing to Mother de Bouchaud she

adds: "Excite your novices to direct their little charities to that purpose. Let them be zealous in teaching the children to work, and collect a sum wherewith to give a little money on Saturdays to those who have shown good will. Train your daughters to the duties of their vocation in these practical ways. Without this spirit, we shall never have great and real virtues amongst them."

Another time she said: "Be stingy, my children; it is a holy stinginess to save for the poor." She liked the novices to make clothes for poor women. This was the sort of present which pleased her most on the day of her feast. "The two devotions of the spouses of the Sacred Heart," she always said, "were devotion to our Lord and devotion to the poor."

Nor was the apostolate of prayer less dear to her heart. As soon as she returned to Paris, Mother Barat presented her novices to the famous and holy Curé of Notre Dame des Victoires, M. Dufriche-Desgenettes. "We are very glad," she said to him, "that you make people pray for the conversion of sinners, for we are all sinners." The worthy Curé could not help replying that he had something better to do than to pray for such sinners as those, and he related with all the ardour of his faith the history of the Arch-confraternity, its Divine origin, the consecration of his parish to the Sacred Heart of Mary and the wonderful change which had ensued. "It is an admirable work," Madame Barat said to Mother de Gramont, "you must spread it amongst our pupils, especially the elder girls." M. l'Abbé Desgenettes from that time forward took the habit of coming to ask for prayers at the Sacred Heart on every occasion when he was planning some new good work. A few days afterwards he returned, asked if they had prayed much, announced that the Blessed Virgin had performed one of her miracles, and then repeated the name of Mary two or three times with indescribable delight.

Once he enlisted all the inmates of the house in a holy league for the conversion of England; adding: "That is a conquest worth praying for. Bonaparte's sword broke in the attempt; but Mary is mightier than an army ranged in battle. Sooner or later she will invade that isle of saints."

Other friends also engaged the Sacred Heart in that great Catholic movement. Mgr. de Quélen did not hesitate to proclaim at the mother-house that it was to the fervour of the nuns that he ascribed the blessings attached to his works, and that he looked upon them as his powerful cooperators. Mgr. de Forbin Janson instilled into the novitiate that unwearied zeal which urged him to second every enterprise of apostolic devotion. One day that he had just returned from the monastery of La Trappe, he exclaimed in his eloquent language: "How beautiful it is to see that magnificent censor burning day and night in the desert for the glory of God, and the whole of that religious body obeying like a little child the voice of one who holds the place of God."

Other apostles from distant parts of the world and especially missionary bishops passing through Paris addressed heart-stirring exhortations to the novices of the Sacred Heart; namely, Mgr. Bruté, that great servant of God who came to France in order to make a last and, alas! ineffectual effort to bring back to the Church the friend of his childhood, the unhappy Abbé de Lamennais. Then again, Mgr. Dupuch, who had been chaplain at the convent of the Sacred Heart at Bordeaux; he had just been named Bishop of Algiers, and was the first prelate appointed to that see since the French conquest. He told the novices that when he heard of his nomination, his first impulse was to fall on his knees and hide his face in the dust, and the second to rise and throw himself into the arms of God. His instructions on the Cross, on sacrifice, the will of God, suffering love and triumphant

love, seemed to lift up above the earth the hearts of his hearers. Mother Barat wrote that he was a saint and an apostle, that he produced everywhere that impression and inflamed others with his zeal. "We shall go some day to his African mission," she added, "it is worthy of the Sacred Heart."

The novitiate pined to answer the calls which were addressed to the Society from every side. "I am obliged," the Mother General said, "to resist the pressing solicitations I receive from Poland, North Germany, England and the United States, besides most of the principal towns of France." One day she mentioned to the novices the offers she had just received from Holland and New York. "And will you not accept them?" they all asked. "Who<sup>m</sup> can I send?" "You can send us," several voices cried. "You, indeed! mere novices and such novices too!" And after a pause she asked: "How many are you?" "Forty," they answered. "Only forty!" she rejoined, "alas it is my fault. If I had been what I ought to be there might have been four hundred instead of forty." "Well, Reverend Mother," Madame de Bouchaud said, "there would be a way of supplying this deficiency. Suppose each of us were to try to be worth ten good subjects." Mother Barat greatly approved of the suggestion, spoke of St. Francis Xavier, St. Theresa, the Venerable Margaret Mary, and many were the resolutions made that day to walk in the steps of those saints and emulate the ubiquity of their zeal.

The Mother General was indeed blest in her work for souls with the assistance of many great servants of God. The Abbé Trébuquet only came to France at distant intervals; but one devoted friend of the Sacred Heart was still to minister for some time to come to its spiritual needs, and another was preparing to supply the place of that zealous apostle.

Father Varin was sixty-eight years of age, and to his ardent energy was joined a gentle sweetness which gives to sanctity in an advanced period of life a peculiar charm and character. He still continued to preach, and with unabated spirit, but simple and familiar conferences were his delight. He arrived sometimes unexpectedly at the Sacred Heart, and after uttering his usual salutation, "How good God is!" would sit down, and, surrounded by all the Community, he addressed them in a strain of fatherly kindness which varied from grave to gay. Sometimes earnest, sometimes playful in his style, he told them stories always relating to the love of God. Encouraged by Mother Barat's occasional remarks, and the softly-uttered exclamations or pleased smiles of his hearers, he thus gave vent to the ruling passion of his soul.

Like St. John, the aged saint exhorted his daughters to have a great love for one another and for their Mother also, but to love her in Jesus Christ. He recommended them to follow the common path, and to be on their guard against extraordinary ways which he called the bane of religious life. "For my part," he added, "I have such a dread of them that I am almost tempted to say in the Litanies, 'From the gift of miracles, deliver us, O Lord.'" Simplicity was what he prized in dealing with God, and the love he valued was the confiding affection of the child nestling in a father's arms. "If you are in His arms you must be close to His Heart," was one of his sayings. He told the novices that he had taken pleasure one day in thinking of all the different ways in which Jesus belonged to him, and that he was convinced that there was nothing on earth so entirely his own as Jesus. Another time, commenting on the passage in which St. Paul speaks of the width, the length, the height, and the depth of the charity of Christ, he added: "The measure of our love for God must be, if possible, proportioned in every respect to that of God for us. By

its width it will embrace even the most distant places, and include all the missions you may be sent to, even amongst the savages. By its length it will extend, without an hour's interval or interruption, to all eternity. By its height it will rise to the summit of the Cross. By its depth it will sink into abysses of humility and self-abnegation; for to love is to be nothing, so that Jesus may be all."

The coadjutor, so to speak, of Father Varin in his apostolate at the Sacred Heart was Father de Ravignan. Mother Barat was always glad to obtain as often as possible for her communities the teachings of this holy priest; and whilst France was beginning to hail in him one of her most eloquent preachers, she pointed him out to her novices as a consummate guide and master in the spiritual life. She had written some time before to Mother de Bouchaud: "How well he knows the ways of God! What a perfect religious he has been from the first! You can hold him up as a model to your novices. If he had remained in the world and at the bar, he would have walked in Berryer's footsteps, and now he has given up everything. Those are real sacrifices; ours are nothing in comparison. And yet we think we have done a great deal, and want to rest on our laurels."

On the 8th of February, 1839, Father de Ravignan began for the nuns of the mother-house a series of weekly instructions, which lasted throughout Lent. Those who have only heard him preach in public cannot form an idea of the strength of his words when, in private, abandoning all art, he gave full scope to his deep religious feelings and imparted them to souls which a habit of spiritual things had prepared to receive his teachings. He described prayer "as the life of angels, of saints, and even of our Lord Himself. He called it the medicine, the freedom, the light, peace, and happiness of souls. He praised the Cross as the accomplishment of the will of the Father, the glory of

God the Son, the triumph of His Spirit, the strength of the Church, the glory of the Apostles, the bulwark of sanctity, and the light of the world." "O Sisters!" he exclaimed, "here in this retreat, far from the strife of the world, you do not know what goes on in that chaos of darkness and iniquity. You have not, as we have, to fight for souls. But you can suffer, and that makes up for it. And then, speaking of the duty and the blessedness of belonging to God, he said: "Well, now, Sisters, I must confess it, when I see myself at Notre Dame, surrounded by a crowd of six or seven thousand men of all conditions, I often ask myself, 'Is there amongst that large multitude one perfectly happy heart?' And then I see myself in that pulpit, I glance at the livery of our Lord which I wear, and my heart thrills with gratitude at the thought that I am a religious, that I am happy, and that in the midst of this incessant ebb and flow of passions which are surging and raging around me, I am at peace and lodged in a safe haven."

At the beginning of the year 1839 Madame Barat sent Mother Prevost to found a house at Toulouse, where Mgr. d'Astros had been for some time past inviting them. Mother Agarithé de Varax, a soul full of ardent love for the God of poverty, was placed at the head of this new establishment. "We sow a tiny seed at Toulouse," the Mother General said, "in order to take possession of a soil which is capable, we are told, of producing a hundredfold."

Soon afterwards Madame Barat announced to her daughters that she was about to leave them, without saying where she was going. On Tuesday, the 26th of February, they all went to communion together; then she blessed them; and as the bell for the morning office was ringing, she bade the Community farewell and drove off.

This absence was to be a long and, moreover, a painful one. Not soon again was Mother Barat to enjoy peace, harmony, and happiness. Our Lord's words, *Oportet hæreses*

*esse*, apply not only to His Church but to every religious society; and the more such a society increases in extent and strength, the more it seems to require, like the sea, winds and storms to purify it.

Mother Barat was about to undergo a greater trial than even the one she had borne from 1811 to 1816, during the crisis at Amiens. A constant advance in holiness had been preparing her to meet it. God had ordained for this purpose the long retreat she made the preceding year at the Villa Lante. In that deep solitude she had meditated the self-abasement of the Incarnate Word and the mysteries of suffering in the life of His Blessed Mother, and her heart was now ready to embrace a new and unexpected Cross.

## CHAPTER VI.

*The Council General at Rome. The Decrees. The Opposition. Mother Barat's Meekness.*

1839—1840.

TWENTY-THREE years had elapsed since the Council General of 1816 had regulated the constitution of the Society, and experience had only confirmed the wisdom of its prescriptions. The Order had, however, so increased in numbers that whereas at the time of that Council it only possessed six houses, it had forty in 1839. This great extension suggested the necessity of somewhat modifying its government, the weight of which fell almost entirely on the Superior General, and threatened to crush her under a load of labour too great for human strength. Some points of the rule seemed also imperatively to require certain improvements. But it was only with regard to regulations of second-rate importance that this applied, and the Institute in all essential respects remained entirely what it was before, and in complete accordance with the Divine inspiration which had originated it. Illusions, however, existed in some minds on that subject; zeal for what they fancied to be a higher perfection made them wish the whole Institute to be remoulded and cast into the precise form of the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. Mother Barat had most reasonable misgivings as to the necessity, the wisdom, and the success of such a transformation. "Some people fancy," she wrote, "that women can be governed like men. The future will show if that is possible." Such was also the

fear of other holy persons. Cardinal Odescalchi, then Vicar of Rome, had said to Mother Armande de Causans in 1836, "Take care what you are about. It is better to leave well alone. The first idea of a founder bears the mark of God's spirit. There is always danger in interfering with it."

The most important result which the proposed re-casting of the Society would have brought about consisted in the translation of the habitual residence of the Superior and of the central government of the Society from Paris to Rome. Plausible reasons for such a change were not wanting. Since 1830 Paris had been continually agitated by revolutionary movements; it was looked upon as an unsafe residence, and the alarm which the approach of the year 1840 excited drove away from it a great number of persons, and then whatever emanated from France was looked upon with suspicion by Catholic nations. Some recent foundations in foreign countries owed the obstacles which they met with to the prejudices of governments and even of bishops against a Religious Order of women, the Superior of which resided in Paris. Rome, the eternal centre of the Church and the capital of a State, governed and protected by paternal laws, was in those days a haven of peace, the great city of refuge; and lastly, that concentration of Catholic interests around the Holy See which has gone on ever since was then beginning, and a feeling existed that nowhere would the Spirit of the Sacred Heart maintain itself with greater purity than in such a focus of faith, piety, and discipline. For all these reasons a great number of the nuns, especially of those who were not French, and of wise and prudent friends of the Sacred Heart, such as Fathers Rozaven, Loriguet, Barat, Sellier, and even good Father Varin himself, and also of important ecclesiastical personages, namely, Mgr. Tharin, Bishop of Strasbourg, Mgr. Reisach, Bishop of Eichstadt, who was afterwards made

a Cardinal ; and Mgr. Parisi, Bishop of Langres, desired, or at least approved of, the removal of the centre of the Society, that is, of the mother-house and the novitiate to Rome.

It is easy to understand the anguish and perplexity which Mother Barat felt on the subject. If France was the home of her heart, Rome was more and more the home of her soul ; and if in choosing between the two she had only consulted her tastes, her love of solitude and peace, and above all her devoted affection for the Holy See, she would have preferred Rome. We find her saying some years afterwards in a letter to Mother Lehon : “The greatest sacrifice I have ever made was to live far from you and the Holy City. I have known there the happiest days of my religious life.” But in this as in everything else she was ruled, as she says herself, only by the interests of her Institute ; and was it not its supreme interest to go on residing in France, where it had taken rise, which was the centre of its activity, the sanctuary of its traditions, the source of its vocations, and the focus of its apostolate ? Could she forsake it without giving the Episcopate and the Government dangerous uneasiness ? This was the opinion of a great number of bishops. The only advice which would have counterbalanced theirs would have been that of the Pope, or even the least expression of his wishes on the subject. But, as the Mother General had written on a previous occasion, “the Holy Father had left her perfectly free. He understood that the centre of the Society must be in France, and notwithstanding the contrary opinion of others, he did not give way ;” and in a letter of 1836 she said, “I beg of you make yourself easy as to my stay in Rome. Our Holy Father the Pope understands that the government of our Society must remain in France.”

Such was the state of things in 1839. The questions hitherto secretly raised were beginning to be so passionately

discussed, that the Superior foresaw that they would not be peacefully solved. On the 2nd of February she thus expressed her anxiety: "Our Society as well as our government is on the eve of a crisis. May it overcome the trial and come out of it more strongly constituted. This is what we most earnestly ask the Heart of Jesus to grant us."

The Council General was about to meet and decide on this question. It was supposed that the increasing political excitement would prevent its assembling in Paris. The question was where should it hold its sittings. Mother Barat inclined to Montet as a central ground and one which did not forestal in any way the decision as to residence. Others opined for Rome. It was in order to determine the question with greater freedom that Madame Barat had left Paris.

On her way to Switzerland she passed through Besançon and had to cross the Jura in a sledge, snow having fallen without interruption for two days and two nights. "If it had not been for the cantoniers who guided our conveyance and had to lift it up now and then, we should never have arrived. The Blessed Virgin and our good angels protected us."

At Montet she felt refreshed, and wrote to Mother de Limminghe: "The good effected here is solid and wide-spreading. I shall have to tell you more about it." The thought in her mind was to extend the good still further. She said one day to Mother Coppens: "There is a province not far from here where I should like very much to see a house of the Sacred Heart founded." "What province, Reverend Mother?" inquired Mother Henrietta. "Alsace," was the reply. Great was the pleasure of the Superior of Montet, for it so happened that the Curé of Colmar, M. Louis Maimbourg, the oracle of all that country, had been pressing her to establish a house in that town. The Mother General desired her at once to take this proposal into

consideration. In consequence the Abbé Pieau, Mother Henrietta, and Mother Joséphine Gœtz, who was a native of Alsace, went to Colmar, and decided upon a country house a few miles distant from that town. Thus was founded the convent of Kientzheim.

In the month of April, Mother Barat, who had given up all idea of assembling the Council at Montet, proceeded to Rome, where Father Rozaven was urging her to come. She travelled *incognito* in order not to awaken the misgivings and the fears of the French houses. But her charity nearly betrayed her when she stopped at her convent in Turin. The first thing she always did on arriving anywhere was to ask if there were any sick persons in the house; when she was told that one of the children of the school was ill enough to give anxiety, she went up immediately to the infirmary and said to the little girl, "My child, Madame Madeleine has come to bless you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," and she made the sign of the Cross on her forehead. The fever instantly abated, and in a few days Hénédine de Revel was quite well, and said to her companions, "I saw Madame Madeleine, a very good lady, who came and blessed me. It was she who cured me."

On the 21st of April, the Mother General arrived in Rome. On the 2nd of May, she wrote a letter from the Convent of the Trinità, inviting all the councillors to meet there at the beginning of June. She said that never had that meeting been more indispensable than under the actual circumstances. She wrote to some of her other daughters to reassure them as to the results of her absence. She tells Mother Eulalie de Bouchaud, "to be full of courage and hope, and bids her sustain the remnant of Israel. That this time of trial for the Society will pass away." To Mother Giraud, to whom she always seems to write with peculiar tenderness, "Yes, my dear Emilie, I shall see again my French houses, and my former companions. If God pro-

longs the life of your Mother on this land of banishment, you will see her again. When the Society is quite organized I shall have more time to give to my old daughters, whom I shall encourage to pursue the work of their perfection up to the last moment of their existence. Let us be like the swan which sings, we are told, its sweetest notes at its last hour. Such is the death of the saints, the purest, the most ardent, and the most perfect act of love in their lives."

It was found very difficult to bring together the members of the Council. Mother Eugénie de Gramont, who did not in any case approve of the convocation at Rome, was prevented from leaving Paris by the critical aspect of affairs. Mothers Deshayes and Grosier begged to be dispensed on account of their advanced age and feeble health. They were replaced one by Mother Galitzin, Secretary General, and the other by Mother Theresa, who was sent for from Nantes. Mothers de Charbonnel, Desmarquest, Audé, Prevost, de Limminghe, Coppens, de Rozeville, and d' Olivier, altogether made up ten councillors. The Superior General evidently reckoned on their abnegation and right-mindedness to reconcile difficulties. "When no one seeks anything but the interests of Jesus," she said, "it is easy to agree; what spoils everything are our personal pretensions. Oh, if we can only be deeply humble all difficulties will vanish." She especially urged on the councillors the duty of incessant prayer for light, and some time afterwards wrote: "I cannot describe to you with what perseverance they have applied themselves to prayer and the practice of religious virtues during the month which preceded and at the time of the Council." Mother Theresa especially was full of spiritual ardour. She had indeed hoped that now when after long years of separation she was again with Mother Barat they would resume the mystical colloquies of the Convent of the Feuillants and the heights of Sainte Marie. But the moment was unpropitious for

heavenly contemplations. The hour was come for action and for conflict.

The first thing the Council did was to relieve the Mother General of a portion of her labours by the division of the Society into circumscriptions or provinces under the superintendence of provincials who were appointed to visit and direct the houses under their jurisdiction, subject to the control and authority of the Superior General. The process of renewal with regard to the Council of twelve Mothers in whom was vested the election of the Superior General, was also revised. It had become very irregular, and as to both these measures there were no dissentient opinions.

In effecting these changes the Council had made use of the rules and customs of the Society of Jesus. The admiration which some of the councillors felt for these rules led them still further in this work of assimilation. This was the case with Mother de Limminghe, and especially with Mother Galitzin, whose soul was generous and energetic, but whose character and mind were of a very absolute and unbending description. Her passionate devotion to the Order of the Jesuits since her conversion had been as intense as her previous hatred of it. These feelings led to the change or the suppression of forty-six articles of the Constitutions. The period of aspirantship before the admittance to the final vows of profession was extended from five to ten years. The vow of stability through which the lay-sisters were bound irrevocably to the Society was done away with. These were all breaches of the rule of the Sacred Heart. Under the influence of the same spirit, the term of government of local Superiors was limited to six years. The recitation of the Office in Choir having seemed incompatible in some houses with the labour of teaching, it was abolished everywhere except in the novitiate. The periodical meetings of the Council were likewise suppressed, and supplied for by the creation of another assembly called

the Congregation, which the Superior General was to be at liberty to convoke if necessary when and wherever she chose. These changes were to be the subject of decrees to be added to the Constitutions and soon to be submitted to the approval of the Sovereign Pontiff.

But by far the most important of the decisions was that which definitively fixed in Rome the residence of the Superior General. In vain did Mother Barat urge the important considerations of general interest we have already stated. She said some years afterwards, "Our Mothers by so often closing my mouth when I made reasonable objections on that point showed that they did not understand our position in France, and that the feeling on that subject was so keen that it was necessary to take it into consideration. Well, it has been done! We have only to pray that the Heart of Jesus may overrule all for the best. To His goodness and mercy everything is possible." At the time she had written, "that the Council had acted imprudently; that they had gone too fast; that many annoyances would beset her in consequence; and even added that she was sorry not to have followed her own feelings, or rather the lights attached to her office of Superior which made her see and know things that others could not perceive. Pray," she said, "more than ever. We do indeed need it."

On the 5th of July, the Council elected as Assistants General, Mothers de Charbonnel, de Limminghe, Desmarquest, and Galitzin. The latter was to continue in her office of Secretary, and Mother de Charbonnel in that of Procuratrix.

On the 12th, the Mother General and her councillors went from the Trinità to the Villa Lante. They walked in procession through the alleys of the garden, which were festooned with garlands and strewed with flowers up to a spot where stood an image of our Lady of Sorrows. There the Superior consecrated her Society to the wounded heart

of Mary. "O Mary," she prayed, "obtain for us from Jesus that profound humility, that courage which lifts us up above our sufferings and makes us thy true children, and enables us to stand calm and motionless at the foot of the Cross. *Stabat juxta crucem.*" It was observed that Madame Barat looked depressed and sad. On the following day, the Mothers had an audience of Pope Gregory XVI., who blessed them and added to that blessing words of kind encouragement. The Council then dispersed. A circular letter from the Superior gave a summary statement of the additional decrees, and announced that a more complete one would soon be forwarded to each house of the Order. The last of these decrees was thus worded: "The Superior General will henceforward have a fixed place of residence." Mother Barat, always prudent and kind, would not suffer Rome to be mentioned. She wished herself to break this news to the French houses and to soften by her letters the sorrow and discontent it would naturally awaken.

But already the alarm had been raised. Mother de Gramont, one of the first informed, wrote to Rome a despairing letter, to which Madame Barat made the following answer: "My dear Eugénie, your sorrow goes to my heart, and your Mother also longs to have time to weep and pray in solitude. Without the hope of seeing you, I could not bear my exile. If it is God's will that I should remain altogether at Rome, you will come and rest here, dear Eugénie. You will close my eyes, and your old Mother will be comforted on her death-bed by breathing her last sigh in the arms of a daughter who has been in life her consolation and support."

The promulgation of the decrees appeared on the 8th of September. The Mother General did her best to induce her daughters to look upon them as a new means of perfection, and in her generous spirit wrote: "'Behold now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of

salvation. 'The voice of the turtle is heard in our land, the time of pruning is come.' Indeed, dear Mothers and dear Daughters, the vine which already bears fruit is pruned, that it may yet produce more fruit. And is it not thus that the Sacred Heart of Jesus acts in our regard when it asks from us sacrifices and separations? He wishes to disengage our hearts from all human attachments. Those who have respect to persons and who do not look at Jesus alone, what will they have to present at the last day to their Sovereign Judge? Straw instead of good seed! Dust instead of gold!" And in another letter, alluding to the recent assimilation of the Constitutions of the Sacred Heart to those of the Society of Jesus, she says: "If by the mercy of God we become what we ought to be, the Society of the Sacred Heart will show the world that women may by the help of God become men in virtue. Between ourselves, this will not be so great a difficulty at an epoch when men too often resemble women."

But these sweet and earnest words were thrown away in the midst of the agitation which the decrees caused as soon as they were known in the French houses. This was for the Foundress the supreme hour of trial, of that kind of inevitable and fruitful trial which is invariably attached to great works and allotted to holy souls. During four years the Sacred Heart was about to go through an ordeal which must have been fatal to it but for the wonderful prudence and patient sanctity of Mother Barat.

Father Varin was the first to raise a complaint. He was indeed very far from objecting to the removal of the mother-house to Rome, or to the closer conformity established between the Society he belonged to and that which he had founded; but what he considered the sacred ark of that latter Institute had been touched by rash hands. Mother Galitzin, who had been commissioned to

draw up the decisions of the Council, had ventured to erase from the frontispiece of the rule the preface in which it was said that the first end of the Society was *to glorify the Sacred Heart of Jesus*, and had written, in imitation of St. Ignatius of Loyola, "Its end is to consecrate itself *to the greater glory of God.*"

It was against these rash innovations that Father Varin protested by two letters written to Madame Barat on the 19th and 24th of August. They were written in the thorough spirit of a founder; with much feeling and great earnestness, he proved that to suppress these words would be to ruin the Order. Appealing to the first origin of the Institute, the beginning of which he had witnessed, Father Varin declared the Sacred Heart was the object, the end and the only reason of its existence, and he said to Mother Barat: "The proof of this is in the fact that your Society would never have existed if the principal and positive intention of those who founded it had not been to work for the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus by making it known and loved." He concluded his remonstrances by saying, "that the new work was no longer the work which God had revealed to Father de Tournéy, because it had ceased to be the work of the Sacred Heart." And on two occasions he thus ends his letters: "If you suppress that article, the next thing to be done will be to change *the name of the Society*. If however you do keep it, then the Institute may indeed be a Society of the Sacred Heart, but not the one of which we witnessed the foundation thirty-nine years ago; not the one which received you first in its humble commencement; not the one you have, by the help of God's grace, increased and extended in so admirable a manner. The name may be retained; but as to the reality it is evident it no longer exists."

Mother Barat entered fully into the justice of these remonstrances, but she was overcome by her impetuous

Secretary, whom she kept imploring at any rate to proceed slowly. "The works of God," she was always telling her, "do not bear the stamp of precipitation, and the statutes of a religious order cannot be fabricated like a modern constitution."

There was division within and without the Institute. Whereas Father Rozaven, Father Sellier, Father Barat, and Father Loriguet were on the side of the Council General; Father Renaud, Provincial of France, gave it as his opinion that the Jesuits' rule was too hard for women, and that the nuns were attempting something beyond their strength. The Reverend Father Roothaan, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, was afraid that the removal of the mother-house to Rome would set the Government against the Sacred Heart, and the responsibility of this decision react unfavourably on the Jesuits in France, and accordingly he requested the Fathers not to take part in these delicate discussions.

Another friend of Mother Barat's, Mgr. Matthieu, Archbishop of Besançon, who had been confessor to the house in Paris, wrote her a long letter, in which he examined closely every point of the new rule and intimated his opinion as to the disastrous effects that these innovations would not fail to produce in the minds of many of his episcopal colleagues. The first was that some of the bishops, influenced by prejudices handed down from other times, had taken alarm at seeing a congregation flourishing and increasing in their dioceses, withdrawing itself more and more as they thought from their authority in order to place itself under the immediate control of Rome and in the hands of the Society of Jesus. Mgr. de Quélen, supported by the Bishops of Mans, Tours, Poitiers, Orleans, and Beauvais, had addressed a complaint on the subject to the Sovereign Pontiff. The conflict was thus assuming a serious character, and, as Mgr. Matthieu said, "was

likely to become the most serious concern of the Church in France.”

It happened fortunately that the immense majority of the nuns of the Sacred Heart had not the least suspicion of this state of things. Even in the higher regions where the storm was raging the union of hearts was not interrupted, although opinions were to the utmost degree opposed. The Mothers Galitzin, Prevost, de Charbonnel, de Limminghe, and Coppens earnestly supported the new decrees, which had been enthusiastically received by the houses out of France. The French houses had submitted to them with docility, with the exception of those of Mans, Aun, and Beauvais, where the Superior, Madame d'Olivier, protested against the work in which she had herself participated. The two most eminent Mothers of the Society, Madame Grosier and Madame Deshayes, saw with regret a new Institute substituted as they believed for the one the early days of which they had watched over.

But the principal opposition, as might have been expected, proceeded from the Paris house. As Madame Barat had too surely foreseen, Mgr. de Quélen's residence within its precincts had very soon secured for him an absolute influence which had affected the spirit of that house. Mgr. de Quélen was a nobleman of high rank, and besides the vogue which the protection of so eminent a prelate obtained for the school, there had arisen in it a sort of inclination to disparage the humble Mother General. And then Mgr. de Quélen, pious and charitable as he was, had received from the traditions of the preceding century a deplorable tendency to Gallicanism, which rendered him suspicious of what was called at that time the encroachments of Rome and the exempt religious orders. It was under the pressure of these influences, and in perfect good faith, that, in spite of their affection for Mother Barat, the Superior of Paris, Mother Eugénie de Gramont, and the

head mistress, Mother Aimée d'Avenas, gave her occasion to feel how hard a trial it is to suffer at the hands of those we love most dearly.

To the honour of these religious be it said, that the head and front of their dissatisfaction with Mother Barat was her living away from them. Mother Aglaé Fontaine, Superior of Autun, wrote to her: "I could accept all the other changes, but the idea of your residing at Rome crushes me to such a degree that I cannot think of it without terror. What a terrible misfortune this would be for our French houses, where your presence did so much good! For us, your first daughters, this cross is heavy indeed, and the change very hard." It was therefore in a great measure the filial affection of her daughters which made them oppose their Superior. They were fighting against Mother Barat because they could not bear to lose her.

Even in the Court of Rome itself she found opinions equally divided. Cardinal Pedicini, the Protector of the Society, a remarkably pious man, was on the side of the new decrees, whereas Cardinal Lambruschini, who was better acquainted with the state of minds in France, apprehended, on the contrary, the sad results he foresaw they would have.

Mother Barat turned to the Sovereign Pontiff. "The will of the Holy See," she said in her letters, "will be our compass." But the decrees had not been submitted to canonical sanction, and the Pope kept silence. Thus reduced to her own lights, Madame Barat had only one possible way of escape between these dangerous shoals, the way which her patient charity was opening to her. She gave the world on this occasion a singular proof of what can be effected in such moments by dint of humility, prudence, and a saintly gentleness.

A person who has to manage others in the midst of

such irritating conflicts must be endowed with great self-control, freedom from passion, and strength to resist the bias of her own heart. The calm superiority which nothing but consummate virtue can give was the chief element of Madame Barat's power. She never had a predetermination, never an obstinate adherence to her own opinion; her spirit of conciliation was always ready to open a door to every possible arrangement of matters in dispute. On the 6th of September she wrote to Mother de Gramont: "Really you distress yourself too much about my remaining at Rome. It is only a trial, and if it does not prove favourable to the interests of the Society I shall most readily give it up. If it can be shown that the choice of another place for the habitual residence of the Superior General would be more advantageous, who could oppose it? Certainly not your Mother, who only consented to this change as a matter of duty, and in order not to refuse the Heart of Jesus the greatest sacrifice she could make." And to Mother d'Avenas she says: "Do you think that I want to act despotically, to refuse to enter into accommodation with such excellent daughters, or to resist the argument of the greatest good if it is once made evident to me? No indeed! this would be against my character and my resolutions."

Amidst and above these discussions she constantly maintained the spirit of charity. At any cost, and in every case, she was determined to preserve it, and would not even allow the possibility of its infringement. "You may differ with us in opinion," she wrote to Mother de Gramont, "but your duty and your heart will raise you above these dissensions." And to another she said: "I rely on Mother de Gramont as much as on myself. The bonds which the Sacred Heart of Jesus has formed, and which bind us to His service, can never be dissolved." To Mother Grosier, who had expressed a fear that, in

making observations to the Mother General adverse to the recent changes she was running the risk of injuring their old friendship, she replied: "Our affection is placed on the angular stone, which is Jesus Christ, and no human power will ever shake it. You can say everything you like to me—bad, good, and indifferent—and I shall never doubt the purity of your attachment to your Mother and the Society, in the behalf of which I am making at this moment the sacrifice which costs me the most, and that is, to live at a distance from you."

She was generously determined that no personal imputations and no individual names should be mixed up with this discussion. The responsibility of the recent changes had been laid on Father Rozaven. She answered indignantly: "It is a calumny. This unjust reproach ought not to be addressed to this venerable man, who has consecrated his whole life to immense labours for religion. He simply drew up the articles which people attack." And then she adds: "I am the only person who ought to be blamed, I am the only guilty one, and if I have been mistaken in what I have done, at any rate I and many others thought we were thus working towards greater perfection."

She might indeed have complained of Mgr. de Quélen, who without communicating with her, and dating his letter from her own house at Paris, had written to the Pope and Bishops of France against her circular letter and the recent decrees. But, far from accusing the Archbishop, Mother Barat speaks of the violence he must have done his own feelings in causing her so much pain.

Writing to Mother de Gramont she says: "You ought, my child, to have enlightened His Grace. You would have spared him a sorrow, for, knowing as well as I do the generosity and kindness of his heart, I am sure he regrets the immense pain he has given me. Coming from him I

have felt this blow most acutely. I had a right to expect a word of advice from him before he took part against us."

The great sorrow which M. de Quélen's letter had caused her she explains in the following passage of one of her letters: "We are now made a spectacle to God, to men, and to angels! What has become of that *Cor unum* which we were so proud of? Was this the moment to raise up such a clamour and make the world believe we are divided, whereas not one of us but would be ready to sacrifice everything rather than give so sad an example?"

From that moment there was no rest for Madame Barat. She underwent for her Society the pangs of a mother for a sick child, but with what faith they were accepted! She wrote to Mother Giraud: "My dear Emilie, give a very ardent thought in prayer to your Mother, whose want of virtue makes her spend many sad nights, but the blows are softened by the cross, for it is a joy to suffer." To another she wrote: "Up to this time the Society was led like a sheep, and things went on well, for it was enough for the shepherd to carry the staff in order to be obeyed. Oh, how sad it would be if this is no longer the case, simplicity is so pleasing to our Lord!" "O dear Mother," she says to another of her daughters, in the year 1839, "how the God of all goodness tries us all!" And remembering that she was in her sixtieth year, she adds: "Is it not time to begin in earnest to become a nun of the Sacred Heart? A few more years and then we shall have to give an account to the great Judge! Pray that these years of suffering may make up for so many others that I have spent so ill."

St. Vincent of Paul said: "Give way as much as you can, provided you do not thereby offend God and your neighbour."

This was, throughout the whole of this affair, Madame Barat's rule of conduct. Mother de Gramont and others petitioned that the decrees before they were made definitive

and irrevocable should be tried for a certain time, and that for the present they should not be presented to the Sovereign Pontiff for approbation. On the 5th of October Mother Barat informed her that she agreed to this delay. "You see, my Eugénie," she wrote, "that I enter into your ideas, and that I have never wished, believe me when I say it, to impose obligations against the consciences or even against the desires of the greater number of those who belong to our Society. I have, alas, many defects which do not permit me to boast; but you who have been acquainted with me for so many years, know that I am not obstinate, and that it is easy to make me listen to reason."

This first concession did not fail to raise objections. It is not every one who can understand on what necessary and obligatory points duty requires firmness, and which are those on the contrary where it requires humility, forbearance, and patience.

The Superior's extreme indulgence for Mother de Gramont was considered by some people as a weakness. Madame Galitzin especially, whose autocratic education had not inclined her to a mild and considerate spirit of government, could only understand and advocate strong measures. But as she wrote herself to some one, it was in vain that the Assistants begged the Superior General to evince firmness with regard to Paris. They could not persuade her to act as they wished, so great was her fear of extinguishing the smoking flax. "If God chooses to justify me I leave the care of it to Him," Madame Barat said to her too vehement friends, "I see clearly that He wishes me to lean on Him alone, so I have only to keep silence and pray for everybody." On the same day on which this letter was written, the 19th of November, the circular appeared which announced that, "according to the request of several of the Mothers, and in order to reconcile divergent opinions, the decrees would be submitted to a trial of three years. Therefore all

the houses were at once to put them into practice with that complete and frank simplicity which belongs to truly religious souls." "If at the end of that time," the Superior added, "it is found that certain regulations have a bad effect, I shall not refuse to convoke another General Congregation, with the view of remedying the inconveniences which experience may demonstrate, for I certainly have nothing at heart but the prosperity of our dear Society."

This circular letter found Mother de Gramont entirely engrossed by the last illness of Mgr. de Quélen. He died in a holy manner in the little Hotel Biron, on the 31st of December 1839, uttering those beautiful words of St. Theresa: "I am going to be judged by Him I have so much loved." Nothing had ever affected Mother Barat's profound veneration for the pious Archbishop. It had survived the recent dissensions raised against her as well as the anxieties which his residence at the Hotel Biron during the last eight years of his life had occasioned her. She had always admired him, and forwarded his interests at Rome; she mourned over his death and had him prayed for in all her houses. Her letters are full of regrets for this friend of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of her Society.

She passed all the winter of 1839, and the spring and summer of 1840, at the Villa Lante: "I am still a Trasteverine," she writes, "this part of the town keeps everybody at a distance;" not but that princes and eminent personages often sought her out in that retirement, but her own thoughts were concentrated on God and the poor. "Sta. Rufina," she said, "is often in such straits, that it cannot pay the baker's bill, I give them all I have." And then she adds some of the lessons learnt in the school of divine love: "I thank our Lord for the knowledge He gives me of persons and things. May I profit by it myself, and become if God gives me strength twice as zealous as heretofore, in order to impress upon souls in an ineffaceable manner the necessity

of obedience, of the entire forgetfulness of our own interests, and care for the glory of the Sacred Heart at the expense of our own. Short of that we shall do no real good. How necessary it is often to lift up our eyes to our heavenly home ! We must try, my dear daughter, to enter it as soon as we have breathed our last sigh !” Meanwhile the Superior had sent to Paris several of the first Mothers in succession, with the object of recommending and introducing the practice of the decrees. Mother Galitzin, who was going to America, had attempted this on her way through with more zeal than success. Conciliation was not one of her gifts. Madame Barat expected better results from the efforts of the sweet and gentle Mother de Charbonnel, who arrived at the Hotel Biron in a state of such poverty that Madame de Bouchaud was requested by her Superior to provide her with absolute necessaries in the way of warm clothing. It had been found out that she had often suffered from cold without complaining of it or asking for winter garments. Mother Prevost also went to Paris with the view of smoothing difficulties ; but the only person who was really expected to accomplish this object was the Superior General, and with that hope Father Varin kept pressing her to return to France. “What is becoming,” he wrote, “of our dear Society of the Sacred Heart ? I hardly like to ask myself the question, not having the courage to answer it. Where is that peace amongst us which our Divine Master bought at so high a price ! which he bequeathed us on the eve of His death, and as soon as He was risen came to put us in possession of ? *Pax vobis !* As to myself, there is but one thing I can do, and that is to adore, submit, and pray.” Thus urged by her old friends, and encouraged by the Holy Father himself, Mother Barat began her journey to France at the beginning of August, 1840.

She went through Loretto, where she had just made a small foundation. In one of her previous pilgrimages she

had been struck by the misery, ignorance, and rudeness of the little girls who followed her carriage in great numbers with clamorous vociferations, and she had promised the Blessed Virgin to look after these children. The municipality had made over to her for that purpose an uninhabited building which had formerly been a hospital. It was situated on the Monte Reale, an isolated height above the town, which stands between the Adriatic and a range of hills and villages which have since become famous as the scene of the heroic struggle of the last noble defenders of the Holy Father's cause.

Mother Barat felt that this foundation, situated close to the house of Jesus and Mary, would be a safeguard for her Society thus placed under their protection. Especially since recent storms had convulsed it, she hastened to have recourse to the Queen of Heaven. Three religious had been sent to Loretto with a promise that she would soon visit them. "I long," she wrote, "to be once more in that holy sanctuary, and to consecrate you all to the Heart of Mary. When once I know that the mantle of our Heavenly Mother is thrown over the Society, I shall be quieter about its future." Nothing, however, had been begun in the month of August. Mother Barat had at first to lodge at the Marchesa Solari's, the benefactress of the foundation, who thought she would keep her in her house by surrounding her with every sort of comfort. This was on the contrary precisely the best means of driving her away. "Oh dear!" exclaimed the poor Superior, "what attentions of every sort, prie-dieu, cushions, carriage! How ashamed one feels at all these comforts so near Loretto, and even in the very sanctuary where Jesus and Mary lived in poverty!" And in another letter she says: "How kind the Marchesa Solari has been, and yet I long to go away, for this sort of life is too contrary to my tastes, and I cannot forget what my position originally was." She remained four days at Loretto and started again after the Assumption.

At Pignerol she found the holy Sister Elizabeth dying, and as humble and unknown in death as in life. Mother Barat spent two hours by her bed-side. No record remains of these intimate communications except that they filled the heart of this lowly sister with overflowing joy. She was overheard sweetly complaining to our Lord that He forestalled her reward: "It is not this that I asked of Thee, my Lord," she ejaculated; "I wanted only to suffer, and Thou knowest the reason of that wish." When they inquired, quite at her last moments, if she had any message to send to the Mother General, she replied with great earnestness: "Tell her that eternity itself will not seem to me long enough to thank her for the manner in which she has acted towards me. It has indeed been according to God's views, and I can now say, *consummatum est.*" Thus did Pauline de St. André end her life on the 14th of September, feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Mother Barat always spoke with the greatest admiration of what she had seen, heard, and learnt of her last moments. "It was love that consumed her," she said; "even in her agony that soul was overflowing with rapture and spiritual joy. . . . She had given up everything and had followed Jesus Christ, humble and crucified; the true way and also the surest and the shortest. Oh, that our Lord would enable us to understand it!" She quite worshipped the memory of this saintly sister, and in a letter to Mother Quirin, Superior of Pignerol, she says, "How hard a sacrifice it has been to part with my Elizabeth. I cannot get over her loss; still I feel that in the bosom of her Divine Spouse she helps me, for I often invoke her."

Mother Barat made another halt at Parma. She found the Community established during the time of the holydays in their country house at Talignano. She liked during her stay there to walk up to the hill where the cows and sheep were grazing, and even to take for an hour the place of the

sister whose business it was to look after them. One morning she asked a little shepherd boy as a favour to let her take care of his flock whilst he went to serve the Community Mass. "This occupation," she said, "afforded me a good subject for meditation in the evening, for having found how difficult it was to keep the sheep in the good pastures, I thought of Jesus, and said to Him, O Lord, how I do pity Thee, having to look after such bad and rebellious sheep, such as myself, for instance."

But she was in haste to arrive at the house in Paris. The wish and the hope of bringing back order and charity to that dear Community quickened her steps. From Parma she wrote to Mother de Gramont: "My dear Eugénie, how I long to see and to embrace you! I cannot think that we shall remain long divided in opinion when once we can understand each other, we who are so exactly of one mind in all other respects. I must stop, for I feel too deeply to enter into explanations. I pray, and cannot help hoping, that we shall soon be as happily and closely united as ever." This was the work to which she devoted herself, and it took a long time to accomplish it. In this struggle, the most painful she had ever encountered, the secret of Mother Barat's strength was her gentleness. This is no paradox, but on the contrary, a great truth, for has not our Lord Himself declared that "the meek shall inherit the earth;" and who has not felt that the souls who exercise a mastery over others are those who know how to conquer themselves. But the supernatural cause of this strength lies in the fact that it is only in such souls that the Holy Spirit of God Almighty can reign in the fulness of its light and of its power in the words of the Scripture, "The Lord is sweet and righteous. . . . He will guide the mild in judgment; He will teach the meek His ways."\* Gentleness has the key of this world and of the next.

\* "Dulcis et rectus Dominus . . . dirigit mansuetos in iudicio, docebit mites vias suas" (Psalm xxiv, 9, 10).

## CHAPTER VII.

*The Council of Lyons, Opposition of Mgr. Affre and threats of the Government. Decision at Rome and unanimity in the Sacred Heart.*

THE Mother General arrived in Paris on the 29th of September, feast of St. Michael. She began by spending some weeks at the Rue Monsieur, where the novices, ignorant of all dissensions, were following the exercises of a retreat which ended on the feast of St. Theresa. Mother Barat joined in it, prayed with her daughters and gave them instructions on the words of the Saint, "To suffer or to die," a fit preparation for the approaching conflicts. She afterwards took up her abode in the Rue de Varennes where the observance of the decrees was still delayed on one pretext or another. First the death of the Archbishop had been alleged and respect for his memory, then the necessity of waiting for the nomination of his successor and the manifestation of his wishes on the subject. "It is the good pleasure of God," wrote the Superior, "violently to shake the little tree of the Society, just as the stormy wintry winds agitate the trees of the forest. Those which have a firm hold of the ground are only strengthened by the tempest, but how many are uprooted!"

What she first laboured at was to reanimate in the house that love of God from which alone can spring sacrifice, union, and peace. "If we become very perfect," she said, "very holy indeed, how the Sacred Heart would expand for us. But, alas! we restrict Its action by our infidelities.

This is a truth which I can lay my finger on." Her gentleness, her quiet goodness, her gracious manners, dissipated a great number of misconceptions. Many of the Sisters said that if she herself had brought the decrees to Paris, no one would have thought of protesting against them. Some months afterwards she wrote: "My mission progresses; slowly indeed, but still it progresses. The house reassumes the religious aspect which the Hotel Biron ought to present, and all who belong to it are with me just as before." This was a truce if not a peace. It was dearly bought by the Mother General. In the chapel of the school which has been recently pulled down, there was between the sacristy and the altar a dark corner where Madame Barat used at that time to pray for hours and to shed tears which she concealed from all but God. It was there that she sought from Him renewed strength for her hard task. It seemed almost a miracle that her delicate health did not give way under this prolonged trial which was complicated by other anxieties. Almost every night the singing of the *Marseillaise* in the street awoke her with a start, and reminded her of the terrible days of her childhood.

"Alas!" she wrote, "good influences pass but too quickly away and bad ones retain their power." The occasion of this burst of popular excitement was the translation of the remains of Napoleon I. to the Church of the Invalides. "I am afraid," she added, "that there is a secret fire smouldering in those ashes which will produce sooner or later a conflagration."

On the 15th of December she went from the Hotel Biron to the Rue Monsieur in order to be at a greater distance from the tumultuous demonstrations of the popular fête. That very evening she fell ill and was laid up for two months. During that time the novices saw every day during their hour of mental prayer the Blessed Sacrament carried to their Reverend Mother, and as they knelt before

It the words of Martha to Jesus Christ rose to their lips :  
“Lord, she whom Thou lovest is sick.”

On one particular festival a ceaseless cough prevented her from receiving the Holy Eucharist. One of her daughters said to her : “How sorry I am, Reverend Mother, that you cannot communicate.” “True,” she replied, “it is indeed a great privation not to receive Jesus, but at any rate I have His Cross, and we cannot have everything at the same time.” It was not till the 18th of February, 1841, that she re-appeared in the garden, and sitting in the sunshine, sent for the postulants she had not seen yet. One of them fell on her knees and begged her pardon for having opened the door of her room by mistake one morning at the hour of prayer and thus disturbed her sleep. “But, my dear child,” the Mother General answered, “I was, on the contrary, very much obliged to you for enabling me to make an act of love of God sooner than I should otherwise have done.” As soon as she was recovered, Mother Barat occupied herself about several new foundations, which will be spoken of later on. They seemed to multiply in proportion to the sufferings of her Society. At the same time, she resumed her course of visits to her houses in the north of France, of which Mother Eugénie du Gramont was the Provincial. She was delighted with Amiens. “It is, indeed, the cradle of the Sacred Heart,” was her remark on this occasion. “This dear flock of our Lord will help me to strengthen the Society in that true spirit of faith, obedience, detachment, zeal for souls, recollection and prayer, the true Baptism of water and the Holy Ghost, without which nothing can live and prosper.” With Lille and Jette she was also much pleased. Besançon had been more disturbed, and it had been necessary to change the Superior, but everything had gone on well since that time ; and in looking back to the results of her journey, the Mother General could say,

“There is great consolation in seeing the good which is effected by our houses in the north. Both nuns and children are devoted to the Society, such a good spirit exists in them. That of the house in Paris is improving very much. Patience and gentleness succeed better than force and anger. Why will not people act in accordance to these principles, which are, after all, those of our Lord?”

She wrote in the same sense to her daughters in America: “Things are calming down by degrees. Every one tries to work hard for the good of the Society, so I hope that Jesus will continue to bless us. As to the conduct you are to follow, I have only one piece of advice to give you; whatever you may hear, hold fast by the stem; we shall then understand one another, for my compass will always be the See of Peter, the Vicar of Christ. We cannot make a mistake if we keep to that principle, and we would rather die than depart from it.”

In the autumn the Mother General left Paris to return to Rome, where she wished to do the same work as at Paris, and by the same means. She started on the 16th of September, and did not arrive at the Trinità dei Monti till the 19th of November. But by that time her departure had made a great commotion in France. In the eyes of the bishops and many of the nuns, it was a kind of escape out of bounds. Mother Barat's perplexity became greater than ever. Was she simply to conform to the decrees and reside in Rome till another Council took place, or was it her duty to calm the irritation her absence produced in France by a speedy return to Paris, at the risk of displeasing her Council and the Court of Rome? St. Vincent of Paul said: “At times, when human prudence ends and sees nothing clearly, then the light of Divine Wisdom begins to dawn.” That ray of light in this instance came from the Vatican. Without any formality, or as yet any decision on the subject, Gregory XVI., hearing of the excitement

caused by this affair, expressed his own opinion to Cardinal Lambruschini. It was in favour of conciliation. The Holy Father said: "The Superior General ought to make her habitual residence in France. She can come to Rome from time to time to visit her establishments and keep up immediate and intimate communications with the Holy See." These words furnished Mother Barat with a clue out of her difficulties. She hastened to announce in a circular letter that she was staying in Rome only for a time, and intended to return to France in the course of the year. That the next Council, which would definitely settle the question, would meet in France. "What a work awaits us there," she wrote in a private letter; "but our Lord will help us; humility and prayer will be our best weapons; do not let us fail to have recourse to them."

On her arrival at Rome, the Mother General found Madame Eugénie Audé, whom she had appointed two years before Superior at the Trinità dei Monti, at the point of death. This much loved daughter seemed only to be awaiting her return, to breathe her last sigh in the arms of the Mother she so tenderly loved. Madame Barat during four months scarcely stirred from her side, and on the 6th of March she closed her eyes and assumed the care of the Trinità during the rest of the time she remained in Rome.

There are times when the graces which always abound so much in that Holy City seem to be multiplied to an extraordinary extent. Father de Ravignan had just been preaching the Advent, and his eloquent sermons had stirred to the very depths the hearts of his hearers. Lent continued what Advent had begun. The Holy Week made the great mystery of our faith almost visible to the eyes, as Mother Barat expressed it, and then, as if to complete these impressions of grace, came the holy death of the Count de la Ferronnays, the Blessed Virgin's appearance

to the Jew Ratisbonne, his miraculous conversion and vocation to the sacerdotal and religious life. "May he become the apostle of his nation!" exclaimed Madame Barat, "and, if it be the will of God, its martyr."

She devoted herself actively to the service of souls. At her suggestion a retreat was preached in the church of the Trinità dei Monti to a number of Roman and foreign ladies, which produced excellent results. Many came to consult her and to let her into the secret of those sorrows which can only be poured into the ear of God, of a mother, or a saint.

"How many miseries one hears," she exclaimed one day, "when this wretched world lifts up a corner of the veil which hides it. It is, indeed, out of love for the Heart of Jesus that we look at it through that corner. It is too dreadful!" She was sometimes tempted to envy the state of her excellent companion, Mother Desmarquest, whom her happy ignorance of Italian left in solitude with God. "If, when I was a child," she said, "I could have foreseen my destiny, I should resolutely have refused to learn anything, and then I might have been a simple lay-sister. I know this is a useless regret, and the best thing I can do now is to turn to account my position—to suffer and to love."

In the middle of the summer of 1832, Mother Barat felt it was time to return to Paris. At the beginning of the year she had written: "For the Mother General to remain at Rome at this moment would be the ruin of the Society. Father de Ravignan and all our friends are of that opinion. Let us pray that peace may prevail and agreement be arrived at, not only on this subject, but on all others, even if with that view we are obliged to make sacrifices. They will be repaid a hundred-fold if we succeed in re-establishing the *Cor unum*. Everything is comprised in that." To one of her nuns, who seemed afraid she

would return from Rome armed with excommunications against her opponents, Mother Barat wrote: "You will soon be convinced, my dear daughter, that neither in my hand nor in my heart do I bear the thunders of the Vatican."

Cardinal Lambruschini had recommended that the next Council General should be held at Lyons, as neutral ground between Rome and Paris. Mgr. de Bonald, a great friend of the Sacred Heart, who had been recently named Cardinal under the title of the Trinità dei Monti, had offered his diocese for this assembly. And it was from Lyons that a circular letter, dated June 1st, fixed for the day of meeting the 26th of July.

Before leaving Rome, the Mother General, accompanied by Mother Desmarquest and Mother de Limminghe, was received in audience by Gregory XVI. The Holy Father blessed the travellers and the Council, affectionately adding that he looked forward to seeing Madame Barat again. "I know," he said, "that you have had painful moments to go through, but the Lord has blessed and will bless all." Then, making upon her the sign of the Cross, he repeated, "Yes, yes, always *Cor unum* and *Anima una*." Four days afterwards, on the 21st of June, Mother Barat left Rome. She stopped on her way for a few days at Sant' Elpidio, a little town of the legation of Fermo, situated on a hill overlooking the Adriatic. A Community of Oblates of Mary in that place had been authorized by the Pontifical Government to join her Society. She adopted them as her daughters, and then passing through her houses of Parma and Chambéry, she arrived at Lyons on the 22nd of July. The affairs of the Sacred Heart were about to enter upon a new phase.

The Mother General hoped much from the Council of Lyons. She wrote in one of her circulars: "All who know us are fixing their attention on this assembly, and feel

convinced, without knowing why, that the Society will come out of it stronger and more perfect. Out of love for the Sacred Heart, unity and submission will arise, and we shall realize the passage of Scripture which says, 'Israel rose like one man.' Then the admirable motto which we wear upon our hearts will indeed be imprinted on our souls by a love of our Lord stronger than death and more ardent than hell, as the Holy Scripture says."

The assembly was very numerous. Besides the Assistants, Mother Barat had invited to it this time the Provincials and Vice-Provincials, and moreover, a professed nun from each province, with a few of the local Superiors. "I should like all our opponents to come to it," said the liberal-minded Mother General. Mother Galitzin had returned from America, bringing with her a young professed nun, Aloysia Hardey, in whom she had discerned the gifts required for a Superior. Madame Barat wrote at that moment: "The arrival of all our Mothers by the various roads that lead to Lyons has been a consoling sight, for they show the greatest attachment to the Society and to myself, and such a spirit of conciliation, prayer, and charity. Let us then hope and trust that the Heart of Jesus will not forsake us!"

The only one that delayed her arrival was Mother de Gramont. She alleged the opposition which the Archbishop of Paris made to her departure, and this was but too true.

Mgr. Affre, successor of Mgr. de Quélen, was possessed of eminent virtues both of heart and character. His magnificent death evinced it. But there was something cold and hard in his nature; he had strong and unjust prejudices against the Jesuits, and included the Sacred Heart in the same disfavour. He imagined that the convocation of the Council at Lyons was an attempt to withdraw the Institute from his authority. On the 12th of July he addressed a severe letter to the Superior General, stigmatizing as irre-

gular any meeting of the Council elsewhere than in the mother-house of which he considered himself the head, and consequently forbidding any deliberations as to the constitutions and general affairs of the Society. At the same time he gave notice to all the bishops of the dioceses where the Sacred Heart was established of the opposition which he thought it his duty to make to the Council, and the changes introduced into the Society by the recent decrees. Twenty-two of the bishops adhered to these protests. In vain did Mother Barat write a respectful letter in hopes of softening him. He maintained his prohibition. There was then but one resource left, and that was to consult Rome. A Commission of eight Cardinals was named to examine this urgent affair, and in the meantime the Superior General thought it necessary to suspend the opening of the Council. She was undergoing a kind of martyrdom. Everything in and out of the house seemed combining to try her—intense heat, continual thunder-storms, constant nightmare, and above all, the news that her dear companion, Mother Grosier, had died at Paris on the 28th of July.

Not to take leave of her in her last moments was a terrible privation to the Mother General, who wrote at that moment: "My heart is broken, and I can find no rest; in my sleep groans escape me; death seems to compass me about on every side. My own turn will come soon: with so many warnings it would be indeed strange not to be prepared for it. If peace could be restored to the Society, I should indeed be happy to join those who are gone to their rest."

She proposed to the Councillors to enter into retreat. "We must," she said, "lift up our hands to God, Who is our hope, for in men we have none. *Levavi oculos meos in montes.*" Madame de la Barmondière had given to the Sacred Heart a house on the heights of Fourvières, called Les Anglais. It was there that Father Barrelle gave the

Spiritual Exercises. This retreat in the midst of these hot contests and sharp trials was like a fountain in the desert. The preaching of the servant of God excelled on this occasion his accustomed power of eloquence. "I have never heard a similar retreat," was Mother Barat's remark years afterwards. It seemed as if in that hour of urgent need God had given to this apostle of His a special amount of light and grace. It bore fruit in each individual case, according to the Mother General's notes, and in her own most abundantly, if we can judge by these words, written just after those days of spiritual graces: "I care not for personal suffering. *Amplius!* that is the cry of my soul, if only the Heart of Jesus saves the Society!" And in another letter she says: "Oh, let us save the Society from the impending crisis. There is but one resource—union! If we had to die for it we must apply that remedy to the evil which produces these divisions." One of her daughters heard and understood this appeal. Mother Galitzin's character was hard as steel, but on the other hand her heart was as true as gold. She had caused great distress and even suffering to her Superior by her imperious volitions; but her generous nature suggested the thought that perhaps in that hour of trial God required a victim, and she spontaneously offered herself to our Lord for suffering and death. We have seen this act of oblation written and signed in a firm hand. It was submitted to Madame Barat, who ratified it at the end of the retreat. It ends with these lines: "On Tuesday, the 10th of August, 1842, our Mother General and Father Barrelle have offered me to our Lord as a victim for the Society." We shall see later on that this offer was not made in vain. It became a question whether the Council could take place. The greater number of bishops objected to it under the circumstances. Even the Cardinal de Bonald, the first patron of the assembly, hinted with regret that it was no longer in his power to authorize

it in his diocese, on account of the dangers, scandals, and divisions threatened by the letters of the Archbishop of Paris.

It was at this moment that the Mother General received the answer from Rome. A Brief of the Pope, addressed on the 16th of August to the Cardinal Protector Pedicini, a copy of which was sent to Mgr. Affre, informed the French Prelate that his quality of Archbishop of Paris did not give him jurisdiction over the whole Society of the nuns of the Sacred Heart. The Archbishop submitted, but was deeply hurt. "What should he say to the Government," he asked of the Mother General, "when consulted according to custom by the Minister of Public Instruction with regard to any new foundations? and what would that functionary think of the Archbishop being no longer endowed with authority in the Society?" This letter was the presage of a new danger, and the cloud thus indicated was indeed rising on the horizon big with impending storms.

Under these apprehensions the Council indefinitely adjourned its sittings. The Mothers were obliged to separate. The Superior General left Lyons on the 9th of September, approved by some, blamed by others, and tormented by anxieties which she could impart to no one but God. Mother Desmarquest accompanied her. They both kept silence: their sorrow was too deep for words. The weather, which was rainy and dark, seemed in keeping with the sadness they felt.

From Lyons Madame Barat went to Besançon, thence to Autun. There she received a letter which filled her with consternation. She had suffered from the opposition of her own Society and that of the Episcopacy. Still more formidably did it meet her on the part of the Government.

The Minister of Public Worship, M. Martin (du Nord), having heard from the Archbishop of Paris of the recent changes, had written to that Prelate that the Society of the

nuns of the Sacred Heart, by transferring the residence of the Superior to Rome in contradiction to the statutes approved by the State in 1827, had infringed the law and forfeited the benefit of its approbation. In consequence he summoned the Society to return instantly to its first regulations, on pain of being subjected to the penalties prescribed by the law of the 24th of May, 1825. These penalties consisted in the dissolution of the Society, the suppression of its schools, and the confiscation of its houses in favour of hospitals and charitable establishments. The Minister's letter was forwarded to Madame Barat by one of the Vicars-General of the Archbishop, who urged her to return to Paris. "Monseigneur," he said, "was inclined to aid her to the best of his power, but had declared that if she would not help herself he would be obliged to abandon her."

How was Mother Barat to act? The Cardinal Protector seemed displeased at the dispersion of the Lyons Council. Father Rozaven maintained a prudent silence. "There are some," the Superior General said, "who are afraid to take our part or even to advise us. But we must not lose courage. Let us remain quiet and invoke Jesus, Mary, and St. Michael. I feel confident that we shall rise out of this abyss, and that good will result from all these trials." Just as she had written this, Mgr. Matthieu arrived at Autun. He came there on purpose to inform the Mother General of the intentions of the Government, and to urge her immediate return to Paris. She started at once, and arrived at the Hotel Biron on the 3rd of November. The Papal Nuncio, Mgr. Garibaldi, approved of this step. It was evident that for her Order it was a question of life or death.

It does not enter into our subject to state all the details of the struggle which the Mother General went through during several months, and of the double resistance she

had to make against extreme parties on both sides. She said herself that her position was like that of the team which the prophet speaks of, composed of four animals, pulling in different directions. One of the greatest sufferings a generous soul can be called upon to endure is to fight against venerated adversaries. "I could never have believed it," she said, in speaking of these dissensions between servants of God. "But saints, until they have passed *per ignem*, that is, through the fire of God's love or through the fire of purgatory, find it very difficult to agree among themselves." The Archbishop was also too right-minded not to appreciate Mother Barat, and he often said that it grieved him to be obliged to grieve her, for she was a saint. If he urged her to subscribe to the suppression of the decrees of the Council, it was in order to save her Order, and indeed she did acquire every day a greater certainty that the destruction of her Society was resolved upon. On the other hand, her Assistants maintained that it had been an act of weakness on her part to return to Paris; they refused to come there, and protested beforehand against everything she might do under the pressure of the Archbishop, as they expressed it.

Mother Galitzin, with her usual impetuosity, wrote "that she and her adherents would like better to be suppressed than not to be Roman." The Mother General thus answered her excited daughter: "You make up your mind on that point very easily. I own that nothing but the love of God would enable me to bear such language and such proceedings. For my own part, I pray that I may not witness the ruin of the Society. I feel that it would kill me." Still she found excuses for her good but imprudent daughters. "Pray for some amongst us," she wrote, "excellent and well-intentioned souls, that they may understand that harm is often done by attempting to make everything too perfect." She never would listen to recrimina-

tions and accusations. "Oh, do not say that it is this or that person who is in fault. It is our own infidelities that bring upon us these troubles. How can we make up for them, God only knows. We can only pray." If people were spoken of as having been ungrateful to her, she answered: "There can never be any real ingratitude except towards God. It would be wrong to complain of ingratitude when no one owes us anything, which is the real truth. And then, dear Mother, have we never been ungrateful ourselves to Jesus Christ?" One of her dearest daughters had so far forgotten herself as to write in a way which made her reply: "My child, your letter would have grieved me had it not been that I sometimes have to distinguish between the style in which you write and the feelings of your heart." And to another, "No, my dear Mother; no, I am not unjust towards you. Some day, perhaps, you will know what I have suffered. I do not like to complain: I prefer to be silent and to pray."

It has been said that there are times when silence is the best token of strength. As much as possible Mother Barat held her peace, trying, as she said, to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ in His silence. *Jesus autem tacebat.* These three words, she said, were her strength and consolation. Following the example of Him who in His agony persevered in prayer, she wept and poured forth supplications in the little oratory adjoining the chapel. The Archbishop of Besançon, afraid of her completely exhausting herself by these prolonged watches, wrote, "Let love alone bind you to the Cross, and let the Cross plead for you. This true and sweet reliance will soothe your heart."

Unkind comments were not wanting on what some persons chose to consider as tokens of the weakness of advancing age in the Mother General. People said, "that the good head, the real head of the Society, was Mother de Gramont." There was no necessity to apprise Madame

Barat of her own inutility. Her humility often suggested the thought that if she were to resign her office the storm would be allayed, and from the bottom of her heart she longed to be set aside, and as she expressed it, "thrown overboard to save the ship." On the 21st of December, the anniversary of the day when Father Varin had laid upon her the burthen of Superiorship, she wrote: "The Lord makes me expiate the faults of my too long government, for it is now forty years ago on St. Thomas' Day since I was named Superior. I had just completed my twenty-third year. How many crosses I have had to bear since then! Could I have anticipated the one which is now embittering my old age?" . . . But then, interrupting herself, she adds: "No, no, it is one of God's mercies, and we shall no doubt understand one day the intentions of our Lord in this singular course of events."

Those intentions were beginning to be apparent. On the 2nd of December, Mgr. Affre addressed to the Holy See a memorial, in which he entreated the Pope to save from ruin a Society so useful to the Church in France by re-establishing in their pure and simple form the original statutes approved by Leo XII. Twenty-two bishops signed this petition. At the same time Cardinal Pedicini, on his side, pressed the Holy See to provide for the safety of the Society of which he was the Protector. It was requisite that some one fully conversant with the state of the case and of well known prudence, should come to Rome to represent the affair in its true light. The Papal Nuncio entirely approved of the choice of Mgr. Matthieu, who had already been proposed by Cardinal Lambruschini as a prelate of singular wisdom and learning, and whose devotion and unalterable fidelity to the spirit of the Holy Roman See had never been called in question. He had been long in possession of Madame Barat's confidence and fully deserved it. He had hearkened to her appeal for advice,

especially during the last month, with a devotedness which had made him careless of his own interests. "My dear and Reverend Mother," he had written to Madame Barat, "I have never disguised from myself that in my endeavours to assist you in such difficulties I may draw upon myself disagreeable consequences. But if I am to share your cross allow me to feel some of its weight. It was the happiness of Simon the Cyrenean to suffer a little whilst he helped our Blessed Lord on His way to Calvary," And the letter of this true friend ended with these encouraging words: "The storm which rages round the door of your heart is a signal proof of the divine mercy towards you and your Sisters." After having ascertained the opinions of most of the French bishops, Mgr. de Besançon went to Rome, where he arrived on the 18th of January, 1843. That very day he said Mass at the Gesù, at the altar of St. Ignatius, and there he prayed that if his mission and his projects did not tend to the greater glory of God, they might utterly fail and come to nought, and Mother Barat, meanwhile, was apprised by a holy soul who was quite ignorant of all that had taken place that their salvation would come from Rome. Mgr. Matthieu presented to the Pope a letter from Madame Barat, and was graciously received. A commission of Cardinals appointed to examine the inculcated decrees listened with equal favour to his explanations. Not but that all these prelates would have preferred the new decrees, and Rome to be the residence of the Mother General, but they questioned the wisdom of insisting upon them at the risk of a rupture between Rome and France, and to the detriment of those very interests they wished to save.

It was in the middle of March that the Mother General, who was then at Conflans, received a letter from Mgr. Matthieu, written on the 9th of March, which contained the final solution of the question, "Whether there was reason to approve of the recent decrees of the Chapter

General of the nuns of the Sacred Heart?" The commission had replied in the negative, and had declared that the Society was to be governed according to the rules confirmed by Leo XII. All the Cardinals, even Cardinal Pedicini, had voted in this sense, and the Holy Father's approbation had sanctioned that answer. Mgr. Matthieu remarked that the sitting of the commission had been held on the first Friday of the month, the day consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to whose Divine assistance he ascribed the decision which he looked upon as a triumph to the cause.

In another letter to the Mother General, the Archbishop of Besançon says: "You will not reconcile opposition by authority but by kindness. If there is to be excess on one side it should be on the side of our Lord, who always makes the first advances towards us in spite of all our faults. As regards the government of your Society, you must be firm, and a Superior in the full sense of the word, whilst at the same time you are kind and gentle to everybody." No one understood so well being kind as Mother Barat, and she was not likely to give up a resource she so highly appreciated. On the 6th of April she wrote in a circular letter: "We shall soon, my dear Mothers, have to thank God for the tribulations He has made us undergo. We shall own that the Cross is ever the Tree of Life, and that it brings us every sort of blessing." In this hope she begged of her daughters to forget all their past divergencies of opinion, and to feel that the voice of the Vicar of Christ is the voice of God. She was not deceived in her expectations. When the Cardinal Protector informed the Superior of the Trinità dei Monti, Mother de Coriolis, of what had been done for the sake of peace, she answered: "And no doubt it will bring about peace. Those whose wishes are thwarted by these decisions are good religious, obedience to the Holy See will be their first duty." And, as she foresaw, all the Sisters submitted. One of the Assistants, however, resigned

her office, this was Mother de Limminghe. Having heard from the Cardinal Protector that the Mother General was authorized in the common interest to receive the resignations which would be offered to her, she concluded that this was a hint to tender her own. The Mother General tried to persuade her to the contrary, but the Mother Assistant had so publicly announced her intention that it had become irrevocable. Madame Barat regretted it deeply. Mother de Limminghe was maintained in all her other offices, and remained to the end of her days in the Society, the friend, the adviser, and the beloved daughter of the Mother General. In her eightieth year she was heard to say: "God permitted me to fall into this error as a punishment, and in order to lead me to detachment. Imperfect as I am, my love for our first Mother was not supernatural enough, God has punished me in the very way in which I failed, and I bless Him for it."

Mother Galitzin had been on the point of acting in the same manner. But on consideration she resumed her functions, and in spite of the sufferings of a perpetual fever, she thought only of the offering she had made of herself as a victim, and in that spirit was ready to go to America for the purpose of effecting the return of the Institute to its former condition. Madame Barat wrote at that time: "Thank God the spirit of the Society is good. Our Divine Master permits that things should not be seen in the same light by different minds, but His Divine Heart is bringing them all back to a conformity of feeling."

It was not long before that conformity became unanimous. It was a wonderful circumstance, and one only accounted for by the prudent kindness of Mother Barat, that a world-wide Society could have gone through four years of such agitations and trials without losing a single establishment or a single subject.

The Mother General's gratitude to the Holy Father was

unbounded. "He has saved the Society," she constantly repeated, and on the 20th of April, 1843, wrote as follows: "We must become the consolation of the Holy Father by a truly religious life of love for our Lord."

To consolidate this unity, she visited in July and August the houses of Nantes, Tours, Autun, Besançon, and Montet. In October she went to Beauvais and Amiens, where she worked with advantage for the Society.

After the death of Cardinal Pedicini, which occurred about that time, Cardinal Lambruschini consented to accept the title of Protector of the Society, which he had always earnestly befriended. He said on this occasion to Madame Barat: "You are losers by this arrangement, if you had selected somebody else as your Protector, you would have had two instead of one." This nomination secured the faithful and prudent execution of what the Roman commission had decreed.

The instructions appended to it by the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation, Cardinal Ostini, softened the transition between the two systems, and soon the traces of that violent conflict subsided, like the waves calming down after a storm. Great was the profit which those days of affliction left behind them; in the first place their effect on Mother Barat's soul, still further exalted and purified in the fiery furnace of a very acute and singular trial, which had touched her in the nearest and tenderest point, the very existence of the work of her life. This ordeal had perfected her virtue and intensified her charity, for as St. Vincent of Paul says, "Patience, abnegation, the ready acceptance of the Cross, are the great lessons the Son of God sets before us. Those who learn them well and imprint them upon their hearts belong to the first class in the school of Jesus Christ."

The Society reaped the advantage of a firmer establishment of its constitutions. "How near it has been to its

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ruin," the Mother General wrote, "and that because with the best intentions in the world, we did not understand each other. But believe me, dear child, the best way is always to adhere to authority. God does not bless even the best of motives when they lead us to oppose it. He has permitted all this to happen that the Society may gain experience." And, indeed, the upshot of these conflicts goes far to prove that works inspired by the Holy Ghost, when once established cannot be modified according to the ideas of men. That God who has called forth and diversified them, takes care to maintain their special character, that the Church possesses and never loses the key of their divine secrets, and though often slow to speak never fails to pronounce her sovereign edict when the hour for it has arrived. Mother Barat's presentiments were fulfilled, and those merciful intentions she had guessed at fully shown forth by the event.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *Foundations in Europe, Africa, and America. Mother Barat's visits in England, France, and Italy.*

1840—1845.

THE troubles we have related did not arrest the zeal of Mother Barat nor the progress of her Society. With as much liberty of spirit as if she had not been all the time suffering severe anguish of heart, she watched over the needs of all those belonging to her Order, and provided for the welfare of the continually increasing houses under her government. The requests for foundations were becoming so frequent that it was impossible to find subjects enough for them.

In a circular letter of the year 1839, the Mother General said: "It grieves me to be obliged to say *No* to the proposals that are continually addressed to me from America, Africa, and all the kingdoms of Europe. We do not deserve, I suppose, that our Lord should intrust to us those important missions. Were we but saints it would be different. Let us strive to be saints, and Jesus will hear us; He will forgive the past and bless the future."

To begin with America; after ten years of languid progress the Society was at last entering on a new phase in the New World. Madame Galitzin, who had been named Assistant General in that country in place of Madame Audé, whose health had failed, went there for the first time in July, 1840, with the following instructions from the Mother General: "My dear Mother and daughter, I anticipate

great crosses for you, but do not lose confidence in God. Pray, and keep close to His Divine Heart. Be gentle, patient, and firm with your nuns. Jesus will help you to train them. Gentleness and calmness are especially necessary in America. You will not get on at all in any other way. The American character is remarkable for its good sense. It will never put up with hot-headedness, or what might look like it." The Mother General had written a circular letter to her daughters in America to prepare the way for the visit of Mother Galitzin. "I am anxious," she told her, "that you should be received as well as you ought to be; for the honour of our Lord, of course, whose poor servants we are." And in another letter she exclaims: "There is no time to lose; make all those around you saints, and become yourself a saint, my child; make haste, make haste." It seems almost as if Mother Barat felt that much time would not be afforded to the soul which had offered itself as a victim, and so wished to urge her forward in the path of perfection.

Mother Galitzin began her tour by visiting Louisiana and Missouri. The manner in which she was received fully satisfied Mother Barat. "She succeeds wonderfully," the Mother General wrote. "As to the people at St. Charles, they call her *the Queen*." One of the first acts of this new kind of sovereign, and the most important of all, was the foundation of New York, which had long been desired by the Metropolitan of that city. In the month of July, 1841, the Right Rev. Bishop Hughes, coadjutor of Bishop Dubois, blessed the new establishment. Two years afterwards this Community was transplanted to Astoria, Long Island, and became gradually one of the most important centres of the Society.

At St. Louis, Mother Duchesne was claiming as the only reward for her labours to be relieved from the office of Superior. She kept writing to Madame Barat: "My only

desire is to be replaced. I ask it of my Mother in the name of the Heart of Jesus. . . . I feel that I am now a worn-out implement, a broken stick which ought to be thrown aside. God gives me the grace to see this quite clearly." Overcome by her supplications, Mother Galitzin accepted her resignation, and then this heroic soul gave herself up entirely to that abjection in God and for God which so beautifully crowned her holy and apostolic life.

Mother Lucile Mathevon wrote that Mother Duchesne was very happy, and a wonderful example to the house by her constant and complete mortification. "The sight of her wretched room," she says, "would affect you; her bed is in a recess under the stairs, she declares that she is quieter there than anywhere else; it reminds one of St. Alexis. Old, sick, and infirm as she is, and with two blisters on her legs, we see her crawling along to go and ask a permission. Few canonized saints can have done as much in that way as this good Mother."

Another favour the valiant servant of God earnestly solicited, and that was, to go and end her days amongst the savages. Bishop Rosati was asking for a colony of religious of the Sacred Heart for the Christian tribe of the Potowatomies, on the confines of Missouri. Inflamed by the accounts Father de Smet had given her, Mother Duchesne had felt all her former ardour renewed, and scarcely recovered from a long illness, was quite revived by the hope of joining this missionary expedition. Mother Barat perfectly entered into her feelings, and wrote to her Assistant in America not to refuse to Mother Duchesne this satisfaction and the opportunity of thus completing her apostolic career. "You know, my dear Mother," she wrote, "that the foundation in Louisiana was not our ultimate object, and that it was for the sake of the savages that Mother Duchesne felt inspired to undertake this work." The venerable nun, then seventy-two years of age, was

overjoyed when permitted to depart as a simple religious under Mother Mathevon, her former novice.

On the 8th of July the little colony arrived at the village of Sugar Creek in the Indian territory, where they were right royally received by the whole tribe with music and firing of guns.

Mother Barat congratulated her friend in the following words: "With what pleasure I received your letter, my dear Mother and daughter, and saw on it the postmark of the village of the Potowatomies! At last you have reached those savage regions, so long the object of your ardent desires. May Jesus preserve you and furnish you with opportunities of doing much good." And another day she says: "Pray for your Mother, who would fain be working with you. She is not worthy of it, but comforts herself with the thought that you are labouring instead of her for those savages so dear to her heart." To Mother de Rozeville, who longed also for those distant missions, she wrote: "Indeed, dear Mother and daughter, we should also be too happy to go and end our lives in a remote corner of the earth, and to sanctify ourselves whilst instructing simple souls; but this is not to be our lot. We have to expiate our faults, our weaknesses, and our want of generosity, in the service of the Lord. We must suffer, we must carry the cross to the end of our days, and leave the savages to Mother Duchesne, who belongs to the good old times."

This hard life, however, so evidently proved beyond the strength of the zealous servant of God, that the following year, in July, Bishop Kenrick, struck by the rapid failure of her health, insisted on her returning to St. Charles, where she led a hidden life devoted to prayer and to suffering, offered up for her beloved savages, whom she never could forget.

The novitiate at Fleurissant had been long in a languishing state. Mother Galitzin asked and received permission

to remove it, first to Mc'Sherry's Town, in Pennsylvania, where the difficulty of communications proved so great that it was transferred to Philadelphia in 1843. These changes, which we shall find frequently repeated, will not surprise those who know that in America distance is not taken into account, and that an inconceivable activity calls into existence important centres of civilization, which appear and disappear with equal facility.

There was another country to which the Mother General directed the attention of Madame Galitzin, and that was Canada, that France of the New World, where up to our days have been preserved the Christian and Catholic traditions of the mother country, handed down from the first half of the seventeenth century. The Bishop of Montreal offered a house to the Sacred Heart with a property of three hundred and sixty acres of land, woods, and meadows, watered by a river.

"I think we cannot refuse so advantageous a proposal," wrote Madame Barat to Mother Galitzin. "Monseigneur de Montreal holds out hopes of novices, and speaks of the good we shall do later on; at any rate, for the present we must content ourselves with small beginnings." The property offered to the Society was at St. Jacques de l'Achigan. Mother Galitzin went there to look at it, and in December, 1842, four nuns were sent there on the feast of St. John the Evangelist. The new sanctuary was soon filled with novices and pupils.

Meanwhile Mother Galitzin had been to France for the affairs of the Council of 1842, and returned with fresh ardour to devote and sacrifice herself to the service of God. She began by visiting her three last foundations of New York, Mc'Sherry's Town, and St. Jacques de l'Achigan, and was everywhere welcomed as the true representative of the Mother General. Then, though suffering almost incessantly from fever, she travelled to the south, and arrived at

St. Michael's on the 14th of November. The yellow fever was raging there; far from being frightened away by this danger, she devoted herself to the care of the sick in their last moments. She seemed almost to be courting death, and it was not long before she felt the premonitory symptoms of the disease which was to carry her to the grave. On the 1st of December they manifested themselves, and Mother Galitzin knew that the hour was come when she was to make the sacrifice of the life she had offered up for the Society. Mother Barat had been frequently reminding her of late to prepare for eternity. On the occasion of the death of her mother and one of her relations, Prince Peter Galitzin, which had occurred that year, she had spoken strongly and earnestly of those who die in the Lord. It was to one fully penetrated with these feelings that her words had been addressed; for after an illness of seven days, on the 7th of December, Mother Galitzin having asked the doctor if she was going to die, and seeing that he hesitated, said with perfect calmness, "I am not afraid of death. On the contrary, I wish to die, so that it is God's will. I care for nothing else." She died on the feast of the Immaculate Conception. Her funeral was performed with great ceremony, and the negroes rent the air with their lamentations.

Mother Galitzin was richly endowed with mental gifts. She possessed indomitable energy, a wonderful fluency in speaking and writing, and a great deal of wit and playfulness of mind; but both in her understanding and in her character there was a want of that sympathy and indulgence which commands respect and wins confidence, and of that moderation which can alone accomplish great things. She was, however, a valiant woman and a true religious, and conferred great benefits on Catholic America: she gave a strong impulse to the work of that mission. The Society was also indebted to her in more than one way. She

laboured in its service, and then gave her life for it. The Mother General wrote after hearing of her death: "How terribly we shall miss this excellent Mother: I especially, for she was quite my right hand, she was so completely self-devoted. It was that spirit which made her insist on going to America in spite of the fever which she had been suffering from for years. Soon, alas! she found death in that country, but this indeed was what she wished."

In the meantime, another continent was presenting an opening to the Sacred Heart. In 1839, the Mother General had seen at Rome Mgr. Dupuch, Bishop of Algiers, and he had spoken to her of his ardent desire to civilize Africa by means of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and had asked her to send him a colony of her nuns. Some time afterwards he wrote to her: "When I meditate in the light of faith on the sublime vocation of your Society, I cannot but believe that it is called to a great and divine mission in Africa. If you accept my proposal, what consolation you will afford to that poor Bishop of Algiers, who even at Rome went by the name of Bishop of the Sacred Heart! I throw myself on my knees before Madame Barat, and I beseech her, by the Heart of our Lord and by the souls whose salvation He has intrusted to me, to take pity on us."

His request was complied with, and two nuns were sent to examine the locality. Unfortunately little encouragement was given to the works of the Bishop of Algiers, he had no money, no resources. Mother Barat came to his assistance. She had already given him considerable sums for his homes for children at Bordeaux, and now she lent him means wherewith to purchase a house for her nuns at Algiers. "We have nothing left," she wrote to Mgr. Dupuch, "but are happy to have given all that Providence had placed in our hands for this foundation,

feeling that we lend it at an usurious interest. Our Lord will give it back to us, and will provide for our other wants." A house once occupied by an Arab chieftain, on a height above Algiers, was bought for the Sacred Heart; and in the month of November, 1843, five nuns, under the care of Mother Chonez, embarked at Marseilles on the *Charlemagne* for Algiers, in order to furnish to the French colony that element of civilization which it most needed, a better knowledge of Christianity.

From every part of the world similar applications poured in: one from the Birman Empire for instance. Mother Barat did not at once refuse it; the idea of apostle-ship amongst idolaters tempted her zeal. From Peru and New Holland pressing invitations were addressed to the nuns of the Sacred Heart. "I have to go through a constant course of struggles between zeal on the one hand and on the other the necessity of saying *No*, or putting off to the future a satisfactory reply. This is, alas! very painful, for there would be so many souls to be gained for our Lord."

Alongside of the list of foundations accepted and made by Mother Barat, another far longer one could be drawn up of those she was offered and found herself compelled to decline.

In France, even in the midst of the troubles of the Society, new houses were everywhere springing up. A rich and pious lady of Laval, Madame de Beaulieu, whose daughter had joined the Order of the Sacred Heart, offered Madame Barat a house especially for the purpose of retreats for ladies living in the world. This was, as we have already seen, one of the Mother General's most cherished objects. A site in the parish of Avesnières, called "La Croix," was chosen by this benefactress for the projected convent. It was a good sized property, a little above the banks of the river Mayenne, from which it was separated only by a

road lined with trees. Mother de Lemp was sent by the Superior General to negotiate this purchase.

“Another cross,” she wrote; “go, my dear daughter, and buy us that cross.” And when the affair had been completed, she said: “I thank God, my dear daughter, that we have purchased that cross. The Heart of Jesus will help us to carry it.” As if to justify its name and Mother Barat’s previsions, great difficulties arose for the Society out of this establishment at Laval. They did not discourage the foundress; and by the summer of 1841 the Sacred Heart added another Community to its number.

M. l’Abbé Thibault, who had been a parish priest in Paris, did not rest when he became Bishop of Montpellier till he had obtained for that town a foundation, which Mother Prevost went to establish in 1841. Several Superiors were successively named for that mission, but the most firm support of the house from the beginning and after a while its head was Mother de Mandon, a holy widow, who had been led to the Sacred Heart by the same Providential trials which had driven of yore St. Jane Frances of Chantal to the Visitation. Anaïs de Lezert, Marquise de Mandon, had first seen the light at Pont-Saint-Esprit in 1806. She was educated at Paris under the spiritual care of the Abbé Carron. Her gifts of nature and grace early inclined her to the religious life. But in spite of this predilection she married, and some years afterwards wrote as follows: “We cannot find peace and happiness elsewhere than in the state where God calls us. I had a vocation to the religious life, and I rejected that grace. I have been punished for it; but in the way in which God punishes those He loves, by sorrows, which were blessings in disguise.” She lost at the age of two years her only child, a little girl. This was the first great grief she had known; but later on she could write: “The Lord has lifted up the cross that was crushing me. I can carry it now without

being overwhelmed. I have even arrived at finding sweetness in the thought of that dear child amongst the angels." Some years elapsed, and then one day she heard that her husband had died at a distance from her of a sudden and violent attack of cholera. From that instant her mind was made up. She parted, not without a severe pang from her mother, and at the age of thirty entered the novitiate of the Rue Monsieur. Her great object was to be, as she expressed it, "lost in the crowd." "I am come," she used to say, "very late to the Sacred Heart. I must make up in breadth for deficiency in length." Mother Barat was delighted from the first with this fervent novice, whom she foresaw would do great things for our Lord in her Society. Madame de Mandon was first Mistress of the School and then Assistant and Superior of the Foundation at Montpellier, to which she devoted her whole life.

An old friend of the Society, Mgr. de Forbin-Janson, wished for a foundation of the Sacred Heart in his episcopal town of Nancy. At his request and that of his coadjutor, the Superior General sent Mother Henriette Coppens to look for a suitable house in that city. She and Madame d'Erlach arrived there at the end of May, 1841. Accompanied by the charitable and pious Canoness de Gondrecourt, they had wandered about for some time, when in the suburb of Saint Pierre, they saw over the door of an old-fashioned mansion a blue shield bearing a Sacred Heart, surrounded with stars and framed with lilies. That place was the country residence of General Villate, and had formerly been a house of probation of the Jesuits in Lorraine, it was called Nabécor. Close to it was the Church of Notre Dame de Bon Secours, the burial-place of the King and Queen of Poland. The heart of Marie Leczinzka, the royal promoter of the worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the last century, was likewise preserved

in that sanctuary. "What a paradise!" exclaimed Father Varin the first time he visited that house. "May it always be a paradise of virtue." Mother Barat purchased this property in July, 1841, and placed there as Superior one of her dearest daughters, the holy Mother Tournier.

In Italy also, Mgr. Gianotti, Bishop of Saluzzo, begged for a foundation in that small town. "Since I have begun to negotiate this affair," he said, "I cannot get to the end of my Mass. I say so many prayers that it may succeed." And when Mother Barat accepted his proposal, he exclaimed: "I am quite delighted. The spouses of the Sacred Heart will rekindle the flame of charity both in the flock and in the shepherd." In the autumn of 1842, four choir nuns and one lay-sister were established there by Mother du Rousier in a house that formerly belonged to the Marquis of Saluzzo. The stillness and quiet of this place made them call it "Our Lady of Peace." The good Bishop declared himself its protector. He said to the nuns: "You will find in me a father who will defend you, a friend who will cooperate with you, and a servant who will assist you." The first thing they did was to open a day-school, which was by degrees to furnish virtuous workwomen for the numerous spinning manufactories of the town. Soon afterwards a boarding-school was set on foot and counted among its pupils the daughters of all the principal families of the neighbourhood.

Near Venice there is a town enriched with all the treasures of art and science, with the most interesting historical associations, and moreover with memorials of the most wonderful sanctity. In this beautiful city of Padua there was a school which used to be called the College of St. Louis: the Empress of Austria offered it to the Sacred Heart. At the earnest request of the Bishop, Mgr. Farina, Mother de Limminghe came there in November, 1843, and placed Mother Angélique Lavauden

at the head of the new foundation. Reforms were most urgently needed, for the nuns of the Sacred Heart found the school composed of young ladies of seventeen or eighteen imbued with the most romantic ideas, who used to get up in the night and wander about the garden gazing at the moon, and indulging in sentimental dreams! A successful retreat, preached by an excellent missionary priest, Count Marco Passi, brought back those young minds to sound principles of solid virtue. He called these results, "Miracles of the Heart of Jesus." It has been a sort of miracle that amidst the general destruction of the houses of the Society all over Italy, the one at Padua exists up to this day.

It was also at the request of a prince of the House of Austria, the Archduke Ferdinand of Este, that Mother Barat sent to Lemberg in Galicia a company of her nuns under the care of a Polish Superior, Mother Dziekonska. Soon afterwards, Mother Marie de la Croix was placed at the head of this house. Mother Barat wrote on that occasion: "A French Superior has been asked for. This is everywhere the case in spite of our unpopularity. But what does it signify provided our Lord is loved? Have we any other object than that? What are our works, and what are we ourselves? Nothing. St. Paul said he was the refuse of this world. What a happiness for us to be so too!" Several times during their journey the nuns were received and lodged at princely houses, and everything done to show them hospitality. On their arrival a rich Countess received them in her house. But the Mother General soon wrote: "This is not as it should be. You must hire a small house till you can get into your own. On every account, my dear child, it is good for us to be in solitude and alone with our Lord. Remember how St. Theresa went about her foundations, how she always tried to hide herself, and yet she was something worth

looking at." The house at Lemberg was opened in the Autumn of 1843, and placed under the patronage of the Polish Saint, St. Stanislaus Kostka.

But we must now speak of the work which at that time particularly occupied Mother Barat. England had always deeply interested her. Men of genius, such as Bossuet, have been moved like St. Paul with a holy indignant grief at the thought that a country so celebrated for its singular piety should be given up to heresy. With what anguish have saints beheld the rent which the falling off of a great and religious people has made in the Heart of Jesus. As early as 1802 Mother Barat had exclaimed: "That nation is made for great things!" And when many young Protestant girls were converted in the school of the Paris house, she wrote: "They will be our forerunners in England; for if the Heart of Jesus vouchsafes to help us we shall go there in eighteen months or two years' time, to sow our grain of mustard seed."

It was in 1839, that she expressed this hope. In 1841, her plan was matured, and she had found an instrument for its accomplishment in the person of Mother Charlotte Goold, an English lady who had been educated at the school of Amiens. Her youth had been spent in London, Paris, and Brussels, at all of which places she had lived in the best society and gone out a great deal in the world. At Brussels, the Princess of Orange, afterwards Queen of the Netherlands, had taken great notice of her. Miss Goold's vocation was long opposed by her family and became a source of intense trial; she also suffered severely in health after an accident from fire, which nearly occasioned her death. At the time we are speaking of she was thirty years of age. Her looks and her manners were remarkably distinguished, and marked by that dignified self-possession which is essentially English. Mother Barat judged at once that hers was a soul apt for work and suffering, and perfectly

adapted to lay the foundation of the Institute in Great Britain. On the eve of her profession she wrote to her: "I am intimately convinced that Jesus wants you in England. Increase the fervour of your prayers, and let the day of your profession be the one in which you will obtain from the Heart of our Divine Master the grace to offer yourself in union with the Society and in the spirit of obedience for the salvation of souls in your native land. I feel confident that your offering will be accepted."

Foundations having been asked for at once in England and in Ireland, Mother Goold was sent to organize the three new houses, which were established at the same moment in the United Kingdom.

The first of these was at Roscrea, in the county of Tipperary, where a Community of Bridgetine nuns, with their Superior, Mother MacMahon, wished to be united to the Society. Mother Goold's description of the extreme poverty of this convent by no means disheartened her Superior. "If it is our Lord's will," she said, "that the Society of the Sacred Heart should begin in Ireland with a Bethlehem, well let it be so." Mother Eliza Croft, an excellent religious, who had been Mother de Gramont's Assistant in Paris, was named Superior of this new foundation. Her admirable tact and perfect abnegation of self enabled her to become, according to the Apostle's precept, "All things to all men." Mother d'Avenas used to say that nothing would surprise her less than to see Mother Croft working miracles.\*

\* A few more words concerning this holy religious will be acceptable to those who still revere and cherish her memory. When a course of providential circumstances had led her to join the Society of the Sacred Heart, Mother de Gramont, under whose care she was placed, soon discerned her extraordinary merits, and took the most special pains to train this chosen soul. Nothing could exceed the gratitude of the novice who, in her humility, ascribed this more than ordinary solicitude of her

It was near London that the next foundation was made. The Sacred Heart purchased a villa called Berrymead, a small house standing in the centre of a large park, which Lady Montagu had built in the last century on the ruins of an old Benedictine Monastery. Under other circumstances

Superior to what she was persuaded was her own extreme incapacity and insufficiency.

The excessive timidity of her nature was throughout all her religious life a source of keen trial and a subject of self-conquest. She felt this especially when she was named Assistant to Mother de Gramont at the Hotel Biron, intense self-diffidence made it so difficult to exercise firmness in government; but by dint of virtue and moral courage, she overcame that obstacle. Her devotion to the children and especially her tender care of the sick is still affectionately remembered in that house.

When, in 1841, the first foundation in Ireland was planned, Mother de Gramont proposed to the Superior General to intrust it to Mother Croft. The task was not an easy one. She had to govern a Community of nuns who joined the Sacred Heart, but had by degrees to learn the usages and acquire the spirit of the Society. The gentleness, the sweetness, the patience of the Superior, gradually won all hearts. The way in which she spoke of the rule, and the example she gave of affectionate submission to the Superiors of the Society, made the deepest impression on her daughters. They saw that the slightest expression of a wish on the part of those venerable Mothers was a law to Madame Croft.

Persons of the most different characters alike appreciated this holy woman. No one seems to have possessed to a greater degree the art of conciliating, reconciling, and uniting the hearts of those about her. The pupils of the three Irish houses which she successively governed testify to the deep sense of her virtues, which was experienced by all those who had anything to do with her, whether in or out of her convent.

From Roscrea, where she was in 1842, she went to make the foundation of Armagh in 1851, and the one near Dublin in 1853. It may be said of her that in every one of those houses she bore the heat and burthen of the day, for she fulfilled a variety of offices at once in the house and even in the school.

Her health entirely failed during the last years of her life, and her sufferings were severe. She was sent to the house of Glasnevin in hopes that the Dublin physicians would be able to cure her; but she became rapidly worse, and gave the most wonderful examples of patience, courage, and sweet resignation. Her death was as calm and holy as her life. When informed that her last hour was approaching, her recollection deepened, and humbly and silently she yielded up her soul to God, leaving behind her an impression of sanctity, which still remains attached to her memory.—

*Translator's Note.*

the price of this property would have alarmed the Mother General, but she had so much at heart the English foundation, that she was determined to make every sacrifice in order to secure it. And thus a little colony of four choir nuns and five lay-sisters arrived at Berrymead on the 8th of December, 1842, and on Christmas Day Mass was said for the first time in the new abode of the Sacred Heart. It was Bishop Morris, formerly Vicar-Apostolic of the Mauritius, who officiated on this occasion. Precluded from returning to the scene of his apostolic labours, this holy prelate, who held Mother Barat in the deepest veneration, devoted himself from that time forward to the spiritual care of the nuns of the Sacred Heart.\* It was

\* Dr. Morris, Bishop of Troy, was born in London in the year 1793, and was remarkable at an early age for piety and learning. In his fifteenth year he entered the Benedictine Order at St. Gregory's, Downside; and during the interval between his profession and his ordination devoted himself to the study of theology, the classics, and English and French literature, whilst at the same time he devoutly practised all monastic duties. Soon after he became a priest he was sent to what was then the London district, and officiated for some years at the Portuguese Chapel, South Street, Grosvenor Square. One of his duties at that time was to visit the hospitals, where he was indefatigable in his efforts to obtain the ministrations of priests to Catholic patients. In 1822, whilst still engaged in the missionary duties of a priest in London, he was admitted to the honour of sitting in the Chapter of the Benedictine Order and received the distinction of Predecessor Generalis.

In 1832 he was appointed Bishop of Troy *in partibus Infidelium*, and sent as Vicar Apostolic to the Mauritius. After labouring for ten years in this arduous post he returned to England in 1842, where he resumed a life of active self-devotion and toil. From the time when the nuns of the Sacred Heart were established in England, an event which he had ardently desired and which he chiefly contributed to bring about, the services he rendered them as their chaplain and spiritual guide were incessant and devoted; but they did not preclude him from lending his aid not only in the two dioceses with which he was most intimately connected, but in every part of the kingdom where his presence and his good offices could aid the cause of the Church. His love of his own Order and his profound esteem for the religious life went on increasing as he advanced in age. His generosity to the poor, the kindness of his heart, the austere simplicity of his life, endeared him not only to the Community he so much loved and valued, and to the children under their care, but to all his neighbours, Protestants as well as

at his request and under his auspices that in the month of October, 1843, a third house was established in the village of Cannington, in Somersetshire. Lord Clifford, whose daughter had entered the Order of the Sacred Heart, lent the Institute this house, and great hopes were entertained of the result; but, as the Mother General had feared from the beginning, it did not succeed. In April, 1844, she wrote to Madame Gould: "Dear Charlotte, the present state of your house confirms my conviction that though there were people who wanted you to settle at Cannington, our Lord did not wish it, for he gave me a strong disinclination to sanction this establishment. I do indeed regret that I did not decline the offer at once. The past cannot be recalled; but the poverty of our Society does not allow us to keep up so expensive a house without

Catholics, and the regard felt for him by the prelates and clergy of the Catholic Church in England was universal. Proof of this was given by the general feelings of sympathy awakened by his death.

The immediate cause of the aged Bishop's decease was in keeping with the whole course of his life. He had promised to preach at Liverpool, at the consecration of Dr. Scarisbrick, who was appointed Bishop in the Mauritius, the scene of his own labours, and though such a journey in the wintry season was most trying and he felt himself seriously ill at the time, nothing could induce Dr. Morris to disappoint his brethren on such an occasion. His weakness was so great that he could hardly dress himself on the morning of his departure, and he had a strong presentiment that his end was at hand, still he went and preached at Liverpool, in the morning in English and in French in the evening. On Shrove Tuesday he attended a meeting of the Benedictine Fathers at St. Anne's, Edge Hill, and then proceeded to London on his way back to Roehampton. On the journey he fainted, and arrived at his home, Subiaco Lodge, entirely exhausted, and remained for two days unconscious. On the Friday he revived, and was able to receive the last Sacraments with full presence of mind, sent his blessing to the Reverend Mother, the nuns, and the children, with a fervent request for prayers. On the Saturday he had a relapse, and died on Sunday morning, the 18th of February, 1872.

The honours paid to his remains, the tears shed at his funeral, the grief of all his friends, and the heartfelt regrets of the Community whom he had watched over for so many years attested the affection and gratitude inspired by the remembrance of that long and holy life spent in the service of God and of the poor.—*Translator's Note.*

any results. We cannot go on as we are doing, and when on the spot we shall have to come to a decision."

It was then that for the first time Mother Barat crossed the sea and came to England with Bishop Morris and Madame d'Avenas. On the 4th of June she was at Berrymead, and kept there the feast of the Sacred Heart to the great joy of her nuns and of their pupils. Some prejudices had existed against the Order, and though the school had been opened eighteen months they had only at that time nineteen scholars. One of the nuns relates that as soon as the children saw the Mother General she completely won their hearts. "It was delightful," she says, "to see them crowding round her in the garden, eagerly listening to her words and anxious to get her blessing. When she came into the schoolroom to wish them good-bye on the day of her departure, they all burst into tears and knelt down before our Mother unable to speak. She was weeping also and could only utter a few broken sentences. It was as if all those children were losing a dear parent."

On the 16th Mother Barat arrived at Cannington where she was received by Mother Goold, to whom she had written: "How many things we shall have to arrange, my dear daughter; some of them I fear may be more sad than pleasant, but as they are the result of God's blessed will, shall we not look upon them all in the same light?" The Somersetshire foundation was given up, the Communities of Cannington and Berrymead thrown together, and Mother Goold named Superior. Mother Barat wrote that these two establishments had been like birds with only one wing apiece, but that Berrymead now possessed of two would be able to fly.

After spending about three weeks in England, the Mother General returned to France. She stopped a moment on her way at Lille and then at Jette-Saint-Pierre, but a sad duty made her hasten to Amiens. Mother Ducis

was dying there. The following passage from one of Mother Barat's letters shows what she felt about this beloved companion of her early religious days: "Am I indeed going to lose her, that dearest friend so devoted to her Mother and to all our Society? Is the danger so imminent? I must try to see her again and give her a parting embrace before she goes home to God. I cannot help weeping as I write. Oh, that my first daughters, the daughters of my early days, could be given back to me!"

Mother Ducis seemed to be lingering on till the arrival of her holy friend. On St. Mary Magdalen's day she asked to be carried into the room which had long been inhabited by Mother Barat, and leant her head against the bed where she had rested, as if to find rest herself in this loving reminiscence. Then at the hour of Benediction she crawled to the chapel, to take leave as she said of our Lord, and almost fainted in the act. Mother Barat's arrival brought to the dying religious the highest consolation earth could still give her. She made the sacrifice of her life, received the last sacraments, renewed her vows in the hands of her Mother, and asked pardon for the playful nonsense with which she used to enliven the recreations. Everyone was weeping round her. But with a smile on her lips, Mother Ducis replied to all those who spoke of her sufferings and her end: "As God pleases, all He pleases, and when He pleases." She was conspicuous for a more than ordinary spirit of mortification and obedience, and at the same time was always the merriest of the Community. When almost in her agony she sang, in order she said, to cheer up the Sisters. The Bishop came to give her his blessing, and Mother Barat bestowed on her a last embrace. Some days afterwards, on the 4th of September, that holy servant of Christ was united to her Divine Spouse.

By the time of the feast of the Assumption the Mother General had returned to Paris. We may pause here awhile

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to consider the spirit in which so many foundations had been made and the course followed on these occasions by the servant of God. Patience in waiting for the moment marked by Providence was one of Mother Barat's great merits. For years, like in the case of England, she watched for an opportunity and only acted when she discerned some clear token of God's will. "My child, we must learn to wait for God's hour," was the lesson she continually impressed on her daughters. This habit of passive obedience to the leadings of the Holy Ghost was a singular effect of grace in so ardent a nature. On the other hand she excelled in that charity which considers as an encouragement circumstances naturally tending to opposite results. Thus what chiefly attracted her to accept foundations was the moral and spiritual miseries of the countries where she was invited to send her daughters. Admirable also was her discernment in the choice of the Superior whom she appointed to those distant missions. After once accepting a work nothing prevented her from carrying it out, neither interior or exterior obstacles, neither want of money or aid, neither distance of place or long journeys by sea and land, hot or cold climates, favourable or unfavourable circumstances. Her intrepidity in such cases illustrated the precept of St. Vincent of Paul, "We must not abandon what the Divine will has made us undertake. A soul always directed by the love of Jesus Christ is capable of accomplishing extraordinary things." And when the work is done then comes the time for silence, for a deep sense of personal nothingness, for a humility proportionate to the magnitude of what God has enabled a servant of His to perform. This is always the case with saints. They never wish for a triumph, they ignore their own achievements. Somebody said one day to Mother Barat: "You had not the least idea when you began the Society that you would reign one day over so many houses." "But I have not the least idea of it now," she simply answered.

After resting two months in Paris, she journeyed southward in October on her way to Rome where she wished to arrive at the beginning of the year 1845. The following details as to her visits to several of her houses add to the knowledge we wish to convey of her character, of her exterior life and of that spirit of kindness which gave so peculiar a charm to her sanctity. After passing through Lyons, La Ferrandière, Annonay, Avignon, and Aix-en-Provence, where a dangerous illness detained her awhile, she arrived at Marseilles on the 13th of January 1845, and on the 19th embarked for Genoa, where the steamer remained only a few hours. She availed herself of this opportunity to visit the recent foundation which Mother du Rousier and Mother de Causans had made in the suburb of San Pier d'Arena. The old Grimaldi palace with its magnificent paintings by the best masters, its marble pavements and its fine gardens struck her as too splendid an abode for lovers of poverty and simplicity. The only thing which reconciled her to this establishment was the fact that, according to the spirit of their Institute, the nuns had devoted all the spacious and grand apartments to their pupils and kept for themselves the most inconvenient part of the house.

On Thursday, the 23rd of January, the Mother General arrived in Rome. Her object was to consult the Cardinal Protector on various points of interest to her Society, viz., the complete return to the Statutes of 1826, the final relinquishment of the transitory measures retained during the last years, and then the adjournment of the General Council which the increasing antagonism of the Archbishop of Paris made it difficult to convene. Rome, as usual, afforded Mother Barat both crosses and consolations, intimate relations with chosen souls, with nature, and with God. She found her novices of the Villa Lante established in the old palace, where a Gothic chapel had just been built. Though she was ill at that time, she devoted herself to the

study of each of those young souls and most tenderly ministered to the sufferings of a young postulant, Mary O'Mahony, one of the pupils of Montet, who had been sent to Italy in the hope that a southern climate would cure her delicate chest. But it had done her no good, and Mother Barat, disobeying the doctors, who would fain have confined her to her room, often visited the Infirmary and watched by the sick bed of her child, ministered to her comforts, and spoke to her of heaven. "Dear Mother, do you think that I am prepared to appear before God?" Mary would ask, and then exclaim, "Oh, what a happiness it is that you should happen to be here!" Madame Barat gave her the habit of the Sacred Heart, received her religious vows, and was with her at the moment of her death, which occurred on the 28th of February, 1845. At the Trinità dei Monti, where she spent the spring, Mother Barat assumed the title of Mistress General of the school, surrounded herself with children, teaching them and watching over them with the most affectionate familiarity. Her kindness extended even to animals: a sick goat belonging to the establishment would only feed out of her hand, and made its way into the room of the servant of God, trying to get as near to her as possible. It was noticed that as Mother Barat advanced in sanctity she seemed to share the power possessed by some of the saints over the animal creation.

Amongst the postulants most beloved by the Superior General was one to whom God had given a great talent for painting. It was with the view of cultivating it that Mdlle. Perdrau had come to Rome; but her love for the Supreme Beauty soon induced the young artist to consecrate herself to God. According to a wish expressed by her Superior, she succeeded in painting on one of the walls of the Convent a picture of the Blessed Virgin in her girlhood, sitting at work in the Temple of Jerusalem.

She depicted her under a portico opening on the country, with her spinning-wheel, her book, and a tall lily by her side. Under the type of that life of purity, of prayer, and of labour, the whole work of the Sacred Heart was personified in the Virgin of virgins. This fresco, so simple in its execution, and so like the works of the old masters of the monastic school, was not so much a remarkable work of art as the exquisite result of that spirituality which makes the body a mirror of the soul. Everything in it expresses innocence, humility, and piety: it is the image of the *flos agri* and *lilium campi* which the Scriptures speak of. The name of *Mater Admirabilis* was given to this picture, which has been reproduced in all the houses of the Sacred Heart and disseminated throughout the whole Church, enriched at Rome with special indulgences, visited and venerated by the Holy Father himself, it has become the object of a devotion which attracts to the Trinità dei Monti many of the pious pilgrims who flock to the Eternal City.

Mother Barat had been ill during the greatest part of her stay in Rome, but she enjoyed the consolation of being near the Blessed Sacrament, Gregory XVI. having given leave to the nuns to place It, for her sake, in an adjoining room. She was thus enabled to hear Mass every day. Cardinal Lambruschini brought her at last a small miniature of our Lady of Sorrows, and insisted on her asking the Blessed Virgin to obtain her cure. She did so, and her prayer having been heard, Mother Barat prepared to leave Rome.

It was with a heavy heart that she took leave of the aged Vicar of Christ. A sad presentiment warned her that the time of his death was approaching, and she said to herself as she went away, "Oh, I shall never see him again; he is so old, and I at such a distance!" As she was kneeling at the Tomb of the Apostles in the Church

of St. Peter, her tears fell on the pavement. The Holy Father had indeed said to her as she parted from him, "We shall meet again." But would it be in this world? Great was her surprise when, on the following Saturday, she was fetched from the house of Santa Rufina and heard that the Pope was at the Villa Lante and was asking to see her. She could only fall at his feet and vainly tried to express feelings which entirely overpowered her. The Holy Father gave her his blessing and spoke words of consolation and encouragement. She was never to see him again.

On the 10th of June Mother Barat left Rome and visited Loretto and her other Italian houses. Mothers de Limminghe and Cahier, Secretary of the Mother General, Mdlle. Perdrau, who had just taken the veil, and a Lay-sister accompanied her. They travelled in a heavy vetturino coach, which at every hill had to be dragged up by oxen. A variety of little incidents marked the journey. For instance, on a beautiful sunny morning, as they were passing through the lovely valley of Spoleto, with the hill of Assisi before them, Mother Barat, after reciting the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, was just beginning her meditation, when a carriage full of nuns arrived, stopped the way, and asked to speak to the Superior General of the Society of the Sacred Heart. This was a deputation from the convent of the Poverette of Assisi. These daughters of St. Francis, who had heard of her from Mdlle. Perdrau, and to whom she had recently sent abundant alms, hoped that she might have visited their convent. At any rate, they wished to see and thank their benefactress, and so the Superior, Mother Veronica, and some of her daughters drove to Foligno in Madame Barat's carriage. There the Mother General gave them a dinner worthy of the primitive love feasts of the Church. The conversation was entirely about God. Madame Barat said: "Do you know, dear Sister, why I did not go to

your convent of the Lily?"—that was the name of their house. "The fact is, that I should have found it very hard to come away; it would be to me a paradise on earth!"

Then they spoke of the Church and its trials, of the bitter injuries which France and Europe heaped on the Sacred Heart of our Lord, of the institution and mission of Mother Barat's Society, of the sacrifice she made of her attraction to a life of solitude and poverty, and of a union of hearts in the Heart of Jesus. An alliance was concluded between the Sacred Heart and the Convent del Giglio. "We shall quench our thirst," Madame Barat said, "at the fount of peace and love which flows at the Giglio. On your mountain height you will lift up your hands to God whilst we are fighting in the midst of the dusty plain, and your glory will be greater than ours if we conquer." The Poverette surrounded her, kissed her hands, and declared themselves her daughters. She was compelled to give them her blessing, kissed them all, and slipped her purse into the hands of the Superior, who had been born wealthy and had made herself poor for Christ's sake. They did not part without tears, and sisterly letters kept up their friendship. This meeting of kindred souls in that holy region of Umbria, so full of sacred and poetic associations, seems to carry us back to the days when St. Dominic and St. Francis met under the same sky, at the foot of the same hills.

On the 13th, the travellers were approaching Sant' Elpidio and skirting the shores of the Adriatic. The sky was bright and the sea dazzling. Mother Barat prayed, meditated, and said: "I was trying to discern in the distance the coasts of Greece. In my childhood I was full of enthusiasm for that land of genius, of art, and of military glory, where intellect and courage always ended by surmounting brutish strength and numbers. I must own it;

there was a time when my heart was full of Athens, Corinth, and Sparta. It was with anguish I used to read the story of the Pass of Thermopylæ. I laugh when I think of it, though I am still of opinion that we ought to interest our children in what is beautiful, and instil into them a knowledge and love of history, otherwise memories would fade away and the past vanish as if it had never been. The study of the rise and fall of nations may teach them to soar higher than their petty cares. It will impress upon them the "*sic transit gloria mundi*," and lead them, when struck with the nothingness of earthly greatness, to turn to Him who abides for ever whilst empires crumble into dust."

In the evening of that long summer day the nuns left the carriage and strolled along the sea-shore, saying their Rosary and singing the *Ave maris stella*. "There is such religion in the beauties of nature!" the Mother General exclaimed. Shall we add that during the time of recreation her companions amused themselves by throwing stones into the waves, and that Mother Barat watched the circling eddies and hoped the pebbles would find their way to the coast of Greece. Yes; for there is in the hearts of those who live for God alone a well-spring of simple enjoyment, a childlike youthfulness of soul which lasts even unto old age.

The moon had risen by the time they reached Sant' Elpidio, a charming little town on the side of a hill which stands between the Apennines and the sea. Smiling valleys watered by two rivers and abounding with olive and fig trees lie at the foot of the convent. In the distance rises the dome which covers the holy house of Loretto. The Oblates who had been united to the Society enjoyed during two days the instructions of the servant of God. At the moment of her departure the peasants in their holiday clothes paid their respects and made an offering to the Mother General

of the produce of their farms. She was looked upon as a saint by these good country people, and as all their crops turned out that year more plentiful than usual, they did not fail to ascribe it to her blessing.

She went to Holy Communion at Loretto, and when alone in the Holy House with her nuns, she rose and went round the sanctuary, devoutly kissing the sacred walls which had sheltered our Blessed Lord. "Here, then," she kept exclaiming, "the Word was made Flesh! Look at that entrance: how often Jesus, Mary, and Joseph went through that door; and this little cupboard, what did they keep in that recess?" Thus saying, she pressed to her lips with ecstasy the bowl which is supposed to have belonged to the Holy Family. She said the Rosary on the spot where the Archangel had been the first to salute Mary "full of grace." Each of those words suggested to her mind endless meditations. She prayed for the Church, for France, for her Society, and could hardly tear herself away from the Holy House, the door of which she three times devoutly kissed. From the convent of the Sacred Heart at Monte Reale her eyes kept constantly turning towards the sanctuary of Loretto. On the 25th of June she arrived at Parma, after a trying journey made in the burning heat and at the slow pace of vetturino horses. The inns were so dirty and noisy that it was hardly possible to sleep, but Mother Barat told her companions that as they had to forego the merit of a regular Community life it was well to make up for it by these inconveniences, and that everything which a religious has to endure is a clear gain which she ought to value. They used to start very early in the morning, and when a bell was heard at a distance the driver cried out, *Ecco una Messa!* "They are ringing for Mass," and then the nuns went into the church to hear it and to communicate. At the inns it was George who ordered dinner: he always told the people that it was for a saint

that he was providing. The sweetness of the Mother General's disposition had quite won his heart, and he wept when they parted company at Turin. "She is the sort of saint I have dreamt of," he said; "I do indeed want to go to Paradise if such good people as these are to be found there." We must not omit to mention that the present of a watch which the Mother General gave him, seemed to afford this good man a sort of foretaste of celestial happiness.

It was during this journey, so full of holy joys, that tidings of a great sorrow reached the Superior General. She had left her dear brother, Father Barat, at Paris, suffering acutely from dropsy which was declared incurable. The words constantly on the lips of this true religious were these: "It is the Lord's will that I should be in this state. He knows what is best for me." When he felt death approaching his thoughts turned to his beloved sister, to whom he sent a special blessing for her and her Society. It was on the 21st of June, feast of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, that he died. Madame du Rousier, Superior at Turin, had to break it to the Mother General, who wrote at that moment: "Though I expected this sad news, it has tried my poor heart very severely: many things combine to make me feel it acutely. I had asked the Hearts of Jesus and Mary to prolong the life of that dear brother, at any rate until my return. I did so long to see him once again for a few minutes in this world. It was not to be, and I have had no consolation in my grief. I speak of natural consolation, for a well-founded hope of the happiness which so faithful a soul must enjoy in heaven does indeed greatly relieve my sorrow. I received his blessing with deep gratitude. Let us pray for the repose of his soul. If, as we trust, he is not in need of our prayers, they will avail for other souls."

At Turin Madame Barat's charity suggested a change

in the day-school for poor children. Up to that time they had not admitted any under nine years of age. "Let them be received at any age," she said; "the younger they are the dearer are they to our Lord." Another establishment, called the *Soccorso*, was offered to the Sacred Heart and accepted. The house contained sixty young girls, most of them nearly grown up. Under the care of the nuns it soon underwent a favourable change.

From Turin the Mother General went to Genoa, where she embarked for Marseilles, and after visiting her Community in that city and those of Aix and Montpellier, arrived at her houses in Lyons on the 5th of August. The good old Mother Geoffroy was no longer there. She had lost three years before her venerable friend Madame de la Barmondière, and during the last days of her life, though hardly able to speak, used often to say, "I have now only two things to do on earth—to communicate and to suffer, and then to suffer and communicate." From every part of the town people came to consult her. "I must be a great hypocrite," she would say, "for persons to have such a good opinion of me. All our virtues are nothing but rags; it is only those who are humble who will make their way to heaven." She wrote to Mother Emilie: "Nothing can keep up my spirits but the most perfect conformity with the will of God. I thank Him for the past, for the present, for the future. Our life ought to be one perpetual thanksgiving!" Such was her state of mind during her long illness. The Abbé de Serres gave her Extreme Unction. Cardinal de Bonald came to visit and to bless her just before her death, which took place on the 13th of May. She was eighty-three years of age. Mother Barat wept over her loss and wrote: "A deep grief fills my soul at this moment and reopens the wounds of my heart. We have lost our Moses on the mountain." And to Mother Emilie she said: "How intensely you must have felt the death of that excellent holy

Mother Geoffroy, you, who were her beloved daughter, the friend of her heart and of her life. Who will supply the place of those departed Mothers who were the chief supports of our Society? I am sure you will do everything in your power to renew amongst us examples of virtue and sanctity such as they have left behind them."

In the middle of August Mother Barat left La Ferrandière and visited Besançon, Montet, and Kientzheim in Alsace, where she arrived on the 29th of that month.

It was the first time that she had seen that favoured and beautiful spot, one of the most cherished and promising homes of her Society. The house stands in a valley watered by two little streams. One of them, which goes by the name of "the Torrent," flows through the gardens and fields of the convent. The views on every side are magnificent; to the east lies a wide plain, bounded in the far distance by the dark blue ridge of the Black Forest mountains; to the west successive ranges of hills are backed by the snowy summits of the highest chain of the Alps. Picturesque villages adorn the declivities of the mountains, church spires rise in every direction, and the chimes, which have given to that valley the pretty name of Vale of the Bells, re-echo on every side. The inhabitants of this charming corner of the world, honest and industrious peasants and good Christians, had preserved the simple habits of their forefathers. The beauties of nature, the solitude of this abode, and the character of that primitive population combined to make Kientzheim a haven of peace.

Mother Barat remained there a week. They showed her in the garden the first little chapel where our Lord had vouchsafed to dwell. "This is, then," she said to the novices, "the little grain of mustard-seed which has grown into a great tree, and you are the birds of the air which have taken shelter under its branches. But the birds of the air do not care to abide on earth: they just skim over

its surface to pick up their food, and then they soar again on high. So must we rise above earthly affections, ascend to Jesus Christ, and take up our abode in His Sacred Heart." Every day she gave them conferences, or during their recreations instructed them in the spirit of their vocation, religious virtues, and zeal for souls. "The harvest," she said, "is immense in this province, and beyond the frontier it promises to be ample. What a field this opens to our labours! From the depths of her solitude St. Theresa's ardent desire to gain souls to Christ embraced the whole world: our hearts must be as wide as hers."

Passing through Nancy and Metz, Mother Barat arrived at Conflans on the 17th of September.

During this long journey she had ascertained by personal observation not only the increase but the firm establishment of her Society. The same spirit existed and the same rule was observed in all its houses, and everywhere she had enkindled that ardent zeal which had made her write, before her departure from Rome: "Let us not tarry or slacken our pace on the road which leads to a truly religious life. Let us give ourselves up entirely to the will and to the love of God. Take great pains with your pupils, enlighten their piety, ground them in the faith and the fear of God. Young people must be impressed with some feeling strong enough to counterbalance the love of pleasure, and where are they to find it if not at the Sacred Heart? Make of them valiant women, devoted to their duties. It is a great mission, and a very difficult one in these days. These very obstacles must conduce to unite us to our Lord in a thoroughly religious spirit. If we are satisfied with an indifferent amount of virtue we shall only arrive at indifferent results. In these times, when such extremities of evil exist, why should we not push to their utmost limits the love of Jesus Christ and of the souls He has ransomed? There must be nothing half and half in perfection."

## CHAPTER IX.

### *Conflans. Joys and Sorrows.*

1842—1847.

ON the banks of the Seine on the same height as Vitry stands a building with a triple row of windows, a belfry, and a church attached to it, which at once marks it as a religious house. This is the convent of Conflans where Mother Barat in 1842 had transferred and established the novitiate of the Rue Monsieur.

Conflans, as its name indicates, is situated at the confluence of the rivers Seine and Marne. The gardens which rise above it command two very different views: on the one side the great city shrouded in smoke, with the spires and domes of its churches emerging out of a dusky cloud, and in another direction a large tract of rural scenery backed by undulating hills. The name of this place is connected with the annals of the Church. During two centuries it had been the country house of the Archbishops of Paris. Mgr. de Beaumont had been imprisoned within its walls on account of his courageous resistance to the enemies of God. Mgr. de Quélen had often resided there during the peaceful period of his life. It was there that Mother Barat had spent in keen anxiety the days of July. Since then she had established her orphanage in that locality. Not far off the Seminary had a house where the oldest members of the clergy had once studied philosophy and rhetoric. Madame Barat had long thought of this house as a desirable one for her novitiate.

The first time she had been there the Mother General had noticed over the door of the study-room a small sheaf carved in wood with this inscription, "*Spes messis in semine!*" "Do you see that motto?" she said to her daughters, "it seems as if our Lord meant you to be also a seed from which He expects an abundant harvest." One day as she was standing in the garden with Madame de Gramont, watching the numerous boats on the river, she said: "I am thinking of the time when the Joigny stage-coach brought me to Paris for the first time, in my little print frock. I passed before this house. Who could have foreseen that I should buy it one day in the name of the Society?"

The great charm of the place was its quiet and rural simplicity. "Conflans," Mother Barat wrote, "will be the place of my rest." And to one of the mistresses of the orphanage she had said some time before: "You are living at Conflans. I ask the Heart of our Lord to visit you, and by means of this delightful solitude to attract you more and more to recollection and the interior life. Say then, my child, with the Prophet, 'Who will give me the wings of a dove, that I may fly away and be at rest?' For me, alas! the time of repose has not arrived!"

What Madame Barat had coveted for this novitiate was a very simple abode in keeping with the spirit of poverty, and in a letter to Mother de Bouchaud she had dwelt on her earnest desire that if ever another house was to be purchased, it should be one with plain whitewashed walls and the most common furniture, and everything not absolutely necessary dispensed with. "I wish this novitiate," she said, "to be a model for all the others with regard to poverty, and I own that it is for that reason I have wished you so much to be at Conflans. Unless we love and practise that virtue our Lord will not bless us."

The style of the old buildings of Conflans at that time

was quite after Mother Barat's heart. The house was small, ill-constructed, and bare. The grounds extensive and adorned by a fine avenue of horse-chestnuts. On the side of the hill there was a little wood which contained rural oratories, sacred images, a calvary, and porticoes ornamented with Scriptural texts. "You will be less conveniently lodged than at the Rue Monsieur, but in a poorer and a healthier manner," Mother Barat wrote to the same nun. "And then the advantage of solitude! It is so delightful to see nothing but Jesus and His images; and then the beauties of nature, the works of God! Oh, I wish I were there! But no—I do not know what I wish. Cares would follow me even at Conflans. It is better to desire nothing but the will of our good Master. In no other way can peace be had."

On the 29th of March, 1842, Mgr. Angebault, Bishop-elect of Angers, said Mass for the last time in the chapel of the Rue Monsieur. He told the novices that our Lord was leaving that fold and going to another; that they had to follow Him wherever He went like faithful sheep, never straying away or wandering about at random. The life of a flock is one of union, docility, fidelity, and trust. Such was to be their life, a better one they could not lead." Madame Barat called the new house Bethania, in memory of the place where Martha and Mary received our Lord. In M. l'Abbé de Laforêt, who is now curé of Saint-Hilaire, Poitiers, she obtained for it a chaplain exactly in accordance with its needs and with her wishes.

It was during the month of Mary that the novitiate was finally established at Conflans, and that an eloquent exhortation was addressed to the novices by a young priest whose name was one day to be famous in France. This was M. l'Abbé Pie, then vicar of Chartres, and now Bishop of Poitiers.

Two days afterwards, on the 3rd of May, second day

of the Rogations, a procession of reparation took place through the grounds of the house, which had been desecrated twelve years before by the blasphemies and outrages of the Revolution of July. And then Father de Ravignan came, and in his earnest manner said to these young beginners in the religious life: "At a time, Sisters, when so many hearts are closed against our Lord, open yours to that Divine Master. Cast yourselves entirely upon Him. Take no notice, take no heed of aught else. Make to yourselves a bridge whence you can see without disquietude the perpetual tide of human affairs flowing beneath your feet."

Such was the state of Conflans when Madame Barat arrived there in November, 1842, after her Italian journey, and when the question of the decrees was in full discussion. Soon after her arrival the first stone was laid of a handsome Gothic church. From that time forward she resided at the novitiate. It was there that she rested from the painful struggles which were going on in Paris; and by the side of the heroic long-suffering which she displayed in that conflict, it is pleasant to look upon the picture of the quiet, cheerful, and happy life she led at Conflans, and which extended to every creature who approached her.

Mother Barat, as has been already remarked, delighted in the country and its various pursuits, and drew from them useful lessons for her daughters. For instance, in May, 1843, the novices having undertaken to clear a field from its rank growth of weeds, the Mother General joined in the work, and when a shower obliged them to take refuge in the Community-room, she took the opportunity of instructing them how to root out the spiritual weeds which invade the soul. If she saw trees putting forth their first buds, she would say: "God has ordered them to grow and multiply. They obey; we are the only works of God's hands who do not obey Him!" The blossoms of an apple-

tree made her say to the novices: "You must be like these flowers, white in your purity, crimson in your charity. But do not rely too much on the sunny beauty of the first spring days, for its fervours are often followed by the frosts of trials, and it is only the souls who are strong enough to live through them that bear fruit in the end." She was kind to every living creature. There was not an animal at Conflans that did not benefit by her arrival. The house-dog was unchained, the goat set loose, the hens visited, the sheep let into the meadow, and she was often surrounded by these domestic favourites. One of her neighbours had shut up a dog, which kept her awake by barking. She was so afraid he had killed it that nothing would satisfy her till she had assured herself of its safety.

What shall we say of her love for sinners. On a day in the carnival she said to her novices: "It is your business to console the Heart of our dear Lord. You must all spend the Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament, and each of you lay hold of a soul and cling to it until you have obtained its salvation from Jesus Christ."

When she heard the news of the terrible railway accident on the Versailles line in 1842, she exclaimed: "O my God! We are horrified at the thought of such a fearful death . . . and hell is worse by far! Death is only for one moment, but eternity! Oh, how we ought to prize a vocation which makes it our object to save souls from such a peril! If we really thought of this we should not be so tepid." If told of some unfaithfulness or fault committed against God, the answer was: "What a mystery man is, and how can Jesus Christ love such miserable creatures? If it were not for His grace we should be worse than others. When I muse on our indifference it makes me understand hell."

The works of the fortifications of Paris were going on at that moment in the neighbourhood of Conflans. There

was a garrison at the Fort of Charenton, the spiritual state of which greatly interested the Mother General. The chaplain of her house instructed the soldiers. They were invited to the chapel and exhorted to brave human respect by going to their duties, often for the first time in their lives, at the parish church. Many of them were confirmed in the chapel of the Sacred Heart at Conflans. She wrote on that occasion, that "Everything has gone off very well. Pupils and soldiers have shared the same graces and received the sacraments together—Holy Communion and Confirmation. The thirty men and their captain were as recollected and devout as the pupils. When the spirit of God reigns in the soul it brings everything into harmony." On these days her military friends were treated to a good breakfast. She gave them all good books and spoke to them with motherly kindness. Once one of these soldiers had struck his superior officer and was in danger of being condemned to death. Mother Barat took him to Paris, concealed in her carriage, and succeeded in obtaining his pardon. These poor men never forgot their benefactress. In one of her journeys, when she was waiting for the train at a station in a town where the regiment which had been at Charenton was garrisoned, she was recognized by her old acquaintances. "It is the good Mother of Conflans," they said to one another, and in a moment they made her a seat with their knapsacks, begged her to sit down, showed her the books and rosaries she had given them, and listened to her pious advice till the bell rang for departure.

Mother Barat was never so happy as in the midst of her novices, and used to say that away from Conflans she was like the dove out of the Ark, who did not know where to rest the sole of her foot till she could return. And once after a rather long absence she wrote: "We have met with very fervent souls during our travels, but my maternal vanity will not allow that you can be surpassed by any other

novices. Conflans will always be to me 'the happy island.'"

"My children," she said one day, "I come to claim your hospitality." "Hospitality, Reverend Mother? Does not Conflans belong to you?" "Oh, no, I possess nothing. Conflans belongs to the novitiate, and unfortunately for myself I am not a novice. So it is you who receive me in your house." Another time, when she arrived very unwell, her first words were, "My children, it is a poor cripple who comes to pay you a visit. I am like a ghost that appears and disappears. If that great servant of God, St. Bernard, called himself 'the phantom of his age,' how much more can I lay claim to that name! But for all that let us rejoice, for we are nevertheless the spouses of Jesus Christ."

We have already described the sort of teaching which this great mistress of the spiritual life gave to her children. It is summed up in what she said to them on the first day of the year 1843. "Do you want to be saints?" she asked. "Oh, yes," they all replied, "we do indeed." "Then, my children, you must *give all* and then you will *have all*."

To *give all*, in the sense Mother Barat attached to those words, was to conquer self and triumph over nature. She was wont to say of some of her novices, "They are good children, but they miss papa and mamma, and cannot get on without them, whether they have a vocation or not. We really do live in times when nature has the upper hand of grace. What is to be done with such soft material?"

She told her spiritual children that what made the period of postulanship the most trying of all was the separation from their families, which is the hardest of all sacrifices to the natural heart. When it has once been made, all the others seem easy. "And then," she would add, "the crucifix, the only true comfort, is there."

Her novices were exhorted to love their relatives on earth as the saints love one another in heaven. And the

same spirit of detachment was insisted upon with regard to the sisterly ties formed in the community life of the novitiate. Once when some very dear companions had received their obedience and were preparing to depart, the Mother General said, "We must make our sacrifice cheerfully, my dear children. We shall celebrate this departure by a family meal, as of old the martyrs were wont to do before they went to suffer for Jesus Christ." Such were Mother Barat's ideas as to *giving all*. What she called *having all* was to possess our Lord. She often said, "You must be like the sacramental species, yourselves the outward form, but your inward substance Jesus Christ Himself." It was by love alone that this miracle could be achieved. One of her favourite sayings was, that "holiness does not consist in being canonized, but in loving God intensely." "Come into the shade," she said one day to her daughters, who were walking in the burning sun; "I do not want you to be scorched by any other fire than the fire of God's love. With what wood are we to light it?" When they had answered each in their own way, she quoted St. Ignatius' words: "The wood of the Cross is the best fuel wherewith to keep up the fire of love."

Sometimes in the conferences on the eves of great festivals, Mother Barat spoke with considerable eloquence. One day, after pointing out that our very faults ought to be made stepping-stones to a nearer approach to God, she added these words: "On the eve of her martyrdom, St. Perpetua saw in a dream a ladder, the foot of which rested on earth whilst its top reached to God; but a dragon guarded the steps of this ladder and obstructed her ascent. Without fear she placed her foot on the head of the monster and made it the first step in her heavenward course. Do as she did, my children; despise the serpent, set your foot on his head, and you will in that way advance victoriously to perfection."

Another time she said, "Henry IV. was complaining one day to the Maréchal de Lesdiguières that he had permitted the Duke of Savoy to build the fortress Des Barraux, which threatened the frontiers of France. 'I know it does,' Lesdiguières replied; 'but only wait a little, sire. I have suffered him to build this fortress only that I may take it and turn it into a rampart of defence for your Majesty's dominions.' A defect, my dear daughters, is a fortress which the enemy possesses in our hearts. In order to take it from him we must undermine it. It is by humility that we shall make our entrance good. Let us make haste to effect it."

The recreations were often spent in a circular arbour, which went by the name of the Hall of the Apostles. The novices sat in a circle round the Mother General so that they could all see her, for there was something speaking in Madame Barat's countenance and gestures. Nothing could be more gay and animated than the conversations which were carried on at those times, for her principle was that joy is a magnificent acknowledgment of the goodness of God. "We must accustom ourselves to rejoice in the Lord," she was wont to say, "for we shall do nothing else throughout eternity. Let us be gay and laugh, so long as our joy is founded on our Lord." Her presence amongst them was in itself a delight to her children. On the great holidays they could hardly bring themselves to leave her. "Fortunately," she used to say, "we have the bell in our pocket." On a day when several Sisters had made their first vows she greeted them as follows: "I have come to see the brides. This is a great day for you, my dear children. Here on earth you have only the second profession to look forward to; the third will be in heaven. Come, let us do as St. Paul bids us; forget the things which are behind and, with the Fathers of the desert, every morning say, 'It is to-day that I begin.'"

This simple, straightforward, and cheerful kind of direction precluded illusions as to certain visionary and extraordinary ways. Speaking of a Sister who indulged in such fancies, Madame Barat wrote: "She declares sometimes that our Lord speaks to her. We laugh at this and snub her a little, for it is all imagination." But at the same time the Mother General always spoke with humble and reverential faith of the favours which God sometimes vouchsafes to chosen souls. At the end of 1839 she wrote: "I do not think that our Lord will bestow upon us those extraordinary gifts. He would find few amongst us simple and humble enough to be led in that way. I do not ask for such gifts, for we might make a bad use of them; still we lose by not having them, but I prefer humility. In that respect we have likewise strong reasons never to depart from it."

Her prudent discernment in this sort of case was evinced in her conduct towards a Sister whose name is now well known, and who deserves to be mentioned in this history.

In the month of June, 1844, a postulant of about twenty-two years of age, called Marie Lataste, asked to be received as a Lay-sister at Conflans. She was a simple peasant, born in the village of Mimbaste, near Dax, had been accustomed from her earliest childhood to work in the fields, and brought up in the exercise of a charity that has always been traditional in St. Vincent of Paul's native land. She had gone through sharp temptations and inward trials, and they had left an expression of suffering on her countenance, but the struggle once over, God conquered that soul and flooded it with lights and graces. Since the end of the year 1839, Marie Lataste had experienced supernatural communications with our Lord. It is not our business to pronounce an opinion on the nature of the revelations of Sister Marie Lataste, such as they have been published since her death, especially as for the most part they preceded her entrance into the Order of the Sacred Heart, and also because we

find no decided opinion expressed by Madame Barat on the subject.\*

She simply wrote to Mother Eugénie de Gramont on the 12th of May, 1844: "Father Cagnard has spoken to me of a postulant whom you already know; he adds his opinion that she may suit us, notwithstanding the way in which she is led, and he says that she has an excellent spirit." This excellent spirit reassured the Mistress of Novices whom Mother Barat instructed as to the mode of dealing with souls of this sort. Marie Lataste was subjected to the sure tests of abnegation, obedience, and self-sacrifice. There was nothing new to her in this, for in 1842 she had written: "I hunger and thirst after sufferings and tribulations. Will they come? I do not know. If not, then my suffering will be not to suffer, and my martyrdom my unsatisfied thirst for martyrdom." Before long Marie Lataste took the lead of all her Sisters on the road of the Cross. "Oh, how sweet is the taste of humiliations," she said during her novitiate. "Without going out of my way to desire and seek them, they are not wanting to me, thank God. They are all the more precious because they are involuntary."

She was perfectly happy in the midst of these trials, and Conflans became for her a delightful place of rest, which she thus describes: "How pleasant it is to live in Community, and with one heart and one soul to love God

\* This is what she wrote to Mother de Limminghe on the 13th of February, 1863: "One line about Marie Lataste. You are wrong to reproach yourself for your ideas about her book. We have quite a right to examine and to form a judgment on this question, and as long as the Supreme Authority has not decided we may express our opinions. . . . Those revelations are no doubt in some respects very extraordinary. . . . I should not have ventured to publish them if it had depended upon me. But the best way is to leave the judgment of these extraordinary things to those who have a right to pronounce upon them, and, if we like, select for our own use what can help to strengthen and edify us. I suppose you have received the recommendation not to place this book in the hands of any of your own nuns whom you do not know to be solidly pious, and whose imaginations are easily excited."

and serve Him faithfully, to have none but good examples before one's eyes, to listen to the heart-stirring words which are uttered by our Mothers, and to live where every thing, even the recreations, contribute to awaken and to keep up fervour."

In this school of simple, earnest, and sweet piety, the nature of her communications with our Lord somewhat changed. She said some time afterwards to one of her former directors, who was questioning her on the subject: "I am here in a place of rest and repose of soul in the Heart of my God. He leads me in a way which He has shown me and which I hope always to follow. It is His will that I should live a hidden, humble, and unknown life for God and in Jesus Christ, and this is enough for me." And in another letter she speaks still more clearly, and uses the following remarkable expressions: "Our Lord is just as good to me as ever, though He deals with me in a different manner. There is now nothing doubtful or sensible in His communications to my soul. The way in which He leads me is simple and ordinary, and I enjoy the deepest peace."

At that time the life of the Superior of the noviceship was drawing to a close. Mother Eulalie de Bouchaud had long been in a declining state of health. One of her novices used to say that she was like one of those blest candles on the altar, emblems of faith, hope, and charity, which illuminate the sanctuary, but in the meantime waste away. Madame Barat felt it, and in April 1844, wrote to Mother Emilie: "Our dear and perfect Mother Eulalie de Bouchaud is gradually making her way to eternity. She is an angel of virtue, and fills the novitiate with the odour of her sanctity. You can understand our regret at losing so perfect a daughter. She had all the qualities for a Superior and a Mistress of Novices, which we so seldom find united in the same person." In the hope that a change of air

might do her good, Mother de Bouchaud was moved to the Hotel Biron, where her Superior watched over her with devoted care and affection. "God can give her back to us," she said, "but it would be a miracle. The fruit is ripe, and Jesus is preparing to gather it." And on the morning of the 20th of April our Lord did call to Himself that chosen soul. Madame Barat wrote to her sister Emma: "It is only by looking up to heaven that our deep grief can be assuaged. Your holy sister who edified us up to the last moment of her existence is now enjoying endless happiness with God. Oh, my child, let us try to imitate her virtues, and may we soon die as she did in the peace of our Lord."

Each year now brought with it sorrows of this kind to Mother Barat, softened indeed by wonderful consolations. At Bordeaux she lost Mother Néline de Warvilliers, the mistress of the school, whom she deeply regretted. At Montet, Mother Aglaé Varin, niece of the founder, mature in virtue though young in years, kept repeating during her protracted agony: "I cannot breathe. I suffocate. Well, if it is God's will so let it be. Let me die of suffocation." Two hours before her death she said: "I see the Blessed Virgin, she protects and shields me." The word "perpetual," which she uttered in renewing her vows on her death-bed, was the last she pronounced. "It is then all over," Mother Barat wrote, "our angel has been taken from us by our dear Lord in the morning of her days. It is the wont of our heavenly Spouse to choose these singularly holy souls. We can but adore His Divine will. And we who are left behind let us work twice as much as we have hitherto done, and make haste to become holy, that we too may deserve eternal repose." At Pignerol, another admirable religious, Mother Clara Quirin, Superior of the Abbadia, had slowly consumed her life in the service of Christ; and on the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed

Virgin, 1841, had been called to a better world. "Our chief supports are taken from us," the Mother General exclaimed at the news of this death, "but do not let us feel discouraged. Those holy souls are praying for us, and our Divine Lord will send His Spirit to our young Sisters." At Conflans, an Irish novice, called Philomena Henneberry, who had been the joy and pride of the nuns at Roscrea, immediately after receiving Extreme Unction, sang the *Salve Regina*, and then said: "I did not know that on such a day as this one could be so happy!" Mother Nicoud, Superior of the house at Avignon, gave this parting advice to her daughters: "Cling to your religious vocation. It is a sublime thing to be a religious and an apostle, a religious and a victim!" Her successor, Mother Edmée Lhuillier, who had been the first to institute the work of the Children of Mary, died four months afterwards. During that short time she had done so much for the glory of God that the Mother General exclaimed: "Where shall we find another such apostle?" Immediately after Mother de Bouchaud's lamented death, Mother Antoinette de Gramont breathed her last sigh at Paris in the arms of her sister. "How many and great losses," Mother Barat wrote at that moment, "but what calm, beautiful deaths! Oh, it is sweet to die at the Sacred Heart!" About the same time she had to mourn over the decease of Mgr. de Beauregard, Bishop of Orleans, of Mgr. Frayssinous, Bishop of Hermopolis, and Mgr. Tharin, Bishop of Strasbourg, all old friends and protectors of her Society. At Conflans, she had with her a venerable Assistant very near her end, but whose knowledge and experience were still of the greatest use to the novitiate. In that "Bethania," Mother de Charbonnel was perhaps, after the Mother General, the most eminent exemplification of the spirit of the Sacred Heart. She had become completely blind, but her understanding had lost nothing of its clearness. One of the

novices of that period relates that she was a sort of living encyclopedia, full of treasures ever at their disposal. Her delight in classical literature and her wonderful memory, joined to a refined and excellent taste, had stored her mind with passages which she recited in a way which thrilled her hearers with the kind of emotion awakened by what is really beautiful in thought and language. "It is so fortunate," she used to say in her humility, "that God allows me to turn to account the mental gifts of others. It is the only way in which I can make my company tolerable to those I converse with, and thus attract some souls to the Heart of Jesus." She did not know that it was her virtue which gave her influence, that sort of virtue which had never lost the loveliness, the freshness, the purity of youthful innocence. Baptismal grace, never forfeited, gave to her old age the child-like charm of early life, and her love for our Lord was marked by a simple tenderness which seemed to increase as the time of eternal union with her Divine Spouse was drawing near. One of the novices said, "that whether they looked at her praying or meditating, or sitting alone and recollected in the presence of God, or whether, as they gathered round her and hung on her lips, she related to them stories of the last century, with that delightful youthfulness of thought and feeling which belonged to her spiritual life, she seemed the exact type of the interior spirit and the eternal childhood to which our Lord promised the kingdom of heaven."

Another of this Mother's characteristics was her delicate, scrupulous attachment to the mind and teaching of the Roman Church. She took care to instruct her daughters as to the different opinions on that point, which still existed at that time among the Catholics of France, and guarded them against brilliant fallacies by inculcating a devoted attachment to the Holy See, the centre of all orthodoxy.

When she described to them the scenes of the reign of terror, Mother de Charbonnel often would say: "My dear children, you will go through trials still harder than those I have known. Lay up a good store of energy against that time, and remember that you have the influence of spouses over the Heart of Jesus Christ, and that it is on that account that you are called *Dames du Sacré Cœur*."

The journal of the novices adds that to these maternal instructions were joined those of the good Father Varin. "Never," it says, "had this holy old man appeared to us so completely the servant of God as at that time. We felt as if we were hearing St. John in his old age exhorting his disciples to love one another." The venerable Founder told them that their souls must expand beyond all earthly limits. "Who knows, my children," he would say, "which of you is to be the first to enter heaven; all I do know is that as soon as you are there God will fill the soul of that Sister. Well, if you are to be the temple of the great God, throw open, as the Apostle says, throw open your hearts! Love God and your neighbour. Love in a strong and earnest manner. In each of our actions let the labour belong to us, the advantage to our neighbour, and the glory to God. During life you say, God is good; you will repeat it at the hour of death, and it will be your song throughout eternity." One day he ended his address by these words: "Oh, what a Master we have in our Lord Jesus Christ! Let us love Him, my children. We wanted a Society of the Sacred Heart to love Jesus." Another time he said: "I knew once a good patriarchal old man who used every day to gather his children about him, in order to speak to them of their mother in heaven. I come like that old father to speak to my children of Mary, their Mother—and what a Mother she is!" Joy and gratitude were always the themes on which he dwelt. 'You know, my children, that I am drawing near to my

end, that I am not able to speak, and am good for nothing now but to be put aside and pray: but I have come just to say one word to you, and that is 'Rejoice.'" And taking leave of them a few days afterwards he used the words of the Apostle as a farewell: "My dear children, love one another, that is our Lord's precept." This absence was to be a longer one than was expected. As it happened in 1830, an impending revolution was prefaced by attacks on the Church, and as usual the Jesuits had the honour of being in the first instance assailed by the enemy's fire, at the tribune, in the newspapers, in the pamphlets of the day, and in the Royal Council. They were valiantly and eloquently defended in the Chamber, and supported by a courageous coalition of bishops; but not so by Mgr. Affre, Archbishop of Paris. More awake to his personal jealousies than to the general Catholic interest, he became, without intending it, an accomplice in the work of evil, by thwarting the Jesuits, paralyzing their zeal, restricting their action, and at such a moment evincing mistrust and throwing discredit upon them in a way which served but too well the purposes of the enemies of God.\* In consequence of this spirit, the nuns of the Sacred Heart at Paris and at Conflans were forbidden to have recourse to the ministrations of the Fathers, whether for direction or for retreats, and thus found themselves deprived of the spiritual assistance best suited to their Institute.

It was the first time since the foundation of her Society that Madame Barat had met with this spirit in the ecclesiastical authorities. She wrote in her journal: "These obstacles on the part of the Archbishop have been very painful to me. They take away from us the Jesuits in

\* On his death-bed, as will be seen in the following chapter, the holy Archbishop repented of his line of conduct, and gave a great example of charity and humility, by sending two successive messages to the house of the Jesuit Fathers to express his regret and ask for their prayers.

all our houses in the diocese of Paris. God only knows the trials this will entail. It is His will thus to chastise us. His love afflicts in order to purify us." It was in vain that the Mother General visited and wrote to the Archbishop. On the 14th of August, 1846, she said to Madame de Rozeville: "I cannot tell you all we go through; but we must be courageous and not complain. Jesus will not recognize as His spouses, those who do not bear His marks, and as we cannot hope to die for Him we must make up for it by another sort of martyrdom. I wish we all understood this truth. But even that would not be enough; we ought to relish, to love, and to practise it."

Together with the question of the religious orders, that of liberty of teaching was occupying the Chamber and the public. The object in view was to deprive the religious orders of that liberty, and on the 1st of May, 1844, Madame Barat said to her novices: "I have heard this very day that the University is bent on suppressing us. In their impious ideas the wicked say: "The nuns of the Sacred Heart stand in our way. Poor little insignificant women who have not been thought of since the world began." And then she added with a smile: "But I am not afraid of anything as long as the Blessed Virgin and the novices of the Sacred Heart are on my side. If you love Jesus and Mary you will be all-powerful. Love them, my children, love them to excess. I allow you to be extravagant on that point."

On the other side of the Alps the same agitation was beginning against Christ and His Church. "We have to suffer in every direction," the Mother General wrote, "go on praying earnestly. Everywhere the Society is attacked on account of its name. They want to keep us out of Germany; they raise up a popular cry to prevent our going to Pisa. Governments must be very weak to be so afraid of a few women. They make perfect bugbears of us. It would really be laughable if it were not that the devil makes

use of all this to prevent good being done. We must pray that the efforts of the enemy of Christ may be defeated. This is indeed his reign and the hour of darkness. It is impossible to describe the way in which passions and errors of every sort are surging around us."

At this critical moment arrived the news of the death of Gregory XVI. "An immense loss," Madame Barat wrote, "for her Society and for herself. Pray," she said to Mother de Gramont, "that he may be replaced by one who will be indeed the great shepherd. How much the world is in need of it!" Soon she hailed with the whole Church Pius IX.'s election, and on the 26th of June she wrote: "This choice softens our regrets. Let us hope that the Holy Spirit will rest upon Pius IX. in all its plenitude. The wants of the Church are so great. What thanks we owe to God for having given us in the august person of Pius IX. so worthy a Successor of St. Peter. Every one agrees in thinking that there is something almost miraculous in his election, and in this iron age it is a great help that Jesus has sent us."

Mother Barat hastened to send to Pius IX. her congratulations on his election to the Pontifical Throne. She received in answer a Brief, in which the Pope said: "Address, and let all your Sisters never cease to address fervent prayers to the God of clemency that He may deign to shed upon us the fulness of His light and His powerful aid, so that our weakness may be enabled to fulfil all the important duties of the Supreme Pontificate in the midst of the many evils which afflict the Church. We will also pray that you may all become more and more pleasing to the Heart of Jesus Christ our adorable Redeemer. And as we have nothing more at heart than the Christian education of youth, we shall always look with favour on an Institute that has so high and useful an end."

The Sacred Heart was in the meantime sending its colonies into every kingdom of Europe. When the house at Perpignan had been founded, Mother Barat had said that it would open for them a door into Spain, and it did so happen that two Spanish girls of the name of Serra, who had been educated in that convent and became religious of the Sacred Heart, brought about its establishment in Catalonia, their native country. A Capuchin, Father Font, had once said to them: "You will find in that Order the means of arriving at the perfect life you aim at. The Superior is a saint, and it is generally supposed that she will one day be placed on the altars of the Church."

Thanks to the zeal of Madame Serra, and the friendly exertions of M. de Lesseps, at that time French Consul in Spain, the Sacred Heart purchased a house near Barcelona, admirably situated, with a beautiful view, a good climate, and surrounded by orange groves. Mother Kerulvay, Superior of Perpignan, was sent there at the beginning of the year 1846, and Madame Barat rejoiced at seeing her Order implanted in the soil where St. Theresa had revived the Carmel.

In France, the Mother General, in obedience to the wishes of Mgr. Dupont, Archbishop of Bourges, came twice to that town in 1844 and 1845 to establish one of her houses. A convent was built in the midst of extensive grounds, on a height which overlooks the surrounding valley. Mother Thérèse Mailluiseau, with two other nuns, arrived there on the 15th of March, 1846, and were most kindly welcomed by the Archbishop.

At Rennes also the Sacred Heart, invited by the bishop, Mgr. Brossais-Saint-Marc, at the suggestion of the Abbé Carron, established itself in a small house and garden, called Bégasson. Marie Lataste was one of the first Sisters sent there. She wrote from that place: "My heart

is happy. It wishes for nothing beyond what it possesses. I find my happiness at the foot of the Cross and in the adorable Heart of Jesus. I am happy, and so is every one in holy religion. I care for nothing else."

The Society had never ceased to regret Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut and Grenoble. Since it had left that place, the largest school in the town was under the direction of some of the Dames de Saint-Pierre, who had not as yet been united to the Sacred Heart. In 1846, their Superior, Madame Alexandrine Guillambeau, solicited this incorporation, which was at last arranged. Mother Barat accepted it in the full conviction that her dear Louise de Bourcet had negotiated in heaven a union she had in life so ardently desired to effect. The house which was thus made over to the Sacred Heart was called Montfleury, built on the site of an old castle of the Counts of Dauphiné and of a convent of Dominicanesses founded by Humbert II. Backed by the mountains of Rochais and Saint Eynard, and higher up by the snowy summits of the Alps, overlooking the whole of the magnificent valley of Grésivaudan, it is one of the most beautiful convents of the Society. It would have amply compensated for the loss of Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut, if beauty of scenery could make up for the absence of associations. The nuns of the Sacred Heart took up their abode in this new home on the 19th of September, 1846, on the very day and almost the very hour when the neighbouring mountain of La Salette was visited by Our Lady of Sorrows, and thus acquired a wide world celebrity.

A very distant foundation, that of Gratz in Styria, was brought about at the same time by the persevering efforts of Mgr. Zængerle, Prince Bishop of that town, and the generosity of Mdlle. Mæstl, who for a while entered the house at Lemberg as a postulant for the express purpose of promoting the establishment of this convent. Madame

Beatrix Schneider, a devoted and excellent religious, was named Superior of this house, which reaped the benefit of the deep traditional veneration still felt in all that country for the memory of Father de Tournéy.

We need only briefly mention the invitations received by the Sacred Heart from Syria, from the far East, from Tunis, and even Further India, where the Vicar-Apostolic of Ava and Pegu held out to the nuns hopes of martyrdom. "Oh, if I were only as young as you are!" Mother Barat was wont to say to her novices when she read to them these applications. And another time, lamenting over the scanty number of her children, she exclaimed: "Alas! how small you are. Try at any rate to have large hearts. If we were what we ought to be, the Lord would work wonders with us. It would be enough to send one religious to each part of the world to convert it."

On the 22nd of July, 1846, Mother Barat left the home of the novitiate and came to reside at the Hotel Biron. But a circumstance which brought out in a wonderful manner the loving nature and the great sanctity of the servant of God called her back for a while to Conflans.

A young novice, Madame de Monestrol, had met with an accident which injured her head, and ended by producing an abcess in the brain. In the month of September of that year this illness was declared mortal. The tortures which it caused became so acute that three persons could scarcely keep the sufferer in her bed. Dr. Cruveilhier and Dr. Maisonneuve saw no means of relief but in the terrible and doubtful operation of trepanning. The novices seeing how little could be expected from earthly remedies, turned to God and commenced a novena in honour of St. Philomena. On Friday, the 11th of September, the Mother General arrived from Paris, hastened to the bedside of her dear novice, and began by speaking to her of confession and Holy Viaticum, of her vows which she was

about to make, and then of a violent remedy she would have to submit to. Madame de Monestrol herself has related what then took place. "Our Reverend Mother rose and came close to me. She made the sign of the Cross on my forehead and seemed in great anguish. I saw that she was praying. My head, which was burning hot, sank on her hand, and as it touched it I felt as if boiling water was spreading all over my body. The effect was instantaneous. I was overcome with emotion. My whole being was under a powerful influence." And so indeed it was; the young religious was cured in that hour. She went to confession, feeling her head completely relieved. Before receiving Holy Communion she was visited by Madame Barat. "Two ways are before you, my child," the Mother General said; "earth and heaven. Choose between them!" "I know but of one way," the novice replied, "and that is the will of God." Then Mother Barat felt inspired to say: "America or heaven?" "Well, Reverend Mother, let it be America; for that way will doubtless lead to heaven." The relics of St. Philomena were applied to her. She made her vows, and received our Blessed Lord. In her own words: "After I had communicated, the paralysis in my left side disappeared, I was able to clasp my hands, all my sufferings subsided, and animation was restored to my whole frame; my sight, which had been quite obscured, returned, and I was able to see the view out of my window. My head was relieved, and the only thing I still felt was a heaviness about the forehead, such as remains after a bad headache." After a night of refreshing sleep the novice was only awakened by the sound of the Angelus. When Doctor Maisonneuve arrived next day, he could not believe his eyes. Deeply moved, he said to the Mother General: "This is indeed a miracle! I am happy to witness and to be able to testify to the truth of such a fact. The impression it has made upon me will

never be obliterated." Dr. Cruveilhier was equally astonished: "She is not the same person I saw yesterday," he exclaimed, "let us thank God together!"

Before returning to Paris, the Mother General came to say good-bye to the daughter so wonderfully restored to life. "My child," she said to her, "you have contracted a great debt to our Lord, I know only one way in which you can at all discharge it, and that is by a boundless devotion to His Heart and to His Cross." When she gave Sister de Monestrol her parting blessing the last traces of heaviness in her head vanished. She declared that she felt lighter and more active than before her illness. The venerable Mother of course disclaimed all share in this miraculous event, but those who had witnessed the occurrence, and the whole Society, included in their grateful thanksgivings to our Divine Lord the names of St. Philomena and Mother Barat.

At Paris the house of the Rue de Varennes was engaging the anxious solicitude of the Superior General. For some years past the school at the Hotel Biron had been much talked about, and in some measure criticised by the public. The appearance of that large mansion, the high rank of most of the scholars and the wealth of some of those young girls, gave rise to an unfounded idea of worldly grandeur which grieved the humble Mother General. "We are too conspicuous," she wrote in 1844. "We thus excite the animosity of our numerous enemies. We ought to try to escape observation and avoid everything that can give them occasion to attack us." She even sometimes regretted the purchase of the Hotel Biron. "We were compelled to it, and as it was impossible to get rid of its magnificence, our reputation suffered from the splendour of its appearance. People did not give us credit for the simplicity of our cells and our own apartments. We were blamed for what we could not help, and ever

since these false impressions have made us lose many subjects. It is only by a close imitation of the poverty and simplicity of the Heart of Jesus that we shall obtain His blessing."

Mother de Gramont was sometimes made responsible for the faults imputed to her school; but Madame Barat earnestly defended her against this accusation. "It is a calumny," she wrote. "If I thought a Superior had a worldly spirit I should not leave her at the head of a house, I should instantly remove her. Nobody can be a more true religious than Madame de Gramont. She cares so little for her birth that she never even alludes to it. For everything relating to herself she practises strict, even severe, poverty. I know no one so devoted to the poor and so ready to sacrifice herself for their sake."

And at the same time that she thus defended her daughter against those who maligned her, Mother Barat left nothing untried in order to comfort and to strengthen her. She entered into her sorrows, and sought in every possible way to relieve them. We find her writing at that moment: "How I grieve over your anxieties! They are constantly in my mind, they are my first thought when I awake." But unfortunately ever since the dissensions of the previous years, Madame de Gramont had lost the habit of entirely opening her heart to her Superior, who was, however, continually striving to re-establish their intimate communications. In the spirit of a true Mother she wrote to her: "Why do you keep silence when anything grieves you? why do you try to hide from me your sorrows? I should be so happy to cooperate with you and to help you to perfect the work which the Heart of Jesus has intrusted to your solicitude. It must be very difficult to bear the weight of it alone. It is not by keeping aloof from each other that we shall succeed, but on the contrary by an ever increasing union." And again, two

days afterwards, she says: "I am sometimes obliged to thwart you. Our Lord permits that you should not always have the same views as myself as to what is best, but believe me, my dear little Mother, I do not love you a bit the less on that account, and I can truly say that I should not much care for my other crosses, at any rate, that they would be very much softened, if you were happy and at your ease with me. I have been asking the Divine Heart of Jesus for some time past to inspire you with that feeling. We should then have more strength to bear our respective crosses, they would be lightened by being shared."

Mother Barat's residence in the house of Paris was the only remedy for this state of things. She did not assume the position of Superior, but on the contrary referred all the officials and the Sisters to Mother de Gramont. "It is from her alone that you are to receive orders," she said, "you would not gain anything, my dear children, by coming to me. I am not so indulgent as she is. Our good Mother de Gramont is the *Refugium Peccatorum*." In this way she soon managed to win the affection of the whole Community. In a little journal which she kept at that time the Mother General notes down, that all the month of August had been spent in preparing for her visit to the Rue de Varennes, and that the Sisters had shown a great desire to enter upon a course of renovation.

But this grace was to be as usual bought by suffering. The measles were raging in the school and several of the children died of it. Mother de Gramont devoted herself to her sick charges, watching over them incessantly. In the night between the 25th and 26th of September she felt the first symptoms of a disease of the heart; and on the 1st of October was confined to her room, which she never left after that day. "I have arrived at the end of my course," she said. And so it proved. That devoted,

arduous, agitated, and towards its end, unfortunate life, was about to be closed, purified, and crowned by a beautiful death—a death worthy of the Sacred Heart.

Mother Barat's unalterable affection for this her beloved daughter increased in intensity as she was about to lose her. "I knew that she was good," she said, "but I did not know all her goodness till now." On the 10th of December Mother de Gramont made a general confession and received Extreme Unction. In peace with God, she publicly asked pardon of the Mother General and all the Society with the humility and tenderness of former days. Referring to the painful occurrences of the foregoing years she said: "Oh, it is those sad affairs that killed me!" Mother Barat kneeling by her side was stifling her sobs, and when the dying nun, feeling her agony approaching, again asked her Superior's blessing and forgiveness, she clasped her to her heart with torrents of tears. "Now I am ready," Mother de Gramont said. "My God, I am expecting Thee. Oh, why this delay? Come and deliver me!" On Saturday, the 19th of December, she expired, after repeating several times: "I will everything God wills." Five minutes after this last utterance, all was over, and Madame Barat closed her eyes. Madame de Gramont's death was deeply lamented in Paris and by the whole Society. "I shall not easily get over this grief," wrote Mother Barat. "She might have added so much to the good she has done on earth. My only consolation is in the thought of her happiness and the recollection of her virtues. We shall all of us soon arrive at the same end. Let us suffer with courage. We have heaven in view."

She took herself the title of Superior and the direction of the house of Paris, the mother-house of the Society. All the lingering effects of disunion had now passed away, all was peace and concord. Never had this unity been

more important than at a moment when on every side the Society was threatened with attack. But Mother Barat was calm and confident now. Her army of faithful religious, in good order and well trained, was in battle array, and she could write : “ Outwardly nothing but trials, obstacles, and even persecutions assail us, but I do not lose heart ; as long as we are united within and blest with mutual affection and trust in one another, nothing can shake us. Oh, how pleased the enemy of Jesus would be if he could overthrow that union. Not able to effect it he stirs up all the world against us. This is a fact which will be proved whenever the history of our Society is written.”

## CHAPTER X.

*Banishment of the Sacred Heart from Piedmont.  
Revolution in France and perils at Rome. Visits  
of the Mother General. Holy Deaths. Death of  
Father Varin.*

1847—1850.

THE storm which was about to burst upon Europe two years afterwards was already presaged in 1846 by alarming rumours and threatening incidents. When they came to Mother Barat's ears, her cry was like that of St. Theresa: "Prayers! prayers! my dear Sisters!" On the 26th of October of that year she wrote from Conflans: "Hell is everywhere at work, let us pray without ceasing. Never have the Church, society, and the souls of men been in greater need of the help of Jesus Christ, and it is only given to faithful and interior souls. Ask our divine Master to grant me those graces, I care for nothing else. Pray that His Sacred Heart may impart to me His spirit, for we are on the eve of persecution, but the words of our Lord, 'Be not afraid, I have overcome the world,' fill me with consolation, and also that other sentence, 'You will be persecuted for My name's sake.' Does it not seem to apply to us? There can be no doubt that that sweet name of the Heart of Jesus is a reason for many persons to hate us." It is not necessary to enter upon the narration of the events which justified Mother Barat's apprehensions, but it will not be useless to relate her impressions on the subject, and in her own words to show what the servant of God felt and thought of the spirit which was convulsing Europe.

Religion was at that moment in presence of two sets of enemies. On the one hand most of the governments of Europe were attacking it in the name of Liberalism, the excesses of which they hoped to anticipate and forestall by abandoning to that party the Church of Christ as a prey. On the other hand a fierce democracy was assailing at the same time both the Church and the State, and in famous publications defending and justifying the arrant scoundrels and despicable orators of '93. In the face of these monstrous aberrations of justice and good sense, and in the hope of preventing the renewal of similar excesses, the Pope determined to show in what a wise measure and on what practical grounds he wished to combine the principles of authority and of liberty. It was then that Pius IX. inaugurated useful reforms and popular institutions. Loud hosannas greeted these measures. The Vicar of Christ was universally applauded, and it almost seemed as if that reign of peace and charity, which in the midst of their discords and miseries men dream of, was about to be realized.

Madame Barat joined in hailing the generous initiative of the Sovereign Pontiff, but not without some misgivings about the future. She wrote to one of her daughters at Rome: "I thank you so much for all the details you give me about the Holy Father. How happy it would make me to see him and to be blessed in person by His Holiness. I often pray for him. I cannot help thinking that there must be a great many thorns mixed up with his triumph. May the Heart of Jesus preserve him to us!"

We need not recount the base and ungrateful return which the benefits bestowed by the Sovereign Pontiff were fated to receive, or the snares involved in the hypocritical ovations of which he was made the object. During the last months of 1847 the Revolutionists were preparing insurrections in almost all the countries of Europe. In the spring of 1848 they carried everything before them, and,

except in France and England, the Sacred Heart was everywhere attacked.

In Switzerland the Society lost its house at Montet. Protestant radicalism, having with shameful and brutal force crushed the Catholic association called the *Sonderbund*, celebrated its easy triumph by the violent expulsion of monks and nuns, and, as usual, added robbery to tyranny by confiscating their property. Mother Barat's presentiment of the approaching fate of this establishment enabled her to disperse in time and place in safety both the nuns and their pupils.

Most of the novices, under the care of Madame Trincano, were sent to Kientzheim; and a few weeks afterwards the Mother General wrote to that good Mother: "The Sacred Heart no longer exists at Montet. That country is invaded by the radicals, the Jesuits have been forced to abandon Friburg, our nuns are dispersed in various houses. Mother Klosen and the servants are alone taking care of our convent. But we are afraid that it may be sacked, as they have begun to pillage in the neighbourhood of Friburg. Pray for poor Switzerland. Pray for Montet. It does not seem probable that we shall ever return to it. . . . Oh, what crosses there are in this world! The wicked have everywhere the upper-hand: God permits it to be so in order to try the good. Their reign is short and their paradise transient. Eternity is in store for the good. That thought consoles us in all our adversities."

Mother Annette Klosen, procuratrix of the house at Montet, was at last obliged to come away in March, 1848. The name of the Sacred Heart was the principal cause of the violent hatred of the enemies of religion against the Society. "It is an honour for us," Mother Barat wrote, "but the devil makes use of this circumstance to impede our doing good: he throws no end of obstacles in our path everywhere and in every way."

Another cause of this hatred was the affinity supposed to exist between the Society of the Sacred Heart and the Society of Jesus. In the year 1845 Mother Barat wrote: "The King of Prussia will not have us in his dominions. He has been told that we are female Jesuits, that there are mysteries in our Order, and that people ought to guard against us. At Florence almost the same answer has been given—'They are female Jesuits!'" Then alluding to their position in Paris she adds: "We are in a strange predicament: on the one hand involved in the proscription of the famous Society of Jesus and persecuted on account of it, and yet not permitted to avail ourselves of the ministrations and aid it might afford us. Thank God we have the Heart of Jesus to lean on; let us cling to It with the aid of the Heart of Mary, and we shall be strong against all attacks."

In Italy the name of the Jesuits had been held up to execration by the slanderous libel of a vain and ambitious man, Vincent Gioberti, whose pride had foreseen the powerful resistance the Order of St. Ignatius would offer to the sacrilegious alliance between Catholicism and revolutionary liberalism, of which that deluded priest was the advocate and apostle. The following letter from Mother Barat shows that he had also heaped accusations against the Society of the Sacred Heart. She wrote thus to the Superior at Turin: "The storm is gathering, and seems to threaten your flock. I think that it will be well to refute by an article in the newspapers the horrible calumnies of Gioberti, which may be very injurious to us in countries where we are not known." In another letter she again urges the necessity of such a refutation, and adds: "And to think that this Gioberti is made the object of a sort of worship in Rome! I am told that his bust, crowned with flowers and surrounded with lights, is placed in the Corso opposite to the one of Pius IX. Bad indeed are the times."

Moreover the Sacred Heart was absurdly charged with favouring in Italy the hated Austrian domination, and thereby rendered unpopular. This charge was an extraordinary one, for at that very moment the Superior of Lemberg, Mother de la Croix, had to endure positive persecution at the hands of the Austrian Government, and particularly on the part of Count Stadion, Governor of Eastern Galicia. Her house was left for some time at the mercy of the mob, who were only appeased at last by the sight of the orphans sheltered by the Sacred Heart: these children's parents had been killed in the massacres of 1846; the nuns had received and educated them.

All this hatred, all this abuse were about to produce results. The wind of calumny had sown the seed, and a harvest of revolutions was at hand.

At the beginning of the year 1848 Italy was already in a complete ferment. In vain had Charles Albert granted the Constitution insisted on by his people: he had no power to prevent excesses. On the 1st of March Turin gave the signal of insurrection by expelling the Jesuits with odious acts of violence. On the following day the convent of the Sacred Heart was surrounded, insulted, and threatened, neither the King nor the Court being in a position to put down these cowardly aggressions against a house inhabited only by women. This siege lasted seven days: at the end of that time it became necessary to break up the school. The parents were in despair, the children inconsolable. They could not bear to part with their mistresses. Intense was the Queen's affliction, but she could do nothing. The best friends of the Society, the governor of the town, the Marchionesses of Cortanze and La Tour, kept sending friendly messages to the nuns and inefficient protestations of good will. Mother du Rousier applied in vain to the Minister of the Interior, Count Borelli.

“The King,” he answered, “can do nothing for you. As his Minister, I am obliged to say so.” She then turned to the Archbishop; but Monseigneur Franzoni had himself just received an official intimation to leave the country in order to save his life. On the 9th March the nuns left their houses in Turin, first taking refuge with some friends, and then trying, some of them at least, to remain at Pignerol; but this was not allowed, unless they agreed to change their name, call their establishment the National Institute, and separate themselves from the rest of the Society. They preferred to give up everything rather than consent to this apostasy, and soon afterwards returned to France.

The house at Pignerol, protected by the gratitude of all the neighbouring country, maintained its position for a while, for the Sacred Heart had done immense good there. A large number of poor children had been taught during ten years in its free school; a great many mistresses trained in it were spreading religious instruction in that mountainous district and edifying it by their pious example, and then the graves of Mother Quirin and Sister Elizabeth were looked upon with deep veneration, the memory of their humility and sanctity remaining as fresh as ever in the minds of all that devout population. This was also the case at the house of Saluzzo. The Bishop who had promised to be a father to the nuns shielded it with his protection, and wrote to the King to implore him to preserve it. At first the National Guard watched over the convent, but the disturbers of public peace soon aroused malevolent feelings in its ranks. Threats were heard that if the nuns did not depart within a month the soldiers would themselves set fire to the house. One of the leaders of the mob proposed to the baker of the establishment to poison their bread. There was no help for it, they were obliged to go; and soon afterwards a decree passed

by Prince Eugène of Savoy-Carignan, banished the Sacred Heart from the Piedmontese dominions, thus sanctioning all the preceding outrages by the most iniquitous of all injustices, legal persecution. The only exception made was in favour of the house at Chambéry, which the town declared itself determined to maintain. Thus in two months the Society lost in Piedmont the fruit of twenty years labour.

At Parma the nuns of the Sacred Heart were living under the protection of the Archduke Charles II., who had succeeded the Archduchess Marie Louise, lately deceased, when in 1848 some of the Turin Sisters took refuge in their house; it was in this way that they heard of the revolution which was soon to prove fatal to them. The Constitution forced on Charles II. did not save him from the insurrection; he was obliged to fly. The Sacred Heart remained awhile exposed to the insults and threats of the mob excited by the Piedmontese emissaries, and at the end of a few months was banished by the order of a Provincial Junta.

At Genoa, the same scenes of brutality took place, diversified by disgusting buffooneries. Every day and every night groups of disorderly persons in masks paraded the street, vociferating cries of "Death to the Jesuits, and to the female Jesuits!" "Long live Gioberti!" Bills containing threats and vile calumnies were posted on the walls. These tumultuous demonstrations were but the presages of actual violence. In the cowardly spirit which generally governs this sort of attack, the mob waited one night till the Jesuit Fathers and their pupils were in bed, and then broke into their house, burning and destroying everything they could lay their hands on. They seized the Fathers only half-clothed, and threw them into the hold of a vessel amongst convicts, the town meantime celebrating this triumph by the firing of cannon and processions singing *Te Deums!* The nuns of the Sacred

Heart received a warning contained in the words: "Yesterday at the Jesuits, to-morrow at your house." On the 8th of March at dawn, troops surrounded at a distance the house of San-Pier d' Arena, which was supposed to conceal arms and Jesuits. Not finding what they pretended to seek, the searchers took to pillaging, which was their real object. The Governor of Genoa had not more power than the Governor of Turin to oppose the sedition, and on the following day the Superior, Mother Armande de Causans, disguised and dispersed her nuns. Even thus it was difficult to protect them from the ill-usage of the mob. They took refuge for one night in a fisherman's hut, some of them sought a temporary asylum in Italy, others embarked for Marseilles, whilst another detachment wandered from Genoa to Turin, and from Turin to Chambéry, across mountains covered with snow. With great toil and difficulty they all at last arrived in France.

A revolution of a different kind had taken place at Paris. On the 24th of February, 1848, almost without a struggle, under the pressure of an insurrection, Louis Philippe had lost his throne. Mother Barat uttered on that occasion Massillon's famous words: "God alone is great," and added: "He is also a God of mercy. Let us hope in Him."

During those terrible days, forgetting her own danger and that of her Society, she thought only of the sufferings of her brethren, whatever party they belonged to, and the Superior General of the Sacred Heart was transformed for the time being into a Sister of Charity.

One evening, for instance, a troop of fifteen to twenty men appeared at the door of her house, overwhelmed with fatigue and exhausted for want of food. "Give them immediately what has been prepared for the Community," she said, and after the distribution, each of those men walked away with a loaf of bread under his arm and one on the

point of his bayonet, full of gratitude to the benevolent lady as they called her.

Another time, at six o'clock in the evening, Mother Barat was told that the court of the Hotel Biron was filled by a band of insurgents, who had brought on a stretcher a man in a blouse so dangerously wounded that he could not be carried any further. "We must take care of him," the Mother General at once exclaimed; "God has had His own purposes in sending him here." She gave the poor man a room and a bed, sent for Dr. Récamier and Dr. Maisonneuve, ordered refreshments for his companions, and whilst the balls were falling in the garden and striking the shutters of the room where she had seated herself by the side of the wounded insurgent, she prayed earnestly that a priest might arrive in time to reconcile to God a soul which seemed on the verge of eternity. Those prayers were heard. Cyril, that was the name of this poor man, was cured both in soul and body at the Sacred Heart. He was soon able to walk to the chapel, and went to his duties. He had become quite a child of the house, and was seen one day in the garden leaning on Madame Barat's arm. He never called her anything but "My Mother General." She acted up to that title, and furnished him when he left the house with clothes and provisions.

Another wounded man, called Christopher, was long indebted to her charity. One day that he came to the Hotel Biron to ask for a coat, the Mother General said to one of her daughters: "Give him your choir cloak; you shall have mine." A coat was accordingly provided in this singular manner for the pensioner of the Sacred Heart.

One of the nuns of that period gives the following details as to the charities of Mother Barat during that year 1848, when the misery of Paris was intense. She says: "The distribution of bread at the door several times a week became at last so considerable that the neighbours objected

to the great assemblage of people they brought into the Rue de Varennes, fearing that some tumult might ensue. The head of the police called on the nuns to thank them for their charity, but requested that the distributions might be interrupted, as in such critical times danger might arise from so great a crowd of persons in one street."

These charitable ministrations saved the Sacred Heart from popular animadversion. The newspapers spoke of them with praise. The house was left undisturbed, and the school, though with diminished numbers, went on as usual. It seemed probable that this Revolution in France would not be marked by the impiety which had disgraced it in other countries. One of Mother Barat's first cares was to go and reassure the novitiate at Conflans. "For the present," she said, "there was nothing to fear, and for the future everything must be left in God's hands. If we are driven away from France, well, my dear children, the Heart of Jesus is wide, and all the earth belongs to us. Have we not America and the Burmese Empire and China? Oh, in the midst of the instability of all human powers, what a blessed thing it is to belong to Him who alone is good, and whose friendship will never fail us."

At the moment when her own native land was agitated by these troubles, letters from Italy announced to Mother Barat that five of her houses in that country were lost. This news reached her just as she was making internal arrangements necessitated by present circumstances. She did not lose for an instant her self-possession. After calmly reading the letters through, she said, "God's will, not ours, be done," and then continued giving directions. One of the nuns who arrived from Italy with Mother du Rousier thus describes the way in which the Superior General received them: "I shall never forget the feeling of peace which the sight of our Reverend Mother gave us. We were ten in number, and had come from Turin, Saluzzo, Genoa,

and Pignerol. She did not in any way betray the grief which our presence must have inevitably renewed in her heart. On the contrary, her smile and manner were so bright and kind that our aching hearts felt comforted at once. There were indeed tears in her eyes, and she said, 'My dear children, I used to think that in case of a revolution I should have to go and crave your hospitality, and as it happens it is you who come to me. God knows best, and we must accept His will.'

The following months were spent in providing for the destination of the banished nuns, some of whom were sent to America. Mother Barat thus announced their departure to the novices at Conflans: "Six of your Sisters are going to New York, six others will soon follow them. It is thus that our Lord causes good to arise out of evil. When light is withdrawn from one country it passes into another. Supposing we are compelled to leave France, well, we shall go and found new colonies," and as she was rising to go away the Mother General added: "And would you, then, my dear children, like better to go to America than to be faithless to your vocation?" They answered this appeal by one of those bursts of feeling which, as one of them expressed it, says everything in one word. "Then if that is the case," she rejoined, "I bless you all in the name of our Lord;" and as she stretched out her hand earnestly over their heads, they felt more than ever that she was their Mother. But beneath all her serene calmness under these trials, there was a deep and sensible wound in the devoted heart which so bravely endured them. To one of her daughters Mother Barat wrote at that time: "For the last few months my life has been a series of sufferings and sacrifices. If only I could prize and profit by them as I ought! I should lose heart but for the hope that our much-offended God will at last be touched by the prayers of His saints. We have never been in greater need of His help.

This world is so unsatisfactory ; everything seems to fail and disappear." And to Mother Maillucheu she said : "How distant seem the calm and happy days of our early religious life ! I scarcely venture to let my thoughts dwell on them. Those recollections affect me too deeply, and especially the regret of not having sufficiently known the gift of God and not having made the most of it. But as the past is no longer in our power, let us throw ourselves into the arms of Divine Mercy, and try to sanctify the evening of our life by rekindling our flickering light. After all, let everything be as God wills and what He wills." In another letter she owns, in the words of the prophet, that it has been good for herself and her children to be humbled, calumniated, and hated without a cause in that Italy to which they only wished to do good, and where they had been so ill-treated in return. She ends with these words : "Let us hold our peace, and in silence adore the almighty will of God."

It was not the human suffering involved in these persecutions, nor the earthly interests, however sacred, which were affected by their results, that Mother Barat felt most acutely. It was the wounded Heart of Christ, the ill-requited love of our Divine Lord which pierced her to the heart. One supreme evil, sin, was the misery over which she mourned, and in every one of her letters she kept repeating the words, *Væ nobis ! quia peccavimus tibi*. When she heard of the loss of her houses and the banishment of her daughters, the cry of her soul was one of lamentation over the hatred evinced towards her Divine Master and over the consequent triumph of Satan. Exhortations to a still more ardent love of Christ and still greater activity in His service flowed from her lips and from her pen. "Oh, let us deserve to win back souls to our Lord," she exclaims, "if not in one country in another. What does it signify so long as we fulfil our vocation ?"

Then came those awful days of June, 1848, crowned by the sublime self-devotion of the Archbishop of Paris. During the previous year the relations between Monseigneur Affre and the Sacred Heart had resumed that paternal and filial character which would always have existed had he better understood this portion of his flock.

On the 15th of November, 1847, Mother Barat rejoiced over the fact that he had given them liberty to have recourse to the Jesuits at least on extraordinary occasions. Eight days before his death he had been at Conflans and said to the novices : "We are always in great need of prayers, but more so than ever just now. I have come to beg of you to pray for the Church, for France, and for me. Do not be uneasy ; if the Revolution attacks anybody it will assail me before it quarrels with you. But if you hear that it has fared badly with your Archbishop, then it will be time for you to take precautions."

In the light of his glorious martyrdom the dying Prelate's eyes were still further opened. We read in his history that before his death he requested his secretary to carry to some friends and to the members of several religious orders assurances of esteem and affection. He named the Pope's Nuncio, the Reverend Jesuit Fathers, the Nuns of the Sacred Heart, and the clergy of the Society of Saint Sulpice. M. l'Abbé Jaquemet, who was afterwards Bishop of Nantes, was also commissioned to convey to Mother Barat the expression of his regrets. The Mother General often spoke with emotion of this last act of the heroic Archbishop. Whatever may be the dissensions which divide during life the disciples of the law of love, on the brink of eternity a heavenly light shines on the soul which dissipates these clouds and renews their union in the Heart of our Lord.

From that time forward Mother Barat held in religious veneration the memory of the pastor who had given his life for his sheep, and we find her in one of her letters a few

days after his death, asking for a medal touched by the relics "of our last martyr."

The end of the year 1848 and the beginning of the ensuing one Madame Barat employed in visiting her Communities in the centre and the west of France.

She went first to Beauvais and Amiens, and then to Bourges, Tours, Bordeaux, Nantes, Niort, and Poitiers, wearing a secular dress and accompanied by Madame Aymardine de Nicolay and Sister Agnes, a devoted Lay-sister. At Bourges she was received with marks of great respect by his Eminence Cardinal Dupont, who venerated her person and esteemed her work to a degree that made him sometimes exclaim: "I do not know what I would not sell, myself included, to help Madame Barat's Institute." He insisted on lodging her in his palace, and gave her the apartments just vacated by Don Carlos, King of Spain. She was obliged to submit, but soon escaped to a cell in her own house, which was only half built at that moment.

During her journey she delighted in mixing with poor people, whether at the railway stations or if travelling in a carriage, when she stopped at inns, and she liked to be taken for a person of the lower classes. One of her pleasures on the road was to relieve the beggars who crowded round the carriage. Also the sight of the beauties of nature, of a fine valley, a hill dotted with white sheep, and, better still, the view of a spire, which spoke of our Lord's presence in one of His humble sanctuaries, gladdened her heart, especially if she could stop a moment to visit Him in His Tabernacle. But often, also, it saddened her to see God's abodes bare and neglected, whilst men's palaces and mansions were luxuriously furnished. The contrast shocked and grieved her.

As soon as she arrived at one of her houses she devoted herself to the Community. Each of the nuns saw her in private and received her advice. The virtue she principally

insisted upon at that time was obedience. "Oh, how difficult it becomes," she wrote to Mother Giraud, "to guide souls in these revolutionary days. This excitement about liberty finds its way even into religious houses, rules and constraints are found intolerable. The thought of our Lord bound and nailed to the Cross vanishes from our minds; let us beware, my dear daughter, of this spirit of infidelity." The companion of her travels declared, however, that wherever Mother Barat went fervour was rekindled, the young became wise, the aged invigorated. Her words seemed to give fresh life to her spiritual children. In the intervals between her visits to different houses, Tours was Mother Barat's favourite abode. In the month of January, 1847, the Sacred Heart had bought near that town one of the most venerable remains of the monastic times. One day that Father Varin was passing below Tours in a steamboat, he was surprised to see one of the men on board take off his hat and say: "Marmoutier! St. Martin!"

On the spot he was pointing to, a soldier of the Roman army, who first became a monk and then a bishop, had led the life of the Fathers of the Desert, assembled his disciples in mountain caves and fastnesses, and astonished the world by miracles of sanctity, zeal and charity. In still more remote times those caves had served as hiding-places to the first Christians of that country. Father Varin communicated to Madame Barat in the following letter the thought which had occurred to him as he gazed on that spot. "Would not a place so favoured by our Lord be a suitable abode for the Sacred Heart? Would I were near you at this moment, to persuade you to purchase Marmoutier! But I hope that the angels who watch over the preservation of one of the most precious monuments of our faith, will speak to your heart. By preserving it to the Catholic Church you will enrich the whole Society of the Sacred Heart, which will for ever rejoice in the possession of so great a treasure.

Oh, how the house of the Sacred Heart at Tours will prosper. Courage then, and confidence! Only say *yes*, and I promise you that this purchase will draw down great blessings on you and your Society."

Yielding to these solicitations and to those of Monseigneur Morlot, Archbishop of Tours, Mother Barat bought Marmoutier, and she announced in the following characteristic manner to her daughters of the Rue aux Prés their approaching removal to the old monastery. "Our Lord has kept you a long time under the bushel; soon, my dear children, you will be set on a candlestick. God chooses to extend and enlarge His work, you will enjoy the honour of treading the holy soil which saints have trod of yore, but remember the inhabitants of that abode must be saints."

When the Mother General came there, on the 12th of July, 1848, the house was occupied by only a few nuns who were getting it ready. She was lodged in a turret, whence her eyes could glance on one side on the quiet banks of the Loire, and on the other on the wild rocks and caves where St. Martin and his disciples once had dwelt. Her first care was to send out of her room the carpet and furniture it contained, retaining nothing but a bed, a table, and two straw chairs. The beauty of the view she enjoyed, for it raised her soul to God, and she walked with her daughters all over that wide domain, planning how to benefit the poor by its means. Her charity seemed sometimes almost to exceed the bounds of prudence. A band of gipsies had established themselves with their cart before the house, not only did the Mother General insist on feeding them as long as they remained there, but she scolded her daughters for allowing them to sleep out of doors, declaring that people are not to be suspected because they wear rags, and that honesty is to be met with in every condition of life. Her compassion was extended to every creature that breathed. A poor man came one day to the

door exhibiting a wolf and begging. Mother Barat pitied the captive animal and gave him a large piece of bread.

In this solitude of Marmoutier she made her retreat. The sight of the cave where St. Martin had so long and so fervently prayed helped her, she said, to sanctify her soul. She wrote to one of her daughters: "Pray that I may not tread in vain this consecrated ground so often profaned since those days of grace. When agitating news from without forced its way into her solitude she said: "I feel strong against wind and tide, the hours I spend with our Lord and His faithful servant calm me for the present and strengthen me for the future." The Sisters were sometimes uneasy at those long hours spent in the cold damp cave of the Saint. Later on, she said to her novices: "Oh, how small I felt in that spot where so many saints have prayed! I asked myself why has God given back to his servants these ruins? Surely, in order that the spouses of the Sacred Heart may revive here the love of Jesus. It is a land of apostleship, a land of martyrs, and it is given to us because it is our vocation to work and to suffer more than others."

Meanwhile the sufferings of the Church were continually increasing. Pius IX. was no longer hailed all over Europe as a deliverer. He had taken as his standing-ground the point where legitimate liberty degenerates into licence and he refused to co-operate with the promoters of war and revolution. Public opinion, governed by Mazzini and the Secret Societies, had in consequence turned against him.

On the 9th of October he visited the house of the Trinità dei Monti. After receiving the homage of the Community and their pupils he went into the garden, and in the course of conversation with the Superior he said how much he would like to know the Mother General of the Society, who had been described to him as a saint. His

countenance and his words were marked with that calm and sweet serenity which have characterized Pius IX. throughout the whole course of his trials. But hidden as it was, the wound was deep. As he walked through the house that day he stopped before His own bust and said: *Ecco quel miserabile il cui nome SIGNUM CUI CONTRADICETUR*—“Behold that unhappy man whose name will be a sign to be contradicted.” Long and devoutly he prayed before the fresco of the *Mater Admirabilis*, and gave permission to celebrate her feast on the 20th of October. The marked silence of the crowd, which filled the square and the avenues of the Monte Pincio, but too well justified the last words of the Holy Father.

Frequent were the visits at the Trinità of the pious Protector of the Society, Cardinal Lambruschini, who was also becoming the object of a popular animosity which was soon to end in persecution. One day, surrounded by the whole Community, he knelt before the picture of *Mater Admirabilis*, and made the following prayer: “O Mary,” thou hast intrusted to me the protection of a Society against which hell is now unloosed. But powerless as I am, suffer me now to commit that charge to thy hands, and let me be nothing but the docile instrument thou wilt use when the needs of this dear Society call for it. Preserve it, protect it, obtain for it fresh graces. In return I promise to lay at thy feet in this place a special token of gratitude if by thy help the houses which it still possesses escape the destruction which is threatening us. . . .” The venerable man could not proceed farther audibly in his prayer, his voice was choked with sobs. In silence and tears he ended his supplications.

On the 20th of October he went to celebrate the feast of *Mater Admirabilis* in its little sanctuary, but it was sometime after that before he was seen again at the Sacred Heart. A month hardly elapsed ere the revolution was

clamouring for his head, and it was only by flight and concealment that he escaped the dagger.

Mother Barat was anxiously watching the course of events. On the 29th of November, at Bordeaux, she heard with horror of the cowardly assassination of Count Rossi, of the bloody and licentious scenes which had ensued, of the imminent danger of the Holy Father, and at last of his flight and arrival at Gaëta. During those terrible days she was heard continually sighing and exclaiming, "How I suffer! My God, how I suffer!" In one of her letters she said: "What will happen, has God abandoned His Church? Oh no, but he abandons those unfortunate people to themselves. They have abused His graces to such an extent." "Oh, my daughter," she wrote to Mother Emilie Giraud, "how can I describe to you my deep affliction and my anxiety about the Holy Father and our Sisters in Rome. It seems as if that country was returning to barbarism. It has in fact grievously abused God's graces. And we . . . what I have read this morning in *l'Ami de la Religion*, has oppressed my heart with grief. Who would not feel it."

And this was only the beginning of alarms. Happy as Mother Barat felt to see France, awakening to a sense of duty, send her army to the aid of the Church, she could not but feel that the siege of Rome was about to involve in new dangers her three houses in Rome. The Trinità dei Monti had been designated by the French embassy as a place of refuge, but this had not protected it against threats and inroads. On the absurd pretext that the house communicated by means of subterranean passages with the enemy's camp, it was minutely searched. At the Villa Lante the nuns were expelled by a Pole of the name of Dobrowolski, who was astonished at the courage of the *Moinesses*, as he called them. "I never saw such women," he said, "they are as brave as dragoons." Thrown and crowded into five open carriages, escorted by soldiers as if

they had been malefactors, and quite ignorant as to their destination, the nuns of the Villa Lante were taken to the Trinità dei Monti, accompanied by popular vociferations, the sound of trumpets, and cries of *Viva la libertà!*

Meanwhile Garibaldi was devastating the house and establishing in their garden two batteries directed against the French intrenchments near Porta Pancrazio. At Santa Rufina three officials appeared one day to read to the nuns an important document. This was a decree of the Roman Republic which released them from their vows and proclaimed their freedom. In vain the Superior assured them that this was a superfluous proceeding; the liberators were determined to fulfil their mission in the presence of the Community. The Sisters unanimously replied that none of them were nuns against their will, that the Institute took every possible precaution to insure to each full liberty to follow her vocation, and that they were all determined to live and die in the state of life they had chosen. The delegates retired evidently dissatisfied with the result of their visit. The whole of Italy was by that time convulsed. In the States of the Church the house of Loretto was in constant danger of being suppressed. That of Padua bore the odium of being protected by the Empress of Austria. But above all her own sufferings and even the perils of her Society, what Mother Barat thought of most were the sufferings of the Holy Father. On the 3rd of May she wrote as follows to Mother de Limminghe, Superior of the novitiate of the Villa Lante: "What reason we have to tremble! All we can do is to invoke Mary. Oh! in her own month of May, we can hope that she will be the dove who will carry the olive branch to our Holy Father. We cannot dwell on our own sufferings but on those of the Pope. More, more suffering for us if it be God's will, but let His name and the name of Jesus be glorified! If His anger is not appeased what have we to expect? Still

greater and more terrible evils. God punishes us in order to bring us to amendment. Let us therefore pray and strive to become holy."

The siege of Rome was slowly advancing; the progress of the French lines of investment, whilst it increased the hopes of Mother Barat's heart, also awakened her fears. On the 1st of July she wrote: "The danger increases in proportion to the closeness of the siege. In Rome everything is going to ruin. Our novitiate is sacked, Santa Rufina very nearly destroyed. The Trinità, where portions of our three Communities are sheltered, alone remains untouched. It is a marvellous instance of God's Providence. Oh, what crimes are perpetrated by men with hard and corrupted hearts! The children of Satan bear the likeness of their father. Think of what hell will be when they all meet in it!"

At last came the news of the deliverance of Rome—"Rome is saved!" Mother Barat wrote in holy exultation. "What gratitude we owe to Jesus Christ! What thanks to the Divine Heart!" Still in her joy there was an admixture of vague misgivings as to the future. In another letter she said: "At last we have received tidings of the deliverance of Rome, but we must continue our prayers. The evil is very deep, and for many a year to come the traces of it will remain. Special mercies at our Lord's hands are greatly needed." And to one of her nephews she expresses the same fears: "The fact is, my dear friend, that things are going on badly in this world; we must look to our heavenly home, for on earth it is, in one sense, all over with us. We shall never again see prosperous days. The mass of the population is getting every day more vitiated; there is so much evil everywhere, it is like a festering wound in the heart of every nation. How to deal with that immense number of revolutionists, who abound in every state, is an overwhelming difficulty. Banished from one country they flock to another. At Rome there are

dissentient opinions even in the Pontifical Government. God alone, I suppose, can solve these questions."

Then in France, since January, 1849, the cholera was again raging with a violence which threatened to renew the disasters of 1832. "After visiting slightly the right bank of the Seine," the Mother General wrote, "it has appeared on the left bank, on our side of the town, and there have been deaths in several establishments. My trust is in the protection of our Divine Lord, He will save us from this danger." Her confidence was not deceived; the cholera spared her houses, but numerous deaths from other causes afflicted at that time the Mother General. Almost every week brought her notices of the deaths of some of her daughters; this diminished the number of the congregation, and owing to the evil times vocations were more scarce.

Mother Eulalie Gonthyn, Superior of Lille, died that year. Her chief request to those about her was, not to let her die unconsciously. "Do not fail to tell me when the end is near, I wish to know it;" and then she added: "It is such a great thing to die!" Her wish was fulfilled. During an agony of twelve days she kept repeating at each renewed struggle: "Not one minute sooner or later than the will of the good Master has appointed."

Marie Lataste, the holy Lay-sister of the house at Rennes, after having made her vows on her death-bed, exclaimed: "Now I am the spouse of Christ, His spouse for ever! I have loved Him alone. . . . O Divinity! O Trinity! O Unity! Jesus, come and receive my soul. This is a foretaste of heaven." On the 10th of May, at four o'clock in the morning, just as the birds were awaking and beginning to sing in the tall trees near her cell, she listened to their notes, smiled, kissed the crucifix, and died.

Joy seems to have marked in an extraordinary manner the death-beds of these nuns. At Turin Mother Clarice

Cherubini thanked her Superior, Madame du Rousier, for all she had taught her, and added : " And now God permits that you should teach me to die well." She then begged her to thank her mother, the Countess Cherubini, for having given her up to the Sacred Heart, and for having by this sacrifice rendered her last moments so happy. At Rome a young Sister, Maria Carosanti, who had entered the novitiate in her sixteenth year, showed a childlike joy when she took to her bed the very day she made her vows. " My Jesus," she said, " I had asked Thee to live only just long enough to give myself to Thee, and Thou hast taken me at my word." She kept singing up to the last moment, *Al cielo, alma mia, al cielo, con Maria!* and with her familiar Italian piety said : " When I get to heaven and see my dear Mother Mary and she holds out her hand to me, no one will keep me from kissing it and throwing myself into her arms."

At Toulouse, one of the nuns said to Madame Noémie d'Astros, the niece of the Archbishop, " How wide you will open your eyes when you go into heaven ! " " Yes, and my heart too," she quickly replied. After receiving Holy Viaticum, Madame Soudan, one of the Sisters at Montpellier, laid her hand on her heart and said with a smile, " He is here ! He so great, I so small ! " She promised when appearing before God to ask Him two favours for the Society, edifying subjects and purifying graces.

Mother Rancelot's last words were : " I have no will, I have no wish ; I have bound up my will with the will of God." And Mother Sophie de Saint-Alouarn's : " I do not know how it is, but, in spite of all my faults, I cannot for a moment be afraid of Jesus Christ. I always feel that He is my merciful Father." A very aged religious, who had gone bravely through the revolutionary prisons and faced the scaffold in '93, kept renewing that offering during the wanderings of her agony : " Do you hear ? " she kept saying, " they are coming to fetch me to die. Well, well,

let us go and die." Young Sisters, such as Madame Valentine d'Hendecourt, peacefully surrendered their souls to God. Jeanne Magnen, a devout Lay-sister, asked her companions to sing by her death-bed, silently joined in their hymns, and died just as the pious concert ended.

But the most wonderful of these holy deaths was that of Mother Charlotte Goold, Superior of Berrymead. After preparing herself all her funeral garments, she entered into a sort of joyful ecstasy. She spoke and smiled as if in the presence of some invisible being, the last words she uttered were, "How beautiful! how beautiful!" Madame Barat wrote that Mother Goold had died like the valiant woman, laughing in the face of death. "I do not know," she added, "how it is; we are very worthless, and yet they all die like saints."

The death of Mother Deshayes was, however, of all the losses she sustained at that time, the hardest trial to the Mother General. She ended her days at Marmoutier, on the 1st of July, 1849, at the age of eighty-three. Her prayer had been to die in the eyes of men before her final departure, and it did so happen that her illness deprived her of speech in her last moments, but her countenance spoke. She was buried beneath the cave of St. Martin, where she had so often knelt in prayer. "The Heart of Jesus has called upon me to make a great sacrifice," Madame Barat said, "by taking from me this dear Mother. She was my very first companion, and the only remaining one of those early days of our religious life. Such ties cannot be dissolved without great suffering. But her beautiful life and her holy death are my sources of consolation. She will pray for the Society she loved so dearly." At another time she says of Mother Deshayes: "She was a saint, and as fervent all her life through as on the day of her First Communion."

Another impending sorrow was hanging over Madame

Barat. At the end of 1849 we find her writing: "Every time the post comes in I feel afraid of receiving the tidings of the death of our dear Mother Agarithé de Varax. She is dying as she has lived, in close union with our Lord." This good religious up to her last sigh kept hungering and thirsting, as she expressed it, for souls. On the last night she spent on earth, after offering up her sufferings and her life for the wants of the Society and the intentions of the Mother General, she said: "Do come, Lord Jesus, I cannot live without Thee!" and a moment afterwards begged to extend her arms in the form of a cross, then bowing down her head she said, "Let me die like my Master." The word *poverty* whispered in her ear just before death seemed to cause her a joyful thrill. She glanced at the crucifix, kissed the key of the Tabernacle, which was resting on her bosom, and breathed out her soul in an act of love.

And now the founder, the leader, the teacher of this band of faithful virgins was himself about to follow them from this earthly exile to the home of the blessed. Father Varin was in his eighty-second year, his body was bent, his head, once so firm and erect, sinking on his breast, his step slow and feeble; but the soul of the servant of God seemed to expand and rise more and more as it neared the eternal shore. In December, 1848, he said to the novices at Conflans, "Oh, how delightful it will be in heaven; one short moment more and all the miseries of life will be for ever at an end. Confidence, then, confidence! we must live only on confidence; and let us say again, God is good! Let us say it so often while we live that at the hour of death these words may instinctively rise to our lips. God certainly intends to give us heaven. We have a right to say to Him, 'My God, you have made me live in such good company on earth, you cannot mean to give me bad companions in the next.'" His joy kept increasing in proportion to the approach of his end. In Lent, 1849, he said to the novices,

“We have just celebrated Lætare Sunday. Well, in the midst of all these public miseries we must still rejoice. I come to speak to you, my children, of joy. You will find subjects for it in those three words which you often repeat: ‘I believe, I hope, I love.’ I believe in God, who is my good Father and who loves His child; therefore—*Lætare!* I hope for graces which will lead me to perfection on earth and for a glory which will be my bliss in heaven; therefore, again—*Lætare!* And then I love a God who is the perfection of beauty and of goodness, and I know I do love Him, for I have left everything for Him; and so always and for ever—*Lætare!*” The holy old man promised to come every month to converse with his children, but he soon became so weak that he could but seldom go out.

In the month of July he wrote from the country, at the time of the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, a last letter to the Mother General, in which he dwelt on the inseparable union of their souls. “It is the good Master,” he said, “who forty-eight years ago united them, and He will make that union eternal in His Divine Heart. But until that happy moment, my dear Mother, we must be united to Him by the Cross. Oh, you who know so well how to bear your own, obtain for me the grace lovingly to carry mine. But alas! my Jesus, I am far from it still. . . . Pray, then, a great deal for me. I am close to a chapel where the good Master seems to testify every day that He likes to remain; so I hope He will favourably listen to our prayers when on St. Mary Magdalen’s day I shall offer Mass for your intentions and that He may bless His very dear servant.”

On the 19th of January, 1850, Father Varin visited for the last time the house of Conflans. In the words of the angels he wished the novices a good Christian new year, and gave them a conference on that Divine text, “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will.” He ended it by his favourite ejaculation, *Laudate Dominum*

*quoniam bonus!* Then he rose, and, as he was leaving the house, turned back and said in a singularly earnest manner, "My children, always courage and confidence!"

This was his last farewell. At the beginning of April he came back very ill to Paris from Mantes, where he had been staying. Mother Barat foresaw that his death was approaching; she wrote: "We are about to lose our dear Father Varin; soon we shall have one saint less on earth and one more saint in heaven." She sent him a farewell letter and craved his blessing. Father Renault read it to the dying servant of God, who found strength when he heard his daughters named to exclaim, "I have them all in my heart;" and as the letter spoke of his forgiving anything which might have given him pain, he said: "No, there is nothing to forgive, I have forgotten everything. Oh, may God bless them. May He always bless them." On the 12th of April he received Extreme Unction. The Provincial bending over him said: "*Courage*, my dear Father, a few more days of suffering and trial and then those eighty years spent in serving our Lord will receive their guerdon. Have *confidence* in Him you have so much loved and who loves you so much." The holy old man was shedding tears of joy. After an apparent mortal struggle he complained of being still alive. "Cruel death," he said, "she came yesterday and went away again, leaving me behind." On Friday the 19th he said in a positive manner, "I shall die to-day;" and shortly afterwards, "As to-day is Friday I shall soon be in heaven." Accordingly at a quarter to seven he awoke as the Community-bell was ringing, raised his head a little as if to listen to a voice calling him, and then fell back asleep in the arms of his Lord.

A circular letter from Mother Barat announced to the whole Society of the Sacred Heart the immense loss it had sustained. "We have every reason to hope," she said, "that our good Father will watch over the little Society

which, under God, is indebted to him for its existence. Pray also my dear Mothers and my dear daughters for her to whom that venerable Father has committed the care of your souls, and whose only desire is to help you to become worthy spouses of the Sacred Heart."

Two years afterwards Father Guidée published the life of Father Varin and sent a copy of it to Madame Barat. In the letter she wrote to thank him, we find her humbly protesting against some of the things he had said about her. "I cannot help wishing, Reverend Father, that you had not spoken of me, or at any rate that what you say of me had been more in accordance with truth. For instance, the title of Foundress which you give me I consider quite out of place, and it pains me, for I certainly do not deserve it. I have been nothing but a feeble instrument, and had it not been for the indefatigable zeal and labours of my companions, and the enlightened spiritual assistance which sustained and guided us, what would have become of our poor little grain of mustard-seed? As the mistake you have made cannot be repaired, it will serve at any rate as a stimulus to my weakness. Pray to our Lord, Reverend Father, that it may have that result."

## CHAPTER XI.

*The celebration of the half centenary of the Society at Rome. The Seventh General Council. The crowning of the edifice. Visits to the principal houses of the Society. Madame Barat at Paris, and at Conflans.*

1850—1853.

THE loss of all the ancient props of the Society warned Madame Barat of the necessity of crowning her work by providing in case of need for the regular government of her religious family after her own death. This was the principal object of her journey to Rome in 1850. But she had also long been wishing to lay at the feet of the new Pontiff the homage of her devotion and that of her whole Society.

“Beg of the Heart of Jesus,” she wrote to the Superior of the Villa Lante, “that this plan may be accomplished. I am so afraid that the devil will throw obstacles in the way; but if he alone objects to it we will drive him away with holy water and proceed.”

During the trials of Pius IX. this desire had only increased, and as soon as she heard that he had left Gaëta, the Mother General wrote to the Villa Lante: “We hear that the Pope will certainly return to Rome early in April. If this is true and order is re-established how happy I shall be to go to you at the end of the summer. I shall start in September; it will probably be my last journey to Rome, if indeed it is God’s will I should go there at that time. I hope His goodness will vouchsafe me this privilege.”

She left Paris on the 23rd of October, and embarked at Marseilles on the 11th of November, feast of St. Martin, with Mother Prevost, and Mother Cahier, her secretary. After a very tempestuous passage, during which Madame Barat suffered for the first time in her life from sea-sickness, and envied Mother Prevost, who, more fortunate than her Superior, was able to pray all the time, they landed at the end of the third night at Civita Vecchia. On the 15th they were at Rome, and found the Villa Lante much damaged by the occupation of Garibaldi and his Vandals. Worse than these material traces of the revolution were the moral evils it had produced. This was what Madame Barat clearly discerned and deeply deplored.

The feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin in the Temple was approaching—a memorable day in the annals of the Society. Fifty years had elapsed since the Mother General had consecrated herself to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and her Society had been instituted in the little chapel of the Rue de Touraine. A circular letter from the Mother Assistants had requested that this happy jubilee might be fervently and solemnly celebrated in all the houses of the Order. At the Villa Lante Mother Barat prefaced its celebration by a conference on the eve of the feast. Her great anxiety was to give to this commemoration a character in accordance with her humility and her love of the sole glory of God.

“Fifty years ago,” she said, “the Heart of Jesus laid the foundations of our little Society. Other Institutes have had a founder or a foundress, but the peculiarity of ours consists in the fact that our only real Founder has been the Divine Heart of our Lord. He has condescended, indeed, to make use of an instrument, but so very poor a one, a mere nothing, a piece of nothingness, which He selected precisely because it was nothing but nothingness. Glory be to God who chose to be all in all to us.” This humble

protestation was followed by a burst of gratitude. Mother Barat gave an account of the whole history of her Society, she described its origin, its progress, its struggles and its persecutions. She showed how it had been originated, how it had grown and expanded and been strengthened and sustained throughout, in and by the Heart of Jesus, whose intervention on its behalf had been so evidently manifested. Hence she deduced the obligation of an eternal gratitude, and one great lesson besides. "It is the duty of every Order," she said, "to study the spirit of its founder, in order to be always conformed to it. The measure of its perfection depends on the conformity of the disciples with the master. It must then be our great care, my dear daughters, to study the Heart of Jesus, Its lessons, and Its virtues. Listen to Him when He says, 'Learn of Me for I am meek and humble of heart.' We must enter into the twofold end of our Society, our own salvation and the salvation of others, by a continual practice of that zeal and love which is due to Him who has so much loved us, and to whom be glory, praise, blessing, and thanksgiving for ever and ever."

Those who heard this address declare that the Mother General seemed intensely anxious to suppress herself, if we can use such an expression, her only fear being that any part of the good which had been effected should be attributed to her, who, if she was to be believed, had only been a constant impediment to its greater success.

The festival of the following day was a happy one to everybody except Mother Barat, for she could not escape being praised. In the morning she was obliged to listen to an allocution from the Rev. Father Roothaan, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, which contained obvious though delicately worded allusions to her long life and labours. But when he said to her as they were coming away from the chapel, "Reverend Mother, in no other

instance has a religious order preserved for so long a period its founder or its foundress:" she quickly answered, "that is not to my credit, for it proves that none of them spared themselves as much as I have done." The evening function was still more trying. A preacher, reckoned very eloquent, took for the subject of his discourse the Society and the Mother General, and delivered a regular panegyric which made Madame Barat miserable. Her countenance betrayed her suffering, and at last unable to endure the trial any longer she slipt out of her stall and left the chapel. "What is that gentleman's name?" she afterwards inquired, and begged Mother de Limminghe not to invite him again to preach at their house.

Six days afterwards she wrote as follows to Madame Desmarquest: "As far as I am concerned I should have wished this anniversary to pass unnoticed; otherwise we cannot thank God too much for the graces He has continually vouchsafed to our Society, notwithstanding my defects and deficiencies. Pray then, my dear Mother, and get others to pray to the Divine Heart, that my last years, if our Lord prolongs them, may be better than this half century and truly years of reparation. For my part I have poured forth my whole soul before the Divine Heart, and fervently besought our Lord to reward you for all you have done and suffered, far beyond what I have ever done for the Society, in making up by your virtues for those I have been wanting in."

Although the weather was singularly beautiful at Rome during that winter, the Mother General was as usual laid up and obliged to take to her bed. As soon as she was able to get up and to go out she was received in audience by the Pope. It was the first time that she had seen Pius IX., and her letter of the 5th of February, to Mother Giraud, describes her feelings on this occasion: "My dear daughter, we have had the consolation of being received by the

Holy Father. What a gentle majesty, and what goodness there is about him. He is a living image of Him whom he represents, of our Lord when He was on earth." And in another letter she says: "It is impossible to unite more kindness with a dignity full of tact and delicacy of feeling, there is a heavenly calm in his countenance. It is a real blessing to spend a few minutes with His Holiness. How well Pius IX. deserves that title!" But sadder thoughts prevailed when a few days later she wrote: "It was with a breaking heart that I called to mind all that heroic soul had suffered and that I felt it would still have to suffer, for nothing, alas! is changed in respect to opinions. The moment that a forcible restraint is removed everything will again fall into anarchy, and the next time there is an outbreak the enemies of the Church will spare nothing in their rage; but God watches over His own, we must trust in His protection."

The Pope spoke during this interview of the necessity of Christian education founded upon faith, the absence of which was perverting nations in so fearful a manner. Whilst listening to the impressive words of the Supreme Pontiff, Mother Prevost thought of the words of our Lord, when on the road to the Eternal City He appeared to St. Ignatius of Loyola and his companions: "Go—I will be favourable to you in Rome."

The heart of the Mother General burnt within her after this audience, and she wrote: "At the sight of all the needs of our Holy Mother the Church one longs to work twice as hard as before, and to labour in every corner of the universe. The enemy of the Church is gaining so many victories! He holds in captivity millions of souls. It is difficult to form an adequate idea of the falling off of this country once so Catholic! It is terrible to be powerless against the efforts of hell. Well, at least let us be true apostles, true nuns of the Sacred Heart. Let us devote

ourselves with more love and fidelity to Jesus when others forsake Him. I have been glad to find this impulse and this fervent desire in many of our Sisters whom I have seen on my way here."

The paternal reception she had met with from the Sovereign Pontiff encouraged the Mother General to present to the Holy See the requests which had been her principal object in coming to Rome.

Amongst the reforms proposed in 1839 and comprised in the general rejection of 1843 there were some measures universally acknowledged to be useful, and the necessity of which was becoming every day more imperative. She addressed a petition to the Pope on the subject of three changes. The first was the adjunction to the Superior General of the Provincial Superiors having the supervision of a certain number of houses ; it was proposed that under her direction they should share a portion of the weight of government. The second was the renewal of the Council composed of twelve members, to whom the election of a Superior General was committed. The advanced age of the Superior rendered this re-constitution a matter of urgency. Mother Barat wished it to consist of Assistants General, Provincial Superiors, and a professed nun besides from every Province. Lastly, she asked to be permitted to appoint secretly a Vicar-General, who, in the event of the Superior's death, would assume the reins of government until the election of a new Mother General.

These reforms were evidently wise and necessary. They formed the complement of the Constitutions. There was not a dissentient voice on that point in the whole Congregation. It was unanimously, and therefore with full confidence in the result, that the petition was presented to the Sovereign Pontiff at the end of January, 1851. It would have been desirable according to rule to submit

them in the first instance to the Cardinal Protector; but the consciousness that he disliked every thing approaching to innovations, and on account of the weakness of head which old age and the late tragical events had produced in his naturally strong understanding, it was thought better not to make it pass through his hands. This was an irregular proceeding, and Pius IX. desired that the usual course should be followed. Cardinal Lambruschini, hurt at the previous omission, gave no support except a merely formal one to the petition, which was laid before the Congregation of the Bishops and Regulars. After a delay of two months an answer was given, and that answer was a refusal.

This was a most painful blow to Mother Barat. She saw at once the dangers to which it exposed her Order. Things being as they were at the death of the Superior General, her authority devolved as a matter of right to the first Assistant General, Mother de Charbonnel, who was blind, and older than Madame Barat. The Council for the election of a Superior General had almost ceased to exist, and its method of renewal was doubtful and imperfect. The situation was critical. It had evidently not been understood by the Holy Father, and no one but God could enlighten the mind of His Vicar on the subject. Madame Barat turned to our Lord and His Blessed Mother, and laid her petition on the altar dedicated to *Mater Admirabilis*. Mary responded to this appeal. Pius IX. heard of the great sorrow of the Superior General, and sent one of his Prelates, Mgr. Luciardi, to learn directly from her own lips what were her wishes for her Society. Better informed as to the question, the Pope withdrew the decree which had been issued, and named three Cardinals to reconsider the question. On the 23rd of May, 1851, a second decree appeared which annulled the first, and granted to the Mother General everything

that she had asked, except that the Holy Father wished the words Vicars and Vicariates to be substituted for those of Provincials and Provinces, which was accordingly done.

Thus was the finishing touch given to the Constitutions, which were now finally established. Mother Barat's work was accomplished. She went to express her grateful thanks to His Holiness, and then left Rome, which she was never to see again.

At Paris, where she returned in order to prepare for the Convocation of the Seventh General Council, which was to provide for the promulgation and application of the recent decrees she found everything in a state of effervescence and disquietude which seemed to betoken an approaching revolution. In consequence of this apprehension she resolved to assemble the Council at La Ferrandière. That convent, near as it was to Lyons, was situated in the diocese of Mgr. de Bruillard, Bishop of Grenoble. He had been the first director of the young Sophie Barat when she arrived in Paris with her brother, and he told her in a most kind letter that he was delighted to have her in his diocese. "I should indeed have liked," he said, "to have inaugurated your Council by celebrating a Mass of the Holy Ghost, but I shall be with you at least in spirit, and I will ask for that assembly, so dear to the Heart of Jesus, the gift of counsel which inspires useful reforms, and the gift of strength to carry them into effect."

The Council had been convoked for the month of November, but the Superior General was so ill at that moment that it was proposed to put it off. She would not however hear of it, and on St. Martin's feast insisted on being carried from her bed to the carriage. Two days afterwards, on the feast of St. Stanislaus Kostka, she opened the assembly of La Ferrandière. Her plan was drawn up. She had written beforehand that the Council, putting away all trifling

details, was to occupy itself principally about the uniform observance of the rules according to the wishes of the Sovereign Pontiff. "They are in our case," she said, "the expression of the will of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and as long as we preserve untouched this bulwark of every religious institute, the enemy of all good will have no power against us."

The Council promulgated the modifications the Pope had sanctioned as to the government of the Society. It also approved of a plan of studies more comformable to the actual needs of the times, which had been drawn up by Madame d'Avenas. It elected the Assistants General, and organized the distribution of the sixty-five houses of the Society into ten vicariates, eight in Europe and two in America.

Mother Barat now felt that she had accomplished her work. She had always wished to retire from the government of the Society, but now this desire increasing with her age it seemed to her that she had a right to indulge it. Her task was done, and she implored the Council to name another Superior General. They would not listen to her. She wrote afterwards to Mother Duchesne: "I have vainly entreated to be relieved from the burthen I have borne for half a century. The Council has been deaf to my supplications, but I am still in hopes that Jesus will free me before I die from this terrible responsibility. Help me, dear Mother and daughter to obtain this favour."

To Mother Emma de Bouchaud she wrote: "If it was not for our Lord, how one would prefer some dark and quiet corner! You can understand, dear Emma, how distasteful this life is to one who had longed to be a Carmelite. Your case was the same and I am glad of it; you would not have found in that kind of life occasions for such constant sacrifice as at the Sacred Heart. Those who have once understood what Redemption means will

never cry out 'enough' when souls are to be won by self-sacrifice." And in another letter she writes: "Let us never say 'that will do,' but uniting ourselves with our Lord, who on the Cross said 'I thirst,' we too must suffer as much as God pleases, as it is only thus that we can save souls."

She addressed to the Children of Mary of Lyons an exhortation which one of them has transmitted to us. She told them that their vocation was to be the helpers of the nuns of the Sacred Heart, and as it were the sequel of their Order: "Ladies," she said, "it belongs to you to accomplish what we in our houses cannot do. We have enrolled you in a holy phalanx with the hope that you will act in the world in our stead, and by your example become apostles and win souls to our Lord." It was a privilege for them, she added, to be the first in France to take the name of Children of Mary, and she besought them to remain always models to those who would follow them in the ways of solid and apostolic virtue.

Before leaving Lyons, the Mother General addressed a long circular letter to her Society, in which she excited her daughters to an ardent devotion to the Sacred Heart as the only means of moving the compassion of the Most Blessed Trinity and winning souls to God.

France at that moment had undergone a change of Government. The *coup-d'état* of the 2nd of December and the agitation it had occasioned justified Mother Barat's precautions in assembling the Council in another place than Paris. Mgr. Sibour had, however, taken umbrage on that point, which was always a delicate question, but he expressed himself satisfied with the Mother General's explanations, and undertook to obtain the approbation of the Government regarding the changes lately effected. Accordingly a decree of approval was granted by the Council of State on the 5th of August, 1853.

During the following year and a half Madame Barat

resided at the mother-house, and only went for a few days' repose to her beloved solitude at Marmoutier or to visit some of the principal novitiates of the Society.

She spent at Marmoutier the feast of St. Mary Magdalen of the year 1852. "Oh, how I wish this place," she wrote, "could be enclosed in our Paris house, or better still, that our Paris enclosure could be shut up in this sacred abode. How different it is from Paris, in its repose, its memories, its associations, and in many other ways that can be felt and not described. Paris is like the tents of Kedar, or the exile of Babylon. Still we must be satisfied with it as long as it pleases God to make it our duty to live there." She prayed at Marmoutier by the grave of her old friend Mother Deshayes. She would have liked to have been laid by her side in the cave of St. Martin, but as she expressed that wish, corrected herself, and added that it was only too great a happiness to be buried anywhere in consecrated ground amidst the faithful children of the Church.

Another holy friend of Madame Barat's had been living for a year in that convent. Mother Theresa Maillucheu after having governed a long time the house of Quimper, and begun the foundations of Nantes and Bourges, had been relieved from the duties of Superiorship and sent as Assistant to the house at Poitiers, the first dear home of her religious life. "Oh, how I envy your fate," the Mother General wrote to her at that time. "Not to be Superior and to have plenty of time for prayer is Paradise on earth! Do you remember your delight in the early days of milk and honey when you used to exclaim: 'What a happy thing it is when to do nothing is to do everything and silence says all we have to say?' We are now reduced to *super flumina Babylonis*. The city we inhabit is indeed a Babylon in every respect." But Poitiers was not to be Mother Theresa's destination, she was sent soon afterwards to La Ferrandière. "I am like a piece of canvass," she used

to say, "on which our Lord may work what He pleases." At last her health failing entirely, Marmoutier became the home of her rest. The Superior wrote to this aged friend: "Follow now the attraction which Jesus gave you at the outset of your vocation to the Sacred Heart. Henceforward your office will be prayer, and believe me more souls are saved in that way than by action. You will be our Moses praying on the mountain, whilst your Mother is fighting in the plain." Mother Theresa found strength enough to assist in the education of the children of Sainte-Radegonde, a village near Marmoutier. The Sacred Heart had opened there a school for little boys, an exception to their usual practice which the Mother General had sanctioned on account of the extreme destitution of that locality. She took pleasure herself in watching over the progress of these young scholars, receiving letters from them which she replied to, sending them clothes and taking an interest in all their work, especially their religious instruction. "How pleased I should be," she wrote, "to keep that little school, to teach those children to know and love our Lord." And in another letter she says: "Those ragamuffins are one of my great delights at Marmoutier. Father Barrelle, who has been spending three days there, is as pleased with them as I am. Those poor children are so grateful to us. May they be ever grateful to the adorable Heart of our Lord."

It was with difficulty the servant of God tore herself away from this abode of peace and holiness. "I should willingly have forgotten the world in that quiet solitude near the Beloved One of my heart, and in the midst of His dear family. But Jesus does not choose His poor servant to rest, and in spite of all her wishes she must bestir herself, perhaps to the last moment of her life. Well, if this be the will of God, we must lovingly embrace it; His love can make this painful existence sweet."

The second absence the Mother General made that year

was for the purpose of visiting the novitiate at Kientzheim. She arrived on the 2nd of September at that place which she had described as "the land of promise, the land after which she had been sighing." The novitiate at Montet, as we have already seen, had been removed to Kientzheim. Mother Mathilde Garabis was its Superior, the Abbé Pieau had followed the banished colony, and was continuing in Alsace his work of devoted ministrations to the Sacred Heart, which for fourteen years he had carried on in Switzerland. Great was the Mother General's joy at the sight of her daughters after a separation of seven years. "I felt, my children, as I was coming to you," she said, "that I should find here souls—souls entirely devoted to God—souls which will never shrink from any sacrifice; and I assure you that this conviction made my heart thrill with joy."

In one of her familiar conferences at Kientzheim, she used the following expressions: "Where shall I find a soul as ardent in the service of God as the devil is ardent against Him. If I thought I could find that soul at the antipodes I would cross the seas to seek it. Good heavens, why cannot we do for our Divine Spouse what other women are capable of doing for their earthly husbands?" And she quoted the example of the wife of an Italian robber, who had died fighting to save her husband. "As the Spouse of Jesus Christ," Mother Barat said, "I envied that death."

And then on her favourite subject, humility, she commented as follows: "Only think how Jesus loved this virtue; we are ourselves the best proof of it; our good Master, no longer able to practise humility in His glory, still in a kind of way practises it here below by making choice of such miserable creatures as ourselves for the Spouses of His Sacred Heart." "I marvel," she went on to say, "at the coldness of our hearts, beginning with my

own, when we meditate on the mysteries of the Cross. A spiritual writer calls it a diabolical miracle, and he is right. In order to be really high-minded, we have so much to obtain from the goodness of God. What is interior and what is exterior are both so limited in our case, yet we ought to have no other limits than the horizon. Where shall we find that boundless space? In the Heart of Jesus, who, if he encloses our nothingness in His immensity, will give it life and impart to it His own essence, like fire heating iron. Then we shall act with a boundless power, and accomplish impossibilities. How far we are from that at present !”

On the 14th of September, feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Mother Barat took leave of the nuns, novices, and children of Kientzheim. Before she arrived, the Abbé Pieau had said to the pupils: “You are about to receive the visit of a saint. Welcome her, my dear children, in a religious spirit, and with the feelings faith inspires.” He asked them, after her departure, whether, when they had received her blessing, she had touched them, and when they answered in the affirmative, he rejoined: “Well, my children, all I can say is, that you have been touched with relics.” Mother Barat’s farewell was expressed in the words of our Lord to His disciples: “If you love me, you will rejoice at my going.” “Not,” she added, “that Jesus had not much to suffer before He returned to the Father, but the love of God turns everything into joy. It is only when we hesitate to receive the Cross that we really suffer.” She ended by saying: “Ask the good Master to repair all the harm I have done whilst I have been here and to supply all I have left undone.” At the moment when she was leaving, a very humble friend came to take leave of her. This was a lamb which had become extraordinarily attached to the Mother General, who seemed to be endowed with the gift of influence over animals which so

many saints have possessed. The poor thing jumped on the lap of its benefactress, bleating in a most melancholy manner. She gently comforted it, and in her letters often inquired after Robin. Having heard that he had been left in a stable where the rats tormented him, she felt sorry for it, and wrote to the Superior: "You will easily imagine that I was not at all pleased with that account; it always pains me to think of the sufferings of creatures who have never offended God. The thought of that poor lamb kept me awake all night." She added, that "it would be better to deliver him up to the butcher, than thus to neglect him." But she quickly wrote: "Not but that it would be a great pity to slay him in the flower of his age. Mind, I recall his sentence of death." When the nuns wrote to tell her that the report was untrue, and that Robin had always been very well cared for, she thanked them, and said: "It is not for amusement's sake that I am fond of these creatures. I do not really care about them, having much more interesting things to think about. But I own that I cannot bear to see innocent animals suffer, and then the likeness of our Divine Master to a lamb, who suffers Himself to be slain without a complaint, gives me a peculiar feeling about this sort of animal. Oh, my dear daughters, can we love Him enough who died for us?" In the month of March, 1853, the attention of the Mother General was directed to another of her novitiates, the one at La Ferrandière. Mother Prevost, who had governed it for twenty years, having been named Assistant General, was called to Paris by her new office. She had successively presided over the foundations of Annonay, Charleville, Toulouse, Algiers, Sarria, and Montfleury. The whole of the South of France had been influenced for good by the virtues of this admirable woman, and the regret felt at her departure was universal. All the houses she had helped to establish relied on her visits and on her aid, especially at times of

danger, and when the state of public affairs was threatening. Every peril seemed arrested by her intrepid courage or disarmed by her inexhaustible charity. She threw herself into the spirit of those amongst whom she dwelt, whether in Lyons or in Provence, in the Roussillon, in Spain, or even at Algiers, becoming all things to all men, in order to win them to Christ. "To attract souls, not to drive them," was her maxim. "Authority," she said, "must be like the rod of Aaron. It must bear flowers." But her goodness never degenerated into weakness. She used to tell her daughters that it was her business as a mother to heal their wounds, by severe measures if requisite, not simply to caress them. "If we want to see beauty in souls," she said, "we must look at them through Jesus Christ." Her charity was unbounded, inexhaustible. She was the mother of the poor, the sick, and the orphan, more generous if possible to enemies than to friends, and winning them to religion by dint of benefits. She described her novitiate at La Ferrandière, as an earthly paradise with its four great streams. A stream of light to illuminate souls, one of love to inflame them, one of peace to console them, and one of grace to water the roots of the tree of life and make it bear fruit." A novitiate deprived of such a Superior was in need of consolation. Mother Barat had long intended to go and enjoy there a little of that peace of which she spoke as follows to the new Superior, Mother Elisa de Bouchaud: "In the midst of all the thorns that wound me to the heart, I catch myself longing for a week in your solitude, where I can seek Jesus in greater quiet. At the *Farm* a shepherd is always at hand who points out to one places of pasture. When once we know the way then we have only to seek Jesus, the true fount of living waters. Men can only present to us empty cisterns which hold no water, but I am like a vessel exposed to contrary winds. So I leave myself to be pushed here and there as God pleases.

When it is His will to release me I shall go to you at once."

She arrived at La Ferrandière on the 26th of July, 1853. The children of that house were great favourites of Mother Barat. "When I have some sorrow at heart," she used to say, "I think of the children of the *Farm*, and it puts me into spirits." So this time she begged to see them before any one else. They were all dressed in their white holiday frocks, and waiting for her in their schoolroom ornamented with oleanders. But she sent for them into the great avenue and was soon sitting on the grass in the midst of that large family, quite overjoyed at seeing her again. She wrote to Mother Prevost: "I have found nothing but consolation in this family, which you have so well trained for our good Master; a good spirit and so much religious virtue are in full strength amongst them. Our Elisa gives life and energy to everything about her." With the exception of these visits Mother Barat's residence at Paris and Conflans was henceforward almost uninterrupted. At Paris her chief occupation was to promote more and more a spirit of simplicity in the school. She felt this to be not only a duty but also essential for the honour and prosperity of her Institute. "It is a work of prudence and edification," she wrote, "to seek to destroy every vestige of our false reputation. It is so easy for the world and the devil to ruin a Society. Alas! we shall never, perhaps, overcome the evil impressions made all over France by our supposed magnificence in the beginning of the school at Paris. That gilded mansion favoured these reports, and made us lose not only scholars but the best postulants, those who seek in a religious Society, poverty, simplicity, and humility."

Amongst those who had been deceived by these reports was Mgr. Parisis, Bishop of Arras, one of the most eminent defenders of religion of that period. At last he determined to investigate the matter himself in its minutest details,

and with that object visited the Community and school. Mother Barat accompanied him during this inspection. At each cell he visited, and in all the Community part of the house, he evinced fresh surprise at the poverty which met his eyes. At last he could not help exclaiming, "What! are these the splendours of the Hotel Biron!" "Ah, Monseigneur," rejoined Mother Barat: "Would that the Hotel Biron were filled with images of Christ, framed in the form of our nuns!" Thus convinced, the Bishop became a friend, a protector, an adviser, and a support to the Sacred Heart, especially with regard to the antagonistic measures which the Government soon endeavoured to carry out against the religious orders. Mgr. Parisis from that time forward, often gave instructions to the Sisters, abounding in that spirit of unswerving attachment and docility to the Holy See, which marked his whole career. He used to say later on: "I am supposed to be fond of the Sacred Heart, and I have no wish at all to deny it." Indeed, he carried his affection for it to the point of saying that he knew only one place that he preferred to the Sacred Heart, and that was heaven. Such excessive commendation was not what the Mother General liked, and the good Bishop related that on one occasion only she had praised his instruction. It had been given at the mother-house, and the subject was humility. Mother Barat accompanied him to the door, and poured forth the most heartfelt thanks for his exhortation.

But prayer was Mother Barat's principal occupation at the Hotel Biron. She passed so much time, even in winter, in her little tribune before the Blessed Sacrament, that Dr. Récamier, who watched over her health with a filial affection and venerated her as a saint, opposed it as much as he could. The advanced age of the good physician, his long services and his eminent virtue, had given him a useful authority over the Mother General. One day that she was

just recovering from an illness she had gone to the tribune to say her prayers, when the doctor unexpectedly arrived, and not finding her in her room said sharply to one of the Sisters, "Well, and where is Madame Barat?" The Sister was going to fetch her. "Oh, I guess where she is," the doctor exclaimed, "I will fetch her myself." He opened the door of the tribune and said to her in a most authoritative manner, "Madame Barat, who gave you permission to leave your room? go back to it directly;" and shaking his stick he drove before him the holy culprit, who half ashamed and half amused, like a child caught trespassing, hastened to her room. He made her sit down by the fire, and then kneeling before her said just in the same imperious manner, "Now, Madame Barat, you are going to give me your blessing." The humble Mother General refused for a long time to comply with this order, but as the doctor did not rise from his knees she was obliged at last to extend her hand, and turning away her head to say, "Oh, Monsieur Récamier, may God bless you!"

In the evening a small stove and a provision of wood arrived for the tribune, sent and paid for by the doctor, who answered to Mother Barat's objections that he had not made a vow of poverty, and that she must allow him the pleasure of undertaking that expense. In the month of June, 1852, the house in Paris and Mother Barat lost this excellent friend, who had been devoted to them for more than thirty years. It was a great grief to the Mother General, who wrote at the outset of his last illness: "I recommend to your prayers the excellent M. Récamier, who is very ill indeed. His loss would be an immense one for this house and for me. Pray as I do, that a few more years may be given to this worthy man, every instant of whose life is marked by acts of virtue and charity." But before Mother Barat had finished writing these lines she received the news of the death of the good doctor, at the age of seventy-seven.

She added at the end of her letter: "His death has been sudden, but not unprovided for. He was a virtuous man in the full sense of the word. We pray for him as one of the most special benefactors of our Society."

The two houses of Paris and Conflans were equally the objects of Mother Barat's affection and solicitude. Mother Desmarquest was the Superior at Conflans, and Mother Goetz, who had made her own noviceship at Montet, and had since been at the head of the school at Besançon, was now Mistress of Novices; she had made her last vows on the 5th of March, 1847, and was immediately afterwards appointed to that important post. At first it seemed strange that the principal hope of the Society should have rested on a person as timid and as diffident as Madame Goetz. The only merit in her which strangers could see was her excessive modesty, but as soon as she was well known the most eminent virtues were discovered under that shrinking reserve.

One of her dearest daughters relates that she found, from the first moment of her entrance into religion, in that venerable Mother a sweetness of manner, an affectionate discernment as to souls, and a respect for them, which deeply touched her. The more intimately she was known the more evident became her profound humility and her wish not to be esteemed. Joined to that utter distrust of self, or rather resulting from it, there was in Mother Goetz a strength of energy which subdued as well as captivated those she had to deal with. That meek religious, whose exterior was so humble, "whose voice," to use the words of the Prophet, "was not heard abroad," possessed a power of action and, if it was necessary to speak in behalf of God's interests, a force of language which irresistibly impressed the line of duty on those she addressed. A spirit of prayer pervaded her whole being. It was almost as if the Divine presence in her soul was perceptible; the very sight of her grave and

simple dignity often recalled a wandering mind to the thought of union with our Lord and a sense of God's presence, and her spiritual direction was likewise remarkable for its wisdom, firmness, and absence of littleness; she wanted her nuns to be *des saintes correctes*.

The texts on which she founded her instructions were principally these: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice;" "A perfect life is a happy life;" "Know how to wait;" "Sooner or later truth makes us free;" "We must learn to put up with our Lord's delays;" "Though the Lord should slay me I will trust in Him." When Mother Gœtz had sown the seeds in a soul, she watched over their growth with a most gentle patience and unwearied solicitude. Order, punctuality, and precision were the outward expression of her intense love of regularity. But there was nothing narrow in her mind even in this respect. The whole aspect of the house at Conflans denoted her spirit of organization, and her deep sense of what was befitting and even beautiful. Mother Gœtz's exquisite sensibility, her perfect tact, her acute powers of observation, and a way of speaking, which although somewhat hesitating was attractive in its simplicity and sound truthfulness, were the means which enabled her to establish in her house the reign of solid virtue and of real happiness. The novitiate of Conflans possessed that tranquillity of order which was Saint Augustine's definition of the peace of heaven.

The Mother General had discerned all these gifts in Mother Gœtz; and amongst the acts which crowned her work may be reckoned the choice of this Mistress for its principal novitiate. She wrote to her as follows at the time of her appointment: "Your mission, dear Joséphine, is an important one and worthy of the Sacred Heart. Always rely upon Its Divine assistance. The less you act upon your own impulse, the more our good Master will operate

Himself, and in spite of individual miseries you will see that all will go on well, for in what concerns souls God's action is necessary. The elements are subject to man, but as to souls it is their Creator and Redeemer who has reserved to Himself the power of moving them. He employs us, indeed, as His instruments, but simply as such. He alone can be the mover, therefore let Him act. We must do like the sower who digs the earth to prepare it for the reception of the seed ; but when once it is in the ground he has nothing else to attend to than to protect and water it."

Conflans soon enjoyed more than ordinary spiritual advantages through the paternal interest which Father de Ravignan began to take in it. In 1852, having obtained from the Heart of Jesus the instantaneous cure of a severe illness, he came on the very day, the 1st of November, to the novitiate and said to Madame Gœtz : " Reverend Mother, from this time forward there will be an alliance between our souls in the spirit and for the glory of the Sacred Heart." He was faithful to this contract. We find him writing to his Superior : " You know that I always like to go to Conflans, and I think there is reciprocal advantage in those visits." And to Mother Gœtz : " God has granted me a great consolation towards the end of a life, which my sins have made useless. I mean the intercourse with the house of Conflans and its Reverend Mother. The advantage is on my side, and it is for me to thank you." Sometimes his chest was so weak that he could hardly utter more than a few words at a time, but his presence and his aspect were as good as an exhortation. *Totus vocalis erat*, as a Father of the Church said of our Lord's precursor.

Another eloquent religious, Father Barrelle, sometimes gave instructions at Conflans. He called himself an apostle of the Sacred Heart, and said that he knew God had given

him that misson, and that he must fulfil it to His greater glory. He preached retreats at Lyons, La Ferrandière, Kientzheim, Marmoutier, and St. Joseph's at Marseilles.

It was chiefly the southern part of France that he evangelized; but Mother Barat had obtained without his knowing it a written authorization from the Rev. Father General of the Society of Jesus to employ the servant of God in her convents whenever it was possible. She invited him to Conflans. "In eight days," she wrote, "I shall shut myself up at Conflans for Father Barrelle's retreat. I shall not write at all during that time. I separate myself from everything. I shall have too many people to look after."

Father Barrelle's eloquence was spontaneous. He was not a finished orator like Father de Ravignan, who in his language and in his person never for a moment lost that perfect self-possession which enabled him to make everything he said correct in taste and beautiful in thought. Father Barrelle's was the impetuosity of a soul which straight from its converse with God, without care and without art, pours into the hearts of his hearers floods of light, of humility, and of love of God.

His retreats were spiritual combats, in which the soldier of Jesus Christ displayed all his ardour. "Never," says the writer of his life, "did a stronger hand more irresistibly force on generous hearts the inexorable logic of grace and vocation; never was a more unmerciful light thrown on the thousand self-deceptions of conscience. From the heights of speculative theology, he descended without effort to the most familiar practical applications, entering into the secrets of the natural heart, tearing away, exposing, overthrowing, and crushing everything which opposed the reign of Him of whom he said: "Jesus, our Father, wants to fashion His creatures in the mould of His own Heart. The process must be accomplished, and it can only take place in the crucible of sacrifice and through the fire of love.

Oh, how beautiful and how great is the new creature when it bears the Divine impress thus stamped upon it!" The Sacred Heart, which had recently lost Father Varin seemed to find him again in the person of this humble religious, who said of himself: "We have just finished the retreat of Conflans. Every one there pleased our Lord except myself. Nothing could have been more tiresome than I was." And in another letter: "What consolations God has given me this year in the various houses of the Sacred Heart where I have been. How many graces I have seen Him bestow upon them. May He be a thousand times blessed!"

But great as were the zeal and merits of her cooperators, it was still Mother Barat who was the soul of the novitiate. When she gave her *white children*, as she called them, into Madame Goetz's care, she said to them: "If I am capable of anything, I shall also look after my little novices. Your good Mother Goetz will let me know all that concerns you. Each time I come to Conflans I will see some of you; and if I have to reprove, well then I shall reprove, but above all I shall encourage you. Jesus must be here the Master of our hearts.

As Mother Barat advanced in age her mind had arrived at that holy simplicity of views, which is, according to St. Thomas, the height of intelligence as well as sanctity. She used to say to the novices: "As you make progress in perfection, you will understand that in our Society every thing must be both little and great. Little by humility, and great by charity."

"You must not imagine," she also said, "that in putting aside the garments of the world you have got rid of its defects. You have been told perhaps that you were saints because you entered a convent. Very well, we shall soon put an extinguisher on saints of this kind who go on thinking themselves saints in Community life." And

another time : "Love, only love, and everything will seem easy enough. When a house is on fire people throw everything out of the window, so St. Francis of Sales tells us. We *must* be real saints. I shall repeat that so often that you will at last be obliged to be saints. I know that I always say the same things. But as there is only one God, one Jesus Christ, one Cross, what else can we have to speak about. Oh, would that men would talk of these subjects without ceasing, and that to our last sigh we had no other subject of discourse."

Once she exclaimed : "How I wish, my dear children, there were amongst you souls like the one I conversed with yesterday, so entirely occupied with the glory of God and embracing everything which concerns the extension of His kingdom." The person she thus alluded to was Mdlle. Jaricot, a Lyonese lady, foundress of the association of the Propagation of the Faith. Mother Barat excited the ardour of her novices by telling them of the various remote parts of the world where the Sacred Heart was invited. Santa Fé of Bogota, Abyssinia, and to a place on one of the branches of the Nile. She brought to see them one day Mgr. Pavy, the new Bishop of Algiers, who said to them : "I have three hundred thousand souls to offer to your zeal, without reckoning the wandering sheep of the desert." "O my good children," she herself added, "there is no want of souls to convert, if only we are faithful and do not fail in our duty to souls." Sometimes she would ask who amongst them were guilty of impeding the progress of conversions, and pointing to the most fervent said : "If it is that one I will send her away ; if it is this one I will get rid of her ; if it is myself I will run away." However, she was in reality very well satisfied with her young army of apostles, and told them once that she never was with them without saying to herself : "Those children will do more than we have done."

The numerous foundations which will be enumerated in the following chapter were the fruits of this apostolical spirit. They are the sequel as it were of the series of persecutions that we have described. This sequence is logical in a supernatural sense, for according to the Christian dispensation the time when a soul or a society draws all things to itself is when it has been lifted up on the Cross.

## CHAPTER XII.

### *Development of the Society in the Old and the New World.*

1851—1853.

SINCE the Revolution of 1848, Mother Barat always discerned in the midst of the material progress of society in Europe a secret work of dissolution which made her tremble for the future. For instance, at the time of the inundations of 1852, she wrote: "It would almost seem as if the elements had imbibed our revolutionary spirit. Everything is hastening towards a general destruction, and few people are struck with it. Empires are founded, all sorts of novelties invented, as if we were to exist for ever, and in the meantime we are advancing towards ruin with the speed of a destructive torrent. We are trying to keep pace with that terrible stream with opposite thoughts and projects. We want to save in that desperate race a few of the souls in danger of perishing. We must think of saving our own souls also, for the times are very bad. Confidence, prayer, and zeal will give us strength."

This salvage of souls was carried on in the first place in France, and the first foundation of that epoch made at Orleans. In 1851, when Mother Barat was at Rome, Mgr. Dupanloup had asked her to establish one of her houses in his episcopal city. She acceded readily to his wish, for she considered him as one of the most eminent masters and patrons of Christian education. From Rome she had written to Madame d'Avenas: "This is a founda-

tion which I have very much at heart. You will be Superior of the new house, and besides the school you will superintend the retreats of ladies living in the world. Monseigneur tells me that the good Society in Orleans is already in the habit of observing this holy practice."

The place fixed upon for the Convent of the Sacred Heart at Orleans was an old hospital, or house for lepers, called St. Lazare, which, in the seventeenth century, Gaston of Orleans had given to the Carthusians with a large tract of land at the entrance of the town.

A considerable portion of the monastery had disappeared. Nothing remained of it but the guest-house, five of the pavilions formerly inhabited by the holy solitaries, and a wide cloister or arched gallery which united together the cells. The conventual chapel was poor and in a ruinous condition; another larger church had been begun in 1780; its walls were rising when the Revolution of 1789 stopped its progress and drove away the monks; only a few stones remained, amidst which a bit of sculpture was found bearing, with the date 1785, the Holy Name of Jesus and a Sacred Heart surmounted by a cross. This seemed to the nuns a good omen.

The Chartreuse was occupied by Mother d'Avenas at the beginning of the year 1851. "I cannot thank God enough," the Mother General wrote, "for the interest your excellent bishop takes in your house. Crosses no doubt you will have, but they will be easy to bear as long as you have the advice and assistance of the friends of the Sacred Heart." And less than a year afterwards she congratulated her on the good already effected among the pupils. "Their dispositions with regard to religion are really admirable. I cannot say how much edified we are at what you tell us. The mistresses will not be less generous and faithful than the children."

Mother d'Avenas was one of the most remarkable women

in Madame Barat's Congregation. Her character, her disposition, her talents, and the charm of her manner admirably fitted her to direct the education of girls of the higher classes. "If I was a St. Ignatius," Mother Barat used to say to her, "I should want you to be the St. Francis Xavier of our Society. Alas ! I am anything but a St. Ignatius, but you are not quite so far from being a St. Francis Xavier. You have only to will it ; you are young, and you have a great deal of strength and character. Set about it, then, my child."

Madame d'Avenas profited by these exhortations. Her studies, her writings, her remarkable powers of conversation, her dignified manners, and her great intellectual gifts gave her a position first in Paris, then all over France, and even in other countries, and an extraordinary influence which entailed upon her an immense correspondence. In her post of Mistress General of the Paris school, she had very much helped Madame de Gramont to give it an European celebrity. Mother Barat's vigilant watchfulness for a soul for whom she had a strong maternal and religious affection, made her fear sometimes that this exterior work might be a snare for a religious. We quote from her letters the exhortations she addressed to her beloved daughter. "God alone, my dear Aimée, can fill your heart. It is one of those that no created object can satisfy. Still I like to tell you that in Him and for Him you are very dear to me. I do not care if people blame this feeling, if by it I can do you any good." "As I can speak quite openly, my dear Aimée, I will say that you have essential qualities for a head mistress, for the cares and the work of education ; but in order to satisfy both parents and children, you must forget yourself and be busy with them from morning to night. You must enter into every detail with regard to both their souls and their bodies ; you must listen to them, comfort and encourage them. In fact, sacrifice everything

for their sakes except your own soul. You must become gentle, patient, indulgent; a real mother, only a more reasonable mother than those whose mistakes we have so often to repair. Examine yourself, my dear daughter, and see if it is thus you fulfil the duties of your office. "Madame d'Avenas, thus trained by her holy reverend Mother, became that admirable Superior whose name still lives in the memory of all those who knew her. In the midst of a life every instant of which was disputed by those who flocked to her, she contrived to remain faithfully united to the Heart of Jesus, according to the resolution she had made: "The hidden and interior life must be my first business in this world. I had rather be forgotten in the Society than be loved and caressed even by the most faithful friends in the world." "O my Lord, I will be Thy slave if Thou wilt buy me with three mites: forgiveness of my sins, Thy love, and final perseverance. But if this is asking too much, take me for nothing, only let me belong to Thee!"

Mother Barat longed to visit the Chartreuse and its Superior. "I comfort myself in the midst of all my labours," she wrote to her, "by thinking first of heaven, which will be preceded, I am afraid, by a long purgatory, and then of the Chartreuse, where I hope to enjoy a few moments of tranquillity."

She went there soon afterwards, but remained only a few days. "My recollections of your little foundation," she wrote to Mother d'Avenas, "are very dear to my heart. I am sure, my dear child, that our Lord will bless it. Our Divine Master has already done a great deal for you and by you, and He will still do a great deal more; for you have no other will and no other thought than Him."

Another once hallowed spot became again a place of prayer in the hands of nuns of the Sacred Heart. At Layrac, near Agen, there was an old Benedictine Abbey founded by Pierre de Cluny in the eleventh century. The

old building was falling to pieces, worn out by the lapse of time and mutilated by the hand of man, but fine remnants of it still remained. A Byzantine church, used as the parish church, contained some ancient frescoes and a magnificent altar supported by six columns of white Italian marble. The old monastery was composed of a series of little low cells, with arched roofs and diminutive windows at the top of the walls, but the position of this old building was magnificent. Fine cloisters surrounded it, and from the hill on which it stood the most lovely view extended over the rich plain of the Garonne on one side and the river Gers on the other. A college had been established there which had peopled the province with good Christians, but it had become involved in difficulties, and Mgr. de Vezins proposed that Mother Barat should purchase the property. She did so, and named as Superior the excellent Mother de Brive. Thus in August, 1851, the Sacred Heart was established in Angers.

At the beginning of 1852 the Mother General wrote: "A year of crosses is before us. I cannot tell you how much I have to suffer on every side." The heaviest of these crosses was the suppression of two of her houses. The one at Le Mans was closed towards the end of that year, and the one at Autun soon afterwards. But the regrets of the inhabitants of Le Mans and the remembrance of the saintly Mother de Gramont d'Aster protested against the first of these suppressions. Natural as well as supernatural reasons also existed that warranted a hope that it would one day be re-established. And this has happened not long ago.

To the nun to whom Mother Barat had intrusted the painful duty of closing the house at Autun, Mother Louise de Lemps, she wrote as follows: "I have in store for you as a compensation a very important mission. It will probably involve many tribulations before it succeeds; but

never mind, God will help us. In the meantime, go and rest near St. Martin's cave. Live there in prayer, recollection, and humble dependence, and remember that the more you humble yourself and sink into nothingness, the deeper and the more solid will be the foundations of the work which I intend to intrust to you."

This work was the foundation of a house at Moulins. Moulins was a city consecrated, as it were, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus by the memory of St. Jane Frances of Chantal's death and by its eagerness to respond from the first to the invitations of Blessed Margaret Mary. Between the town and Iseure, where stands the magnificent college of the Jesuits, Mgr. de Dreux-Brézé offered the nuns a large space of land which presented every sort of convenience for their establishment. Mother Barat, touched by the generous solicitations of a prelate devoted to the Heart of Jesus and to her Society, was only waiting to accede to them for the return of her nuns from Le Mans. One day at the mother-house a Lay-sister came into Madame de Lemp's room carrying a statue of the Blessed Virgin. She placed it on her table, and said: "Our reverend Mother sends you our Blessed Lady, who will be the Foundress of the house at Moulins, and begs you to get ready to start for that place." It was at the feet of that image of Mary that Mother Barat had just determined on the foundation at Moulins.

The name of the place which the house was to occupy was Belle-Croix. In the spring of 1853 Mother Henriette Coppens was sent there to superintend the erection of the convent. "We shall proceed slowly," Mother Barat wrote; "and that is just what we want, for I have not at present any one to send there. Everything promises well, but I trust that we shall have crosses, for there is no blessing to be hoped for without them."

On their arrival the nuns were desired by the Bishop to

go and pray in the old chapel of the monastery, where St. Jane Frances of Chantal died. On the 3rd of June our Blessed Lord took up His abode in the little chapel of Belle-Croix at the same moment that the Bishop was consecrating a new magnificent church dedicated to the Sacred Heart. No foundation had ever been more agreeable to the Mother General; she wrote to Mother Coppens that it excited general sympathy, and that everything relating to Belle-Croix was pleasing and interesting.

In Brittany the Sacred Heart had three houses, Nantes, Quimper, and Rennes. Mgr. Lemée, Bishop of Saint Briec, wished for a foundation in his episcopal town and offered for that purpose a house recently occupied by the free-school of Saint Charles. This establishment was made in 1854. "Tell your children," Madame Barat wrote to the Superior, Mother de Kérouartz, "that I see with great pleasure that they have already acquired the spirit of the Sacred Heart, at any rate as far as feelings and wishes go; practice will follow." And in another letter: "I do not lose sight of, or rather I dwell in heart with my dear little foundation of St. Briec. I often catch myself travelling in spirit in that direction. But if God prolongs my life I hope I shall really go there."

In the meantime another foundation occupied the Mother General. Mgr. Parisis, that faithful friend of her Society, had been translated to the see of Arras, and he too was soliciting a colony for the spiritual cultivation of the coast of the Pas de Calais, in both senses a barren and desolate region. Neither Calais nor Boulogne afforded much prospect of prosperity for an establishment, but it was finally decided that twenty-eight acres should be purchased at Saint Pierre-lès-Calais, a sort of suburb of that city. This site had been used as a place of popular amusement and was called Vauxhall. The greatest part of it consisted of a plain covered with pebbles, in which

stood a small house surrounded by trees with a kitchen-garden attached to it. Mother Dumont was sent there with a small colony, and on the 28th of October, 1854, our Lord went to reside in their temporary chapel. At the laying of the first stone of the new building, which Mgr. Parisis blessed, he preached in the parish church a sermon on the subject of the valiant woman, which ended by a panegyric on Madame Barat and her Society. The first work begun by the Sacred Heart at Saint Pierre was the poor-school, which was soon filled with children from the manufactories, who had been hitherto growing up without religious instruction. "You will be like lilies amongst thorns, or roses blossoming in the desert," was the good Curé of Saint Pierre's poetical remark to his new nuns. The school promised also to do much good.

No one was more surprised at the number and success of these foundations than the Mother General herself. She sometimes exclaimed in the novitiate: "Oh, how is it that God calls us to so many and such distant places whilst our number is so small, so insignificant! O my God, give us virtues that will make up for our weakness!"

Germany particularly excited her solicitude. She felt such strong impulses of zeal with regard to the native land of those great lovers of the Heart of Jesus, St. Hildegarde, St. Mechtilda, St. Gertrude, and St. Elizabeth. She speaks thus of this feeling: "Germany interests me deeply. What good we could do in that country if we only were what Jesus wants us to be. Would we could establish there the 'Tents of Israel.'" Aix-la-Chapelle had sent her a deputation, at the head of which was the Baron of Lommesseu, a devoted Catholic, who was only waiting for that moment to give his daughter to the Sacred Heart. The jealousy of the Prussian Government with regard to an Order which was in its eyes at once Jesuitical and French seemed indeed an insuperable obstacle. The difficulty was solved

by the establishment of a house of the Sacred Heart close to the Rhenish provinces but on Dutch territory. The Baron of Lommessem bought for them in the little town of Vaals a property called Blumenthal, the Vale of Flowers. Placed on the frontiers between Holland and Germany, its school was favourably situated for the reception of pupils from both these nations. The Bishop of Ruremonde, Mgr. Paredis, and Mgr. Müller, Bishop of Münster, became its first protectors, and, in the beginning of 1848, Madame Barat sent there Mother Gertrude DeBrou.

Louvain was the birthplace of this excellent nun. She had begun her religious life at Dooresele, and then at Audenarde among the Belgian ladies of Christian Instruction, as the separated daughters of Madame Barat were called at that time. But afterwards she joined the Sacred Heart, and received the habit at Montet on the feast of St. John, 1833. Her excellent understanding, good sense, and prudence led to her becoming successively, Sub-Mistress of Novices at Montet, Assistant of Mother Eugénie de Gramont at the Rue de Varennes, Superior at Tours, and then at Jette-Saint-Pierre. Mother Barat, who saw in her the qualities which give influence over others, took particular pains to train her in the interior life. "It is by dint of resisting the impulses of the natural life," she wrote to her, "that we enable our Lord to become master of our hearts. Oh, what a happiness it is thus to possess Him! *Dulcis hospes animæ!* Learn to understand this, dear Gertrude, and become interior at whatever cost it be." And then with regard to government she says: "A Superior must be always watching, exhorting, reproving. She must be like the watch-dog that sleeps with his eyes open. But this vigilance must be exercised with calmness, charity, gentleness, and firmness. All your daughters must be convinced that you love them, and that you exact nothing that is not for their good. But discourage feelings

of merely human attachment. Let them love Jesus alone, let them see Jesus in you. This will be the case if you are meek and humble of heart, and if you look to and seek nothing but the interests of 'God's glory.'" We find the result of these exhortations in Mother Gertrude's resolutions: "Jesus is not so much a Superior as a Father, a Mother, and a Friend. To order, to direct, to reprove, to threaten, and even to punish if necessary as Jesus does; this will be the subject of my examen, for such is my duty."

In committing to her care the new foundation at Blumenthal, Madame Barat desired Mother Gertrude to proceed quietly and secretly, in poverty and simplicity, and to avoid as much as possible display of any sort.

Some of the nuns banished from Italy soon reinforced this Community. In 1849 there were sixty pupils in the school, and a hundred and sixty poor children taught gratuitously. Blumenthal was like a door opening on Germany where the Society was preparing to work as soon as the moment marked by God arrived. It was not long before, at Warendorf near Münster, a poor tenement, in which fifteen orphan boys and fifteen orphan girls were sheltered, was offered to the Sacred Heart. "Dear good Mother," Madame Barat wrote to the Superior of Blumenthal, "do pray attend immediately to Warendorf. Go there, look at the place and see with those gentlemen what are the works we could carry on there, and if there is any possibility of the establishment getting on for the present. I think we ought to offer up to the Heart of Jesus this effort in the spirit of poverty and abnegation."

In the middle of January, 1852, two choir nuns and three lay-sisters under Mother DeBrou's direction were sent from the houses of Jette and Blumenthal to begin this foundation. Madame Anna de Lommessem was the first Superior of Warendorf. The establishment gradually

increased, a school and then a novitiate were added to the orphanage. "I am very glad," Mother Barat said, "that our first house in Germany should have been so poor. The children came to school in rags and covered with vermin. Our Sisters cleaned, dressed, civilized, and transformed them. I am so happy to think that our foundations in America and Ireland also were made in the first instance in the midst of the poorest populations."

An attempt was made in the year 1852 to establish a house at St. Gall. Mother Schauenbourg was sent there at the request of the Bishop to found, as Mother Barat said, a little colony of the Sacred Heart in a place surrounded by heretics, and where that Divine furnace of love was unknown. The nuns, dressed like seculars, lived in a small house in the suburbs and had obtained a tolerable number of pupils, but when they ventured to apply for the authorization of the Government, they were insulted by a mob of Radicals who threatened to drive them away with a volley of stones. The Bishop had only just time to arrange for their escape, and the little colony, which had been only six months at St. Gall, returned to Kientzheim.

Different projects were in question for other German foundations. At one time Mother Barat was on the point of purchasing a magnificent abbey in the island of Meinau, Grand Duchy of Baden. But the very wonders which were told her of this "fairy palace" alarmed her spirit of poverty, and it was a relief to her to hear that the negotiation had failed. "It was beginning in too grand a manner," she wrote, "we ought to start more modestly, this is at least my own feeling. Providence will call us elsewhere, we must watch and be on the look out, for the harvest is whitening in that dear Germany. In the meantime we can but pray to the Holy Ghost to inspire us what we must do and undertake for the glory of the

Sacred Heart, and then we will follow His sweet inspirations; only let us accustom ourselves to walk in that divine road, following the impulses, not of nature, but of grace. Oh, it is a great thing to know how to go on slowly, and only to act by the guidance of God's Spirit."

The Holy Ghost guided her in the choice of another residence in Germany. In the Tyrol near Bregenz, overlooking the Lake of Constance, and at the top of a sunny hill, stands an old feudal castle with Gothic windows, massive walls and turrets. This fine relic of the ages of chivalry is called Riedenbourg. It is surrounded by large gardens; the Lake of Constance and the village of Rieden lie at its feet, and thirteen villages with their spires and crosses can be seen from its windows. From the central tower the view is still more extensive: it takes in Lindau and Bavaria, the Swiss glaciers, the Grand Duchy of Wurtemberg in the distance, and a long range of the Tyrolean Alps bounds the vast expanse. Thus placed in the centre of several different states, Riedenbourg seemed admirably adapted to be the head-quarters of the Apostolate of the Sacred Heart in all the adjoining countries. The Society bought it in the month of December, 1853. The venerable chaplain of Kientzheim, M. Pieau, thus congratulated the Mother General on the purchase: "We must bless Providence that our first projects came to nought. The position of Riedenbourg is as central as that of the island of Meinau, and it is in every respect better situated. You are in Austria, instead of the Grand Duchy of Baden. You have Bregenz, which after Naples and Constantinople is considered the most beautiful spot in Europe, and then you are in the Tyrol, the most Catholic part of Germany. I wish you joy of this purchase, and I thank God for it."

Not all these new additions to the number of her houses could make Mother Barat forget the loss of those in Italy.

Her desire was to found one in Lombardy, which was at that time under the dominion of Austria. She was therefore delighted to hear from Mother de Limminghe, in January, 1853, that a proposal to that effect had been made from Milan. She wrote to her in answer: "We have long wished for such an offer, and this important mission is of course meant for you."

Accordingly, in the middle of December, 1853, seven nuns, with Mother de Limminghe at their head, arrived at Milan. They were lodged at first in a miserable little house, but soon removed to one where they were able to extend their works.

With the same submission to the Divine will with which Mother Barat undertook a foundation was she ready to give it up as soon as some token of God's good pleasure guided her to a decision. She never hesitated to sacrifice an establishment rather than retain it at the price of concessions which would have altered the spirit of her Institute. Thus about the years 1852 to 1854 the Sacred Heart was invited to Palma, the capital of the island of Majorca, where some pious women, who had taken the name of Daughters della Purezza di Maria, had testified a desire to join the Society. Mother Granon was sent to give them the habit, and Mother de Résie was left at their house as Superior. But it is easier to assume a religious habit than to adopt a new religious spirit. Mother Barat hearing of the difficulties which the Superior found in the direction of the Spanish Sisters wrote to her as follows: "My dear de Résie, how often I have thought of your troubles and difficulties and pondered over them in the presence of our Lord. Fearing at a distance not quite to understand the position, I content myself with praying until the experience of a few months enables us to decide on the future of this foundation. For the present, dear Mother and daughter, keep us informed as to every essential detail with regard to this

Community. Acquainted as you are with our spirit and our Constitutions, weigh well and in a true manner whether these Sisters, who now wear our habit, can easily be trained to the virtues required by our Society. That is the essential point. We must at any cost prevent everything that could alter the character of our dear Institute."

At the beginning of the year 1854, the Mother General sent Madame Prevost to Palma. "It is to you," she said, "that our Lord commits this decision. I pray that His Divine Heart may enlighten you." The final decision was that the nuns of the Sacred Heart were to retire. When this news was known there was a general feeling of regret amongst the parents of the children, which in some cases amounted to indignation; they wanted to insist on the French nuns remaining. They might indeed have easily established in this island a house of their own and a rival school to the one of the daughters of la Purezza. This offer was urged upon them, but the delicacy of Mother Barat's feelings would never have allowed her to accept it. She recalled her daughters and employed them in other foundations.

England had always been one of the countries which most excited Madame Barat's apostolic zeal. About this time she took two important steps towards the development of her Society in the British dominions. The establishment of Berrymead was transferred to Roehampton, a more important locality and one which facilitated easier communications with London.\*

\* This transfer took place in August, 1850. The first Mass was said on the 24th of that month by the Right Rev. Dr. Morris in one of the drawing rooms temporarily used as a chapel.

It may interest our English readers if we enumerate some few of Mother Barat's daughters who have laboured and died at Roehampton. Clementina Blundell, was born at Crosby in 1810, entered the Society in Rome, but spent the greater part of her religious life, which was marked by singular devotedness and abnegation of self, at Roehampton.

Eleanor Mary Clifford, daughter of the eighth Lord Clifford, born in

In Ireland, Armagh, the city of St. Patrick, had become the head-quarters of Protestantism in that heroic land which more than any other country in our days has nobly and boldly fought, spoken, and suffered for the cause of truth and liberty. More than half the inhabitants of Armagh were aliens to the Catholic faith, and the first sanctuary raised by St. Patrick for the worship of Christ was in the hands of a rich and powerful Protestant prelate, whereas the Catholic Bishop, with only a few zealous priests to assist him, had the spiritual charge of five or six thousand souls, most of them belonging to the very poorest classes. Cardinal Cullen, then Primate of Armagh, who had known Mother Barat at Rome, had recourse to her zeal, and invited her to Armagh. She agreed very readily to his proposal, for she had always felt the greatest sympathy for the trials

1820 at Tor Abbey, Devonshire, who was received into the Society by Mother Barat at Paris. During the years which she devoted to the school at Roehampton, her holiness and goodness won all hearts. Mother Clifford's spiritual life was characterized by an ardent love for the Blessed Sacrament and devotedness to the interests of the Church and the Holy Father, for whose welfare she joyfully offered all the sufferings of her long illness.

Mathilda Thompson, who after her profession at Roehampton in 1851 gave herself with unwearied zeal and energy to the work of education, though during fifteen years severe sufferings made her life an incessant martyrdom.

Catherine Anastasia Cuddon was educated at Berrymead and obtained her father's consent to pass from the school to the novitiate. Her religious life only lasted eight months, and she died on the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, after making her vows on her death-bed and offering her life with the greatest generosity and with almost a feeling of joy. Her brother, Mr. James Cuddon, of the Inner Temple, rendered great services to the Society at the time of the removal of the Community from Berrymead to Roehampton.

Lastly, we cannot omit to add Augusta Henrietta Fitzgerald, daughter of Sir Thomas Freemantle, who, as a wife, a widow, and a mother, had led a life sanctified by every Christian virtue. After giving two daughters to the Society, she herself entered the novitiate at the age of fifty-seven, and spent the remaining years of her life in simple childlike obedience, which was crowned, after a long and painful illness, by a death of heroic patience and resignation to God's will.

of Ireland, and admiration for the courage with which her faithful children had endured them. In a letter to Mother Croft, the Superior of Roscrea, she says: "My interest about Ireland and my attachment to those dear foundations can never diminish. I feel a happy confidence that you will be the means of saving souls, and that your little grain of mustard-seed will grow into a tree which will afford shelter to many."

The foundation of Armagh was accordingly made, and the poor schools opened at the end of the year 1851. It was soon filled with scholars, the poorest of the poor. The Sisters had to furnish them with clothes and with food. On days of First Communion they clothed the young communicants from head to foot; and on the feast of St. Vincent of Paul, 1852, a distribution of garments at the school won the hearts of the population. "We can die in peace now," the poor Catholics said. "Our children will be happier than we have been, for the servants of God are at Armagh." The feeling about the nuns rose to such a pitch of enthusiasm that they wanted them to cure children by touching them, and to bless objects of devotion. Besides three hundred scholars, crowded in rooms resembling barns, more than four hundred women came on Sundays, some of them from a great distance, to attend the instructions of the nuns of the Sacred Heart. Mother Barat furnished herself the humble little chapel of this house with vestments, a monstrance, candlesticks, and flowers. There was a picture of the Sacred Heart in this modest sanctuary, and the Irish Catholics when they heard the nuns singing hymns before it, thought that the days of St. Patrick had returned, when tradition says that "the singing in the monasteries was so beautiful that the angels bent down from heaven to listen to the sweet sounds."

Meanwhile, Archbishop Cullen had been transferred from the see of Armagh to that of Dublin, and Mother

Barat wrote to the Superior of the convent at Armagh: "It would be very desirable that His Grace, the new Archbishop of Dublin should invite us to that city. You must not neglect anything that might tend to that result, for the Society will only vegetate in Ireland till it is established in its capital." Accordingly, with the sanction of the Archbishop, who always showed the greatest kindness to the nuns of the Sacred Heart, they established a boarding-school for girls of the upper classes and a day-school for poor children at a place called Glasnevin, which was sold to them by the sons of an Anglican bishop. The *Annual Letters* thus describe this convent: "It is a charming place at a short distance from Dublin, near the Botanical Garden. The house is small but handsome and built on a hill. It is surrounded by thirty-seven acres of well cultivated land, which afford a number of agreeable walks. It is generally considered as one of the prettiest spots in this neighbourhood. We shall take possession of it on the 8th of December, 1854, that feast so particularly dear to the servants of the Immaculate Mother of God. The Sacred Heart of Jesus seems to intend His little Society to do some good in Catholic Ireland."

And now we have to turn to the New World and to witness there the immense development of Mother Barat's Institute during the years we are speaking of. To go into details on that subject would be impossible, it would amount to writing another history; but to complete the picture of Mother Barat's life, it will be necessary to take a rapid view of this extension and to show the part she took in it.

Ten years after Mother Galitzin's visit in 1840 and 1842, the Council General had divided those regions into two vicariates, the one of the east and the other of the west; between them they contained fifteen establishments. In the western division was St. Charles, the first foundation

of the Society in America. Mother Duchesne, after a short residence at the Potowatomies, had been obliged to retire there, and was spending her last days in prayer in penance and in seclusion. Mother Barat's kindness afforded in the course of those years a great consolation to the venerable recluse; Mother Amélie Jouve, sister of Aloysia, who was on her way to Canada, went first, by the Superior General's desire, to pay a visit to her aunt. She thus described her reception: "She greeted me as if I had been an angel sent to her from heaven, and tears of joy streamed down her face as she read our Very Reverend Mother's letter." Mother Jouve adds: "The words of St. Anthony came into my mind, 'I have seen Paul in the desert.' I felt that I had seen a great saint ending her days in that solitude."

St. Charles required a special mention, but it will be enough simply to name the other principal establishments of those vast regions. In the Southern States, the novitiate had been removed from Fleurissant to Grand Coteau, and, in 1847, Natchitoches founded on the banks of the Red River; in February, 1851, the Sacred Heart had gone to Bâton-Rouge, and St. Michael's was attaining a high degree of prosperity. Northward, St. Louis continued its works of charity and apostleship; St. Joseph had opened its schools on the confines of the Indian territory in 1853, and the new mission of the Potowatomies had moved in the wake of the savages from Sugar Creek to Kansas. Mother Barat had been afraid at first that that very peculiar sort of life, the frequency of its migrations, and the great distance from other houses would loosen the bonds of religious dependence, and alter in her daughters the spirit of the Institute. But the urgent appeals of the Indians transmitted by Mother Mathevon had been so pressing that she yielded to their solicitations, and on the 9th of September, 1848, the nuns arrived at the station of St. Mary, near Westpart, where the

Mother General sent them assistance and reinforcements. Madame Barat's choice of a Superior for this western vicariate evinced her desire to maintain in her Society in America a spirit of simplicity and humility.

In 1828 an English postulant had been received at the Paris novitiate whose name was Maria Cutts. She was then just seventeen, and had been brought up a Protestant. Her native place was Loughborough, in Leicestershire. About a year before, she had been received into the Church, and full of gratitude for the gift of faith, she wished to consecrate herself to God as a Lay-sister in the Society of the Sacred Heart. But Mother Barat had soon discerned, in spite of the humility of this novice, that she had capabilities of a high order; and when the novitiate was dispersed in 1830, she sent her to Beauvais and raised her to the rank of a choir religious. This promotion grieved Maria, and it was only by threatening not to allow her to make her vows at all, that she could be prevailed upon to agree to it. More humble, more retiring, more self-sacrificing than ever, she had no sooner been professed, in 1836, than she wished to devote herself to the foreign missions.

The Mother General, at the same time that she accepted the offer Maria made, took care to confirm her in her humble opinion of herself, and when she named her Superior of Grand Coteau it was in the following manner that she announced to her this appointment: "How fortunate you are, my dear Maria, to have been chosen for that mission, rather than some other Sisters who have been longing for it for years, and who possess greater talents and more virtue than you have. This is an additional reason why you should work heart and soul to acquire the qualities you are still deficient in. As you have not great talents to devote to this mission, make up for it by a lively faith, perfect obedience, and an entire devotedness. Jesus consuming His life for the glory of His Father and the salva-

tion of souls is your model. Let all your little efforts in America tend to these ends.”

The other vicariate, that of the north-east, contained in 1853 eight establishments. It began its novitiate, as we have already said, near New York, in Astoria, Long Island ; but in 1847 Mother Barat and Dr. Hughes, Archbishop of New York, agreed on its removal to Manhattanville, which, admirably situated between two arms of the sea, was destined to multiply a hundredfold the resources of the Society of the Sacred Heart in the United States. In Canada part of the Community and school of St. Jacques had been transferred, on the 6th of August, 1846, first to St. Vincent in Jesus Island, and afterwards to Sault-au-Récollet, near Montreal. This was also the case with the original school at MacSherry's town : it was removed to Philadelphia in 1846, and in the course of the following year established itself in the midst of a large property of ninety-five acres, which well deserved its name of Eden Hall. Every year new foundations were made. In 1849, Halifax in Nova Scotia and Buffalo on Lake Erie each received a colony,\* and in New York day-schools, poor-schools, orphanages, work-rooms, and pious associations of various kinds instructed, assisted, and directed more than a thousand girls. In 1850, the generosity of a family of the name of Beaubien bestowed on the town of Detroit, in the Lake country, first a boarding-school, and then an orphanage and day-schools, where more than five hundred children were educated by the Sacred Heart. In the year 1852 the foundations were still more numerous. Mgr. de Charbonnel, Bishop of Toronto, nephew of the Mother Assistant of that name, petitioned for an establishment at Sandwich which was afterwards transferred to London. Dr. John MacCloskey, now Cardinal Archbishop of New

\* The house from Buffalo was transferred to Rochester some years later.

York, invited the Sacred Heart to begin a school at Albany, which was soon moved to Kenwood. Then in New Brunswick a benefactor of the Society, Bishop Connoly, who had obtained from the Sacred Heart of Jesus the cessation of the cholera in his diocese, as a tribute of gratitude procured the establishment amongst his people of the nuns of that Order. St. John's, New Brunswick, therefore received, in September, 1854, a colony which promised to succeed admirably in the midst of a population almost entirely Irish by descent if not by birth.

This extensive vicariate was governed by Mother Aloysia Hardey, now Assistant General of the Sacred Heart and one of Mother Audé's first daughters. Madame Barat often expressed to her a wish that she could herself visit those fields ripening for so rich a harvest. "Oh, if it was but granted to me," she wrote, "to set sail for America and to spend a few months with you, I should die happy! In my youth I sometimes hoped this might happen, but now there seems little prospect of it. At any rate, my heart is often with you, and especially when I am in our Lord's presence I think of you." She never ceased by her correspondence to direct that vast colony of the Sacred Heart which promised to become as flourishing as its European mother.

"I do so ardently desire," she wrote to the Superior, "that the Society may be consolidated in America, and founded on the true religious spirit, but one which will not frighten away people, for we must try to attract those who live in the world by making virtue amiable and not austere, although we must be interiorly austere. I have seen visible proofs that no fruit is produced in souls if the instrument is not united to the source of all grace." Her great anxiety was to establish a perfect unity of heart and mind between the Old and the New World. It made her write as follows: "One thought has occurred to me over and over again. If you found a good opportunity for it,

and happened to have two novices likely to possess the virtues and talents which would eventually qualify them for the first posts in the Society, it would be an advantage to send them to make their novitiate at Paris or at Rome. We would faithfully give them back to you after their profession. The bonds of union between us, intimate as they are, would thus be strengthened still more and our spirit perpetuated. It must always be identical, even if we are to exist in different parts of the world."

In the meantime the brave and noble-hearted woman who had prepared in America the results we have described, had gone to receive her reward. Mother Duchesne often said: "Personally I have never succeeded, but God gives me the grace to rejoice in the success of others." One of her consolations was to see the worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of which she had been so valiant an apostle, spreading over both hemispheres. Mother Barat wrote to her on the 16th of February, 1852: "Dear and good Mother Duchesne,—The Devotion to the Sacred Heart increases and spreads in every direction. Oh, if we had many souls as zealous and as detached as those who have invaded your part of the world, foundations would be easy. Pray, then, dear and good Mother, urgently and fervently that our Divine Master may consider the needs of the souls we ought to save. He will grant the prayers of my dear old daughter who has so well understood the value of souls, and who never stopped at any obstacle when Jesus called upon her to help them."

This was the last letter Mother Duchesne received from her Superior. In that same year, 1852, she was seized with violent fever and delirium, and apprehending the result, sent her last farewell to the Mother General. On the 17th of August, however, she was able to write to her again: "Reverend and dear Mother,—This is probably the last time I shall write to you. Yesterday I received the Last

Sacraments. The wanderings of mind I suffered from were the result of strong fever, which did not prevent me from going about. I do not know now when my end will come. God will perhaps make me wait before allowing me to see Him. Once more I kneel at your feet, to beg your forgiveness and to express my deep respect."

It was only in November that she died. Her sole happiness at the last was in Holy Communion. Though nearly choked by her cough, the holy religious would not drink anything for fear of being deprived of her only treasure. More and more in love with poverty, she refused all mitigations of her penitential mode of life, and on the evening of her death complained that a small fire had been lighted in her cell. "It would have been much more to the purpose," she said to Mother Hamilton, "if you had knelt down and said a *Pater* and an *Ave* for the good of my soul." They told her that the Community were praying for her in the next room. "Oh, how happy I am," she said, "to die in a house where there is so much charity!" On the 18th of November she received Holy Viaticum. With intense fervour she kept ejaculating, "Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I give you my heart, my spirit, and my life." And then with devout impatience added, "Come, Lord Jesus, do not tarry: come and take me!" Towards the middle of the day she fell asleep, and entered upon what St. Augustine calls the eternal noon. She was eighty-four years of age, had been a nun forty-eight years, and for thirty-four years had laboured in the American missions.

We have seen how many foundations sprang up, so to speak, from the grave of this devoted servant of God. On the soil where she and her four companions had silently landed in 1818, she left at her death more than three hundred nuns of the Sacred Heart, and their convents and schools were disseminated all over the United States. But her holy ambition was never satisfied, and almost as soon

as she had arrived in Louisiana, Mother Duchesne wrote : "If God lets me live on, I feel as if I might set foot one day in Southern America, either at Lima under the protection of my patron St. Rose, or at Carthagena under that of the Blessed Peter Claver." What she could not accomplish another performed, and very near her end she had the consolation of seeing and blessing the Sister in religion to whom God had assigned that work.

A few weeks before her death Madame Duchesne was visited by Mother Cutts, accompanied by Mother du Rousier, whom Madame Barat had sent to visit the American missions. The aged nun asked the blessing of the young Mother, who represented the Superior General, and then blessed her herself. This newly-arrived religious was destined to fulfil her wishes, and to establish the Sacred Heart in Southern America.

The Archbishop of Santiago, Mgr. Raphael Valdivieso, had invited the Society into Chili. Mother du Rousier started from New York in the month of August, 1853, and not without many difficulties and dangers crossed the Isthmus of Panama, a journey which could only be effected at that time on the back of mules and along precipitous paths. She and her companions arrived at Santiago on the 14th of September, feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Soon afterwards a school was opened there, and also an orphanage, a training college for teachers, gratuitous classes and congregations of Children of Mary and of St. Anne were likewise set on foot. The apostolical influence of the Society extended from that centre to the whole of Chili, and eventually over all the southern part of the New World. Such were the divine results of persecution, such the merciful compensations for the iniquitous proscriptions the Society had experienced in Europe. It is worthy of remark that the very religious who began the work of the Sacred Heart in South America was the one

who had been insulted at Turin, turned into ridicule on the stage, and driven out of the town. Thus were realized then, as again in our days, Fénelon's eloquent words when he said : "When you see immense regions suddenly revealed to sight, a whole new world unknown to the old, a continent more extensive than our own, do not for a moment suppose that this prodigious discovery is due to the boldness of men. Man moves, but God directs him ; and whilst dark shades are gathering round us, the true faith planted in the midst of so many storms in America does not cease to bear fruit."

Mother Barat's work in this, as in every other respect, was the work of humility. Humility is a great conqueror. This is a secret well known to all those who are learned in God's ways. Once at the Sacred Heart at Nancy a priest who did not know Madame Barat personally, but who heard of the rapid increase of her Society, remarked : "You must have had a very humble foundress. I cannot account in any other way for the immense and sudden extension of your Order !"

## CHAPTER XIII.

*The mother-house at the Feuillantines. Madame Barat's last visits. Death of her First Companions.*

1854—1857.

SINCE the mother-house had been transferred from the Rue Monsieur to the Hotel Biron it had lost the character of a place of retreat and recollection. The vicinity of the school attracted to it a flow of visitors which annoyed the Mother General. She wrote "that to be always with people when one loves solitude; to talk incessantly when one would wish to be silent; to be always in communication with the world when one would like to have nothing to say to it, is a life which would be very painful if it were not God's will." She also complained that the ever-increasing number of pupils left no room for the nuns. "Our house," she said, "is like a lodging-house at the time of a fair. . . . We hardly know where to stow away our own nuns. No, never since I was born have I seen such a sight."

In order to obviate these inconveniences the Mother General purchased in April, 1854, the remains of the old Convent of the Feuillantines in the Rue S. Jacques. It was separated from the street by a court with very high walls. This quiet abode seemed admirably adapted for the mother-house of the Order and the residence of the probationists whom Mother Desmarquest directed at Conflans.

Few persons besides Madame Barat understood as well as Mother Desmarquest the management of souls, but her

advanced age and her infirmities were beginning to make her yearn for the eternal rest. She was then seventy-four years of age. Still from his distant exile the Abbé Trébuquet, the faithful guide of her soul, kept writing to her not to abandon the work for souls. "When feeling," he said, "the weight of age and its miseries which confine you to your cell, you are perhaps tempted to say with St. Paul, 'Who will deliver me from the body of this death?' but, my dear Mother, your patience in bearing this cross will be like the perfume which Magdalen poured on our Lord's feet, and thus embalmed all the house. Conflans will be embalmed by the odour of your virtues, your gentle resignation, your unalterable serenity, your perfect submission to the will of God, and your continual union with Him by that prayer of the heart and of the mind which nothing can interrupt."

But in the spring of 1854 the state of Mother Desmarquest's health became so very alarming that on the 21st of April it was thought necessary to give her Extreme Unction. Madame Barat, who was suffering herself very much at that time from the results of a fall which deprived her of the use of her arm, insisted on going to Conflans. She seated herself at the foot of her dear daughter's bed, and gazed at her for three quarters of an hour. Mother Desmarquest did not look up or move or give the least sign of recognition. Suddenly the Superior General rose, and as if impelled by a heavenly inspiration went straight to the chapel. There she knelt, and those within hearing heard her say several times, "O my God, give me back my daughter. O my God, let me keep her yet a while. O my God, we want her." A few minutes afterwards, as she passed amidst the assembled Community, Mother Barat said, "Do not be afraid, my children, let us ask a miracle of our Lord who loves to be invoked. I go with a heart full of hope." She went

into her friend's room, and Mother Desmarquest, with open eyes and extended hands, uttered a few words of gratitude. "We shall see each other again," Madame Barat confidently asserted. And so it came to pass. The improvement continued, all danger disappeared, the venerable nun was cured.

On the 8th of May the Mother General came to Conflans to rejoice over this extraordinary event. "I wish I were able, like Josue," she said, "to prolong the time I have to spend with you." She told her daughters that she attributed to their prayers Mother Desmarquest's recovery, and recommended them to be instant in supplications. "Be like the palm tree," she said, "which covers the earth with its shade, whilst its head is lifted up to the sky. There is nothing we cannot obtain by asking God for it."

Conflans had won back from the confines of the grave the venerable Mother Assistant only to see her depart. Madame Barat prepared the novices in the following way for the sacrifice. On the 21st of July, the eve of St. Mary Magdalen, they had presented her besides their bouquet with a chalice. "You are quite right, my children," she said, "to give me a chalice with these flowers. It is only in that way that they are acceptable. We must be at every moment prepared to drink the chalice, and if we only do so with courage we shall find sweetness at the bottom of the cup. Jesus Christ by drinking it Himself to the dregs has made it for us a cup of salvation." On the 28th of August she came again to announce to them that their first Mothers were going to leave them for their new home in Paris, and she added: "When I have worked for some time amongst thorns I shall come to Conflans to gather a few flowers; come, my children, courage, generosity and a spirit of self-sacrifice. It is thus we shall arrive at real happiness. And at the hour of death the voice of the Beloved will sweetly whisper in our ears, 'Come from Lebanon, my spouse, and be crowned.'"

She took with her that day to the house of the Feuillantines, Mothers Desmarquest and de Charbonnel. The probanists soon followed them there. The house was blest on All Saints' day by the Abbé Gaume, and during Benediction Mother Barat consecrated it to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and prayed that it might become the model as well as the head quarters and support of all the houses of the Society. The government of the Community and school at the Rue de Varennes was committed to Mother Prevost whom the Superior General called another herself.

In the meantime the whole Christian world was preparing to celebrate a great event. On the 8th of December, Pope Pius IX. was going to proclaim at Rome the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. Next to the devotion to the Sacred Heart none has been more practised and promoted by Mother Barat's Order than that of the Immaculate Conception. She said in one of her letters that it had been a great consolation to her that the Society had been everywhere the apostle of Mary Immaculate. When a telegram brought to Conflans the news that the definition had been pronounced, there was a great burst of joy, soon followed by hymns of praise. Father de Ponlevoy at Conflans, and Mgr. Parisis at the Hotel Biron and the Feuillantines, eloquently celebrated what they called the great event of this century. They felt as if the Woman that the Apostle St. John had seen in heaven clothed with the sun and crowned with stars had set her foot that day on the infernal serpent.

"We may hope," Mother Barat wrote on that occasion, "that better times will follow the proclamation of Mary's Immaculate Conception as an article of faith. It will be the haven in the storm, for the sea of this world is still furiously raging."

Mother Barat told her daughters that they were called

upon to believe all the more firmly because so many refuse to believe, and love all the more ardently to make up for those who will not love. "Happy, indeed," she exclaimed, "are the eyes which see what we see! As for myself, my dear children, I have only to say with the aged Simeon, 'Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, to whom it has been given to see this light arise in Israel.'"

In the month of February, 1855, Mother Barat, then only just recovering from a dangerous illness, consecrated on the day of the Purification the house of the Feuillantines to Mary Immaculate. After Vespers, kneeling down before the image of the Queen of Heaven, she laid the keys of the convent at her feet, and addressed to her the following prayer: "O Mary, Mother of my God! at this moment, when heaven and earth are uniting in a concert of praise and celebrating thy most glorious privilege, when the august Head of the Church Militant, from the height of the Apostolic See, proclaims thee pure and Immaculate from the first moment of thy Conception, suffer me to unite my voice with that of the whole Catholic world, and to extol thy triumph in the name of a Society which has always delighted to honour thee under that title.

"Thou hast blessed this little Society, O Mary! when Jesus originated it on Mount Calvary, and when from His Heart, pierced with a lance, flowed with His Blood the last token of His love for men. Bless it again on this day of grace, O Immaculate Mother. Make it pure and spotless like thee. Bless the souls who come into this solitude to learn and to make ready to fight against hell, and kindle in every direction the fire of divine love. Free them entirely from the spirit of the world, and clothe them with that of Jesus Christ. In the midst of their labours let them unite the simplicity of the dove with the upward glance of the eagle, so that, detached from everything that is not God, and always in communication with the Divine Sun of

Justice, they may worthily fulfil their mission in this world.

“Let thy maternal hand, O Mary, sustain us in the struggles and trials of our earthly pilgrimage. Let thy Heart, so intimately united with the Heart of Thy Divine Son, be for us that *Tower of Ivory* which defends us against all our enemies, and that *Enclosed Garden* where nothing worldly can penetrate.

“Thou art already our Mother; be also the guardian of this Society, and of this house which has become its centre. Receive the keys of this abode, take possession of it, and look upon it as thine own. Happy to be thy humble servant—nay, that is saying too much—rather thy slave, I give over to thy keeping everything most dear to me. . . . Be ever and more than ever the Mother of the numerous family which God has given me. Bless with thy most special favours the first companions of my humble labours. Grant that, like the Divine Spouse who has chosen us, we may not lose any of the souls which He has intrusted to our care. May they all *know the gift of God*, and correspond with His graces, so that at the termination of our exile we may all meet at the feet of Jesus and His Immaculate Mother. Amen.”

“I shall never forget,” one of her daughters declared, “the way in which our Reverend Mother, when she had uttered the words ‘happy to be thy humble servant,’ added, ‘that is saying too much—thy slave.’ The faith and the intense humility with which she spoke thrilled through the hearts of all who heard that prayer.”

After placing the mother-house under the protection of Mary, Mother Barat thought it right to gather up her remaining strength, and for the last time to visit and give her final instructions to all the principal Communities of her Order.

In the April of 1854 she wrote to the Superior of

Kientzheim: "I rejoice with you at the movement which is taking place in those poor Protestant countries. The Lamb of God will conquer by the power of His Divine Heart. But His victories ought to inspire us with greater zeal and courage to conquer ourselves by doing away with all the obstacles which impede the reign of Christ, for this is our weak point."

It was in order to direct herself that holy crusade that Madame Barat, at the age of seventy-six, went to Kientzheim, where she arrived on the 28th of June, 1855. She had not been at that house for three years. Her first words were: "My dear daughters, do you remember my saying to you at my last visit, 'If I knew of a faithful and generous soul, I would cross the seas and seek it even in the most distant parts of the world?' This is my reason for coming to Kientzheim. I need not go so far to seek for what I am sure of finding here." She looked round at the assembled novices, and quoted the words of the Canticle: "In our gates are all fruits; the new and the old, my Beloved, I have kept for thee."\* "The old fruits are the professed Sisters whom I am acquainted with; the new ones are the novices and postulants whom I long to know."

The journal of Kientzheim relates that it was impossible not to notice how much changed were the features of the Mother General, but that though age and suffering had left their impress on her face, it bore the same unalterable and peaceful charm. Her voice was weaker, but as earnest and impressive as ever. The hearts of all that Community were profoundly touched, and Madame Barat herself felt deeply moved. "My dear children," she said, "there must be something in this house which rouses and excites my feelings, for as soon as I am here I feel impelled to speak of our Lord." On the feast of the Apostle of the Gentiles

\* "In portis nostris omnia poma nova et vetera, Dilecte mi servavi tibi" (Cant. vii. 13).

she commented on those words of St. John Chrysostom, *Cor Pauli Cor Christi*—"The Heart of Paul is the Heart of Christ." She explained also those words of Jesus to the Samaritan woman: "If you knew the gift of God you would ask of Me to drink." "O my God," she exclaimed, "give us of that living water!"

Her farewell to them was: "My dear children, we must be like Gedeon's soldiers. If on our road we meet with some consolations, some refreshment, let us be satisfied to taste a few drops of it in the palm of our hand without stopping to bend the knee. . . . For instance," she added with a smile, "to-day we are together here. This is refreshment. To-morrow we shall part to march on and to fight."

On the 21st of July the Mother General left Kientzheim. She had meant to go on to Riedenbourg, but a continual fever and sufferings in the chest and in the knee obliged her to give up that long journey. She went instead to Metz, where she arrived on St. Magdalen's day, 1855.

The children all came forward to congratulate her on her feast. This seemed quite to renovate her. "There are only two things in the world I care about now," she said, "our Lord and children." She thanked them for the pleasure they had given her, and added, "Thanks to you, I may say that God has given me at the close of my life one of the happiest feast days I have ever spent." She exhorted them to perseverance and to have a great zeal for souls. "Save souls, my children . . . a pupil of the Sacred Heart must save souls . . . souls besides her own. . . One day I hope we shall meet again in heaven. What a joy it will be for us to greet you in that blessed home! Live for and with Jesus. In the happy possession of that Divine Lord, you will, like the valiant woman, laugh when death comes."\*

\* "Fortitudo et decor vestimentum ejus, et ridebit in die novissimo" (Prov. xxxi. 25).

In one of her conversations with the nuns, as if she had foreseen that in less than twenty years from that time the Community of Metz whom she was addressing would be banished from its religious home, she spoke at length of the expulsion from convents which had recently taken place. "It is in such a moment," she said, "that we must bear in mind our Lord's words: 'Whosoever shall not receive you nor hear your words: going forth out of that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. If it be not worthy, your peace shall return to you.'"\* She quoted the example of an old Carmelite monk banished from his country and living at Bordeaux in a state of destitution, who by his sanctity had converted a young Jew who had just joined his Order. "Oh, yes," she exclaimed, "our century produces saints. It is only we who are behindhand in that respect."

She predicted that the houses of Metz and Montigny would do much good provided they preserved the spirit of humility. "This is the great mystery that God has hidden from the proud and reveals to little ones. I will say and repeat this as long as He leaves me an atom of breath."

Painful news was awaiting Mother Barat on her return to Paris.

A new and terrible scourge was afflicting America. Before it had appeared, at the end of October, 1853, Mother Cutts, Superior of the Western District, had died of a cancer. The supernatural peace she evinced during a severe operation made the Protestant surgeons remark that her serenity was the best argument in favour of the Catholic religion. Nothing could stop the bleeding. As she watched it she said: "My God, take my blood; it is Thine to the very last drop." Up to the day of her death she repeated the *Te Deum* in thanksgiving for her sufferings.

\* St. Matt. x.

The American mission was still mourning over her loss, when, in the middle of autumn, 1855, the Mother General learnt by the newspapers that the yellow fever was raging in lower Louisiana, and almost at the same time she received a letter from Mother Jouve, who had succeeded Mother Cutts, full of the most heart-breaking details on the subject. On the 26th of September this disease had broken out at Bâton Rouge, where a number of nuns from different houses were making a retreat. On the 3rd of October one of them died, and on the 19th Mother Praz, the Superior, an admirable religious, was carried off by this fearful epidemic. Almost every day from that moment deaths took place. Mother Guinand wrote in the anguish of her grief: "Oh, dear Reverend Mother, shall I own to you that in our affliction I cried out, 'O Lord, O Lord, it is enough; sheath the sword of destruction,' and we could not refrain from weeping bitterly. But a glance at Calvary strengthened our breaking hearts, and we had then courage to say, 'The Mother of Sorrows stood at the foot of the Cross. Let us remain there by her side.'" Mother Barat's answer to her afflicted daughters was as follows: "I have wept with you and prayed for you. I am so deeply affected that I can hardly hold my pen to write these lines. I understand so well the state of your soul. But be sure, however, that it would not be right to allow yourself to be overcome by your fears. Drive them away, my child; they would wound the Heart of our Lord, who loves you so much and shows it by sending you such excruciating trials. Do not, I beseech you, shrink from the Cross. Hail it, as St. Andrew did. Jesus is lying on it. With all your might embrace it, and you will find Him there. And then, after all, what are these afflictions in the light of eternity? Our life, even were it to be one continual martyrdom, would be quickly over, and rest and relief from every suffering will follow. Heaven will last for ever." When

she wrote this letter the Mother General did not yet know the full extent of her loss. Death had not ceased to make new victims, and she felt almost stupefied for some days after again receiving sad news. Writing to the same Mother, she said: "When the friends of Job visited him for the first time as he sat on his dunghill, they could not speak for seven days, struck dumb as they were with astonishment and grief. Thus was it with my poor soul when I heard of the succession of misfortunes at St. Michael's. It has taken me several days to recover myself sufficiently and to collect my senses before writing to you, and yet the sad details you give me about our dear departed Sisters soften my grief. Jesus was their help, and I have the firm conviction that He has received them into His Fatherly Heart."

These deaths had indeed been very edifying and worthy of the Sacred Heart. Mother Praz had prepared for her end by going into retreat, as if before a great festival or a final profession. Six days before her death she wrote: "I have made up my mind to go into retreat on the 14th; I feel the want of a renewal. I do not know what will happen, but I am anxious to recollect myself. Pray very hard for me." In the course of these exercises the fever seized her. The pains in her head were terrible. "What can I do with my head?" she asked Mother Guinand. "Offer it to Jesus crowned with thorns," was the answer. "Oh, yes," the dying nun replied; "yes, my Jesus, everything Thou willest." Her last words were, "I am ready."

Sister Duboille, who soon afterwards followed her to the grave, wrote almost on the eve of her death: "The more I advance in religious life the more I love my holy vocation. If it involves sacrifices the thought of Jesus softens them." Another, Sister Justina, asked, "Shall I die soon?" "Yes, Sister," her Superior answered. "Well,

then, Reverend Mother, let us say Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and give me holy water."

Mother Barbarin, the Mother Assistant at St. Michael's, fell exhausted by the side of the Sisters whom she had been preparing for death. When the Community saw her dying they begged her to ask of God that she might be the last victim. "Of course I will," she said; "it will be the first request I shall make to our Lord." But it was not God's will as yet to arrest the scourge. Mother Walsh died next, a nun of most angelic virtue, who kept repeating in her last moments that God was her Father and Mary her Mother, and she cared for nothing else. Mother Carrard, who had prayed to have her purgatory on earth, went through a terrible agony of three days before her end. "Oh, how I suffer!" she ejaculated. "God has heard my prayers. This is my purgatory." The seventeenth and last victim was Mother Stanislas Aguiard; joy was the predominant feature of her deathbed. She yielded up her soul to God in the midst of loving transports of gratitude. "To think," she said, "of the goodness of Jesus, who sought me a poor orphan in my ignorance and nothingness, and made me His spouse!" All these holy deaths evinced that facility to die which Tertullian declared was peculiar to Christians: *Christiani mori expeditum genus.*

Mother Barat, who would fain have preserved these useful lives at the expense of her own, wrote to Mother de Limminghe: "Would that it were given to none but me to drink this bitter chalice! It would be just, whereas it has been the innocent ones who have suffered. Those we have lost had spent themselves in labours and sacrifices. They have received their reward; nevertheless, pray for those victims of their devotion to the work of the Society, to the work of the Heart of Jesus."

These losses seemed to threaten the mission of Louisiana with complete ruin. The destitution in which they left the

diocese of New Orleans necessitated the suppression of the house of the Sacred Heart at Bâton Rouge, in order to supply the urgent needs of St. Michael's. It was also proposed to suppress the one at Natchitoches. But the bishop of that city, Dr. Martin, wrote to Madame Barat a strong protest against this step. "I know Reverend Mother," he said, "that you live in your daughters' lives, and die, as it were, when they die; but much as I sympathize with your grief, I cannot make up my mind to see my diocese so vitally injured by the destruction of the most important work within it. To take away from our country an establishment which has existed in it for nine years and taken root amongst us, in order to strengthen the houses in Lower Louisiana, which is already provided with numerous resources, is indeed, Reverend Mother, to realize the parable of the prophet Nathan." He ended his letter as follows: "For my part, I like better to say, 'Long live Jesus and Mary,' than to allow myself to be cast down by an accidental and temporary calamity. We must make Jesus and Mary known and loved in places where they are unknown and blasphemed. It is on us missionary bishops, priests, and nuns that the honour of this apostleship devolves. It does not signify if those names are glorified by our lives or in our deaths, so that they are glorified."

Mother Barat read out this letter to her probanists with irrepressible sighs and tears. When she came to the passage in which the Bishop said, "You live in your daughters' lives, and die, as it were, when they die," the Mother General said: "Oh yes it is true I die indeed," and after a pause exclaimed, "Where shall I find generous souls whom I can send to labour on those distant and desolate shores? If I were forty years younger, oh how soon I should set off!" Her children fell down at her feet and offered themselves in a body for the American mission. She looked at them with her kind smile, and said:

“My poor children, that would be too many to send, and France and Europe have likewise pressing needs. However, whatever may be God’s will in your regard, yield yourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and simply follow His inspirations.”

Natchitoches was not suppressed. Mother Barat said “that ‘the prophet Nathan’ had so much frightened her that she could not persist in giving it up.” Assistance was sent to the house of St. Michael’s, where Mother Jouve took up her residence, and the Mother General soon wrote : “The ruined walls of Jerusalem are rising up again. They are all eager to work, and they give us an example of the miracles which can be wrought by souls devoted to the Heart of Jesus when His glory is concerned. Now my hopes increase and strengthen. I might almost venture to say with the prophet Aggeus : ‘Great shall be the glory of this last house more than of the first.’ These are the fruits of the Cross.”

Another trial, and a most painful one to Mother Barat, and one involving important consequences to her Society, was the threatened suppression or interdiction which was menacing the house at Chambéry. We mentioned that in 1848 this establishment had been exempted from the decree which had banished the Sacred Heart from the Sardinian dominions, and in 1854 a similar exception was made in its favour in the law which suppressed all the religious houses. This concession had been owing to the zeal of the Archbishop of Chambéry and the feelings of the Christian population of Savoy. But it is the misfortune of our day that governments are generally much more wicked than the people they rule over. That of Piedmont, bent on its revolutionary work, tried indirectly to ruin the Sacred Heart by imposing on its teachers the obligation of being certificated by government and the inspection of the school by its own delegates.

Mother Barat saw at once the danger in which this measure would involve her Order. The Sacred Heart had to consider the twofold question of principle and conscience with regard to these government claims, which were likely to become universal. As a matter of principle, could a Society which held its right to teach to be derived in the first instance from God and His Church by its letters of obedience, and in the next place from Christian families by the delegated authority of the fathers and mothers of the children, acknowledge by accepting it the right which governments have assumed in our days to substitute their own authority in place of the two authorities, the religious one and the domestic one, which alone have the right to educate children if they belong to God and their families and not to the State? Then, in conscience, could it open its doors to the inspection of the University and submit to its examinations, without being necessarily compelled to adopt its system, its books, its opinions, and its spirit, too well known not to be the spirit of the Sacred Heart? Such was the question of right, such the question of duty, and hence the danger.

On this account, in spite of reiterated attempts, renewed under successive forms of government, the Sacred Heart had hitherto resisted the visits and the interference of the secular power in its boarding-schools. The day might come when this oppressive condition would everywhere be set to the exercise of teaching. If that happened, it would then belong to Rome to point out the line to be followed, and the wishes of the Holy See would always be looked upon as commands. But Rome and her most accredited organs had not expressed any opinion on the subject, and this made Mother Barat write: "I insist all the more on our independence, that I am sure that on this point we are acting according to the ideas of the most Roman portion of the clergy." Amongst other very Roman members of that

clergy was the Bishop of Arras, who was also a member of the Superior Council of Public Instruction. She received from him an answer, or rather a document, very remarkable for its firmness, good sense, and high-mindedness. Looking on the question, both with regard to the interests of the Sacred Heart and also the general interests of religion, Mgr. Parisis came to the conclusion that under the circumstances a decided refusal should be given to the admission of inspectors and the reception of Government certificates.

Thus guided, Mother Barat no longer hesitated. "We are bound in conscience to resist," she said, "otherwise our good Master would not bless our work. We must make this sacrifice in order to preserve the true spirit of our Society."

Generous and necessary as it was, the sacrifice was a great one to her heart. She speaks of it thus: "I was so fond of our foundation in that dear Savoy. What makes this trial so bitter is the thought of the souls that will suffer. But God will provide a remedy, for that country is thoroughly Catholic. Till the decisive moment comes, my child, we shall go on lifting up our hands to the mountain whence cometh our help: and if the decision is without appeal, grace and strength will be given us to bear that cross."

A first decision, adverse to the Sacred Heart, had been pronounced. Public opinion in Savoy protested against it. The question was carried before the courts of justice; the Archbishop renewed his courageous remonstrances; the municipal council petitioned Victor Emmanuel, and influential families in a high position personally urged him on the subject. When Mother Barat was informed of all these manifestations, she wrote: "How good is that country, and what excellent people there are in it! No, my child, I cannot believe we are to part with it for ever. We must

keep as long as we can for them the little seed in the ground. It may remain hidden under the mould during the winter of tribulations, and that as long as God pleases; but when the spring returns it will grow again, and our little birds will rest amongst its branches."

These words turned out prophetical. In the autumn of 1856, the school of the Sacred Heart was closed by order of the supreme court; but it continued its work of charity, the education of the deaf and dumb. The government suppressed an annual grant it had made to that Institution, and Mother Barat declared that rather than turn adrift these poor creatures the Society would itself support them. During four years, this was the only work continued at the Sacred Heart. Then came the annexation of Savoy to France, which completely changed the state of things. An Imperial decree of the 26th of August, 1860, re-established the rights of religious congregations; and on the 5th of November, the school of the Sacred Heart was re-opened and soon restored to its former prosperity.

In the meantime Providence had led the way to several new foundations. A small congregation in the town of Angoulême, which went by the name of Ladies of St. Paul, offered to join the Society. Its Superior, Madame Lhomme-Plantier, after making a retreat in the house of the Feuillants at Poitiers, expressed this wish to Mother Emma de Bouchaud, who transmitted it to the Mother General. Her reply was as follows: "I hasten to tell you what a consolation it will be to me to receive those ladies into our Society. I have been wishing for forty years that we might establish ourselves at Angoulême. There is very little devotion to the Sacred Heart in that place. What a mission for us. May we fulfil it according to the wishes of our good Master!"

Mother Emma de Bouchaud was accordingly sent in the month of September, 1856, to the house of the Doyenné in

Angoulême. It had once been the residence of the Dean of the Chapter, and the Ladies of St. Paul were educating there about seventy pupils. On the 15th of November, they received the habit of the Sacred Heart from the hands of their Bishop, Mgr. Cousseau. "Keep me informed of all your doings at the Doyenné," Mother Barat wrote to the Mother Vicar. "That new family interests me particularly. I feel that I care about it just as much as about the older ones. We shall gladly do everything we possibly can for it."

Mention may also be made here of the foundation of the house at St. Ferréol, near Besançon. Fifty orphans and a boarding-school were established there at the end of the year 1856. This was in great measure the work of Mdlle. du Ban, an admirable Christian, sister of one of the nuns of the Sacred Heart. It was said of her and with truth that no one had ever done more good with less noise.

The Mother General had never ceased to regret that her illness of the preceding year had prevented her visit to Riedembourg. "When I make a beautiful dream," she used to say, "I fancy myself at Riedembourg." That dream was, however, realized in the month of July, 1856. This journey and all those that followed it were marked by the universal veneration paid to the holy traveller. Everyone looked upon her as a saint. It was in vain that in her dismay at this celebrity she tried more and more to veil her sanctity. There was something so holy about Mother Barat that wherever she passed a sort of anticipated homage was paid to her as if she had already been proclaimed a saint.

Thus at the Strasbourg station all the railway officials, the station master at their head, showed her every kind of devoted attention. They brought an arm-chair to the door of the carriage, and almost quarrelled as to who should have the honour of carrying her into the waiting-room. Astonished at being the object of so much kind solicitude,

she exclaimed: "But you make a mistake, gentlemen. I am only a poor little nun." Amongst these officials was an old soldier who had been with the French army at Rome, and remembered having been received into the Trinità dei Monti and taken care of by Mother Barat. He insisted upon kneeling down and kissing her hand. The Mother General gave him her blessing, made him a present of a prayer-book, and obtained from him a promise that he would be faithful to his religious duties. But the most touching incident on this occasion was to see the son of Colonel Hervé, a young boy of fifteen, whose sisters had been educated at the Sacred Heart, rush into the railway carriage where the Mother General had taken her seat after bidding an affectionate farewell to all his family, and falling down on his knees in the presence of all the travellers ask a blessing which was to be the last he was ever to receive from her. He died soon afterwards, holding in his hand a little image of the Blessed Virgin which she had given him that day, and in the midst of the sufferings of his agony crying out: "Oh, Madame Barat, give me your blessing! Bless your poor child!" When she arrived at Keintzheim, the Mother General wrote to Mdlle. Hervé, who had with all the rest of her family lavished upon her the most affectionate care: "I am really ashamed, my dear Antonine, at receiving so many kind attentions. You carry them too far, and I beg of you to place some restraint on the warmth of your heart which makes you act towards me in this way. You would accustom me to indulgences which a nun ought to reject, and yet which one hardly knows how to decline when offered in so affectionate and delicate a manner."

Mother Barat stopped only a day or two at Kientzheim, where she was to stay on her way back from Germany. Travelling rapidly through the kingdom of Wurtemberg and the Grand Duchy of Baden, she arrived in time for the

feast of St. Mary Magdalen at Riedembourg, where they received her at the gate under a triumphal arch and fired cannons in her honour. After visiting our Lord in the chapel, she said to her daughters: "Oh, how I have longed to see this house, now that I am with you I forget that I am tired;" and she added, "to save one soul we ought to endure far greater fatigues."

Mother Barat's arrival was considered quite an event in that country. Hermann Joseph Müller, Professor of Law and Philosophy at Würzburg, and one of the most able and courageous champions of the Church in Germany, wrote as follows to the Superior of Riedembourg: "Let me know, I beseech you, how long your venerated Mother Foundress will remain with you. If I had to cross the Alps on foot I must see her, for she is the St. Theresa of our days." Finding it, however, impossible to leave Munich, this pious Catholic could not carry his project into execution. He expressed his intense regret in a letter in which he begged Mother Barat to send her blessing to him and to his family, and promised to go to Communion for her intentions on the feast of St. Magdalen.

Immediately on her arrival, at nine o'clock in the morning, the Bishop of St. Gall came to visit the Mother General. This venerable Prelate was eighty years old. Mother Barat had then attained the age of seventy-seven. She knelt down to ask for his blessing, but the Bishop at first could not be brought to extend his hands over her. However, when she insisted upon it he yielded, but said: "It is not I but the Heart of Jesus that blesses you a thousand times, you and your Society." He could only speak in German, and the Sister who translated what he said to the Mother General was somewhat distressed at the excessive eulogiums she had to convey to one so little fond of praise.

Mother Beatrice Schneider, from Gratz, who had not

seen her Superior for eleven years, and Mother de Iim-minghe, from Milan, came to visit the Mother General at Riedenbourg. She wrote on that occasion: "All these souls are advancing in holiness, but their strength is wearing out. We want other generous souls to aid them." On the day of her feast she exhorted her daughters to set no limits to their generosity, and to form as it were in their hearts an immense receptacle for the living waters of God's love. "And what will create that vacuum in your souls?" she asked. "Humility," was the answer given by several voices and expected by the Mother General.

During the play-hours she assembled the children under an apple-tree at the corner of the house near the chapel and spoke to them with such warmth and earnestness of heart that many of them afterwards declared that they owed their vocations to those conversations. That apple-tree was christened St. Magdalen's tree, and has retained the name ever since.

In the midst of this happy time Mother Barat fell ill. A violent cough and great weakness at her advanced age naturally gave rise to anxiety. "My children," she said, "I had hoped to be a comfort, and I am only a trouble to you. I wished to be of use, and it is I who have to be taken care of. Our Lord has given me a good lesson."

As soon as she was sufficiently recovered to go out Mother Barat went round the grounds of Riedenbourg in a chair on wheels which the nuns dragged themselves. "This is a sort of carriage I like," she said, "for it is quite in keeping with poverty." Her eyes gazed with delight on the beautiful banks of the Lake of Constance, and then on the snow-capped summits of the Tyrolean Alps. She kept exclaiming: "Oh, how beautiful this country is! How it raises the soul to God. Living in such a place how could you help being contemplatives?" One day she said, "I have asked our Lord to give sixty pupils to this house, I hope

they will be granted to you, so much good can be done here." That day two years the school reckoned exactly sixty pupils.

Mother Barat's farewell to her daughters consisted in our Saviour's recommendation to His disciples: "What I ask of you is to have a great love for one another." On the day that she left she drove slowly round the grounds; whilst giving a last look at the place she said: "I cannot tell you how much I love this Germany."

On the 10th of August, feast of St. Lawrence, the Mother General was at Kientzheim. Father de Ravignan had also arrived there to give a retreat. In describing to her daughters the country she had passed through, Madame Barat said: "What a pity it is that error prevails in those countries. Stuttgart, for instance, is a beautiful town. Would that we might one day place in it a novitiate which would spread its branches all over that fair land." She often remarked "that the Germans were of all people the least adapted for heresy. Their character is so open, so simple, so naturally inclined to faith. It makes me miserable to think of Luther, and that this heresy may last to the end of the world. Well at any rate, my children, let us root up as much of that noxious weed as we can."

News from Paris arrived at that time which gave Madame Barat anxiety and then deep affliction. On the 6th of August her most ancient remaining companion in the Society, Mother de Charbonnel, had received the last Sacraments. When Father de Montezon brought her the Holy Vaticum, he said: "This is your Lord. Do you believe in Him?" "I do most firmly," she replied. "Do you hope in Him?" "Yes, I hope in Him." "Do you love Him with all your heart?" "I *wish* to do so," she humbly answered. On the 16th, the morrow of the Assumption, she received the Plenary Indulgence for a good death. On the 17th, when some of those belonging

to the house asked her for her last instructions, she said with her weakened voice: "Fidelity, my dear children, fidelity always." She then fell into a doze which lasted till the 19th, and on that day about noon that burning and shining light almost imperceptibly went out. She was in her eighty-second year, and for fifty-two years had been a nun of the Sacred Heart.

Mother Barat had not been fully informed of the state of her friend. When the news of her death arrived, Mother Garabis came to break the sad intelligence to her Superior. "Ah!" she said, "then that dear Mother is receiving the reward of the humility and obedience which have so long edified us; her heavenly triumph has begun." "Yes, Reverend Mother, the end has come. You knew then she was dead?" "Is she dead?" the Mother General exclaimed, "O my child, let us pray!" With irrepressible sobs she complained that the anxious charity of her children had deprived her of the consolation of watching over the last moments of her dear Mother Assistant.

On the 25th of August Madame Barat arrived at the Feuillantines. During all that journey the thought of Mother de Charbonnel was not for one moment absent from her mind and as she drew near to Paris her companions heard her ejaculating, "and to think, alas! that I shall not find her."

A very desolate solitude was beginning to surround the Mother General. A day or two after her return to Paris God withdrew from this world another beloved daughter of hers, of whom a short time before she had said, "I thank our Lord that He leaves me still a few of our first Mothers and Sisters, my Emilie especially."

Mother Emilie Giraud had been Superior at Poitiers and afterwards at Lille. There was in her character a beautiful simplicity. Her face was a perfect type of purity and sweetness, and the lapse of time had not in the least

impaired these qualities. At the end of half a century Mother Giraud was as child-like as the little girl of Sainte Marie d'en-Haut, only more detached and brighter in her old age than in her youth, and retaining to the last the freshness of her religious innocence. On the day when the fiftieth anniversary of her profession was celebrated at Lille, Father Renaud said to her: "The best wish I can make for you, Reverend Mother, is that you may find again all the fervour of your novitiate." "But Father I have never lost it," she replied. The only fault she was accused of was being over-indulgently good as a Superior. She was thinking of this one day at Mass when her attention was caught by these words in the Litanies of the Sacred Heart which the choir were singing, "*Cor Jesu bonitatis oceanus.*" They reassured her. "People may say what they like," she said to herself, "but I am not yet such an ocean of goodness as my Divine Master!"

Mother Barat delighted in this character. "I am sure," she used to say, "that God will bless the labours of that soul. She is like Nathaniel. There is no guile in her heart." She also declared that few people had understood her like Mother Duchesne and Mother Giraud.

Madame Emilie was seventy-three years old, and she remembered that during an apparently hopeless illness she had when twenty-four years of age, our Lord had said to her—so she thought, at least—"No, yet twice as much," and now twice twenty-four years had been given to her since that time. She felt as if her hour were come; continual sufferings seemed to presage it. The last words she uttered were a recommendation to the head mistress of the school to train the children in solid virtue founded on self-abnegation. After having received Extreme Unction on the feast of the Assumption, 1856, she died on the 27th of August in that peace of the just which St. Gregory tells us is the foretaste of an eternal reward. In the midst of these

sorrows and these losses Mother Barat courageously pursued her work. In October, 1856, she wrote: "Oh, if it were not for our Lord, how could we bear such painful toils? But we are doing His work, and must struggle on to the end. That good Master can never forsake us."

In the year 1857 she visited her houses at Lille and at Saint Pierre-lès-Calais. It was on the 11th of July she arrived at Saint Pierre. Her nuns and even the children felt that they had a saint amongst them, and a saint whom God would soon call away from this world, and they were careful not to lose one minute of her presence or one word from her lips. After her accustomed first visit to our Lord, the Mother General went into the garden, and whilst she sat there looked at the sea and asked on which side was the coast of England. They showed her the white line which marked in the horizon the shores of Great Britain. She gazed at it a little while, and then said, "There is much good to be done there. I hope to go to England next year, my dear children, and if such be God's will you will see me again." The children used to crowd around her, giving her flowers out of their little gardens, asking her to tell them stories and to give them her blessing. The nuns sat at her feet on the steps, or under an ash tree, on which the date of her visit was inscribed and an oratory afterwards established. The *Life of Blessed Margaret Mary* was read in the refectory, and Madame Barat's instructions and conversations were often about this Saint. "What is our fervour, my dear children," she would say, "when we compare it with the ardent love of this servant of God? You must be Margaret Maries in this age, that is, apostles of the Sacred Heart."

She visited the poor schools, decided that a workroom should be added to them, and on the Sunday saw the Children of Mary, learnt all their names in order to offer them up to the Blessed Virgin, and spoke to them of the

happiness of serving God, taking for her text two lines she was very fond of—

The greatest joy the earth can give  
Is in the peace that virtue brings.

Mgr. Parisis arrived at Saint Pierre on the eve of the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, and greeted Madame Barat with enthusiasm. He said a Pontifical Mass, and preached on the following day. In the course of his sermon the Bishop delicately but pointedly alluded to the labours and sanctity of the Mother General. The next day she was at Lille, and was received there with the same rapture and the same veneration as at Saint Pierre. The children stole pieces of straw from her chair and pieces of string from her veil, which they kept as relics. Others managed to get their Rosaries touched by her dress. "If she is not a saint," they said to each other, "there is not a saint upon earth." Mother Barat complained of this to the Superior, and said, "I cannot understand how you can suffer children to take such false ideas into their heads." She was almost angry because a preacher ventured to praise her in the pulpit. "Did you hear the slaps in the face I had to endure?" she said, almost in tears. The children had prepared for her entertainment a sort of living picture of heaven, full of angels and saints. "You made me fancy myself in Paradise," she said to them. "But only, your heaven lasts a very short time. Fortunately there is another heaven where we shall meet, my dear children, and then it will be for ever." The ladies belonging to the Congregation of the Children of Mary have never forgotten the exhortation she addressed to them on the 29th of July. Solid virtue was, as usual, what she dwelt upon. "Be pious," she said, "but let your piety be of the kind which sets duty above mere practices of devotion. Be firm against the world and human respect; be simple and modest; habits of luxury and novel-reading are the ruin of women. Bad books lead

to hell. If you come across any such works thrust them from you as you would a burning coal. I warn you against these things that you may not fall into sin; but if you ever find your fervour waning, come to the Sacred Heart, make a good retreat, and God will give you grace to rise again." And then she told them to make virtue amiable. "Do not judge the conduct of others; be indulgent. Do not think it enough to be good: you must also be amiable in that energetic and kind manner which is learnt from the mighty and meek Heart of Jesus."

The vice-president of the Children of Mary said that these words were accompanied by a smile of indescribable sweetness—a heavenly smile she called it, the memory of which to this day strengthens her in virtue.

On her return to Paris the Mother General heard of the death of another of her earliest and dearest friends, Mother Theresa Maillucheu. In the last letter that she had written to her Madame Barat had said: "Dear Theresa, the Heart of Jesus merges all our miseries in the burning depths of Its love. If we really love Him we may do what we please, for we shall only do the will of our Beloved. I hope, my old and dear daughter, that I shall see you once more before I leave this world, and that we shall converse together of Him who has done so much for us."

But this was not to be. Mother Theresa said herself, "I feel as if I saw, as if I touched, as if I already possessed the promised blessings which await us." She died without effort, entirely absorbed in God, and, as she described it, like the pilot who, with his eyes fixed on the shore towards which he steers, takes no notice of anything foreign to the object he has in view.

Mother Barat had now attained the age of seventy-eight. She wished to take leave of her Communities in the south of France, and invited the Superiors and the Mother Vicars to meet her at La Ferrandière. She arrived there on the

28th of August. As they were pointing out to her the disasters caused by recent inundations, she answered: "My dear children, St. Paul says that everything works together for good to those who love God. So whether our Lord sends joy or affliction, may His holy name be blessed." On her account permission had been obtained for the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament in a small tribune near her cell, but her humility protested against this favour. "How can I suffer that our Lord should remain there for my sake alone? Well and good if others came to visit Him in that room, but my poor prayers alone cannot console Him."

Mothers Granon, de Valancise, Garabis, de Mandon, de Lescure, de Saint Ferriol, and a great number of professed nuns from the houses of the south had gathered together round the Mother General. She besought her daughters to revive amongst themselves the early fervour of the Society, and to look upon it as the greatest of joys to give this proof of love to the Heart of their Divine Spouse. She reminded them that the vocation of the nuns of the Sacred Heart was to be adorers and victims of reparation. "By our works," she concluded, "even more than by our words, let us say, 'If any one love not Jesus Christ let him be anathema.'"

On the eve of her departure, the 19th of September, 1857, she thus bade farewell to her daughters: "My dear children, it would be too sad to part but for the hope of meeting again. Happily we hope, we are certain to be together in heaven . . . and then for ever."

This was Madame Barat's last journey. From that time till her death she remained always in Paris, where she devoted herself to the government of her Order and the spiritual direction of souls. In the next chapter we shall have to show the part she took in the work of probation which she had recently transferred to the Feuillantines, and over which she herself watched and presided.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *The work of the Probation. Mother Barat's affection for her Daughters.*

WE have stated in the preceding volume what the work of the probation is, and pointed out how useful to the aspirant are those six months of retreat, during which, withdrawn for the time being from her accustomed place of residence, released from her active duties, and brought, as it were, into immediate contact with God and her own soul, she enters again, as St. Ignatius expresses it, "the school of the heart," reforming, conforming, and transforming her affections, in imitation of our Lord, who at the age of thirty retired into the desert to prepare for the strife of His public life.

But we have not yet spoken of the strength which the Society derives from that assemblage of souls, all coming to refresh themselves at the fountain-head of the Institute under the eyes and direction of their first Mothers. They arrive not from the French houses only, but from the most various and opposite parts of the world, from Italy, Spain, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Africa, and North and South America, not only speaking different languages, but bringing with them different feelings and habits of mind. Such a gathering might easily become a tower of Babel, but the six months of probation make it into a Pentecost. The same rule, the same instructions, the same prayers above all, are daily and continual means of assimilation. Thus cast a

second time, as it were, and on the eve of their final vows, into the mould of the Constitutions, all these Sisters come out of it completely harmonized and united. By degrees dissimilarities disappear; and natures, originally strongly contrasted, under the influence of grace and community life become entirely remodelled. There is an end of Jew or Gentile, Greek or Barbarian, nothing remains but nuns of the Sacred Heart. One faith, one law, one only interest, in short *one heart and one soul*, that is the great strength of the Society, and more especially the result of the probation.

None were admitted to it by Mother Barat who had not for five years at least resolutely practised the virtues of their vocation. "Those who lag behind are my hardest cross," she used to say. "Cowardly and effeminate souls are not fit for probation or profession. You know well how much harm is done to the Society by nuns of this sort." One of the first things she said to probanists when they arrived at the Feuillantines was this: "My dear children, you will perhaps see great deficiencies when you look back at the past. If our Lord had dealt severely, some of you perhaps would never have crossed the threshold of this house. But His mercy has discerned repentance for the past and a good will for the future. Now you must go forward. This is the time for a renewal."

Mother Barat summed up the renewal in these words, "Reparation" and "Preparation." She thus interpreted the words of Scripture, "Thou wilt send forth Thy Spirit, and we shall be created, and Thou wilt renew the face of the earth," and she sometimes added: "If God only took six days to make the world, in six months He can certainly make you into new creatures." She also quoted the words of the Apocalypse: "I will create a new heaven and a new earth," and asked them if they felt the old earth in their hearts, and if they had got rid of any of it since

the morning. And then she told the probanists that the apostles had prepared for their hunt after souls in the world, by hunting their own defects in the cenacle. "Hunt your faults during this time of probation," she said, "and we shall send you afterwards to hunt after souls."

One of her daughters having called the time of probation a time of rest, Mother Barat declared it was on the contrary a time of labour. The seed which has been sown in the earth does not rest in the winter season," she said, "it is on the contrary the time when it goes through a complete transformation. But mind it must begin by dying. It must die. The new life consists in three points. It is God's will that each of you should become a *light*, an *example*, and a *support* to the Society." These words became, as it were, watchwords of the probation, and the theme of all Mother Barat's instructions, conferences, and conversations at recreation whenever she was staying at the Feuillantines. A few days after the probanists had been established there, the Mother General said as she came in: "I have just heard good news. We have saints for our neighbours—the Little Sisters of the Poor." Then she related the prodigies of charity and self-devotion performed by these humble Sisters, and added: "That is indeed abnegation. When I compare it with the little we do, I feel so ashamed that I should like to hide a hundred feet deep in the ground."

One day that she found her nuns particularly joyful, she said: "You are quite right to be joyful, my dear children. Can there be a greater happiness than to belong to Jesus, to love Him, and to teach others to love Him? St. Magdalen of Pazzi was so full of that holy joy, that one night as she was coming out of the chapel she rang the convent bell, and collecting all the Sisters round her exclaimed: 'Let us rejoice, for we love Jesus, and we could love Him still more than we do.' We have still greater reason than this

saint to be joyful, for our Lord has withdrawn us from a Babylon; our times are worse than those she lived in." Sometimes the following words were on her lips: "To consecrate our heart to Jesus is to consecrate it to happiness. There is nothing on earth so near heaven as Calvary."

Once on the Sunday of the Good Shepherd she commented as follows on the Gospel for the day: "Jesus," she said to her flock at the Feuillantines, "Jesus, the Good Shepherd, has given His life for us who are His sheep. What can we give Him in return? Nuns who belong to severe orders and practise great austerities give Him their skin; we cannot do that, but we can at least give Him our wool. By that I mean we can give up comforts and vanities and all our little susceptibilities. Such a fleece as that, my dear children, we shall lay to-day at the feet of the Good Shepherd." The sacrifice she most commended was the generous accomplishment of the duties of our state in life. "Bloody disciplines and long night watches," she wrote, "are a sort of penance that people plunge into, whereas an exact fidelity in observing silence, modesty, obedience, and the rule, is an exertion which must be continually renewed." And alluding to the prominent subject of interest at that moment, she added: "This is the real Sebastopol we have to take, and to do so it is not necessary to shed blood."

She had a familiar way of conveying great spiritual truths and lessons. One of her favourite sayings was "that humility is a needle that mends many a hole." She liked to quote St. Francis of Sales' assertion that we die a quarter of an hour before our self-love. And with her arch smile advised her daughters to keep out of the chimney of their hearts the soot of pride, if they wished to light in it the fire of Divine love. "We must be faithful," she maintained, "even to the least iota, the slightest

infidelity is like a stitch dropped in a piece of knitting, it entirely spoils the work." Another of her maxims was: "We must not bargain with our Lord. If He asks you for a small bit of sacrifice give Him the whole piece."

Mother Barat's conversations and her letters abound with this sort of effective and playful illustration, and one might almost apply to her mode of teaching what Fénelon says of St. Francis of Sales' spirituality: "Everything in it is encouraging and pleasing, though the drift of it is to make men die to themselves. It is practical, wise from experience, and full of feeling and the light of grace."

The conferences given to the probanists were imbued with the same spirit, but still more elevated in their tone. One of the nuns relates that after hearing for the first time these instructions, she felt carried out of herself, and felt impelled to rush to the altar and promise in a transport of fervour to give herself to Jesus Christ in all humility and self-devotion. Everything seemed possible to her after what she had just heard.

Sometimes, overcome by her earnestness, Mother Barat's voice failed her. Obligated to interrupt her address, she would say: "Would that since my childhood I had never spoken of anything but Jesus! My mother used to say to me: 'The only good thing about you is your tongue.' Alas! I have not even that at this moment."

When recovering from an illness which had kept her away from her daughters during a whole winter, she said to them: "My greatest trial has been this absence from you even whilst living under the same roof." All I could do was to repeat Father de la Colombière's prayer: 'Lord Jesus Christ Thou knowest I would fain be with those souls to do them good, as Thou willest to keep me away, take my place, O Lord, beside them. Be their friend and their comforter. I am happy to submit to Thy will.'

The day on which the probanists made their last vows

was one of fervent and humble joy for Mother Barat. "I was so happy," she was wont to say, "to hear you uttering your vows in so heartfelt a manner. You have made them in the hands of Mary, for as I received your promises I passed them over to her, telling that good Mother that it was to her, not to me, that her daughters had been speaking." Another time she spoke as follows: "My dear children, here you are adorned with the jewels you have just received from your Divine Spouse. I see His Cross on your heart, His ring on your finger. Do you not feel inclined to say with the Psalmist, 'What return shall I make to the Lord for all He has given to me? I will take the chalice of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.' Take, then, that chalice. It is one of suffering. It is brimful of your toils, perhaps of your tears. Drink it with rapture, invoking the Lord, and you will be delivered from all your enemies."

To each of the probanists, when they left the mother-house, Madame Barat addressed one of those parting words which shed light on a whole existence. To one she would say: "Remember, my child, that the soul is straitened until it plunges into the immensity of God." To another, who was dreading a difficult mission: "Jesus does not ask you to raise the dead to life, but to be humble of heart yourself." To two nuns who were going to take charge of an unpromising school, she said: "I wish I were going with you, to lift up the hearts of these children to God." And to another: "Mind you never teach in the school without saying something of our Lord Jesus Christ to your pupils."

One of the nuns declares that she never can forget her words when she gave her two pictures on the eve of her making her vows. "My child, I cannot bestow upon you anything more precious. The Heart of Jesus to sustain you in all your trials, and the Divine Infant to teach you to immolate self-love and to be little in your own eyes." To one of her children who said to her, "Reverend Mother,

the words I lived upon during my probation have been, 'To forget myself and to devote myself.' " Write them down on the memorial of your vows," the Mother General answered, "and I will add, 'Do this and you shall live.'" Some of the Sisters thought that her parting expressions were prophetic. She said to one of them, "I exhort you, my child, to be resigned and patient under the sufferings God will send you." A few months afterwards the nun to whom this advice was addressed fell into a state of prolonged infirmity, which accounted for the words of her Reverend Mother. Madame Barat's reputation of sanctity was by that time so widely spread, that she had no little trouble to fight against it. Mgr. Gerbet, Bishop of Perpignan, who had been one of the chaplains at the house at Amiens, having publicly congratulated the Society on the possession of such a Superior, she said to her nuns, who were delighted with what he had said, "Yes, indeed, my poor dear children, God could not have given you a better Superior . . . if He meant to humble you."

When in the year 1855 she was complimented on her feast day, her answer was, "O my God, why did you choose me to direct these souls? They deserved a very different Mother. Why did you not raise up another St. Theresa or St. Jane Frances of Chantal, or any one else worth having." Mother Henriette could not help subjoining, "Thank God, there are still on this earth St. Therasas and St. Mary Magdalens."

But neither her sanctity nor her wisdom would sufficiently explain the Mother General's unbounded influence over her Society, if we did not also take into account her great power of loving. She loved all her nuns tenderly and intensely, and in order to get a complete view of her character we must give a few details which show the strength of that affection. All her daughters were conscious of it; they felt how dear they were to her, and this was a consolation under

every trial. This fondness of heart overflowed in all her correspondence. "I need not tell you," she writes, "the pleasure your letter has given me. To receive one from you is an old and a new pleasure. Our affection does not wear out like earthly feelings. It rests on a sure foundation—the Heart of our Lord. I know you feel it as I do." And to another of her daughters with whom she had just parted: "You are hardly gone, and I want to run after you. Your presence, your assistance, are of such use to me. I feel it at every moment, and I have at every moment to sacrifice this longing to our Lord."

The peculiarity of Mother Barat's soul consisted in this combination of affectionate warmth of heart with high sanctity. One of her spiritual children speaks of the kindness with which she always welcomed them when they arrived at the mother-house. "Come, my child," she used to say as she embraced them, "welcome home, welcome to your Mother's house." Then she asked for news of the one the Sister had left. So earnest and minute were her inquiries, that it seemed as if she had nothing else to think about. All the little details for their reception were ordered by her care. Her way of conversing with them, the openness with which she spoke of her own thoughts and feelings, the tender sympathy with which she listened to the description of their trials or their sorrows, assuaged all their griefs. No one ever left her without feeling cheered and consoled.

Whatever might be her occupations she was always accessible, always had time for everybody. Once a novice who hardly knew her, and who was alarmed at the idea of going into the room of the Mother General, stood hesitating at the door. "Come in, my child, come in," Madame Barat said, as soon as she saw her; "the door of this room, as well as the heart of your Mother, is always open."

The Scripture says, "In the cheerfulness of the King's countenance is life, and His clemency is like the latter

rain."\* Such was the effect produced by the presence of this beloved Superior. She never met any one without addressing her a gracious or kind word. To a nun who had been slightly indisposed, she said: "I did not see you yesterday, my dear child; why don't you come and show yourself to your Mother?" She smiled at another who was carrying a heavy parcel, and told her the angels were counting her steps. She reminded a sacristan, who was going to decorate the altar, that it was well to give flowers to the Spouse of virgins, but that she must offer Him also fruit out of her garden. "You know the fruit I mean," she added. "My child," she often exclaimed, "let us love God. Love sweetens everything." Sometimes she asked, "What are you doing with your Jesus, my child?" One or two words had their effect. "I reckon on you, my child," or, "Heaven is the prize." Often a look, a smile, that wonderful smile of Mother Barat's, the touch of her hand when she made the sign of the Cross on the forehead of one of her daughters, was enough, and said more than words. Humility and charity are closely allied, and it is always those who are most detached and forgetful of self who are also most ready to think of the wants of others, even in little things. Mother Barat liked in the evening to stand in the passage leading out of the Community-room, holding in her hand a candle to give light to the Sisters as they passed by. When they tried to take it from her, "No, no," she said, "I have read somewhere that St. Theresa never went to bed without at least having performed one act of charity, and this is the only one I have done to-day."

She was anxiously solicitous about the health of her nuns. These were some of her rules on this subject. "It is God's will that we should take a little care of ourselves. We must, alas! acknowledge that the saints of our times

\* "In hilaritate vultus regis vita; et clementia ejus quasi imber serotinus" Prov. xvi. 15).

are different from those who preceded them. The strong constitutions of former days enabled them to bear great labours and immense austerities. It is almost the contrary with us as regards bodily health. And as the Author of all sanctity acts always in the same manner and in the same spirit, we must make up for our deficiencies, in that respect by an increase of humility, patience, gentleness, and so on. Our predecessors were wholesale dealers in sanctity, we must be satisfied with retail. If we knew how to manage it we might still grow rich with greater safety, for there is no room for pride in a simple common mode of life. To one of her daughters who was habitually delicate she said: "Take great care of your soul, my dear child, but try also to take care of your body, for I venture to say to you as the Angel did to Elias: 'Arise and eat, for you have still a long way to go.' If you throw yourself into the ardent furnace of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the good Master will renew your youth like that of the eagle." To another she playfully said, "Be as careful of your health, my child, as a fine lady;" and then like a true parent added, "or rather like a child of obedience to the poor Mother God has given you. In the light of faith you will be obeying Jesus."

She watched herself over the health of her daughters in all sorts of ways. Numerous instances of her maternal care are recorded, such as her sending the shawl she was wearing to a nun whom she saw walking in the snow at Conflans. "I cannot sit here," she said, "in this warm room with a shawl on and see that poor Mother out of doors without one. Take it to her, and desire her from me to put it on." Or bringing, herself, a mat and slipping it under the feet of a novice who was writing in a room paved with tiles. Before two nuns praying in the chapel without support, she one day silently placed prie-dieu chairs. In the night the Mother General was sometimes seen gliding through the house to see with her own eyes whether some of the more delicate

nuns were sufficiently provided with all they wanted. Her recommendations to the religious charged with the linen-room and kitchen were as follows : " You must furnish each Sister with all she needs. If out of a spirit of penance they choose to deprive themselves of things, they are at liberty to do so, but our duty is to see that they do not want for anything." Sometimes when nuns arrived from houses known to be poor, Mother Barat took care to replenish their slender stock of clothes, and tears often came into her eyes when she saw in their old, worn-out garments proofs of her daughters' courageous poverty. In case of illness she spared no pains to arrest a disease as soon as it appeared, and if necessary called in first-rate medical assistance. One of her daughters relates that Mother Barat would not be satisfied with consulting, as to her health, the ordinary physician of the house, but would insist on her seeing Dr. Cruveilhier, and answered when she protested against this and urged that the Mother General would not allow him to be called in to attend her, " Oh, I am so old that it is not worth while ; but you who are young can work a long time for the glory of God, if he cures you." An aspirant had been sent to Paris, great fears having been entertained as to her sight. When the oculist came to see the Sister, Madame Barat, who was at dinner, was called, and though then eighty-four years of age she assisted at the examination and consultation, anxiously watching the countenance of the oculist, as if to anticipate his verdict. When he turned to her and said, " There is nothing dangerous in the case," she seemed to revive, and tenderly taking her daughter's head between her hands she exclaimed, " Oh, my dear child, you are not going to be blind ! "

As soon as she arrived anywhere her first visit was to the infirmary. At the house at Paris she often took upon herself the office of infirmarian. It was one of her chief attractions. A sister who had become paralyzed was for

some time fed by Madame Barat who placed the morsels of food in her mouth with all the care of the tenderest mother. If on account of her advanced age something more delicate than usual was provided for her, or some of the early produce of the garden, she stealthily concealed it under her habit, and secretly carried it to one of her sick nuns. "Take this, my child, and don't tell any one," she would say, laughing at the trick she was playing on the Sister who was waiting upon her.

Her visits cheered the sick and made them forget their sufferings. Sometimes she sat hours by the bed-side of some poor sufferer. One day a novice who was ill with a slight fever saw the Mother General coming into her room, hardly able to walk from the state of her legs. "Is that you, Reverend Mother?" she exclaimed, quite astonished. "Do not say anything about it," Mother Barat answered; "I wanted to see if you had everything you wanted, so I contrived to creep up the stairs on my knees."

Her affectionate solicitude for the sorrows or anxieties of her spiritual daughters was not less keen. "I wish you," she said, "always to let me know when anything grieves you. If I cannot give you consolation I can at any rate pray and get prayers for you."

She always took the greatest interest in the family ties of her nuns and the events which concerned their relations. It was one of her maxims that parents who have given their children to God ought to be rewarded a hundredfold even in this world. When misfortunes befell them, not only did she sympathize with their afflictions, but if possible she endeavoured to relieve them, and often we find her managing in the most discreet manner she could devise to return the sum they had given as a dowry to their daughters. In questions of inheritance she was equally generous. We find the following recommendation in a

letter to a nun who had recently lost her mother. "Arrange everything in the way that will tend most to preserve family union and due esteem for the Society. That is all we care about and what we prize infinitely more than the few thousand francs that might devolve to us."

She missed no opportunity of obliging the parents of her nuns, particularly by admitting their children gratuitously into the schools of the Institute. "It is what I did by my own relations," she used to say, and her manner of granting a favour doubled its value. Having heard that one of the Superiors had a young niece whom her parents could not send to school for want of means, she arranged the matter with the nuns of that Community, and wrote to her on the eve of her feast: "My dear child, I know so well your delicacy of feeling and your discretion that I cannot help giving myself the pleasure of adding a flower to the bouquet which your daughters mean to present to you. That flower will be your niece, whom you may expect in a few days, and whom you will receive as a child specially recommended to you by your poor Mother." Her solicitude for the spiritual interests of the relations of her daughters was unwearied. "I can well understand," she wrote to one of them, "your anxiety and your sorrow with regard to your dear parents. I share your grief and will unite in prayer with you to obtain from the merciful Heart of Jesus that they may return to Him before they depart from this sad world so full of scandals. Alas, how many are in the same state! But in proportion to the increase of wickedness amongst men Jesus shows mercy, and numberless conversions are granted by the Sacred Heart of our Lord. Ask through the intercession of His beloved servant Margaret Mary. Her Divine Spouse will not refuse anything she prays for. She has already obtained so much from His Sacred Heart."

One of Mother Barat's nuns relates that having confided to her Superior the grief she felt at the godless state in which some dear relations of hers were living, she received the following answer: "Do not be distressed. They have excellent qualities and they will return to God. I promise you that I will do something for them, I do not say what, but be sure I will not forget them." What she did is not known, but soon afterwards these persons were all converted.

If the Mother General heard that one of her daughters had lost a parent, she hastened to make her feel by the kindest and most heartfelt sympathy, that she had still a mother on earth as well as a Father in heaven. Madame de Lemps, soon after she had joined the Sacred Heart, heard, whilst she was in Paris, of the death of her father. Madame Barat sent for her, and when she found this new daughter of hers had also lately lost her mother, she fondly embraced her and said, "Oh, my child, I will now be both a father and a mother to you." She always recommended the deceased parents of her nuns to the prayers of the novices. "My children," she used to say, "we must try to get these souls out of Purgatory in twenty-four hours by a Communion offered up as soon as possible after we hear of their deaths." Once an answer escaped her which indicated with what efficacy her own prayers were made for those dear souls. One of her nuns had received the news of the death of her father, and knowing that for some particular reason this intelligence would grieve the Mother General, she refrained from communicating it. Some months afterwards Madame Barat called her aside and said to her, "My child, you did not write to tell me of your father's death, it was your fault if in consequence he remained longer in Purgatory. Had you informed me of it I would have prayed for him. I have done so since the news reached me, and he is now in Heaven." These words

drew from the Sister an exclamation which startled the Mother General. She felt that she had said too much and could not be induced to utter another word on the subject. Spiritual trials above all others excited her affectionate commiseration, and no one knew better how to distil on such sufferings the holy balm of God's love. To one of her first companions she wrote: "What you tell me, my dear daughter, of your interior trials, goes to my heart. I conclude, then, that our Lord continues to treat you as His beloved one, as His faithful and generous spouse, by communicating to you only the bitterness of His chalice. He treats you as His Father treated Him. I envy your fate. It is the portion of valiant souls who are in love with pure love."

To another she suggests consolations in the style and spirit of St. Francis of Sales. "You must turn your trials to account, my dear child, for the benefit of your soul and then leave them in the hands of our Lord. Bees do not always gather what is sweetest from the flowers they suck, but also what is bitter, and that delicious food, honey, is made up of both. Do the same, my child, and by distilling your joys and your sorrows in the Heart of Jesus you will produce the good honey of perfection."

It has often been said, and with truth, that to give at the right moment doubles the gift. Mother Barat's consolations were always singularly well timed. To a Sister who had written to her in a moment of trial she sent an answer of four pages. It was on Good Friday, and she said, "I wished my letter to reach you on a day when you will find it sweet to lay your burthen at the foot of the Cross. I was also anxious that you should have it before Easter day, for your Mother's heart could not have been quite happy if she had felt that yours was sorrowful on so joyful a feast."

There was no distinction of persons in Mother Barat's

affection for her numerous family. If she could have had a preference it would have been in favour of the Lay-sisters whose humble occupations seemed so well to represent the humility of the Divine Master. She respected them because of the eminent dignity of the poor in Christ's Church. She honoured their position and even envied it. Often she said to them, "Oh, how I envy your little cap, I have asked for it often enough but could not obtain it." She inquired one day of the Sister who had the charge of the poultry if she would like to change places with her, and added: "I feel as if I should never lose sight of the presence of God, if I had your office. How happy it would make me!" One day at noon she was found in the kitchen peeling potatoes and taking lessons of a Sister, to whom she said: "Show me how to do it, Sister, for I never can do anything well." Another time as she was passing through the part of the gardens of the Hotel Biron called "the field," she offered to supply the place of the Sister who looked after the cows whilst the latter cleaned the stable, and with a stick in her hand performed the office as if in her whole life she had never done anything else.

She said one day to the Lay-sisters, "Ah, we are reckoned the first here, but I am afraid that in the next world the order of precedency will be changed, and that many a Sister leading a hidden life and working in the sight of Jesus will have a higher place than us in heaven." Sister Françoise hearing this exclaimed, "What, Reverend Mother, can I get such a place as that by only working in the kitchen?" "Yes, Françoise, you certainly can," was the answer, "and if you choose it you can have a better one than mine, for I do nothing, though I ought to give a good example."

She showed particular attention to these good Sisters. One of them relates that as the Mother General was once returning to Paris from Conflans she took some of them

in her own carriage instead of the choir nuns who envied their privilege, and when they thanked her she said, "What is there to be surprised at, my children? Are you not the spouses of Jesus of Nazareth? And are we not meant to live together throughout eternity?"

Her orders were always given in a spirit of respectful consideration. They were not in fact orders but requests. "Would you be kind enough, my dear Sister, to do such and such a thing," or, "You would oblige me, my child, by doing so and so, if it would not tire you too much," or, "if you have time," or, "if it would not be inconvenient," and she even insisted when occasion called for it that others should be attended to before herself. Her thanks for the commonest attentions were always given in the same spirit of humility and kindness. This used to touch so much a Lay-sister at the Villa Lante, a young girl from the Roman Campagna, that when Mother Barat went away she burst into tears and said: "Do you know that that holy Mother always begged me to do things, she never ordered me about. It was always 'Sister Angelica, could you gather a little grass,' when she might very well have said, '*Va te ne a l'erba.*'"

Another little instance of her deep respect for the spouses of Christ may be quoted. "A Lay-sister who waited upon her during one of her illnesses stated that the Mother General was one Christmas morning waiting for Holy Communion to be brought to her sick-bed and making aloud acts of love and praise which set the heart of her listener on fire. She now and then asked if the Mass was nearly over, if our Lord was soon coming. When I told her," the Sister went on to say, "that it was almost finished and that our Lord was about to arrive, she desired me to take some holy water and to bless her by making with my finger the sign of the Cross on her forehead. I trembled at the idea of a poor Sister like myself blessing

my venerated Reverend Mother, but I was obliged to obey, and I can never forget the impression her humility made upon me."

Nothing could be more kind and charitable than her reproofs and the excuses she found for those she had to find fault with. One day a Sister came with a dismal face to accuse herself of having broken a glass, which had already been injured. "Reverend Mother," she timidly said, "there was a star in it before." "And you, my child, have made it into a sun," was Madame Barat's playful answer. On another occasion when a Sister who was considered very stubborn was sent to her to be scolded, she gave her one of her gentle and penetrating looks and said: "My dear little Sister, I love you dearly," and the incorrigible Sister declared that her conversion dated from that moment.

Having one day deprived a Sister of the permission to communicate on the following morning on account of a fault of negligence with regard to the virtue of poverty, she sent for her at half-past five o'clock and said, "You can go to Communion, my child; you committed a fault, but I thought just now, 'How sorry my poor Sister Martha will be not to receive our Lord whom she loves so much,' and so I recall my prohibition." If the families of her nuns were suffering from poverty she always contrived to send them assistance. To be charitable towards everybody was her principle, but more especially towards her spiritual children. She had a keen insight into suffering of every sort and a ready sympathy for it. Once hearing that all the kitchen Sisters were crying because Sister Martha had received her obedience to go elsewhere, she sent for the Sub-Assistant and said: "I find, my dear Mother, that our Sisters in the kitchen are in despair at this order; I cannot bear to grieve them. Go and tell them that her departure is put off. We shall keep her here." There was a question of

dismissing a Sister who was very negligent and difficult to live with, but Mother Barat would not agree to it because the poor girl was penniless and weak in health. She pleaded guilty to a partiality for persons thus situated. Some people thought that the Mother General's goodness in such cases almost amounted to weakness, but excess of goodness is the failing of great souls. "It is only those who have great hearts," Fénelon said, "who know what a glorious thing it is to be good!"

We have already spoken of the solicitude of Mother Barat with regard to the health of her daughters. This was if possible still more strongly the case as to the Lay-sisters. She would not suffer them to be overworked, and insisted on their being made to rest in their old age. Her own clothes, her own shoes off her feet, her linen, were continually bestowed upon them. When they were ill she never visited them without saying cheering words. "Well, Sister, it seems that our good God attacks you on your weak side, you who were so active and worked so well. Come, you must turn it to account and unite yourself more closely to Jesus and His Cross." The death of Sister Marie who had waited upon her for fifteen years, and still more that of Sister Agnes in 1863, gave her the keenest sorrow. With tears and sobs she kept repeating during the night after the death of this humble friend, "I have lost my faithful companion;" and of all the trials which afflicted her old age, this was perhaps the one most bitter to her feelings.

It will perhaps be said that such details as these are beneath the dignity of history, but whilst describing the character of one who was the humble disciple of our good and merciful God, we feel that they complete the picture we have been endeavouring to draw, and since it is true, for our Lord has said it, that a glass of cold water given in His name shall not go unrewarded, is it not a duty to

record in the life of a saint so many titles to a heavenly recompense? So much charity in a Superior could not fail to win the affection of her children. No parent, no mother of a family was ever loved more than Madame Barat; and to this day, ten years after her death, this love is as strong and as universal as in the brightest days of her life. But we must not omit to add, that this holy Superior always checked and repressed what was too vehement and too personal in this filial affection, as derogatory to the supreme dominion of God over the heart of a religious. "We must never put anything," she was wont to say, "between our eyes and those of Jesus, between our heart and His." One day that her nuns were sitting round her, she exclaimed: "Oh, my children, how I love you! but I feel it right to add, you are not my God. My God is so great, but you are steps which help me to ascend to Him." To some of her most beloved and most loving daughters she wrote: "I have an anxiety which disturbs my peace of heart. How terrible it would be if I were the cause of the excessive sensibility I see in you! I do so ask of God to give you great detachment and freedom of soul." And in another letter: "Who ever loved his friends more tenderly than Jesus did when He was on earth? Only, my child, we must love Him above all, and let your heart be always ready to give up your Mother should your Divine Spouse require that sacrifice. He has the first claim upon you."

It must have been a great effort to a nature so tenderly affectionate as Mother Barat's to break off attachments just because of their intimate closeness and strength. We often notice in her letters that her heart bleeds, though her hand does not hesitate courageously to draw the arrow from the wound. We cannot doubt that this was the most painful sacrifice of her life. But she was strengthened on the one hand by her humility, which convinced her of her

own nothingness and persuaded her that she did not deserve to be cared for, and then by the charity which taught her soul to feel that God is all in all, and that the love of His creatures is due to Him alone. It almost seems as if He had wished to show this to Mother Barat in a forcible manner by permitting that the three daughters she had most loved, Mother de Gramont, Mother Galitzin, and Mother de Limminghe, should have been, we will not say the cause, but the occasion of her greatest trials. It was by these means that her sanctification was perfected, and her soul more and more purified and exalted.

## CHAPTER XV.

*Rue Cassini. The mother-house built on the Boulevard des Invalides. Madame Barat's mode of government.*

WHEN Mother Barat had taken possession of the Feuillantines she had declared that in that little nest she would live and die. But such was not God's will.

After the victorious close of the Crimean war, the French Government was anxious to engage in another direction the public mind of France, and thus stave off revolutionary attempts. It originated and encouraged a perfect mania for pulling down and rebuilding in Paris, and hoped by transforming and occupying the most turbulent parts of the city to keep it quiet. The house of the Feuillantines happened to be situated in one of those places destined to destruction and its remodelment and expropriation was decreed. The Mother General wrote in the month of April, 1856: "You know how conveniently we were lodged at the Feuillantines, in such pure air, such delightful quiet, not far from our belongings, and with a large and pleasant garden; and now they want to expropriate us in order to make streets in our garden. We are trying to resist, but it will be of no use. Where shall we find a refuge? God only knows. Paris is turned upside down and contains now no suitable abodes for religious communities. You see that we can never enjoy any quiet. The peace just signed by so many nations brings us nothing but disturbance. Well, at the Sacred Heart we must be detached from everything and hold to nothing."

After a fruitless search for a suitable house, Madame Barat made up her mind to build the mother-house and the residence of the probanists in that part of the gardens of the Hotel Biron furthest from the schools of the Rue de Varennes and close to the Boulevards des Invalides. In the meantime a small house was hired in the Rue Cassini, which could barely hold the Mother Assistants and the twelve or fifteen probanists. They gave to this abode the name of Nest of the Rue Cassini. "It is nothing but a corner to take shelter in," the Mother General wrote on the 15th of March, 1857. "But closely packed as we shall be, it will keep us together and the mother-house will subsist. We thus remain in the same locality, in a quiet situation and a good vicinity. We must be satisfied with it for three years." The removal took place in April, and a little temporary chapel was arranged. "To lodge our Divine Master is the most important point," Mother Barat wrote. "He will be poorly lodged indeed; but we shall possess Him, and that is everything."

On the 29th of June, the first stone was laid of the future mother-house, and on that day the Mother General said to her nuns of the Rue de Varennes: "God has given you, so to speak, the whole world in charge: His Heart gives it you, that you may promote His reign in it. Why are we in so few places as yet? And why when we are called to every part of the earth, have we still so few labourers? This is a mystery which the future may perhaps clear up, but I do not understand it."

The houses of the Sacred Heart continued indeed to be asked for in every direction. His Eminence Cardinal Pecci was begging for one at Perugia. During his residence as the Pope's Nuncio at Brussels he had often visited the convent of Jette-Saint-Pierre, and when he became Bishop of Perugia was already thinking of establishing the Institute

of the Sacred Heart in that town, when Pius IX., then on a visit to him, confirmed the prelate in his resolution and gave himself five hundred scudi for the first expenses, "for the purchase of the cups and saucers," His Holiness said.

A wish expressed by the Holy Father was of course an order for Madame Barat. "The Vicar of Christ has spoken," she wrote to Madame Lehon. "I am confident that God will help us to carry out a mission recommended to us by His representative on earth." On the 17th of November a colony from Rome went before its departure to get the Pope's blessing. "Go, my daughter," the Holy Father said to the Superior, "go and win souls for the Heart of Jesus, and do as much good as you possibly can in that country." The Revolution nipped this promising work in the bud.

In the following year the Society established itself in the Grand Duchy of Posen. In 1856 Mother Barat had written: "I am obliged to fight a hard battle with the Poles who are at Paris. They use all their efforts to push on the plan. It is hard work to resist, especially when one longs to yield, and yet we cannot make a move at present in that direction." At last, the Archbishop, Mgr. Léon Przyłuski, and General Chlapowski, father of a Polish novice of the Society, became so urgent in their solicitations that the Mother General gave way.

Amongst those who were sent to Posen was a Polish nun, Mother Pelagie Dziekonska, whose only fault seems to have been the excess of her enthusiasm for the Society and its Mother General. We find the following severe instructions addressed to her: "When questions are put to you about the Society, I beg that your answers may be humble and modest, and that a sense of inferiority to other religious orders, which have all laboured more than we have done as yet, should be expressed; that the number

of our houses should not be put forward. It is easy to elude questions on that point; above all things there must not be anything said about Superiors, or the name of Foundress used, for it is a vain usurpation. I reckon on being obeyed about this, for I hold to it very much."

The work of the Sacred Heart began at Posen in April, 1858, by the opening of a class for poor children who had been obliged up to that time to attend the Lutheran schools. The boarding-school was soon afterwards established. These works gave great satisfaction to all classes in that corner of Catholic Poland.

In both Northern and Southern America the Sacred Heart was also multiplying its houses. On a beautiful October day, 1857, the probanists were sitting round their Mother General at the hour of recreation when she said to them: "You know, my dear children, that we have long been asked for at Havannah. The governor of the island offered me a million of francs with which to begin our establishment. I told him that we did not want so much money, but that we must wait till America had furnished us with subjects for that mission. Well, my children, see how admirable are the ways of Providence. I have just received a letter from Manhattanville, which informs me that since June nineteen postulants have entered the novitiate, and amongst them are three natives of Havannah! It is evidently our Lord's will that His name should be glorified in that island; and yesterday Father Munnar, Rector of the Jesuits' College at Havannah, came to urge me to a decision, and declared he would not leave the house till I had bound myself by a promise." The promise had been given; and a few months afterwards Mother Hardey, Vicar of Eastern America, began the foundation. "I am told," her Superior wrote to her, "that those I send to you will be in danger of catching the yellow fever, which rages every year in that country.

But this miraculous supply of vocations must inspire us with great confidence, and induce us to leave everything to the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

At Chicago, in the north, Bishop Duggan was witnessing the sudden and immense extension of his diocese, which contains at this moment three hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. In 1857, he wrote to the Superior of St. Louis: "The moment is favourable. If you come at once your house will be full by September; and meanwhile there will be time to build, for things go on at a rapid pace in this country. Do not, Reverend Mother, refuse this good work. I see in it the finger of God." Mother Barat scarcely knew how to provide for this foundation, and for a moment thought of suppressing the establishment of St. Charles and transferring the Community to Chicago. But Madame Jouve pleaded the cause of that house, which had been the cradle of the American missions of the Sacred Heart, and where Mother Duchesne was buried. On the 26th of October, 1857, she implored the Superior General "to listen to the voice of that holy Mother, who from her heavenly home was appealing to her in favour of the poor little house of St. Charles." It was accordingly spared, and the one at Chicago also founded in August, 1858.

Santiago was the only place in South America where the nuns of the Sacred Heart had a house, until M. Justo Pastor Tapia, Rector of Talca, invited them to that town. They had no sooner arrived there than war broke out in that country. But their charity secured to them the respect of the belligerents on both sides, and their gratuitous schools were so numerously attended, that Mother du Rousier was obliged to apply to Madame Barat for reinforcements. "By dint of efforts," the latter wrote, "I hope we shall find in our nets a little rubbish for you. I assure you, my dear Anna, that we are nothing better than that. It is however the wont of the Divine Heart to work with

feeble instruments. We should be very guilty if we were not very humble. Without humility our works would be like dried leaves, only good for manure."

In the course of the year 1859 a foundation was made at Chamartin-de-la-Rosa, near Madrid. The Mother Vicar for the south, Mother de Valancise, in consequence of an earnest appeal for an establishment in the centre of Spain, had visited Toledo and Alcala, and then the convent of Valgarde, when as she was crossing the barren plains of Castille, she remarked a sort of oasis in the shape of a charming residence, surrounded by trees and delightfully cool. This place was called Chamartin-de-la-Rosa. It owed this appellation to the hedges of roses which surrounded it on all sides. She would have liked to buy this property. The Duke de Pastrana, to whom it belonged, was sounded on the subject, and answered with Castillian pride, that Chamartin was not to be sold. But when he heard that the nuns of the Sacred Heart wanted to purchase it, "If that is the case," he said, "I should like to *give* it to them." Thus an excellent house, well furnished, with twenty-seven acres of land, and surrounded by walls, was made over simply as a gift to the Sacred Heart, and that in the kindest and most generous manner possible. "O my dear daughters," the Mother General used to say, when she heard of such events, "to carry on such works apostles are required, and where are they?" And about that time she wrote as follows: "I shall have soon attained my eightieth year, and how little have I done in my life! for what has been done badly does not reckon. What gratitude I owe to our Lord, who gives me time to redeem the past. Ask His Divine Heart to bestow upon me that grace."

By the end of October, 1858, the new mother-house was in a condition to receive the probanists. It was erected at the furthest extremity of the grounds belonging to the

Hotel Biron on what was called the meadow. There was nothing conventual in its appearance, but it was well built and conveniently arranged. On one side it opened on the Boulevard des Invalides, and on the other on the garden. The frontage was too much ornamented to satisfy Madame Barat's love of simplicity.

On the feast of the Dedication of the Churches, November 7th, she came to reside with her daughters in this new house, and in her efforts to imbue it with the spirit of the Sacred Heart, was seconded by some of the oldest friends of her Society. Mgr. Parisis thus described their vocation to Madame Barat's children: "Forgetfulness of self, and no other care than to work, to pray, to suffer, and if need be, to die, in order to save souls."

The Abbé Trébuquet, on his way through France, recommended them to be scrupulously docile to the teachings of their first foundresses. "They are drawing near to the end of their course," he said, "they know that their days are numbered. Soon they may be snatched away from you like Elias the Prophet on the fiery chariot of divine charity. They are therefore in haste to see you growing in religious perfection. Oh! listen to them attentively, and when they can no longer raise their voices, continue to watch your Mothers in Christ. Their very silence is eloquent." The most illustrious of the apostles of the Sacred Heart, Father de Ravignan, had departed this life a year before that time, on the 26th of February, 1858, feast of the Five Wounds. His last words had been, "The wound in the Heart of Jesus! what a blessed door into heaven!" The last lines he wrote were addressed to the Community at Conflans: "If God vouchsafes to admit me into heaven, I shall not forget you. Farewell, I bless you for eternity."

The chapel of the new house was blest on the 22nd of June, 1859. Cardinal Morlot evinced on that day his

deep veneration for Mother Barat. In his answer to the address of the chaplain he said: "I invoke blessings not only on this visible building, but on that other building also, the Society founded sixty years ago, the foundation-stone of which I rejoice to see still amongst us. That corner-stone which, hidden as it is, bears the whole weight of the edifice. May it long exist, for the sake of an Order which so well deserves the esteem of the Church and of all those who have at heart the glory of Jesus Christ." Much abashed at such praise, Mother Barat knelt at the feet of the Cardinal, and uttered a few inaudible words. She then presented to him the keys of the house. He laid his hand upon them, and said: "I am happy to touch them, Reverend Mother General, but I hasten to give them back to your keeping; to you who have so long and so well taken care of them. They cannot be in better hands. Keep them, Reverend Mother; may you keep them a long time yet." These words moved to tears those present on the occasion.

The house of the Boulevard was the Mother General's constant and definitive residence from that time forward till her death. She had no longer strength to travel about, and the Superior Vicars supplied her place by visiting the Communities under their care. The Superior General continued to govern the Society by a laborious correspondence. The letters she received every morning were so numerous, that the postman could not sometimes refrain from saying, "Here is plenty of work for that lady! I pity her if she has to write to all the people who write to her." She did answer every one of those letters. During the whole of the morning, and sometimes all the evening, her pen was at work, and those who watched her earnest and animated countenance, could observe the various expressions which marked it, as sheet after sheet of paper was covered with her rapid and firm hand-writing. From time

to time she gave herself a few minutes of rest near our Lord in the chapel. In some of her letters we find these words: "I shorten what I have to say, my dear child, as I want to go and pray a little." When on her way to the chapel she seemed rather to fly than to walk, the loving impulse was so strong. But generally she contented herself with earnestly pressing in her hand her cross, which was her constant habit, or else raising her eyes to the crucifix, as if to seek there light and strength. She was continually interrupted, and in one of her letters she said: "I wish I could, like Cæsar, do four things at once. Two I am often obliged to accomplish at the same time, writing and listening, and that is already too much for my poor capacity, so I hope you will read my letter with indulgence." There was of course no time for study or art in this rapid correspondence. Mother Barat's letters are, however, remarkable for their simplicity, their lucidity, and their measured language. We find in them indeed that quaint originality called in France "Burgundian wit;" but good sense and warm heartedness are the principal characteristics of a correspondence which is the spontaneous outpouring of a most wonderful soul. The peculiar beauty of Mother Barat's letters consists in the constant reference of every thought, every word, every feeling, every expression, to our Lord, whatever may be the immediate subject they treat of. She owned it herself. "It goes against me," she said, "to use my pen if it is not to bring in the name of our Lord." And another time she wrote: "I do not know if I may borrow St. Bernard's language, and say that I care for no conversation in which the name of Jesus does not occur. It is of course for His sake that we talk of other things, but it would be much pleasanter to talk only of Him."

We have now to speak of the truly evangelical spirit in which Madame Barat governed her Order. We have already described the way in which she acted, and it will be well to

study the inspiring principle of her conduct with regard to the three separate works which constitute government. That is to say, organization, preservation, and, if necessary, reformation; or in other words, how she constituted, directed, and corrected.

The first point in the organization of a religious order lies in the choice of superiors and principal officials. This duty the Mother General considered a profoundly holy one. She never made an appointment of that kind without consulting, meditating, and praying. One of her nuns declares that it was before the tabernacle that the Mother General regulated all the affairs of the Society. Sometimes after prayer she unexpectedly changed the obedience she had given to one of her daughters. "God wills it so," she used to say; and the way in which she uttered those words left no doubt that it was indeed an order from heaven.

One of her maxims was, that "a religious of the Sacred Heart was to have no other country than the world and heaven." And claiming obedience from her spiritual children solely in the name of our Lord and of His love, she used to say, "You must belong to God, my child, without reserve or restriction. It must therefore be quite indifferent to you whether our Lord places you in Paris or Constantinople, you will find Him and the souls He has ransomed with His Blood wherever you may go." Viewing obedience in this light, she looked upon want of courage as a sort of sacrilege, and those who tell us of her admirable sweetness and patience speak also of her indignation when on rare occasions cowardly refusals seemed directly to outrage the Heart of Jesus. She wrote once to one of her nuns: "You are not obedient because you are not humble, and thus you fail to fulfil your vows. What are we to do with you? where are we to send you? How can a person imagine she is a religious, my dear child, if she will not suffer anything, if she flies from the cross? Read the

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*Life of Blessed Margaret Mary*, compare it with your own, and then act and be converted."

According to the same principle, she looked upon it as the part of a deserter to seek a release from office of one's own accord. She wrote to one of her most useful nuns: "I am not at all pleased with your supplications to be relieved from your office of Superior. It is false humility; you dread responsibility and trouble, whereas you ought to accept the cross in order to spare others less sinful than yourself. Is it not necessary that there should be souls ready to devote themselves for the sake of the Society? Be only too glad that God gives you the opportunity of making a sacrifice and giving Him a proof of real love." Another time, one of her most efficient nuns asked to exchange her important office for that of a Sister in the kitchen. Mother Barat's gently satirical answer was: "I have no objection to it. If there is a Sister in the kitchen who can undertake your office and be procuratrix and mistress of the parlour and a councillor instead of you, by all means make the exchange and go and work in the kitchen." Then, speaking more seriously, she added: "Knowing as you do the needs of the Society and its lack of subjects, I cannot understand how such ideas can enter into your head. Believe me, there is a great deal of illusion—to use no harsher word—in all these plans of greater, but, in fact, of false perfection, which deviate from the ordinary line. Remain quietly where you are, my child, and try to settle the affairs of your office as soon as possible, in order to come to us for your probation. We shall then make you sweep and work in the kitchen, that is as much as we can do for you." But strong as were her ideas as to obedience, nothing could be more free from dry formality than Mother Barat's system of government. She was inflexible when the will to obey was wanting; but when the principle of

obedience was fully accepted and acted upon, she spared no pains to make the practice of it easy. Nothing could exceed the delicate kindness with which she dealt with her daughters when she required a sacrifice at their hands. The following letter to Mother de Limminghe, when she had to withdraw her from Rome, is a proof of it: "I know, my dear child, the strength of your attachment to me. I can hardly say whether that kind feeling of yours gives me most pain or pleasure at this moment, for I must break to you that our Divine Master asks from both of us a sacrifice, which I know will be as painful to you to accept as it is to me to require it. But I cannot do otherwise. It is the will of our Lord." And after telling her where she was to go, the Mother General added: "I write this instead of speaking of it, in order to spare my own feelings rather than yours, for you have followed for years the most generous course of detachment, and are more and more inured to it."

In the same considerate manner she wrote to Superiors when obliged to withdraw from their houses some valuable assistant. For instance, to the Superior of Amiens she said: "We want for Berrymead a person of mature judgment, deeply religious, entirely devoted to the Society, but of a calm disposition—one who will suit English people. Well, it is only in your house that I can find what we require. But I feel that I am depriving you of your hope, your support, your greatest comfort. You know how it must pain me thus to grieve you. Tell me, my dear Mother and daughter, does this sacrifice cost you too great an effort? It will be—I feel it—the result and the fruit of your retreat. I should scarcely have had the courage to propose it, if we had not just been meditating on the truth that God is everything and creatures nothing. How could we, after that, refuse to act generously?" Whenever Mother Barat sent her nuns to a trying post, she knew how to strengthen

and encourage them. One of her daughters relates that when she was sent for by the Mother General and told that she was expected to go to a very distant mission—that of Lemberg—her eyes filled with tears, upon which her Superior said: “Do not be afraid; you will not be left to yourself; our Lord will do what I shall not be able to do. He will be your guide. Trust in Him; abandon yourself to the Heart of Jesus. He will bless you as I bless you at this moment.” “These words fell on my ear,” says the nun to whom they were addressed, “with a strengthening power: they seemed to me a prophecy, and I carried them away in my heart.”

Mother Barat tried to impress on her spiritual children that practical sense of God’s Providence, that desire of a complete surrender to His will, which opens the only true source of consolation. To one of them she wrote: “If not a hair falls from our head without the will of God, how much more is a change in your destination the result of that Divine Will? How can we then venture to complain? Should we be real nuns if we did? You will understand later on the merciful and tender foresight of the Heart of Jesus. And how happy you will be at the hour of your death, to have left all to follow Christ.”

She sometimes carried very far the limits of condescension. Having sent to one of her daughters the order to go to a place where, humanly speaking, there was little to attract, she received from her an answer written in a truly religious spirit, but with a shade of regret and sadness in its tone. Mother Barat, knowing well the soul she was dealing with, left the final decision to herself. “I own,” she wrote, “that I had reckoned on your devotion and attachment to the Society, and on your being willing to help it at a trying moment; but if you find this sacrifice too hard a one, and especially if it interferes with your inward peace, I do not hesitate in withdrawing your obe-

dience, which I only send you conditionally. I shall indeed find it difficult to supply your place, but Jesus will help us. If, on the other hand, you make up your mind, everything is arranged to soften your exile, for such I see you consider it. Alas! is not this earth as it is an exile also? I feel every day more that we have no real home but in heaven." The good Religious made the only possible answer to this letter—she went to her destination.

Once a Sister showed so intense a dislike to the post which had been assigned to her, that the Superior of the house she belonged to sent her to the Mother General, in order to beg for a revocation of her commands. She felt somewhat distressed and embarrassed at appearing before Madame Barat, who was at that time confined to her bed by illness. But as soon as she entered the room she was greeted by the words, "Oh, here comes my prodigal child. You know why I give you that name. Was not the Prodigal Son his father's favourite?" The whole conversation was in that strain. As one of her daughters says: "We would have gone to the end of the world for the sake of hearing those sort of things from her lips."

She was herself astonished at the obedience and submission of her children. She told them one day it made her feel in a sensible manner that it was a higher hand than her own which guided them. Speaking of two of her nuns, she said: "They are in my hands like balls which I can throw from one end of the world to the other." And another time she remarked, that having asked herself the reason of the singularly peaceful deaths of all her daughters, she found it in the spirit of obedience, self-devotion and sacrifice existing amongst them, and which in the eyes of God compensates for many defects. She could not help wondering sometimes how, at a word

or a stroke of the pen, one or five or ten persons would rise up and leave everything without even asking "why?" And this not once only, but over and over again.

Having organized her Communities, Mother Barat's next care was to maintain them in the spirit of their Institute, and as that Institute comprises a life of action combined with a life of prayer, it was on these points that she was careful to instruct the Superior Vicars, the local Superiors, and the principal officials of the Society.

The first of these points was prayer, that is, union with God. St. Theresa has said "that the shepherd who performs his duty must stand at the top of the hill, overlooking and protecting his flock. For a directress of souls, this height should be that of prayer." Mother Barat wrote to a Superior: "You must be with regard to our Lord, at home like a little spaniel, abroad like a hound; that is, you must lie at His feet in adoration and pursue His work with incessant zeal. No doubt it is difficult to combine both those lines; it would be easier to be devoted entirely to one or the other, like Carmelites on the one hand, or Sisters of Charity on the other. But then, our vocation consists exactly in that combination." "What makes a good Superior," she often said, "is a strict dependence on God in everything we do. Our effort ought to be to draw down into our souls the spirit of Jesus Christ—*Dulcis hospes animæ*—to establish Him there as a Master, and ourselves retire into a corner, like a servant who stands always aloof but under her mistress's eyes, waiting to do her bidding." "Get rid of your own selves and give yourselves up to Jesus Christ, and you will then, I assure you, govern well." "We must feed souls with the true food of Jesus Christ." "If we are to resemble Jesus and govern as He governs, we must live in Him and suffer with Him." "A Superior," she was also wont to say, "must be the cross-bearer of her Community." Hundreds

of her letters are full of comments on these maxims. The active duties of a Superior embrace two objects. The guidance of individuals, direction in short, and the care and management of affairs. With regard to the first, Madame Barat inculcated an equal combination of gentleness and energy. "The longer I live the more I am convinced that the best way of governing is to be at once firm and gentle. But gentleness is not weakness. Firmness is necessary in order to sever nature from grace. It must be, however, a firmness that knows how to separate without making rents which it would be afterwards necessary to mend. Nothing is gained by that process. In general, we must lean on the side of kindness rather than of justice. A nun of the Sacred Heart must be guided by duty and not by fear. Our Lord likes us to exceed on the side of indulgence. O dear Lord Jesus Christ, where should we be if Thou hadst been severe with us?" But varying her instructions according to the characters of each of her daughters, she sometimes added, "that in this effeminate age discipline cannot be maintained without Christian energy; that a house governed with too loose a rein was on the brink of ruin, and that always to throw a veil over faults is to hide fire under ashes, and to prepare the way for an inevitable explosion." She advises Superiors to be calm, not to speak much, not to be overactive, to exert influence rather than exercise authority, to leave to each member of the Community her own work to do, without absorbing everything themselves; to take pains to train those under their care, to avoid commotion, to be regular and concise in their method of direction, and, like good shepherds, noiselessly to watch over their flock. She summed up these instructions by saying "that women must be looked after as the angels look after us, that is, invisibly and imperceptibly."

As to temporal affairs, Madame Barat wished them to

be considered as a part of the work done for God. "It is necessary," she said, "sometimes to attend to our small treasures on earth, but we must hasten to turn our thoughts to our real treasure, Jesus in heaven."

A religious integrity in all matters of business was always strenuously inculcated by Mother Barat. It was with her a matter both of justice and charity. She wrote to a procuratrix, "You must not make the least delay in paying your workmen. Winter is coming on, and poor people suffer twice as much from the badness of the times if they do not receive their wages at once. I could never make up my mind to let a workman wait for his money, and this for two simple reasons. To attempt something beyond our means is a fault against prudence and also against justice. The cross of being in debt is the most painful one our Lord could lay upon me."

She strenuously maintained a spirit of humility and poverty in the administration as well as in the direction of her Society, in little things as well as in great things, and wished to exclude from all its houses what savoured of luxury, magnificence, or even art. "I must tell you, my child," she wrote to one of her nuns who was making a foundation, "that your ideas are thought too grand. Your parlours are not simple enough. People say that your pupils will get used to a style of house which will tend to make them dissatisfied with their simple country homes." She reproved severely a Superior who had allowed a fine portico and a stone colonnade to be built for the house at Chambéry. At Montigny, near Metz, she stopped at once a building begun in a handsome Gothic style, and in spite of the incongruous effect produced, insisted on its being finished in a plain manner. Numerous facts of this kind are on record. "I should prefer," she said, "that this little Society, which God has visibly blessed, should cease to exist, than that the spirit of

poverty should decrease in it, for this is the curse of communities."

But together with the love of prudence, justice, economy, and poverty she had a most generous and liberal spirit. There was nothing mean, petty, or narrow in her views. As soon as she perceived or even suspected that any of her Communities were suffering from pecuniary wants, she gave them large sums, she sent them furniture, clothes, whatever seemed most needed. Her love of giving was intense, and her way of giving made a gift doubly welcome. We see this in almost every one of her letters. For instance, to a Superior of a new foundation she writes: "I am sure that it is out of discretion that you do not ask me for anything. I am afraid that you are suffering from cold and that you do not eat enough. This would be entirely against my wishes, my dear Alix. I will send you a thousand francs more as soon as I can. You must not deprive yourself of necessaries, your strength must be kept up." Once she said to a Superior who had owned that she could not sleep at night on account of her anxiety about debts, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, my child, and all these things will be added to you;" and then when she was going away on the following day she exclaimed, "I should really like to give you good nights by paying your debts. I wish I could pay them all;" and at once she gave her a sum of fourteen thousand francs, adding that if in the course of five months her house was still in the same difficulties she would contrive to relieve her from that embarrassment. "You will have plenty of sufferings," she kindly said, "which I shall not be able so easily to relieve." "Pity me," she wrote to a Superior in the New World, to whom she was sending a sum of money, "for being able to do so little to help you. But my dear Americans know better than I do, that the Sacred Heart is far from being a California!"

But besides the obligations of constituting and maintaining, it is sometimes the duty of a governing power to correct and to reform ; nothing was more painful to Mother Barat than this duty, but she did not shrink from it, and followed in its performance the rule laid down by St. Augustine, that is, to begin by warning, then reproof, and lastly to threaten. "Love," says that great Doctor of the Church, "is the eye of the soul. To love is to see." Mother Barat wrote as follows to a Superior: "My dear Mother, it is indeed a great fault to believe too easily what is bad and without sufficient proofs, but it is by far a greater evil to refuse ever to believe in it and determinately to shut one's eyes." To another she said: "I do not listen to reports, I have stood up for you as long as I could, I have only given way when actual evidence was laid before me of the facts alleged with regard to your manner of governing." In another instance she sent to a Superior the list of charges made against her, and thus left the cause in her own hands. "I know you better than any one else, and begin by saying that I do not believe a word of it. But I wish you to send me explanations on these several points, which will place them in their true aspect, the one in which you yourself see them, in the light of the humble Heart of Jesus. I know this will be an effort, because you dread everything like a discussion with your first Mother. But consider the matter calmly. I know your religious spirit, and I ask of you to perform this act of obedience towards a Mother whom you love."

Very often, to the great joy of the Mother General, such explanations turned out complete justifications. She wrote to a Superior at Poitiers: "Tell your Juliette that her explanation has been a great relief to me. Now the whole thing is forgotten and buried in the depths of the Heart of Jesus Christ. He understands, and fills up with His mercy the abyss of our miseries. How good He is, always to

forgive us!" And another time she says: "I had indeed been under a painful impression, my dear child, but it has disappeared since we have understood one another. It is so sweet to be united in heart and soul in the Heart of Jesus; a word is enough in that case to remove misapprehensions."

Often she blamed herself on these occasions and begged forgiveness of her daughters. One of them tells us that having on her arrival in Paris opened her heart to the Mother General with regard to the sufferings she had undergone at a house she had just left, Mother Barat was painfully affected at the recital and said, "My child, I have been the cause of all these trials. Poor children! I ought to have protected you against them by taking more heed of the reports that reached me. I trusted too much to my own impressions. Forgive me, my child, and ask God to forgive me. I shall feel sorry for it as long as I live."

If once she was convinced that her daughters had been in fault she pointed it out to them without disguise. Those she loved best were the most severely reproved. She wrote to a nun who was very dear to her, "If I were less anxious to see you perfect, and if you were not one of the dearest of my children, I should have overlooked so small a thing, as I often do in the case of others. But with you I cannot bring myself to overlook it, I so intensely wish the Divine Heart to rejoice in your fidelity. Is this vanity? I think, however, that I care more for the interests of the Heart of Jesus than for my own. But we are such wretched creatures that I cannot answer for it." Her reproofs were very energetic. We have perhaps not sufficiently shown that side of her character, evinced by the severe manner in which she visited any faults of pride or negligence in God's service. Her threats, for instance, to exclude from profession an unsatisfactory aspirant: "I will not have in the Society a half-and-half religious. Those who wish to remain

in it must sanctify and save themselves, for otherwise it is better not to make vows. Think of this, my child, during Holy Week, when we meditate on the immense love of God for us, whether in the institution of the most Holy Eucharist or the mystery of the Cross. If we really understood what we owe to Jesus Christ, could we think of not turning to account so many graces? I cannot go on. I will pray for you, my child—and I will hope!”

To a Superior she says: “I have seen for a long time past, my dear Mother, that my suggestions are unwelcome and disagreeable to you. I make them simply with a view to your advantage and that of your house, and in order to teach you how to govern. Perhaps somebody else may succeed better than I do, so I shall send you our good Mother Desmarquest and spend my own time on others. This will not make me less solicitous about your Community, which is very dear to me. I will leave you to the care of one who can bestow upon you more leisure than I can, and will content myself with praying a great deal for you.”

Once when a Superior had complained of the indocility of one of her nuns, Mother Barat wrote: “Find an opportunity of sending that Sister to me, I will converse with her, and ascertain what is God’s will in her regard. Pray that I may not give way to the indignation I feel in the presence of such faithlessness. Why did that soul vow to belong to Jesus Christ? nobody obliged her to do so. Oh how ungrateful we are!” Those who under such circumstances were sent to Madame Barat, generally left her subdued by her energy and won over by her love. One of them said, as she left her room, “It seemed to me like heaven on earth, and made me think of our Lord conversing with men.”

When she had been obliged to speak strongly and reprove severely, the Mother General never failed to soothe in an indirect manner the pain she had been obliged to

inflict. "I have said all I was obliged to say," she wrote on one occasion, "now let us banish the subject from our minds. Errors in judgment are nothing in my eyes when I am certain the heart is good. I know yours well, therefore any displeasure I may have felt is easily dispelled." One of her Assistants had written a sharp reproof to a Superior. Mother Barat, when she had read it, wished to add a postscript, it extended over four pages. "You know my dear daughter how dearly this good Mother Assistant loves you, and how much she wishes to help you in your labours. I am convinced that you will understand the feelings which have made her write this reproof. I do not cancel any part of it, but I was anxious to add a few words from your first Mother, which will soften I hope any bitterness of heart they might occasion. Come, my child, do not be disheartened, I am satisfied with your zeal; be sure, my child, that our Lord loves you."

It is easy to imagine the effects produced by the advice, the reproofs, the exhortations, written in this spirit, which went every day from the mother-house to the various houses of the Society. Madame Barat herself was the only person who wondered at it. When told of the happy result of one of her letters, she looked quite surprised and said: "What, that poor letter so carelessly written? It must have undergone some change on its way."

Deviations from the spirit of the Institute she could never be brought to tolerate. Once the nuns of a Community which she was visiting presented to her a magnificent piece of embroidery which they had worked themselves, but at the cost of many an hour which ought to have been devoted to sacred duties of obligation. Mother Barat knew that this had been the case, and she began by speaking strongly about poverty and the humble labours of our Lord. Laying her hand on the unhappy offering she said: "My dear children, we must therefore tear up this

work or else tear up our Constitutions." The sentence was carried into execution, and as she began the work of destruction, she exclaimed: "Thus may everything perish which would vitiate the spirit of our Institute." Visiting on one occasion one of the dearest of her houses, the convent at Turin, Mother Barat found that dissensions existed between the Superior and the Mistress General of the school, and that each had a party on her side. She began by removing from the house the principal cause of the dissensions, and then assembled all the religious. "What has become of the oft-repeated promises," she asked, "which engaged to make of this house a garden of delights? Can our Divine Master take pleasure in the midst of the thorns of dissension?" She spoke with such vehemence that her daughters were moved to tears. "Now," she added, "we must atone for the past, and I must give the example." Upon which she knelt at the feet of the Superior, and then at the feet of every one of her daughters and kissed them. From that moment peace was established, and the house of Turin became once more a garden of delights.

Such was to the end Madame Barat's system of government. Such is the way in which saints have always ruled. Possessing their souls in patience they influence rather than constrain; their voice is not heard in the streets. They imitate Him who never broke the bruised reed or quenched the smoking flax. To them belongs the evangelical promise, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the land." And by their means is fulfilled the petition in our Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### *Mother Barat's exterior direction. Two of her Pupils in the World.*

MADAME BARAT'S influence was not limited to the sphere of her Communities, nor even of her schools. She remained the Mother of her pupils after their education was finished. Two striking and strongly contrasted examples will illustrate the nature of the apostolate which she carried on among the young women in the world who had been brought up in her convents. We have already mentioned in the first chapters of this history the name of Caroline de Beaufort, one of the first pupils of the house at Amiens, and have likewise seen how, at a subsequent period, after she had become Countess de la Grandville, and was living at Lille, she promoted the establishment of the Sacred Heart in that town and in Belgium.

From the time that this young girl left the school of Amiens, Mother Barat never lost sight of her. "Constancy in my affections," she wrote to this dear pupil, "is the only good quality for which I am noted. I believe that this arises from my not easily engaging in intimacies." And in another letter she gives the supernatural reason for her attachment to Mdlle. de Beaufort. "Could we ever forget a pupil of the Sacred Heart, who has made up her mind to save her soul at any cost and to become a saint?"

For forty years Madame Barat carried on a correspondence with this lady which shows how incessantly all the warmth of her heart and the superiority of her mind were

employed in strengthening her in her trials and encouraging her in her struggles.

As long as Caroline lived in the house of her father, the Marquis de Beaufort, who was Mayor of Nancy, and under the care of her mother, Léopoldine de Merode, as long as she had been appreciated, admired and flattered by a distinguished society, her letters to Mother Barat had been few and far between. She was happy at that time. Her mind and her talents were far above the common order. She was devoted to art and to literature, and was conversant with foreign languages. She even studied the classics, and one of her biographers attributes the energy and heroism which were combined in her character with an intense sensibility, to her intimate knowledge of the thoughts and writings of the greatest men of former ages. But everything changed when, after her marriage with the Count de la Grandville, she found herself deprived of all the social and intellectual enjoyments she had so highly prized, and banished, as it were, to Lille, or to the Chateau de Beaucamps, at three miles distance from that town. Her feelings had not been consulted by her parents with regard to her marriage, only the convenience of her own and her husband's family, and though the Count de la Grandville was a good and kind man, Caroline, very superior to her husband in character and mind, could not find happiness in this union. The life she led in the house of her father-in-law was anything but a happy one. She had no children, and feeling deeply after some years the separation from her parents and the cheerless solitude of her existence, she turned to the guide of her childhood for aid and consolation.

Mother Barat, before advising the young Countess, began by sympathizing with her. "Your letter," she wrote to her, "deeply affected me. If I had been alone I believe I should have cried over the remembrance of your child-

hood, and the thought of your present position and my own inability to contribute to your happiness, which I so earnestly desire. I am so grieved about you, my dear Caroline, and yet I feel that your resignation and your struggles endear you to our Lord. Be very faithful. Take up and bear your cross with courage. Jesus will help you to carry it. I even hope and believe He will lighten it."

Disappointed with the world, and only comforted by the ties which bound her to her Christian friends, it naturally happened that Madame de la Grandville indulged in regrets for the religious life to which she had at one time thought herself called, but Mother Barat considered it right to check those vain and therefore dangerous longings. "In your state of life," she wrote to her, "you can love and serve God with more perfection and purity of heart than nuns often do. Most of the saints God has made use of to carry on great works, even in religion, have begun by being married. Try then to advance in perfection, with peace and resignation to God's will, who if He has chosen to call you to a less perfect state, has done so for the very purpose that you should excel in true and deep humility."

Father Varin cooperated in the direction of this much tried soul. "He is the only person," Madame Barat says, "to whom I show your letters, that he may think of you and pray for you." And again, "Father Varin likes to hear of my dear child, and when he sighs I know what are his thoughts; he prays very earnestly for his spiritual daughter. Every time I mention your name, he raises his eyes to heaven, and I can see how much he feels for you. That good and true friend is going to write to you a few words of encouragement." If Father Varin's letters to his penitent and those she wrote to him and Madame Barat had been preserved we should have seen touching proofs of the way in which religion can soften the most acute sorrows of domestic life. The Mother General's letters are

in themselves an admirable course of practical instructions to a young woman exposed to the dangers of the world.

Madame de la Grandville did not seek worldly homage, but it was spontaneously paid to her. Her cleverness, her goodness, her generous warmheartedness, the need she felt of sympathy and kindness, joined to an irresistible charm of manner, sometimes attracted people to her, and the admiration she excited, to a certain degree disquieted her own heart and interfered with her peace of mind.

Mother Barat fully understood the danger of this state of things and would have wished to be near her spiritual daughter to guard her against them. "My dear Caroline," she wrote, "would I could spend some hours with you. How many sad and consoling things we should have to talk about, ending always with these blessed words, 'God is good.'" At any rate, by her letters she tried to warn and guide her much-loved pupil. "You are still too much influenced," she tells her, "by the things of this world. This is not extraordinary, for you are obliged to live in it; try by degrees to detach yourself from earthly cares, but in a way that will not excite observation." Earnestly she begged of her at any cost to attach herself to her new home. She had given her as a maxim the words, "God alone and your duty," and added, "by that I mean God and your family." She urged her to remain under the roof of her husband's parents. Madame de la Grandville would have liked to take advantage of an opportunity of living at Nancy near her own relatives. Mother Barat strongly objected to this plan, which she thought a dereliction of duty. "Better to endure a long and painful martyrdom," she wrote, "it will in any case end with your life, and we may hope it will serve to sanctify you. God, who sees the extent of this sacrifice, will strengthen you, and will not allow your soul to suffer from it. Above all, my dear Caroline, do not give way to discouragement and

low spirits. Your health will fail if you abandon yourself to sorrow and dejection. If it is God's will that you should find nothing but disappointment and bitterness in your intercourse with those whom it is your duty to love, accept His will. Bear with them, love them from a sense of duty. And love Him above all things."

But by that time, what Madame Barat apprehended had already happened. Most serious fears were entertained as to the health of the young Countess. The Mother General asked for prayers in every direction. A novena was made for her in the house at Paris. She recommended her dear child to Prince Hohenlohe, the great miracle worker of that day; and at the tomb of the holy Aloysia at Grenoble, where she was in 1823, she petitioned for her recovery. Over and over again she wrote letters of hope or of consolation to the invalid who, according to a prevalent idea in France, was living in the cow stable of the chateau in order to inhale the breath of those animals, supposed to be curative in cases of chest complaint. At times she mingled with those consolations words evidently intended to prepare her to whom they were addressed for the end which at that time seemed near at hand, but such was not the case. The Countess de la Grandville went to Italy, and found so much benefit from the change of scene, and the beautiful, the artistic, and the religious enjoyments of that journey, that she returned to France with improved health. Useful reminiscences and notes of her journey furnished materials for a remarkable work which appeared under the title of *Souvenirs de Voyage*. Mother Barat's prayers had accompanied her during this journey, and their correspondence was renewed when the young Countess returned to the Chateau de Beaucamps where "the cross had followed her and abided with her."

But Madame de la Grandville was determined at any cost not to offend God. Her friend knew it, and encouraged

her by such words as these : "Your letter has cheered me, my child. You are all that I wished and thought you capable of being—noble-hearted, generous, solidly and reasonably devout, and endowed with the sort of faith that would enable us to suffer martyrdom, were we happy enough to be offered that privilege." Another time she wrote : "I have long besought our Lord to despoil you of everything short of Himself, and to enable you to find neither peace nor happiness but in Him alone, according to those words of St. Augustine : *Fecisti nos ad te Deus, et irrequietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te.*"\* You will enter into the feelings of that saint for whom you have so much admiration and sympathy." And in another letter : "Be courageous, my child, and God will have mercy on you. If your friends feel for you and are grieved at your sorrows, how much more will the compassionate Heart of Jesus look tenderly on your sufferings? Love Him more than any creature. Fear above all things to displease Him. Let that be your constant rule."

Mother Barat had sometimes to appeal to the heart, sometimes to the conscience of Madame de la Grandville, and made use of every circumstance in her life which she could turn to account for the purpose of strengthening and sustaining her amidst the temptations and difficulties of a singularly trying position. In 1832 she wrote to her friend : "At your age you have still to fight against those natural gifts which, in spite of your own wishes, lead others away from the Sovereign Good. Oh ! if they would but remember that those gifts which they admire are but tiny emanations of God's infinite perfections, how they would appreciate His boundless excellence, and love Him far more than His creatures." And later on she says : "Now that age has calmed the vehemence of your affections, fix them entirely

\* "Thou hast made us for Thee, O God, and our heart is restless until it reposes in Thee."

on the Sovereign Good, and do not let creatures stand in the way of your attainment of that great and exalted end; let them be only stepping-stones which help you to ascend to Him. This was your Creator's object when He gave you so many gifts and the power of attracting souls to His love." "Without intending it, you are a snare for souls sighing after happiness and attracted by the charm of virtue. This being the case, virtue must be in you very pure and austere. You become too easily intimate with people. In your character and in your manners there is a freedom from constraint and an unaffected eagerness which renders you attractive. Try to conceal from the eyes of men qualities which make even good people too fond of you. It is time, my dear child, that you should practise greater reserve and evince in your manners that purity, delicacy, and uprightness which really exist in your soul. Give your whole heart to God, and love only in Him those you ought to love. Be prudent, firm, and courageous. Be like a rock in the midst of a stormy sea; keep out of the way of danger. Trust in God's help, not in the mere fact that you are growing older. It is God alone that your soul needs. Do not seek for compensation in the affection of creatures."

At a time when the Marquis de Beauffort, the beloved father of her friend, was lying in a hopeless state on a bed of pain, Madame Barat wrote as follows to the heart-broken daughter: "How I pity you, my dear child! but on the other hand, how many graces God bestows on your good father. He is now receiving the reward of his virtuous life. My dear child, do not grudge him the happiness he will soon attain! Accept this sorrow, and live on to practise amidst your relatives the virtues of that dear parent." After the news of the Marquis' death had reached her, she said: "My dear daughter—for now that your father is in heaven I feel more than ever that I am your mother—think how

short, after all, will be this separation. A few years more and you will be with him again. You are at the eve of that happy day ; for what are even centuries by the side of eternity ?”

After the Countess had lost her sister, the same affectionate solicitude was expressed. “I heard at Turin of the sad unexpected death of your sister Pauline : I feel convinced that God has received her in the abode of eternal bliss. You will be a mother to her children. Pray very earnestly for the grace of the Holy Ghost, that you may bring them up in the fear and love of God. Oh, my dear child, everything is comprised in that—nothing else signifies.”

When Madame de la Grandville’s father-in-law had departed this life, Mother Barat suggested thoughts which bore ample fruit in the sequel. “This death will make you realize more than ever your isolation. Alone with your husband you will feel in a stronger manner the absence of real companionship. But as a Christian heroine you will more than ever evince great patience and gentleness. You will supply to him the place of his father, and now that your fortune is increased you can enjoy the happiness of doing more good. This will be a solace which such a heart as yours will gladly accept. You will help those who seek your aid ; you will be the consolation of the afflicted, the providence of the destitute, and the prop of your family. These virtues, if calmly practised and in a spirit of faith, will gradually be shorn of that excess of merely natural tenderness which exhausts and tortures you.”

Under this wise and prudent direction, Madame de la Grandville devoted herself to good works with all the energy and zeal of her ardent character. Deprived by God’s will of the happiness of having children of her own, she made for herself a family composed of sufferers of every sort. It is difficult to give an idea of all she did for the Church and for the poor.

Before the Revolution an ancient place of pilgrimage, called Notre Dame de Grâce, had existed at Loos, near Lille. But the church had been destroyed, and the faithful no longer frequented the spot. Madame Barat's pupil undertook the work, and Notre Dame de Grâce rose from its ruins. When, in 1832, the cholera raged in the village of Beau-camps, Madame de la Grandville bought a house which she turned into an hospital. Gathering all the sick under its roof, she nursed them herself with the assistance of the Sisters of the Child Jesus, and thus saved the lives of many. When the epidemic disappeared the Community remained in the house, and opened a poor school for girls. A boarding-school was subsequently added to this establishment, and the Marist Brothers called to begin one for boys. In 1850 the novitiate of that congregation, which at this moment imparts Christian education to fifteen thousand children all over the world, was instituted in the same place. In her estate at Boisgrenier she transformed the chapel of the hamlet into a parish church. At Lille she contributed considerably to the foundation of a house of the Good Shepherd, and established a refuge for penitents at Loos. Half of her house and the whole of her garden at Lille she gave to the Jesuits to build a church, and the patronage work established by those Fathers is partly due to her assistance. And then her truly Catholic charity turned to the foreign missions. She herself bought a ship destined to navigate in the seas of Oceanica, and made a present of it to Mgr. Bataillon, Bishop of those islands. Such was the response made by the worthy daughter of Madame Barat to her spiritual mother's exhortations.

It was a great delight to the Superior General in her visits to Lille to witness all these good works, many of which were owing to her suggestion. Sometimes she had to cheer Madame de la Grandville and guard her against discouragement when her charitable efforts met with an

amount of opposition not unfrequently offered in our days to similar undertakings. "What a life," she says, "you are leading, always anxious, always travelling, carrying about your cross, and Providence adding to it those of others! God has given you both depth of feeling and strength of character. These gifts make weaker souls look up to you, and oblige you, as it were, to guide and to support them. It is a holy and noble thing to use this power of influence in saving souls and preserving them from the snares that beset them." If Madame de la Grandville complained to Mother Barat of the inconceivable ingratitude with which she was sometimes treated by those on whom she lavished benefits, she was told by that true friend to forget it, to look only to eternity, and, like the angels, to help others without expecting gratitude.

This unwearied solicitude accomplished its work. It is evident, by a letter written in 1840, that a great change had taken place in the soul so devotedly cared for: "Does your soul still enjoy the same complete peace? Are you faithful to all that God requires of you? You will never find any happiness except in the love of the Supreme Being. You relieve every kind of distress, you are continually conferring benefits upon others. Such is the continual employment of your life; but your heart must be devoted to Jesus alone. Consecrate to Him all your remaining years. He has showered so many graces upon your soul that it owes Him this return. You are His beloved daughter. Final separation from everything earthly is at hand. The torrent of time will soon carry us away into the ocean of eternity."

Madame de la Grandville's life was still to be a long one, for twenty-five years more she lived at her Château de Beaucamps as in a sanctuary. Mother Barat exhorted her to separate herself from everything useless, everything unconnected with God and His glory. "No one will be surprised," she said to her, "at your wishing for more

solitude. If you must devote some of your time to your relatives at least assign every day to prayer, to rest, and to pious reading, hours when no one will intrude upon you." In this secluded life and constant communion with God she continually advanced in holiness. A priest once said of her that in the cloister she would have been another St. Theresa. She felt that her good Mother, for she always gave that name to Madame Barat, had been the means of saving her soul. On the other hand the Mother General called this child of hers *her only daughter*, for she was the only person outside the Community, with whom she maintained a constant intercourse and intimate friendship. For many years Madame de la Grandville spent the winters in Paris, and then they met often and with mutual edification.

The last letter she wrote to her was dated June, 1860. "For many and many a year," she wrote, "the intimate outpourings of my dear Caroline's heart have been one of the joys of my life. But there comes a time when such sensible enjoyments must be sacrificed, and a real affection grows even purer and stronger when deprived of them. Now, my dear child, fulfil your mission and help me by your prayers. Let us go on doing all the good, such as it may be, which God requires of us, and the more obstacles we meet with so much the more let us trust in Him. Souls saved! What a ground for hope at the hour of death. Then, dear friend, you will receive the reward of your zeal, the recompense of your long efforts, and like the valiant woman, you will laugh in that last hour." Madame de la Grandville died just four months after Mother Barat. Her end was holy, peaceful, and sweet, and her last moments, cheered by the blessing of Pius IX., whom she had largely assisted in his misfortunes, and the hope of meeting her beloved friend in heaven.

In this instance of spiritual direction, the Mother

and the daughter were worthy of one another. We will now describe the dealings of the servant of God with a completely different soul, and witness in Mother Barat's long and patient struggles to win over to God a hard, proud, and perverse being, the triumph of her saintly spirit of persevering charity.

In the course of the year 1842, two women met on the road near Valence a young girl, apparently about sixteen or eighteen years of age, whose language they could not understand, but fancying that she must have come from Marseilles, they asked a boatman to convey her to that city. No one, however, could be found there who had seen her before or who could make out what she said. Her appearance, her manner, her rather masculine features and projecting cheekbones led to the supposition that she belonged to some wandering tribe of Bohemians or was of Russian origin. The police made useless investigations, public attention was excited, the newspapers of the day published the fact with various romantic embellishments, and a Russian Countess in Paris who fancied that this girl would prove a countrywoman of her own went to Marseilles on purpose to see her. But neither could she understand the language spoken by the stranger. She was going away when the girl clung to her dress and looked at her in so supplicating a manner that the Countess made up her mind to take her with her to Paris. She offered to pay a pension for her at the Sacred Heart, where she was accordingly received. The young girl learnt to speak French and was taught the elementary truths of religion, of which she was so ignorant that she had never even heard of the existence of God. When sufficiently instructed she was baptized, and made her First Communion on the 17th of May, 1844. Meanwhile her benefactress was making every sort of inquiry in order to discover the family of this poor wanderer. But these efforts proving unsuccessful, and suspecting

the truth of the girl's account of herself, she gave her up and declared that henceforward she would have nothing more to say to her.

Mother Barat then took under her care this forsaken creature, with a zeal which nothing but supernatural motives could have awakened, for every sort of bad quality was soon evinced by this wild, strange girl. Although gifted with a wonderful power of memory and imagination, her reasoning powers were weak and her character deceitful, mean, and selfish. Thanks to Mother Barat's vigilance, her prayers and exhortations, she did not fall into gross sins, but the instincts of this child of heathen parents were low and bad. She had declared at that time that her father was a Kalmuck Tartar and her mother a Persian. To tame, to convert, and to save her at any rate from perdition, was the task Madame Barat undertook. For that purpose she, as it were, adopted the stranger, who was called at the Sacred Heart "Mother Barat's Julia." More than two hundred letters addressed to this extraordinary being remain as a proof of the most heroic perseverance with which a spiritual mother ever devoted herself to the salvation of a wayward child.

Of all vices the one most opposed to her own spirit of sanctity was that of pride, and in this instance she had to deal with a soul possessed of it to a frightful degree. The following description will give an idea of it. One well acquainted with this Julia wrote: "She was not like any one in our part of the world, and her defects which proceeded mostly from an overweening pride could only be restrained by the power which eminent sanctity exercises over even the most rebellious natures. Several successive teachers tried to educate her, but utterly failed in subduing or guiding that indomitable and wayward soul; there was a coarseness and at the same time a cunning about her which baffled and eluded all attempts at control. Her

only object was to gain her ends, and falsehood her constant resource. In no two instances did she ever give a similar account of her past history, and the declaration which she had to make before a magistrate at the time of her marriage was found to be as false as all her previous statements. The only dogma of religion which made any impression upon her was that of hell, and the fear of it the only motive which touched her conscience. She used to say to her mistress, "Why do you take so much trouble to make those young ladies advance in perfection? Save me if you can; prevent me from losing my soul. This is much more essential." When she was in one of her fits of fury or of spite there was nothing she did not scruple to utter, even calumnies against the Sacred Heart, even accusations against Madame Barat, and yet no one but that saintly Mother had the power of soothing her. It used to remind one of our Lord's calming the poor wretches possessed by the devil, to see the infuriated girl rush to our Mother's feet in her moments of passion and quiet herself in her presence. When our Reverend Mother came into the garden after despatching her letters, Julia used to dart out of the bushes and accosting her without ceremony showed the birds she had caught by climbing up the trees, or the flowers she had gathered to the destruction of the *parterre*. Mother Barat was always ready to talk to her, took her into her room, gave her sweet things to eat, and all sorts of presents to pave the way for a reproof or an exhortation. During her journeys and absences in foreign countries, and even when she was in retreat, the Mother General wrote to Julia and to others about her, inquiring as to her studies, her needs, and especially the state of her soul. It seemed difficult to account for this strange predilection, which in the eyes of many was a weakness, but in which we cannot but admire the triumph of the divine strength of charity.

In 1845 Julia was placed at the Sacred Heart at Beauvais, and then began a correspondence with her and about her, the like of which has probably never been seen in the annals of education. Mother Barat did not flatter the child she was trying to save. She vigorously attacks the enemies of her soul. "You know that I have always told you that if you do not become humble you will always be headstrong and wilful, and these defects lead to wickedness, injustice, and ingratitude. It is a terrible misfortune to be governed by pride! May God preserve you from it, my dear child!" Indulgent as she was, her reproaches were often severe. At each oft repeated offence she placed before the perverse girl the whole extent of her guilt and the danger of her soul, and insisted on her owning her faults and going through the humiliation of seeking forgiveness from her patient and much tried mistresses. One day she wrote: "You must think of this, my dear Julia, I hope that the goodness of your heart will lead you to make a sincere act of reparation towards those whom you have offended; in that case alone can I continue to be your friend." And another time she says: "Your letter grieves me, I find in it all that obstinate and revengeful pride which is utterly opposed to the spirit of Jesus Christ, that dear Lord whose goodness to you has been so great. You are very ungrateful to Him and to us, and if you do not amend, your fate will be a very unhappy one. Think over this, my child, and try hard to become a gentle lamb instead of the savage little wolf which you are at this moment."

It was difficult to awaken the moral sense in this uncultivated conscience, and Mother Barat was obliged to dwell continually upon the themes of eternal perdition and hell. Sometimes she tried to appeal to Julia's feelings: "I am quite ready to grant the forgiveness you ask, but I must tell you that your conduct has deeply grieved me. I am not morally or physically in a state to cope with it,

my thoughts have been so painfully occupied about you that I have not been able to sleep. It is so difficult to understand how with two ways open before you, one which would secure your happiness in this world and above all in the next, you will choose the other which will make you more miserable than you ever can imagine and lead you to perdition."

But besides awakening a dormant conscience, the patient Mother's object was to call forth in that proud hard heart some feelings of affection. She spared neither kindness nor gifts for this purpose, and tried to make Julia's teachers at Paris and at Beauvais follow the same plan. She wrote to one of them: "People expect too much from Julia, they really require of her the perfection of a consummate religious, and this dear child has suffered from this." She wrote as follows to her perverse daughter on one of the anniversaries of her First Communion: "Have you thanked our Lord on this Sunday for the innumerable blessings you have received from that truly Good Shepherd? You were one of the sheep wandering outside the fold; that good Master called you by your name and lodged you in one of the most privileged spots in His domain. And now, my child, are you a gentle and obedient lamb?" And another time she says: "Do love our Lord, you owe Him so much. He has loved you first and so tenderly watched over you. You love Mary; oh, my dear child, try to imitate her virtues; she the most perfect was the most humble of all creatures. And you, with all your faults, you cannot put up with a slight." And then we find her, the venerable Mother Barat, actually recommending herself to Julia's prayers and promising to pray for her in return.

In 1852 Julia was sent to America, in hopes that she might turn to account her talent for painting. Thanks to the indefatigable pains of one of her teachers, Mother Perdrau, she had learnt to copy pictures well enough to

secure for herself sufficient means of support. But no sooner had she arrived at Manhattanville, than she began to astonish her benefactresses by her impertinence, her ingratitude, and her duplicity. After a very short time, she requested the Mother General to let her return to France. Mother Barat wrote in answer letters full of kindness and encouragement, in which she advised her to go on painting, and promised to find purchasers for her pictures in the houses of Northern and Southern America. She thus ends one of those letters: "I often think of you, my dear Julia, in my walks in the garden at Conflans, and especially in my tribune, where you liked so much to come and see your Mother, and to tell her of your faults and your sorrows. I beg of our Divine Master to take care of you as I used to do." To the nuns of the Sacred Heart at Manhattanville she wrote: "I am so anxious about that soul; I hoped the poor child would find a destiny in that New World where so many poor people find means of support, but our poor Julia is a sad exception." Then shortly afterwards gentle remonstrances are addressed to her absent child. "I was sorry to find in your letter words which are far from being written in a gentle and humble spirit. Alas! my poor Julia, you forget that you have sinned, and that in this world or in the next we must expiate our offences. God grant that you may save your soul; that is my great anxiety. Pray and go often to Holy Communion. Oh, how much you ought to value, to love, and to seek the privilege of communicating! You have so great a need of the sacraments. Farewell, my child, I am sorry to lay down my pen, but my heart never forgets you." Julia came back to France, and was placed at Conflans under the care of the gentle Mother Gœtz, whose sweetness of manner ought to have subdued her perversity, but insolence and calumny were the only treatment she received in return for all her efforts to conciliate this strange girl. Everybody gave her up, dis-

gusted with her conduct, except Madame Barat. Still bent on saving her, she kept not only writing to Julia, but sending her presents, one day a shawl, another a new bonnet, once a gold watch. To make a way into her heart for God was the daily study of that Mother General on whom the burthen of more than a hundred Communities rested. A parent could not have written more tenderly to a wayward child. "Your little nosegay of violets stands before my Blessed Virgin," she tells her; "may Mary obtain for my daughter the virtue of humility, of which that flower is the emblem. Then you would be happy, and I should be happy too. Jesus will hear my prayers. I hope you will love Him at last. He has done so much for you. I am growing old. What will become of you when I die?" She paid her a pension of eight hundred francs a year, which would have enabled her, together with the sale of her pictures and her fancy work, to live comfortably; but the poor wild creature hated work, and would never remain in the same place. She went to Tours, to Besançon, to Versailles, and back again to Paris, always returning to her indulgent Mother to be forgiven and comforted. A rule of life had been given her, and strenuous advice to be careful in the choice of her friends, and in avoiding the society of men. Madame Barat warned her on one occasion of the danger she was running of losing her only treasure, a good reputation. Love of dress seized the unfortunate girl, and she sold her watch, the Mother General's present, in order to buy a ball-dress. Soon she left off prayer, and ceased to frequent the sacraments. "What an account you will have to render to the Supreme Judge!" Mother Barat exclaims in one of her letters, in which she threatens to withdraw her pension, and no longer to be her Mother. Then Julia falls into a passion, and writes to her benefactress letters such as Mother Barat had never in her life received from anybody. Everything seems at an end between them.

But no sooner did the prodigal child feel the pressure of want, than remorse returned. At the first sign of repentance she was called to Conflans to be forgiven, and reconciled to God in a retreat, during which the Mother General wrote as follows: "My dear Julia, you must at last think of your salvation. If you go on leading this wandering and idle life you will risk your eternity. It is time to make up for the past. You are now making efforts, they must be persevering; you must advance now in virtue, otherwise you are a Christian only in name. It is only by dint of efforts that heaven can be won. Life is short, eternity long. We shall meet again if you are faithful."

In the following year, 1860, Julia was married. At that time Mother Barat "really felt satisfied and hopeful about her in every respect." She did not arrange this marriage, as some people supposed, and incurred no responsibility with regard to it; but when Julia's intended husband came to see her, it was with great pleasure that she heard of her prospects. "I am convinced," she wrote to her, "that it is a Providential event in your life, and affords every hope of happiness such as I have desired for you. I am drawing near to my end, for even supposing the father of lies prophesied truly,\* five years are soon elapsed, and I should have departed this life with a feeling of anxiety about you, had not your future been thus decided. Now I am easy on that subject. You will have a friend and a guide in your husband; his religious principles and his respect for all his duties afford every ground of security. You will be as happy as is possible in this world, and you will save your soul." This hope seemed to increase for awhile, and her

\* This is an allusion to a prediction made by a gipsy with regard to Mother Barat when she was a very little girl. "Look at that child," she said, "she will play a great part in the world, and will live to be eighty-five." Mother Barat, in her old age, used sometimes to speak of this announcement, which was so exactly verified.

letters to Julia were full of expressions of gratitude joined to the most admirable advice. On the day of the marriage she went to Communion for those she called her two children, and sent them her blessing.

Madame Barat fancied at that moment that her work was ended, whilst on the contrary it was about to become more arduous and painful than ever. During the five remaining years of her life, one of the severest crosses she endured was the sad contrast between those whose union she had so joyfully hailed. On the one side a more honourable, hard-working, kind-hearted man could not be found than Julia's husband, or one who strove with greater self-devotion to make his wife happy; whilst on the other hand, that unworthy wife, by her idleness, her pride, her violent temper, and even her drunken habits, made her home a scene of violence and tears, and brought upon it poverty and scandal, almost amounting to disgrace. "My heart bleeds when I think of you," Mother Barat exclaims: "I have been so long in the habit of caring for you, that I cannot keep my thoughts from what makes me suffer so terribly." And oftener than ever during those last years she wrote, and pleaded, and threatened, and clung to that soul with a sort of desperate resolution to save her in despite of herself, to draw her back from the abyss which in the light of faith she showed her opening under her feet. "Your passions are driving you to destruction. What have you done with the teachings of the past? Have all those years spent in the Sacred Heart, in the midst of so many graces and blessings, ended in these sad and disgraceful results? What a shame for you, what a disgrace for us! And what will become of you? You will die one day, and what will be your eternity? Such as your life, alas!"

For a while she affected to forget this unworthy object of her care, but as she said herself, only as God does when a soul rejects Him and He continues to pity it, to do it

good and to hope for its return. The ungrateful woman, astonished at such persevering kindness, shuddered at the prospect before her, and expressed repentance. Immediately Mother Barat sent for her, opened her arms to her, called her her daughter, received her at the Sacred Heart to make her peace with God, and started her again in the good path, watching continually over her steps. This occurred over and over again during those five years. Mother Barat was ready to forgive seventy times seven. A few days before her death, on the 28th of April, 1865, she wrote to Julia this last farewell: "I should like to see you once more in this world, and it will probably be for the last time, for my end is approaching. I feel life abandoning me. You are young, but do not forget that the longest earthly existence is short, compared with eternity. Can there be a greater folly than to employ it in false pleasures? You have assured me that you have amended your life, but be very careful not to fall again. Oh, no! an upward glance to that heaven which you would be in danger of losing, and the remembrance of your Mother, will stop you on the brink of the precipice. Farewell, my dear Julia, I shall love you more and more if you are faithful." Julia did not long survive Madame Barat; she died in September, 1872, and thanks to her excellent and Christian husband, who seemed to have acquired in his frequent conversations with his wife's holy benefactress an equally ardent zeal for the salvation of her soul, her end was pious and edifying. As soon as she heard that she was in danger, she made a general confession, and received the last Sacraments. If ever there was a sheep perseveringly sought after in her wanderings, it was this child of Mother Barat's, and great must have been her joy in heaven at her repentance and return, greater even than over that large number of faithful sheep in the immense fold which God had committed to her care.

## CHAPTER XVII.

*Events in Italy. War in America. Mother Barat's work completed. Eighth General Council.*

1859—1864.

THERE is a date in the history of our times that will ever be a sad one; that of the miserable day when on fair sounding pretexts the French crossed the Alps to let loose the revolutionary elements in Italy, to unsettle the time-honoured foundations of Christianity, to encourage and lead on the powers of evil, and bring upon the Church, society, and France a deluge of misfortunes. We have witnessed these melancholy events, and seen how, when the principle of authority was overthrown at Rome, the whole of the edifice of social order tottered on its basis, and breaches in it were made through which the enemy soon entered with fire and sword. We have suffered in consequence and are still suffering from it. Mother Barat's last days were saddened and sanctified by the sorrows with which in common with every servant of God on earth she beheld these mournful results. She did not indeed live to see the final consummation of the ruin they prepared, but from the beginning of that fatal war she foresaw its consequences. In the midst of the triumph of the French army, she pointed out the dangers that would ensue and said, on the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, 1859: "My children, gather up your strength against the enemy of all good; see what snares he is laying at this moment for the Church. It would make one tremble were it not for the words of Christ, 'Thou art Peter, and

upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' As daughters of the Church we shall glory in sharing her fate, and her fate is that of our Lord during the whole of His mortal life. Our Society must not hope for a different destiny; and if the bark of St. Peter is buffeted by the winds and waves, our little skiff must necessarily be shaken by the storm."

When Mother Barat uttered those words, the treaty of Villafranca had just been signed. The act which gave Italy to the King of Sardinia from the Ticino to the Mincio became the signal of persecution at Milan, and the Sacred Heart was honoured by its first attacks. The pretext was, as usual, its supposed attachment to Austria and the feelings of gratitude it entertained towards the former sovereigns of Lombardy. The Mother General had long been aware of this danger, and as we see by a letter of hers she tried to guard against it. "For heaven's sake," she wrote to the Superior, "do not bring Germans to Milan. You cannot have any idea of the excessive animosity between these two nations. It is only by slow degrees that they will ever be reconciled."

Mother de Limminghe was at the head of that house. The words of her Superior, her exhortations to courage and expressions of tender sympathy sustained her under no ordinary trials. One of Madame Barat's letters ended by the characteristic exclamation, "Oh, how much there is to suffer in this world, and what reason we have to long for heaven! And yet, my beloved daughter, I charge you to do your utmost not to go there at present. Let us be like brave soldiers who rejoice at having gone through a battle unscathed, in order to fight again the following day." Another time she said, "If you wish to be perfect you will remain peacefully nailed to the Cross, and like Jesus you will soon be able to say: *In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam.*\*

\* Psalm iv. 9.

The house at Milan had courageously stood its ground for a year, when in March, 1860, the Piedmontese Parliament voted the annexation of the provinces of the Romagna to the Kingdom of Sardinia, an event which was celebrated by public rejoicings. The Sacred Heart refused to illuminate in honour of this iniquitous spoliation of the Pope's dominions. An insurrection ensued, and on the 16th of March, the convent was attacked by a mob which for three hours behaved outrageously without any interference on the part of the civil or military authorities.

Ten days afterwards, the same attacks were renewed with more violence and brutality than ever. The mob broke in, vociferating threats of every sort. It was no longer possible to hold out; the children were sent to their parents. The Superior, according to Mother Barat's wishes, remained to the last moment to make all necessary arrangements.

On the 13th of May, 1860, Mother de Limminghe took her final departure from Milan. In their annual letter of that year the banished nuns record that it was on the feast of our Lady of Martyrs and on the birthday of Pius IX., for whom they had the happiness of suffering, that their expulsion took place.

The Revolution rapidly gained ground. At the same time that the Romagna was detached from the Pontifical States, the duchies of Parma and Modena revolted against their sovereigns, and threw themselves into the arms of Piedmont. The Sacred Heart, which had been driven once before out of Parma, in 1848, had been re-established there by the pious widow of Charles III., Madame Louise-Marie-Thérèse de Bourbon. When political events became threatening, she sought consolation in the chapel of the Sacred Heart. On Holy Thursday, the 22nd of April, accompanied by her son and her daughters, on her knees before the tabernacle she made a declaration, the spirit of

which reminds one of the last act of Louis XVI. Some days afterwards she had to fly from Parma. Her people, who loved her dearly, persuaded her to return to it; but in the end she was compelled to retire to Switzerland. The Sacred Heart, nevertheless, maintained its ground. Mother Barat wrote as follows to the Superior, Madame de Curzon: "I think that as long as you are not expelled, you must remain where Providence has called you, and do all the little good you can by looking after the poor. Open your free-school for poor children and teach them to work. Life is so short, we must make the most of it, according to those words of our Divine Lord: 'Work whilst it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work.' Be equally devoted to the poor and to the rich. Pray that a spirit of conciliation may prevail and that peace may be restored. You know that we must be everywhere and towards everyone angels of peace, taking no part in politics, and ready to assist everybody as far our means allow of it."

A poor-school was opened, and seventy children were attending it, when the Government insisted on subjecting it to inspection. This the Mother General would not submit to, and the house was suppressed.

The one at Padua seemed in danger of the same fate. Madame Barat wrote to the Superior, Mother Dudrunska: "Jesus will be with you. It has been out of obedience that you accepted your office, and that is your real security. Consult some prudent persons. It is no doubt desirable when one can do so to withdraw from the eyes of the world in order to pray in silence, for the less we are seen the better it is for us. Nuns must stand, as it were, between earth and heaven. *Sursum corda*. Still there are circumstances that make it right to take advice of men, at the same time that we have recourse to God." The nuns at Padua followed the dictates of charity: they received into their house the wounded soldiers and nursed them

with devoted care, leaving the future entirely in God's hands. This was acting exactly in the spirit of their Mother General, who congratulated them on their line of conduct. "The house of Padua," she wrote, "will be like the reed blown about by the winds, which bows its head before the storm, but maintains its position." This actually happened and the convent was saved.

At that time, Madame Barat's thoughts and her heart were at Rome, where the Vicar of Christ was advancing step by step on the way of the Cross. She would fain have visited again that city of martyrs, and felt, she said, as if another pilgrimage would have effected her conversion. Above all she wished to be blessed by that hand, for which chains were being prepared. "Amongst all the saints who are to be found in Rome," she said, "the one I admire most is the Holy Father. He is certainly the most perfect image of Him whom he represents in this land of exile. What costs me most in giving up the idea of a journey to Rome, is the thought of never seeing again our Supreme Pastor. I should so much have wished to receive one more blessing from that venerated Pontiff before going to our Lord. I feel it would have given me more courage in appearing before the Sovereign Judge. We pray much for the Pope and the Universal Church, for there is not a single corner of the world where peace really exists. Well, we must look to heaven, where it will abide for ever! But does it not incline one to say with the Prophet, 'How long is my exile!' Men are full of evil designs, and are watching for the opportunity of moving heaven and earth. We must pray to Him, who can say to this stormy ocean, 'Thou shalt come as far as this grain of sand and no further.'" She begged the Holy Father to bless a crucifix and rosary for her, on which she might pray for his intentions. "It will," she said, "encourage and console me in the midst of my daily crosses. Light ones

when compared to his, but often hard for my weak virtue.”

An evil day was indeed approaching. At the end of the summer of 1860, after a series of dark intrigues, tending to isolate the Holy See, in order more surely to despoil it; all at once, without any previous declaration of war, without any of the formalities which are the bulwarks of good faith in the civilized world, and as if the ages of barbarism had returned, masses of troops invaded the Pontifical provinces, and crushed by the brutal force of numbers a handful of heroes. In the words of the Scripture, *Datum est Bestiæ bellum facere cum sanctis et vincere eos.*\*

The battle-field of Castelfidardo is opposite Loretto. From the heights of Monte Reale the Sacred Heart watched the course of events during the whole of that sad and glorious day. The walls of the convent became indeed the last refuge of the brave Pontifical soldiers, who fighting one against ten drew up their cannons and their cavalry under its windows, determined to resist unto death. It was only then that the nuns and children withdrew and took refuge at Sant' Elpidio. When a few days afterwards they returned to Loretto, the town was in the hands of the enemy; and the first thing the victors insisted upon was the expulsion of the Jesuits and the nuns of the Sacred Heart. The noble exertions of the Bishop, Mgr. Magnani, in their behalf did not succeed, and on the 27th of September they received orders to leave their house before the 3rd of October.

Sant' Elpidio hoped to be spared, on account of its happy obscurity, which had made the Mother General say that it was a particularly favourite house of hers from the likeness she saw in it to the scene of our Lord's Nativity. The little Community, protected as it was by the gratitude of the townspeople, made a short struggle to remain, but it

\* Apoc. xiii. 7.

only served to delay their departure; and on the 2nd of December, 1860, Mother Gerardi and her nuns were obliged to withdraw to Rome.

By dint of patience, the house at Perugia, then in the hands of the same masters, prolonged its stay for two years; but was at last compelled to yield to necessity.

In 1862 the Sacred Heart was replaced there by secular schoolmistresses. Pius IX. received the banished nuns like faithful soldiers who had only capitulated at the last hour. He greeted them with the words of Scripture: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake," and then added, "We live in an era of pride. What we want, what we require is humility, a deep humility, and then resignation, patience, and prayer. This is the hour of darkness, but the Lord will come to our help. One thing I can tell you, in 1849 I did not feel as calm as I do now; I was undecided then as to the course to follow, and on that account I went away. Now I am satisfied; I know what I must do, and if they come to Rome I know what I shall do."

The revolutionary torrent had swept away since 1847 ten houses of the Society without including Montet. The political horizon was growing darker and darker; but in the midst of that darkness, as Pius IX. called it, the light of Divine promises was shining brightly. As to Mother Barat, the only misfortunes which really affected her were the offences committed against God and the horrors of sin. On the 1st of January, 1861, she said to the probanists: "During my long sleepless nights I ponder over the numberless evils which affect the Church. But amidst so many crosses the heaviest is the thought of the souls who are faithless to their vocation. A torrent of crimes deluges the world. The great Victim wishes for voluntary victims! Happy those who will deserve to be chosen." "And there were chosen victims who offered themselves at that time to

our Lord. Alongside of brave and generous men who gave their lives on the battle-field for the cause of the Church, there were humble women who accepted their sufferings and died holily in honour of the Divine Heart. Amongst them were some of Madame Barat's first companions. In 1859 she heard of the death of an admirable nun, Mother Joséphine de Coriolis, one of Madame Duchesne's pupils, who had been Superior, first at the Trinità dei Monti and afterwards at Parma. In 1860, Mother Sophie Toussenet, Superior of Charleville, died after half a century of religious life exclaiming: "O my God, how I love you! and how I thank you!" A still greater loss was that of Madame Emma de Bouchaud, Superior and Vicar of the west of France. She had long been infirm and ill, and used to thank our Lord for her sufferings, her good sufferings, the gift of God, she called them. She wished those who saw her shed tears after Extreme Unction to know that they were tears of joy. One year afterwards, on the 12th of July, 1863, Mother Henriette Coppens died, rejoicing, as she said, that for seventy-five years all the powers of her soul had been consecrated to the love of God. Her favourite prayer had long been the words of the two disciples of Emmaus to our Lord: "Remain with us, O Lord, for the day is far spent and the night is at hand."

Many and many were the holy souls that the Society gave to heaven, and great the joy with which they hailed the approach of death. An old Lay-sister at Paris, Françoise Feldtrappe, felt that it was near, and exclaimed: "Alleluia! God be praised for these sufferings!" and then added, "My heart is ready." Mother Lazarine Fouquet said a few days before her end, "The soul begins to feel its freedom, the walls of the prison are falling by degrees, and eternity is dawning. If I had courage enough I would celebrate in verse 'The Release of the Captive.'" Marie Antoinette Bourbon, with a radiant countenance, said:

“We must welcome death graciously, for she is the messenger that calls us to heaven. If I could sing I would die with a song on my lips ; at any rate I mean to laugh in my last moments.” Mother Antonia Berger, the mistress of the little children in the house of Annonay, assembled her pupils on the day of her death, the feast of the Ascension, crowned them with flowers, and told them she was going to wait in heaven for her little angels. She died that same evening. The last words of Mother Marie Ursine de Salis at Algiers, were : “Thy will be done, O Lord, but let Thy kingdom come to the poor Arabs.” She also said, “What a blessing it is to be a spouse of the Sacred Heart, but on earth we are only betrothed. It is in heaven that the eternal union will be consummated.” She asked leave to sing the hymn *Beau Ciel* just before her death, and spread out her arms as if to take her upward flight. When pain drew tears from her eyes she said, “I want my last tears to be tears of love.” Her last words were, “Jesus calls me ; I am going ; farewell, and thank you, dear Mother.”

If we could linger over the history of all the beautiful deathbeds of that period, we should be inclined to dwell on the last days of Mother Louise Mallac, that suffering angel who, with the spirit of an apostle, and after going through a long martyrdom, drew to the religious life her mother, her sister, and her brother. On the bed of pain, where for a whole year she had to lie, she used to say, “I am a small fruit gathered by our Lord before it was ripe, and laid on straw to ripen.”

We might also mention Theresa Agnes Tilly, an English convert who, after receiving Extreme Unction, exclaimed, “I am anointed for eternity,” and who wished her place in heaven to be “as near as possible to her Beloved ;” and also Mother Emma de Villefranche, who said, “I used to think the day of our First Communion was the happiest

day of our life ; but that was a mistake. The day of Extreme Unction is happier still."

Mother Barat mourned and rejoiced over these pure offerings, and uniting them to the Sacrifice of the Cross, offered them up to our Lord with a breaking heart but a holy exultation.

Sometimes she seemed to think, as the news of fresh calamities reached her from every side, that the world itself was drawing near to its end. In January, 1861, she wrote : " America is beginning to exhibit the same symptoms of agitation as Europe. It seems spreading everywhere, and one cannot help calling to mind the words of our Divine Master when He told His disciples of the signs which would announce the approaching destruction of the world. The end may be more or less distant, but the premonitory signs are beginning to show themselves. Oh ! how this thought must increase our love for the Heart of our Lord and our zeal for souls ! Many, alas ! will fall away ; but on the other hand, the number of the elect will be immense. We must prepare souls for Christ ; we must try to inspire them with Devotion to the Sacred Heart. Woe betide us if the salt loses its savour, if the lamps of the sanctuary yield an uncertain light. The Divine Spouse will surprise us in the night of the world. With more ardour than ever let us work, first to perfect ourselves and our Sisters, and then to save the souls intrusted to our care. The hopes of the Church rest on the young. The devil unfortunately is but too well aware of it, and works incessantly to rob children of a Christian education."

Three months later the war in America broke out. Mother Barat trembled for the fate of her houses in that country. The constant absence of certain news during the next three years increased her anxiety. She knew that the convents of St. Michael's, Natchitoches, and Grand Coteau were in the central seat of the war, or at least on the way to

it. But thanks to the sympathy with which the Sacred Heart was looked upon in those States, their houses were respected and even revered by the conflicting parties and their troops. With deep gratitude the Mother General heard these tidings, and ascribed this blessing to the ardent prayers offered up in all her Communities for their far distant Sisters.

The American war delayed the convocation of the General Council which the Mother General had much at heart, the period fixed for it by the Constitutions having already elapsed. She wrote as follows to Mother Jouve, Vicar in America: "If I allowed myself to form a wish, it would be to assemble once more and for the last time in this land of exile, the dear Mothers and daughters who have so long shared with me the arduous labours of our mission. Yes, I should like to see them again, and to speak to them of my feelings, of my gratitude, and of my earnest hopes that those who will survive me will redouble their efforts to consolidate our Society on the firm basis of Christian perfection; a boundless humility, an ardent zeal for the salvation of souls, a generosity that never hesitates before obstacles where the glory of God is concerned, and for that object a close union with the Heart of Jesus, or at least a faithful striving for that union, the source of a life of sacrifice. Keep yourself therefore in readiness to comply with our summons, which will soon follow the conclusion of peace." Other causes, besides the American war, amongst others the state of exhaustion of the venerable Mother General, delayed the summons till the summer of 1864. A letter of convocation dated the 10th of March mentioned the subjects which the Council would have to consider. "First," it said, "they must study the means of preserving and even strengthening the spirit which the founders of the Society, the venerable Fathers Varin and de Tournély, had bequeathed to it; secondly, to adapt still further the plan

of studies and the system of teaching to the modern requirements of education ; and thirdly, to complete the machinery of administration by filling up the gaps which death had made in the ranks of the Council." "Then," added the Superior General, "all I shall have to do will be to utter the words of the holy and aged Simeon, for leaving the trust which Jesus has vouchsafed to commit to me in the care of souls so anxious to preserve it, I can look upon my mission as ended, and hope that my faults may be remedied by others and our good Master glorified."

And in her private letters she said : " My last illness has aged me very much. I am drawing near to my end. It is indeed time to allow me to rest a little. Pray for that intention."

It seemed, however, as if the Superior General's strength was renewed when the time of this great meeting arrived. On the 22nd of May she said to her daughters, " My legs and my voice fail me, and my sight is growing dim ; the poor framework of my body is falling to pieces ; but what would this signify if my soul, collecting all its strength, could get more vigorous in proportion as the body decays ?" And with an expressive gesture she laid her hand on her heart, as if wishing to accelerate its beatings and speed its ascent to that heaven on which her eyes were fixed.

On the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus she renewed her vows with the Community for the last time and said : " We are gaining ground, the end is approaching. Let us quicken our pace. When the sun is declining it brightens with its rays a greater number of countries than at noon. And so ought we in the decline of life to win more souls for Jesus. Crosses have not been wanting to us ; others are perhaps in store for our little Society, but never let us lose heart, God will sustain us."

The Eighth General Council of the Sacred Heart opened on the 17th of June, 1864. Mother Barat presided at all

its sittings and animated it with her spirit, but with humble reserve left as much as possible the Council to act, as if to accustom the Society to do without her.

Conformably to her suggestions, a sort of normal school was organized under the name of *Juvenat*, in which the nuns who were to be employed in teaching were to complete their studies and acquire the method of teaching. The Mother Foundress did not live to see the working out of this institution, but it originated with her and proved one of her legacies to the Society. She also expressed a wish that when a house of the Sacred Heart was situated in the country, a supplementary establishment in the nearest town should furnish the means of receiving young children, or holding meetings of ladies, Children of Mary. What had been done in this way at Marseilles since the year 1853 served as a precedent and a model for similar establishments in other places.

The Assistants General elected by the Council were Mothers Prevost, DeBrou, Gœtz, and Lehon. Mother Desmarquest, who had grown more and more infirm, at last succeeded in obtaining a release from office. It was with regret that Mother Barat accepted her resignation. Alluding to her name which was *Felicity*, she used to say, "It is from God all our felicities proceed, but mine are not all in heaven." In September, 1864, she wrote to her daughters: "You would be edified to see the abnegation of self which our Mother Assistants have shown since they gave up their offices. How obediently and gently they act towards those who were once their pupils and are now their Superiors." Mother Gœtz's election was only the confirmation of the appointment made by Madame Barat at the death of Mother Henriette Coppens. She had to comfort and encourage her new Assistant. "The Sacred Heart will bless your submission, and as He maintains you in this office which ratifies my own choice, you can rely

on His supplying for your deficiencies, only you must endeavour to abstain from acting on your own impulses. Jesus will give you His Divine Spirit and act towards you as He did towards His Apostles. One abyss calls to another abyss, and absolute nothingness attracts the Sovereign Good. The august Trinity animates it with His Divine Spirit, and gives us the Heart of Jesus as our model and treasure. With such a Protector what have we to fear! So the less we have the more we can hope for." This nomination was only the prelude to another project of Mother Barat's. She thought the moment had arrived to press earnestly on the Council her own resignation, and confidently expected its assent. She sent a verbal message to the Mothers, urging her desire to be released from the burthen of government. Surprise and emotion kept them silent for a moment and then they all pronounced a decided *No*.

Mother Barat then came to them and pleaded in person that her weakness and advanced age made it impossible for her to bear alone the weight of government. In case the Council persisted in its refusal, she wished at any rate to avail herself of the power conceded by the last decree obtained at Rome by naming a Vicar-General who could assist or act for her. This sort of compromise was gladly accepted, as it left the Mother Foundress to the last at the head of her Congregation and provided her with a co-operator chosen by herself, trained and initiated in her system of government and evidently called to succeed her.

Mother Barat's successor could only have been one eminent like her in the virtue of humility. Mother Gœtz was named Vicar-General. It is reported that the Foundress had received more than one supernatural intimation with regard to this appointment. In 1825 she had said one day at recreation: "My dear children, I was strangely taken aback last night, I was asking God in my prayers

to deliver me from the burthen of Superiority which I had had to carry for twenty years, and the answer I received was that I was to be patient, for that my successor was not yet eight years of age. But this was of course nothing but a dream," she hastened to add. But it did so happen that Joséphine Gœtz was at that very time seven years and a half old. In 1842, a holy religious had said to the Foundress: "The Sister who will succeed you is quietly working away in her school." Mother Gœtz was then sub-mistress general at Besançon. Later on the thoughts and the hopes of the Society began to fix themselves on the Superior of Conflans. The Foundress said of her: "Mother Gœtz's soul is anchored in humility, and then there is so much breadth about her." Humility and breadth were indeed the qualities which the Holy Spirit had implanted in the chosen soul to whom it was given to continue Mother Barat's work.

The Council lasted a month, and proved the crowning act of that work. The Society then numbered three thousand five hundred subjects in the Old and New world. A hundred and eleven houses had been established under the direction of the Mother General during the sixty-two years that she had been at the head of her Institute, and eighty-six of them were still existing and prospering in 1864. To these were added during the following year those of the Conception in Chili, of Bois l'Evêque at Liège, and then one at Seville, the foundation of which was the last object of Mother Barat's solicitude. The whole Constitution of the Order was completed, its administration entirely organized; by the nomination of a Vicar-General the past was linked with the future. And what the Foundress had not done but still wished to do, was decided and described in documents which have left to her successors the simple task of carrying out her wishes. It is an almost unexampled occurrence that a Foundress

should have been enabled to put the finishing touch to her work. So seldom is it that things can be fully accomplished in this world, that it would be difficult not to recognize in the achievement of so great an undertaking a very special mark of God's providential mercy.

On the 21st of July, 1864, the Council was brought to a close. The following day, St. Mary Magdalen's feast, was a memorable one for the mother-house. The children of the school made a present to Madame Barat of fifteen pastoral staffs, which were intended to represent the fifteen vicariates or provinces of the Society. She gave them to the Superior Vicars, and those who were present on that occasion never lost the remembrance of that day. It was a very impressive meeting, for all who witnessed it felt that it would never be renewed on earth.

The poor were not forgotten on that festival, and nothing could have given Mother Barat greater joy than an act of charity which she performed that day. A young woman belonging to a good family, who had been for ten years a pupil of the school in Paris, had lost her fortune, and by the illness of her husband, which deprived him of his situation on the railway, the young couple found themselves reduced to a state of destitution. The poor wife pawned her trinkets, her furniture, and even her clothes. At last she had nothing left of the slightest value except her medal of the Congregation of the Children of Mary, which she had thought never to have parted with. But one day that she had no means of buying some medicine the doctor had ordered for her husband the sacrifice was made, and the beloved medal pawned like her other possessions. Soon afterwards the time for paying their rent arrived and expulsion was threatened. The husband was recovering but remained still very weak; his physical and moral sufferings had made him irritable, he was not a religious man, and in his blindness he laid the blame of his misfortunes

on Providence. One day that his wife had said to him: "If my good Mother Barat knew our distress I am sure she would help us." He answered bitterly: "Your good Mother Barat is much too great a lady to take notice of you in your present position, all you would get, my dear, would be additional humiliation, and we have had enough of that already." The poor young woman said nothing but her tears flowed, her heart felt wounded by this accusation against her dear Mother of former days, and she determined to write to her in secret. Mother Barat had received that letter a few weeks before her feast. She ran to her drawer, counted out the money due for the rent, and prepared a large present of clothes for her former pupil. In spite of her feebleness she went about the house searching for all that could be made available for the purpose, and saying to the Sisters: "Poor Clothilde! what terrible distress she is in; give her this and that. Bring me all the contents of that wardrobe that I may choose a gown for her. Two gowns she must have, one for week days and one for Sundays; then a shawl and a bonnet and stockings and handkerchiefs. How she has suffered! and to think that one of our own children should be so destitute. Take all this to her as quick as you can, and tell her to pray for me and the Society." It was a blessed moment for the young wife when she received all these presents from the Sacred Heart and its dear Mother General. Her husband owned with emotion that he had misjudged Madame Barat, and said to his wife: "I will kneel down and pray with you, I never could do so before when you asked me, but at this moment I feel that I must thank God." They prayed together for blessings on their benefactress.

Mother Barat's joy when she heard this can be easily imagined. She continued to assist these young persons in the kindest and most considerate manner and gained a great influence over the husband. He read the books she

lent him, went to Mass with his wife, and by her charity was gradually brought back to the faith and practice of his religion. On the day of the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, the Mother General sent Clothilde a pretty bonnet and the sum necessary for the recovery of all the things she had been obliged to pawn. The husband and wife had been together to Mass that morning, she had offered up her Communion for their benefactress, and he had earnestly prayed for her. In the evening Clothilde came to see her dear Mother. The silent language of her tears and the deep tenderness with which she kissed her venerable hands expressed her overwhelming feelings of affection and gratitude. That little episode completed the happiness of Mother Barat's feast.

On the morrow of that festival the councillors departed. It was a sad separation, for many of them could not but feel that they were never again to see their dear Superior. But their common work was accomplished, and henceforward the Foundress could have said with the Apostle; had her humility allowed of it: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest there is laid up for me a crown of justice which the Lord the Just Judge will render to me in that day."\* Before we describe the final consummation of that long and wonderful life, it will not be amiss to study the picture given us of Madame Barat's soul by those who saw and knew her in those last days when love and grace had perfected in her their glorious work.

\* 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *Consummation of Mother Barat's sanctity. Her love of God.*

THE closing years of Mother Barat's life had all the soft loveliness of the evening of a fine day. Divine love illuminated her soul, and made her care for nothing but God, and for anything and everything else only in Him and for Him. This detachment from all earthly things went on ever increasing to the end of her life. It was with her both a principle and a habit, and extended to every detail of existence. "A wise man needs but little," she used to say, "and a saint still less." Everything about her bore the stamp of religious poverty. Her little sitting-room was so poorly furnished, that a Princess on entering it exclaimed, "What! is this the apartment of a Superior General?" Its furniture consisted of a small table and desk and a few straw chairs, and had no other ornament than a very simple crucifix and a small image of our Blessed Lady. A priest having bequeathed to her a cross elaborately carved, she wrote: "I give it to the house at Beauvais, as a remembrance of this good priest: do not bring it to me, for I should not know where to put it. I like to have in my room only a very simple crucifix." Anything comfortable or costly or handsome, which the affection of her daughters sometimes led them to offer to her, she always rejected and disapproved. To a Sister who had worked for her a travelling-bag in tapestry she said: "I know the kind

feelings which have prompted you, but I love you too much in the Lord not to tell you how vexed I am when I think of the time you have spent on this bag. Let it be the first and the last piece of fancy work presented to me. I will not accept any presents." On another occasion she rejected a coverlet made of silk, and said: "A bit of print cut out of one of the old gowns of the postulants would have done very well. Take this thing away. It would be against poverty to keep it." When she was entreated to accept gifts which seemed to her too costly, she, in return, begged of her daughters not to pain her by insisting upon her giving a bad example. Once, on arriving at one of her houses, she saw a carpet in the room prepared for the Mother General. Nothing could induce her to set her foot in it until this unhappy carpet was removed. Another time, without saying a word, she turned out of the room at Conflans, not only the carpet, but the curtains and other contrivances placed there to keep out the cold. Then sending for the procuratrix, she smiled, and requested her to take away all those useless things which encumbered the passage.

She would have liked to wear none but old and patched garments, and ordered the Religious at the head of the wardrobe never to give her anything new without apprising her. The things required for her daily use and her correspondence were asked for as alms by the Mother General. "My children, we are poor, and must do like poor people," she always said. Everything belonging to the Community she economized with the strictest care; water, wood, and oil, for instance. The ends of candles she desired to be set aside for her room, and kept up as little fire there as possible. In the garden and in the refectory she was often seen collecting everything that could be turned in any way to account, and was often found sweeping, cleaning, weeding, like the humblest of servants, and that with a bright and

cheerful activity which showed she was working for God. Never for a moment did she remain idle ; her hands were constantly employed in sewing, mending, and knitting. If one of the nuns stopped working whilst she related something at recreation, the Mother General would notice it and say : " My child, you can tell us that and work at the same time. Poor people like us must do two things at once." Overwhelmed as she was with business and writing, there was not much time to spare for work, and she was wont to accuse herself in the last period of her life of not being able to make more than three or four pairs of stockings a year. " So you see, my children," she added, " that I live at the expense of the Society." No one would have practised greater austerities than Mother Barat, if obedience had not checked that ardour for penance which had originally inspired her with a strong desire to be a Carmelite. She was about one day to imitate St. Jane Frances of Chantal, by impressing on her breast the image of the Sacred Heart by means of a brass medal she had heated in the fire, but her purpose was discovered in time to stop the act. Her habitual practice was to conceal her penances. She said, " that to hide what we suffer was pleasing to our Lord ;" but sometimes a few unintentional words let out her secret. " There was a time," she said to one of her nuns, " when I was so disposed to impatience, that there was only one way in which I could conquer irritation, and that was by taking the discipline, and by a good shower of blows subduing those feelings." A sudden blush showed that she was conscious of having said too much. Another time, when she was advising a Superior not to allow persons of a nervous temperament to take the discipline, she added, " I am not naturally nervous, and yet I can never do so without bringing on a fit of trembling, which prevents me from being able to write for ten minutes afterwards." She was then in her sixty-sixth year.

She did not neglect any opportunity of mortification. Once she was seen pulling up nettles with so little precaution, that her arm was swollen with stings. "That will do instead of a discipline," she said to the Sister who was helping her. It was observed when she was in Italy that the Mother General allowed the mosquitoes to bite her till her face and arms bled rather than drive them away. Some soup which had turned sour was once given her by mistake. She swallowed it all without making any remark. In her frequent illnesses, when nice things were brought to her she said: "I do not like that," or "this does not agree with me;" and at last they understood what that meant. Once when she was ill she left her bed and knelt on the stone floor of her room. The Infirmarian blamed this imprudence, and she answered: "I could not be unfaithful to grace. I left my bed because I felt too comfortable in it." On her way to the refectory, the Mother General often went after the other nuns to the common fountain, and wiped her hands with the towel all had used before her. "Madame Louise de France," she playfully said, "practised this act of mortification. I quite understand it, and though not brought up in the Palace of Versailles, it does cost me a little." Her days were full of these little sacrifices, very small ones indeed, but hallowed and consecrated by a holy intention. One of her maxims was, "That a day in which we have not suffered anything for our Lord is a wasted day."

The enemy which Mother Barat fought against most incessantly was pride. "Oh, I should like to strangle that foe!" she often exclaimed. "There ought to be no truce to that war. We must conquer or perish." A holy bishop, in the last years of her life, declared that Mother Barat's humility was a revelation. In her case, self seemed merged, as it were, in the ocean of God's greatness. "Self! that little atom!" she contemptuously called it. And speaking

of temptations to pride, "I am not afraid of them; they are to be simply spurned," adding to the words an expressive gesture with her foot. Another of her sayings was, that St. John, in his old age, always repeated the same thing to his disciples. "Charity! charity! love one another." And I to the end will say to my daughters, "Humility! humility! always humility!" And again, in speaking of the admirable letter on obedience which St. Ignatius bequeathed to his sons, she declared, that if she ever made up her mind to write anything for her little Society, it would be on humility, for that she thought it the greatest of all virtues. We find this spiritual legacy in the records of her conversations, and, above all, in her example. We have often mentioned how she disliked the title of Foundress. It made her smile with pity, and exclaim, as she looked up to heaven, "O Jesus! Thou, Thou only art the Founder!" Her humility had a ready answer on all occasions. If people asked why God had chosen her to lay the foundations of the Society, she thus accounted for it: "Are you not aware that the most beautiful flowers spring from a rank soil, and that the most worthless and unsightly stones are thrown into the foundations of a house, for the very purpose of remaining out of sight?" If they inquired how she had managed to accomplish so many great works, she explained it by saying: "Just like a child whose hand is held and guided by the master whilst it writes in its copy-book. Without that help a fine scrawl would indeed be produced." How could she direct so many souls, so many communities scattered all over the world? "Like those finger-posts on the roadside which point out the right way, but never move themselves." And how did she manage to write those wonderful spiritual instructions with which her letters were filled? "Even as it happens to forgers who stamp on false bank notes the evidence which con-

demns them." And these clever and quick answers were uttered with a strength of conviction which left no doubt as to their sincerity. In the month of September, 1864, on her return from Conflans, where she had been celebrating the feast of the Seven Dolours, Mother Barat said: "I have seen all the postulants who are about to receive the habit, and I exhorted each of them separately to be truly humble. Humility is the first and the second and the third step towards perfection. To-day the Beatification of Blessed Margaret Mary is celebrated at Rome. This is indeed the triumph of humility. Oh, why do you not thoroughly devote yourselves to the practice of this great virtue? Alas! I am afraid that the fable of Mother Lobster and her daughter accounts for it:

\* Mère Ecrivisse un jour a sa fille disait  
Comme tu vas, grand Dieu? ne peux tu marcher droit?  
Et comme vous allez vous-même! dit sa fille?  
Puis je autrement marcher que ne fait ma famille?

You might well say that to me. . . . Well, become all of you Margaret Maries, and perhaps you will drag me on with you." Compliments were her aversion. If at Conflans they began singing stanzas in her praise, she interrupted them by such exclamations as these: "My dear children, you will give me a horror of poetry;" or, "By dint of singing, my poor children, you have lost your wits;" or, "This sort of music does not suit me at all, for it has already kept me silent for ten minutes, and I want to talk to you." If she was mentioned in the annual letters, the sound of her

\* Mother Lobster one day  
To her daughter did say,  
Good heavens! what a gait!  
My child, can't you walk straight?  
O mother, how you talk!  
Yourself, how do you walk?  
I cannot mend my gait;  
We none of us walk straight.

bell soon interrupted the reader. "If you please, my child, skip that passage," she said, "and everything of the sort you may happen to come upon. I did not know that people took the trouble to write down my words. If such is the case, I shall hold my tongue." If mention was made of writing the history of the Society her remark was, that it was better to leave behind one actions than writings. "No one will have time to read about us," she said. An album had been presented to her, containing the names of the houses of her Society, and some one having taken this opportunity to write a panegyric on the Foundress, she sent back the album and never looked at it again. She called her Society "the little Society; a Society of flies, and worse than flies, for *they* do not offend God." She never would reckon up the number of her Religious, and used to quote a French proverb, which says: Count the sheep and the wolf will eat them." One day that Dr. Hughes, Archbishop of New York, was ascribing to her the merit of the great things done in America by the Sacred Heart, Mother Barat could not conceal her vexation. The Archbishop, perceiving it, changed the subject, and on leaving her remarked: "It does not do to praise your Mother General." Her secretary entering the room soon afterwards, found Madame Barat shedding tears. Mgr. Parisi was speaking to her once of the rapid progress of her Society and said: "I know you are not inclined to draw any personal merit from it." "Oh, monseigneur!" she exclaimed, "of course not; it would be too horrible!" She said to a great-niece of Father Varin's who was making her probation in 1865: "It was a signal mistake of your uncle's to appoint me to the government of the Society. . . . Still, it is just possible that God inspired him to do it. He may have wished to found His work on the most utter nothingness. If your Mother is so poor a concern, what must you be, my child?" The ardent fire of love

which burnt in Madame Barat's heart often found vent in sudden exclamations, which darted from it like flames. This was especially the case in her latter years, when she had not strength to speak much. One day in summer, when the wind itself was intensely hot, she cried: "Would that it were hot everywhere. We are in the midst of a great fire. Let our Lord have His way with us. He will soon light up a flame." Another day, on arriving at the Rue de Varennes, she said, looking round at the Community: "How many we are here: enough to set the four corners of the earth on fire." Over and over again she repeated this prayer, which seemed to burst from the depths of her heart: "Oh, Heart of Jesus! my light, my love, and my life, let me know Thee alone and live in Thee, through Thee, and for Thee!" One evening she came into the room of the probanists and sank breathless on a seat. The words of St. Paul burst from her lips: "Anathema, yes, anathema to those who love not Jesus Christ!" As those around her were silent, she said sadly: "What! does no one answer my appeal? Alas! alas! Jesus is not loved." In the night she was heard exclaiming, "My Jesus! my dear Lord!" and her hands seemed to be feeling for the crucifix, which was always close to her. Sometimes she uttered the words of the Cantic: "I slumber, but my heart watches;" or else Latin ejaculations which the Sister who was with her did not understand. In one of her illnesses, when she was asked if she wanted anything, her answer was: "I want only one thing, to love Jesus, and to know that He is loved."

There was nothing she did not make use of to raise her soul to God, and St. Bonaventure's words about St. Francis of Assisi might well have been applied to her. "He saw in all beauty Him who is beauty itself, and tracked as it were on the surface of creation the beloved of His soul. Everything was to him a step of the ladder by which he

ascended to the supreme perfection, and he looked upon each creature as a drop of the Divine goodness.”\*

Once, as she was gazing on some beautiful mountains, Mother Barat exclaimed: “Oh, what beautiful things God makes, and what ugly things we do.” One day she stopped in the garden to look at a lovely rose sparkling with dew, and then said, as if speaking to it: “Beautiful as thou art, thou art not my God!” This reminds us of St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi’s words when she enjoyed the perfume of a flower: “Oh, how good Thou art my God to have intended from all eternity to create this rose for the delight of a poor sinner like me.” As she travelled, Mother Barat was continually exciting her companions to praise the great Creator of the world. Nature and art and books inspired her with comparisons and illustrations tending to God’s glory. One day that she was looking at a volume of poetry with one of the mistresses from the Rue de Varennes, she found some lines which expressed feelings of earthly love. “Let us read some of these stanzas,” the Mother General said, “and apply them to our Divine Jesus.” When she had done so, she added: “We have been talking nonsense; but never mind. It warms the heart, and our Lord will benefit by it.” Everything with her tended to *Sursum corda*.

We can gather from this what must have been her spirit of prayer. She said once to a Superior: “If we manage well, we can make more time than would seem possible. With all I have to do, I still contrive to spend six or seven hours in prayer.” The following day, afraid of having given too favourable an impression of her devotion, she tried to explain away what she had said: “As I sleep little, some of the hours of the night are, of course, employed in thinking of our Lord; then in the afternoon I pray in my little tribune, but this is in fact rest rather than prayer.”

Her habit of union with our Lord had become an

\* St. Bonav. *Vita S. Franc.* cap. ix.

instinctive and irresistible condition of her soul. Once after giving the signal for the end of the reading at dinner-time, she fell into so deep a state of recollection that for an hour she neither spoke nor moved. No one ventured to interrupt her, and the bell which called the nuns to vespers did not arouse the Mother General from her abstraction. Often in her travels, while the horses rested, she used to stroll into a wood, and when the hour arrived to set out again her companions found her kneeling by a bush entirely absorbed in God. Not but that she experienced at times what she called "the hiding of our Lord's face" and suffered from spiritual dryness. This trial she turned to account by making it a subject of humiliation, as we see in a note in her handwriting, dated 1839: "I earnestly beg of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, through our Lady's Seven Dolours, to give me back the method of prayer I used to have in former days and that I have lost through my long infidelities."

We have not many details with regard to Mother Barat's method of prayer. It was generally speaking more affective than speculative. It did not deal in profound thoughts and still less aimed at extraordinary states. She said of St. Gertrude: "It is her love of God, not her revelations, I envy." The mysteries of the life of Jesus were the constant subjects of her meditations, and she identified herself with the periodical celebration the Church makes of its events. His life became her life.

In Advent her recollection always deepened. On the 1st of December, 1862, she said: "If we had faith, the approach of Christmas would sink us into an abyss of humility and charity, whilst gazing on Him, who, as the Church says, 'did not abhor the Virgin's womb.'" On the feast itself joy filled her heart. She received that day and kept in her room until the feast of the Purification a little wax image of our Infant Lord, which she was wont to cover

with kisses and to hold on her knees during her prayers, pressing it to her heart, and calling it her treasure and her all. In 1863, at the beginning of Advent, she said to the Sisters: "I was told last year not to kiss the feet of the Infant Jesus in the chapel. They were afraid I should spoil them. It was very cruel of the Sisters, but this year I do not care, for I have got a Divine Infant of my own, and can kiss it as much as I like." Elsewhere we find her tender love of our Lord expressed in the following words: "To think of a God, the Word of God, the only begotten of the Father, the Eternal Wisdom, reduced to silence or to the utterance of childish cries, an all-powerful God subjected to creatures. Oh, at that sight pride must indeed blush and disappear. To me the greatest of mysteries is the fact that a religious can look at the crib and still possess feelings of self-love. If the crib does not teach us to renounce everything finite and earthly, we are blind or mad, and had better go and live in the world's lunatic asylums."

Her soul united itself in the same way and offered itself up, as it were, in the mystery of the Cross. On one occasion, at the beginning of Holy Week, she came into the novitiate and said: "My children, let us die together and die the death of Jesus, that we may rise again with Him." And another time speaking to the probationists: "Let us thoroughly indulge ourselves this week! Indulge ourselves in humiliations, love, and sacrifices." On Holy Thursday, nothing could exceed the humility with which she washed the feet of the novices and waited on them at table. On Good Friday, she spent the hours during which our Lord hung upon the Cross in such intense consideration of His sufferings that she could not be aroused from her meditations. Towards four o'clock her soul and body seemed to revive. On one of those sacred days she came in the evening into the noviceship, and exclaimed with a sigh of relief, "At last, my dear children, His sufferings are over!

It feels like coming to life again!" On the festival of the Five Wounds of our Lord, in 1855, she said: "Oh what a beautiful feast! I felt this morning as if from these Divine founts, the blessed wounds of our Lord, I could see His Blood flowing on your souls. For if it flows for all mankind, how much more must it be poured out for those who without reserve have given themselves to Him." The history of the Passion affected her so deeply that it was impossible to read it in the refectory; she could not eat whilst the sufferings of her Lord were spoken of, and only longed to be nailed to the Cross with her Divine Spouse. "When we study the mystery of the Crucifixion," she said on one of the days of the Holy week, "we can only will to suffer and make reparation as long as the world lasts and longer still."

On Easter Sunday her face brightened with joy. She looked transfigured. "With my Lord I have risen again," she said to her children, "and as He appeared to Simon, so I hasten to appear among my little band of apostles." It was the same with all the glorious mysteries. A Lay-sister remembers how on the feast of the Ascension one year, when the venerable Mother was walking up the stairs leaning on her arm, she turned to her with a sweet smile, and said, "O Sister, if you were but leading me up to heaven!"

As to the tabernacle, it was Mother Barat's refuge and home, her heaven upon earth. In the morning, before five o'clock, when the Sister sacristan went to open the door of the Church she generally found the Mother General in prayer before it, longing for the moment of entrance into her Lord's presence. For two or three hours she usually remained before the altar in humble adoration. Sometimes in the course of the day she was seized with a sudden thirst for that Divine presence. "It is so long since I have seen our Lord," she would say. Once when a visitor had

detained her for a long while from the chapel she could not help exclaiming that she had hardly seen our Lord at all that day, and that she could not live in this state. When on her knees in her little tribune she seemed to forget the world and herself, and to see nothing but Jesus, the beloved of her heart. His name rose to her lips, and was uttered with indescribable feeling. "My Master!" she would exclaim, "Thou art so good! Thou art so powerful! O my God, why are there so few who love Thee? If I could but give Thee the hearts of men! If only we loved Thee well!" Her countenance expressed even more than her words. Many of her nuns say that they have seen her walk up to the altar with clasped hands and looking at the tabernacle with an ardent gaze whilst praying for some special grace, "Do not, do not refuse it," she would say, "I have prayed for it so long." If the Sisters wanted to speak to her at those moments they waited a little while and then said: "Have you done praying, Reverend Mother?" "You know," she would answer, "that I have never done;" and as she left the chapel they heard her saying, "My dear Lord, I must leave Thee; but I will soon return."

Mother Barat communicated every day, and prepared for it by confession. In her later years she confessed only every other day, which made her say: "I hope I am beginning to be converted, and then I shall not be obliged to confess oftener than once a week, as you all do." She accused herself of the least fault with so much contrition that it might have been supposed she had committed the greatest sins. One of the nuns declares that when she went after her into the confessional she often saw it wetted with her tears.

St. Theresa has said: "When you have communicated, shut the eyes of your body, open those of your soul, and you will find heaven." It often happened that during those

heavenly moments Mother Barat was carried out of her herself. One of her daughters relates that it was no use to call her or to touch her; she looked up with her eyes open, but saw nothing. At last, as if coming back from a long distance she roused herself and said: "Oh, is that you? Yes we must leave Him to go and work for Him. We must leave God for God." Some have thought that at those times they saw her surrounded by a bright light. One of the probanists declares that one morning in the chapel of the Feuillantines she heard the Mother General, who thought she was alone, addressing our Lord in words of ardent love. At last she saw the Sister, and asked her if the bell had rung for the end of the thanksgiving. It had been rung three quarters of an hour before. She then desired her to close the shutters. As she was doing so, it struck her that though the weather was dull and gloomy there was a light shining in the chapel around the Reverend Mother, and concluded she had given that order for the purpose of concealing it.

It was in hours such as these that, urged by the power of Divine love, she plunged, as St. Augustin describes it, into the depths of that unknown God whose goodness filled her with heavenly rapture, and that she felt those vehement transports which St. Augustin thus speaks of: "Thou makest me experience, O Lord, new and extraordinary emotions, and Thou dost impart to me a sweetness which, reaching to its highest point, would border on something not belonging to this world."\*

We have already spoken of Mother Barat's devotion to the Holy Mother of God. She often told her daughters to look upon Mary as their true Superior, and when submission was a difficult thing, to remember it was Mary they were obeying. One of her sayings was "that Mary's heart was the court where mercy holds its sittings." Every evening

\* Aug. lib. x. *Confess.* cap. xl.

she said the Rosary, the *Memorare* and the *Salve Regina*, and kissed several times a little statue of our Lady of Guadalupe, which Father Druilhet had given her, and sought the blessing of our Lady by touching her own forehead with the hands of the statue. In the same way she asked St. Joseph for his blessing, and repeated her favourite hymn, beginning—

Je mets ma confiance  
Vierge en votre secours.

Then Jesus, her beloved one, as she called Him, had her last thoughts. "Jesus mercy!" was her last prayer at night. The friends and patrons she most frequently invoked were the angels, especially St. Michael, the protector of her Society; the Apostles St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John, St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Francis Xavier, St. Mary Magdalen, St. Theresa, and Blessed Margaret Mary, the apostle of the Sacred Heart. She said of this last Saint: "Humiliation and love made up her whole life. Would we could say the same of ourselves!"

Such was the love of God in Mother Barat's heart, it towered over every other affection, but at the same time overflowed in feelings and acts of kindness towards all that God loves or wishes to be loved for His sake. In the following chapter we shall glance at some of the practical proofs of this universal charity.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### *Consummation of Mother Barat's sanctity. Her boundless charity.*

OF all God's works on earth the Church is the greatest, and as such it was the first object not only of Mother Barat's devotion, but of her affection. We have seen what her feelings were about the Pope; and she venerated the episcopate with a reverence, heightened in her case by gratitude. The venerable prelates who had been the protectors of the early days of the Order of the Sacred Heart, most of them departed this life long before Mother Barat's death. We find amongst them the honoured names of Mgr. d'Aviau, Mgr. d'Astros, Mgr. de Beauregard, Mgr. Soyer, Mgr. Frayssinous, Mgr. de Quélen, Mgr. Dubourg, Mgr. de Rohan, and Mgr. de Forbin-Janson. The last of her great episcopal friends, Mgr. de Bruillard, Bishop of Grenoble, died at the beginning of 1861 at the Sacred Heart of Montfleury, where he had retired at the end of his life. Mother Barat wrote at the time of his death: "Almost half a century of good works and edification to the Church have filled up the measure of this good man's merits and prepared his reward. He was my first guide in the ways of piety. We lose his protection on earth, but he will pray in heaven for the Sacred Heart which was so dear to him." The successors of these holy prelates continued to befriend her and her work with the same earnest goodwill, and she wrote to Mgr. Sergent, Bishop of Quimper,

that the paternal kindness of their lordships the Bishops had been one of her most heartfelt consolations to the end of her long life.

Her deep reverence for the episcopal office was evinced on all occasions. Never, even in her extreme old age, and when it was painful to her to kneel, could she be persuaded not to give them that mark of respect, and any advice from them she listened to with the utmost deference. The Bishop of Beauvais, however, relates that once the venerable Superior did not agree to a measure which he had recommended with regard to her house in his episcopal city. "There was no disobedience on her part," he adds, "for I did not give any orders on the subject, and had not the right to do so. But some time afterwards Mother Barat, on receiving more ample information on the subject, carried out the plan I had proposed, and as the result was very satisfactory, I called upon her in Paris to congratulate her on its success. I was surprised and edified at seeing the venerable and infirm Superior rise with difficulty from her seat, and kneel down before me to beg me to forgive her for not having at once followed my advice. I was ashamed to see at my feet a holy woman whose blessing I was myself inclined to ask. It was with difficulty that I made her rise." "It was wrong, very wrong of me," she said; "I see it now, and it proves to me more than ever with what deference poor women like ourselves ought to listen to the requests and advice of our bishops." Having heard that some fears she had expressed about the future prospects of the house at St. Pierre-lès-Calais had vexed Mgr. Parisi, she could not rest till she had asked his forgiveness. "I cannot bear," she said to her secretary, "to give pain to any one, and especially to so worthy a prelate, almost a Father of the Church." She wrote to him: "It would make me miserable to think that anything I said with regard to that dear house had made me seem ungrateful to your lordship, and I beg

you in the name of the merciful Heart of Jesus to forget the words which, quite involuntarily on my part, have pained you, and to send me a few lines containing the assurance that you grant me the forgiveness I humbly beg for."

Mother Barat always exhorted her daughters to see only our Lord in the person of His priests, and not to make any distinctions founded on human respect. "Look at Magdalen," she said, "at the tomb of Jesus Christ. It is not the angels who occupy her attention. It is only our Lord she thinks of. I am glad to feel that in our Society we do not run after directors." The humblest chaplains of her houses were always treated by her with the deepest respect. There was at the convent of Orleans a good old priest, M. Stérenne, who had been for years curé in a village, a pious, humble, simple-minded man. One day Mother Barat, who knew how holy he was, went into the sacristy, and kneeling before him craved his blessing. "But it is impossible," the old priest said; "what does this mean? What! a saint ask a blessing from such a sinner as myself? It is I who want your blessing," and down on his knees he went. As neither would yield in this devout contest, they were at last obliged to pray together, and to ask our Lord to bless them both.

The spouses of Christ, to whatever order they belonged, were dear to the servant of God. The Carmelites, the Sisters of St. Vincent of Paul, the Little Sisters of the Poor, and the Nuns of the Visitation, were to her really like sisters. In 1847 she signed, with the convent at Paray le Monial, a treaty of association for prayer and good works. Never did she feel the least jealousy at the successes of other religious orders. "Let us do all we can," she wrote; "let us deserve God's blessing on our labours, and always rejoice at the prosperity of those who work for the same Master." A congregation sprung up in Italy at one time which took the name and, in a great measure, the statutes

of her own institute. She always said to those who complained of it, "If they are to do more good than we do, the Heart of Jesus will be all the more glorified. It is wide enough to contain many religious families." She readily supplied Mgr. Reisach with the rules of her order when he was thinking of founding one on the same plan. "If it is to promote the glory of God," she said, "we must not refuse his request; but it will be difficult to enter into the spirit of this admirable work. It is in this that our stronghold consists." She also said, "I do not care what they borrow from us, so that they leave us humility." Mother Barat not only esteemed other religious communities, but she did her best to help them. In 1840 some French nuns came to Rome to take charge of a school founded by Princess Borghese. They were received at the house of Santa Rufina in order to learn the language and habits of those they were to teach. In 1862 the Council of the work of schools for the East begged her to interest herself about the missionary community in Syria called the Sisters of the Sacred Heart. The Mother General recommended this work to all her houses in Europe, and even in America, and sixty-five Arabian Sisters were supported by her efforts. "It would have been a great joy to me," she said, "to have sent myself a colony to the Holy Land. These good Sisters in Jesus Christ will do still better."

Her thirst for the salvation of souls seemed to increase as her end approached. "The night is close at hand," she said in one of her letters to Mother DeBrou, "the night when we can no longer work, or merit, or save souls. This is what I should most regret, supposing we could regret anything, when the Master comes and calls for us." And another time: "To be an apostle, a saviour of souls, is the only thing worth living for." She wrote to one of her American missionaries, Mother Evelina Lévêque: "They tell me to leave off writing when my pen shakes, but how

can I leave off when I am writing on this subject—the foreign missions, my first attraction?” Sometimes she felt an ardent desire to visit her distant communities, especially the poorest amongst them—the Irish ones above all. “I should start at once,” she said, “if I were worth the expense of the journey.” Her love for the souls of sinners who could describe? A spiritual writer said in a recent work, “There are a number of hearts in the world which are hard with regard to God as iron and steel. He must have furnaces in which to melt them. Be one of these furnaces.”\* Mother Barat was one of those furnaces. She had always in hand some souls for the conversion of which she toiled. For a long time those of the Emperor Nicholas and the Abbé de Lammenais occupied her. She had agreed with our Lord that every time she kissed the little crucifix at her side it meant, “By the infinite merits of Thy Passion, Lord Jesus, convert Thy poor servants Nicholas and Lammenais.” The impenitent death of the latter drew from her the sad exclamation: “O my children, if I had any influence with the Heart of our Lord, would that poor man have died in that way?”

Reigning sovereigns, emperors, kings, ministers, influential officers of State, had a great share in her prayers. She was unwearily zealous in beseeching for them the aid of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. On all occasions she performed the part of an apostle, and never received a visit without striving to do some good to the soul God placed in her way. She obtained in this manner many a promise the fulfilment of which brought people back to the performance of religious duties. The doctor who attended her in her last years, good man as he was in other ways, had neglected his religion. Often and often she had tried to bring him back to God, and a short time before her death had a long conversation with him on the

\* M. l'Abbé Gay, *De la vie et des vertus chrétiennes*, t. iii. p. 325.

subject. When he left her he was so deeply moved that he could scarcely speak: "What a woman that is," was all he said. Soon afterwards it was known that he had gone to Communion.

A young Protestant had married a girl who had been educated at the Sacred Heart. They had just had a son, and according to an agreement which the Church does not sanction, the poor child was to be brought up in his father's religion. The Mother General sent for the young man who often visited her and had taken the habit of calling her, "Ma Mère." "Well, if I am your mother," Madame Barat said, catching at the word, "my grandson must be a Catholic." So great was her influence that the father went himself the following day to ask Mgr. Sacconi, the Pope's Nuncio, to baptize this child. "That holy woman, Madame Barat," he said, "has so much power over me that I cannot help doing all she wishes." The venerable Mother asked to see the baby and gave it her blessing. Her letters often effected conversions. One of her nephews who had spent fifteen years in the direction of the military hospitals in Africa, was named director of the one at Ajaccio. He was very ill when he arrived there and soon fell into so rapid a consumption that his state was declared hopeless. He had become an infidel, laughed at holy things, and complained impatiently of the efforts made by the chaplain of the regiment to bring him back to the faith of his childhood. Fortunately the priest spoke to him one day of Madame Barat. He had known his aunt very little but held her in great veneration. "She is a saint," he said, and after relating some instances of her holiness, he pointed to a crucifix hanging on the wall, and told the chaplain that Pius IX. had given it to her and that she had sent it to him when he was in Africa. The priest, Canonico Spinosi, wrote at once to Mother Barat to inform her of the state of her nephew and to beg her immediately

to write to him, which she did. He expressed regret that he did not keep a copy of this letter ; it was, he says, a masterpiece of affectionate zeal and prudent advice and persuasion. Every word of it was exactly adapted to the character and the feelings of the invalid, and breathed a spirit of apostolic fervour. The heart of the soldier was deeply touched by a language so new to him, and over and over again he read this precious and encouraging letter and called upon the priest to listen to it and to admire it.

After an evening spent in thought and struggle with himself, the sick man made up his mind, and as soon as the chaplain entered his room on the following morning he said: "Monsieur l'Aumoinier, I wish to go to confession." Mgr. Sarrebayrouze, the auxiliary Bishop, celebrated Mass in his room. When he returned to him and asked him if he wished to receive the Sacraments of the Church, the dying man answered: "Yes, Monseigneur, I wish for it and look forward to it with joy, although I am unworthy of that grace." He received first the Sacrament of Confirmation and then that of Extreme Unction, with a piety which deeply affected those who were present, and died full of gratitude to her who had opened for him the way to light and led him to seek God's mercy. "Oh, what a blessing it is, my children," Mother Barat said, "when God sends us souls to save! If I could only know that I had saved one soul!"

She once wrote: "If one could seek poor sinners in the depths of their dark prison we should be there trying to save them." At any rate she longed to procure the release of the souls in Purgatory. The Foundress of an Order devoted to that work owed a great deal to Madame Barat. On the 27th of January, 1856, the Mother General said to the probanists: "I have seen this week a person whom our Lord has inspired to found an Order entirely devoted to the souls in Purgatory. Oh, my dear children, that is a

soul burning with zeal! She tells me that she has already a great many postulants, and asked me how she should train them to the religious life. I directed her to a priest worthy of her confidence and who has been of great use to her." This holy person was Mdlle. Eugénie Smet, who had been educated at the Sacred Heart at Lille and who, under the name of Mother Marie de la Povidence, was the first Superior of the Helpers of the Holy Souls, devoted to the sick poor and the relief of the suffering portion of the Church. Mother Barat became her most frequent adviser, and assisted with the most earnest good will the infant society, the motto of which, "To pray, to act, and to suffer for the souls in Purgatory," was so exactly in keeping with the spirit of charity of the servant of God.

She had sometimes herself special lights with regard to the deliverance of these captive souls. The widow of Maréchal de Saint-Arnaud states that after her husband's Christian death she went to the Sacred Heart and begged earnestly the servant of God to obtain for her the assurance that he was safe and happy. The holy Reverend Mother told her that she knew a privileged soul to whom God vouchsafed in intimate and supernatural communications sometimes to reveal many things, and said: "I will try to learn by her means what you want to discover." But after a moment's thought she changed her mind and added; "No, my child, it is better not to tempt God. I shall not ask for the light you seek; trust entirely in God's goodness, I feel persuaded myself that your excellent husband is with our Lord. In case he is in Purgatory we will pray for him." Satisfied with these judicious words, Madame de Saint-Arnaud did not insist any further, but remained convinced that the person Mother Barat had alluded to was no other than herself.

Love and respect for poverty were one of the great characteristics of the saintly soul we are describing. She

obeyed much more readily the summons of poor visitors than those of eminent and titled persons. It happened one day that she had sent an excuse when a distinguished visitor had asked for her whilst she was in prayer in the chapel, but a moment afterwards a coalheaver's little girl having begged to see the Mother General, she at once came to the parlour and catechized the child as if she had nothing else in the world to do. Another time excessive fatigue had made her refuse to admit a pious Roman Princess, but recollecting that she had promised a visit to the poor washerwomen employed in the house, she went off in spite of her exhaustion and spent some time conversing with them. "Ah, Reverend Mother," one of her daughters once exclaimed, "it answers with you to be poor and insignificant." She was like a Mother to the servants, workmen, and tradespeople employed in her houses. A coachman called Louis exclaimed when he was dying and delirious: "Is it possible that I am going away? Does Mother Barat know it? Did not she promise me that I should never leave the Sacred Heart?" One of the under-gardeners had fallen asleep in the sun on a hot day, Madame Barat hastened to throw her handkerchief over his face and noiselessly withdrew. "Oh, Reverend Mother! Reverend Mother!" he exclaimed, when on waking he guessed what she had done. An old washerwoman at Amiens told her that she found it very difficult to maintain herself, her husband, and a sick daughter, and to the end of her days Mother Barat gave them every day a dinner from the convent. At another time the gardener informed her that the gift of a cow would enable him to support his large family of children. The present was made at once and permission given to feed it on the land belonging to the Sacred Heart. At Nantes she saw one day an old workman who was hiding behind the trees and dining on dry bread while his companions were eating a comfortable meal.

Mother Barat called the portress and asked her to take to the poor man a parcel; in it was a loaf which contained, as was afterwards found out, her own dinner which had just been taken up to her. No one realized more than did this holy woman the supernatural beauty of poverty. She had an instinctive attraction towards it. Sometimes when travelling she used to interrupt her prayer, and even awake from sleep, and say to her companions: "There is a poor man begging of us."

When the Sister who was employed in the distribution of alms came into the Mother General's room, she was always greeted with such questions as these: "Well, Sister, tell me how are your friends. Were so-and-so pleased with what you gave them? How delightful it is to make people happy! Love of the poor is what makes people happy, and it is what brings a blessing on a house, it makes me hopeful to think that they are well received here." One day that she was ill she asked a Sister who had taken some alms for her to a destitute family why she had waited so long to let her know the result of her visit. "The good news of the joy it gave those poor people," she said, "would have given me a pleasant day and a good night." A poor man to whom she had sent a coat had exclaimed, "Oh! I wish I could see the Mother General! I should kiss her feet!" This made Madame Barat laugh, and she said to the portress: "I shall be very glad to see him. Let me know when he calls." Another of her clients insisted on her looking at a pair of shoes she had enabled him to buy, and said: "It will please her so much to see that they are such beautiful shoes," and he was right. The Mother General examined them with great satisfaction and a feeling of real pleasure.

She gave bountifully, and at once. As soon as notice was given her that people wanted her assistance, her answer always was, "What do they want?" and very often she gave

more than had been asked for. The procuratrix had sometimes to express fears that she would be ruined by such unlimited almsgiving. "Well, when we have nothing left," the Mother General answered, "we can sell our sacred vessels rather than leave the poor unassisted." The Sister at the head of the linen-room complained that she gave away her best chemises, that they were too good. "Too good!" she exclaimed. "Too good for the poor! why, my child, I would give them my skin if I could!" One of the portresses once asked her what she would do if she was besieged like herself with beggars. "What I should do, my child? Oh, I suppose I should ruin the Society. God knew it, and that is why He did not allow me to be a portress."

Her charities were so incessant, that she forgot what she had given. One winter evening, seeing at the door a ragged old man, shivering with cold: "Give him my cloak," she said. "Why, Reverend Mother," the portress exclaimed, "do you not remember that you gave it away this morning?" The Sister who looked after her clothes found one day her cupboard entirely empty. "Well, I suppose you are satisfied now, Reverend Mother," she said; "you have not even a change of linen left. The people to whom you give your things are not so poor as you are. Is this proper for a Superior General?" Mother Barat smiled and answered: "Forgive me, my good Sister, the Superior Général will easily find somebody who will be charitable enough to give her what she wants. My poor people would find it more difficult."

Perseverance in relieving misery was also one of her merits. A young orphan had been assisted at the Sacred Heart, clothed and sent back to her family in the country. She came to Paris, and was again relieved and clothed by Mother Barat. After the lapse of six months, the portress saw the same girl again at the door in rags, and at first

refused to let her in. "Do go and tell the Mother General that I am here," she pleaded; "I am sure she will take pity upon me." The Sister went to Madame Barat, but told her that it was a very unsatisfactory case, and that this was the third time the girl had come to the house in the same condition. "And you, Sister," the Mother General quietly said, "have you had recourse only three times to our Lord's mercy?" A suit of clothes was immediately got together. "Now, we only want shoes and stockings," Madame Barat said; "I will give my shoes, and you will give your stockings. Make haste, that we may not be seen by the Sisters when they come out of the refectory." The trousseau thus completed was bestowed on the girl, with a little money to support her until she could obtain a situation. The faults and even the vices of the poor did not harden towards them the heart of the Mother General. An infirm old woman, who could not bear to go to the hospital, had been for a long time lodged and fed at her expense. Once when her poor pensioner had been for some days absent she sent for her, made her sit down by her side, and dirty and sickly as she was, kindly embraced her. The Sisters found out that the poor creature was given to drink. At first Mother Barat would not believe it; but when ample proofs were given, she desired her not to come to the house, but continued to assist her through other persons. Every day almost she would inquire, "Has anything been heard of my poor woman? If she comes back and seems humbly disposed, mind you receive her." She did come at the end of a fortnight's time, and made many promises which were soon forgotten; but at the least token of repentance Madame Barat's hand and heart were opened to her again.

It must be admitted that her charity was frequently deceived. Her doctor, whom she asked to visit her poor people, had often occasion to tell her that a bad use was

made of her gifts. "Oh, really?" she would say. "Well, then, promise me that you will call again to try to improve them."

It was not the necessities of life alone that she loved to give to those for whom she felt a supernatural affection. She liked to indulge the tastes and even the fancies of the poor. A beggar asked for money to buy snuff, which the Sister whom he applied to considered a preposterous luxury. But Mother Barat said that if he felt the want of it and that it was a pleasure to him, there was no reason to deny him that boon. Hearing one day that a poor family were expecting their relatives from the country to spend the day with them, she provided them with a good dinner for their guests. She had taken a fancy for one particular postman, because he never called her anything but *Sister Barat*. She charged her daughters not to tell him to do otherwise. "He is quite right," she said: "it is you who do not understand this sort of thing." She converted him, and interested herself in his children. On the day that he made his Easter Communion she gave the good man and all his family a little dinner at the Sacred Heart, and had it been possible would have waited upon them herself.

We sum up these details as to the inexhaustible charity of this great servant of God by saying that she gave to her neighbour the bread of the body by abundant almsgiving, the bread of the heart by sympathy and compassion, and the bread of the soul by means of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. She would have given her own self to save or to help others. Somebody said of her, that she had the head of St. Ignatius, and the heart of St. Theresa. Perhaps we may be permitted to add also, something of the spirit of St. Vincent of Paul.

We have often spoken of her tender love of children. It went on ever increasing to the end of her days. Once

when she was staying at the Feuillantines she missed so much the sight and the society of her dear little flock, that she wrote to one of the mistresses: "My child, I hunger after children; do put all the little ones into a big carriage and bring them to see me for their holiday. I shall have their meal ready for them in the garden." When the new house near the Hotel Biron became her residence, she often assembled them under a cedar which she had planted herself and told them edifying stories. It was one of her sayings, that she would have founded the Society, had it been only for the sake of saving the soul of one child.

But she was preparing to take leave of her beloved little family. On the 21st of July, 1862, after receiving their congratulations on her feast, she told them that the hope of meeting them in heaven consoled her in her old age. "I shall soon be waiting for you there," she said. "You mean to go to heaven, I suppose?" "Oh, yes we do!" was the answer. "Will you then promise me never to commit a mortal sin?" "Yes, we promise it!" two hundred voices replied. "Well, then, we shall be together during all eternity." Those last words were uttered in a loud and earnest voice as in former days. She remained for a few moments with her hands and eyes raised up to heaven, beseeching God to bless her numerous family.

The Scripture tells us, that the Lord opens His Divine hand and fills every living thing with blessings; and the Gospel, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the permission of our heavenly Father. The love with which God had filled the soul of his servant extended even to the inferior regions of creation. She said of animals, that as they had no future existence to expect we ought to make their present lives as happy as possible. They cannot tell us their wants, we must try to find them out. Having seen a Sister strike without necessity some poor animals, she said her heart could not be good, and argued ill of her

vocation. Many and many an instance of her kindness to dumb creatures could be added to those already related, such as her taking up in her arms a lamb lost in the field, and carrying it to the sheepfold, and her drawing out of a chalk pit, not without some risk to herself, a sheep which had tumbled into it. In the winter the snow was swept away to make room for the seed with which she fed whole troops of sparrows. The nests of the birds in the garden of the mother-house she tenderly protected, and begged her daughters not to go near them. Even ants and spiders and flies were cared for in her room, and to those who wondered over it she said: "Let us make all God's creatures happy when we can. That is my principle. Let people think of it as they will." It was generally noticed that all those living creatures she was so kind to care for her in return. Several facts are related which support this belief. At one place a number of birds surrounded and even entered her carriage, singing as if to take leave of her. A cat at Conflans used always to bring her kittens one after another to the Mother General and lay them down at her feet as if to put them under her protection. All sorts of anecdotes of this kind are related. Those who witnessed these facts were reminded of the familiar intercourse which existed between the Fathers of the Desert and the humblest of God's creatures. "We must not be astonished," says the Venerable Bede, "if creatures obey him who himself faithfully and truly obeys His Creator." Two thousand years before the birth of Christ, in the deserts of Idumea, it was promised to the just man reconciled to God that he would live in peace with the beasts of the earth.\*

Her tenderness of feeling towards all God's works was manifested by the care Mother Barat took of trees, of fruits, and especially of flowers, which she looked upon as

\* "Et bestię terrę pacificę erunt tibi" (Job v. 23); Bede, *In vita S. Cuthb.* cap. xiii.

the most delicate masterpiece of Divine love. They were to be admired and respected, she thought, and their existence favoured in its measure. She was often seen standing before a tree laden with fruit, or a flower-bed, or the grass of the fields, absorbed in contemplation. Sometimes she picked up the flowers which the children had torn up in their gardens, and begged the gardener to replace them in the soil, and let them bloom for a few days longer for the glory of God. One day she saw the Sisters throwing away some nosegays which were hardly withered at all, and she said, "God has made these beautiful things for us, and you do not think it worth while to make them live a little longer?"

When a soul has arrived at the perfection of charity, when it loves all that God has made, and loves everything only in Him and for Him, it may be said to have attained sanctity, and we can expect that virtue will then begin in that soul to assume a divine energy and grace to become transformed into a heavenly power. Some of these extraordinary gifts were noticed in Mother Barat. Many of her daughters believed that she could read in the souls of others. One of them says: "After a conversation with our Reverend Mother, I remained convinced that she was acquainted with the inmost secrets of my interior life. When I had committed a fault I went always to tell her of it, but in the full certainty that she knew all I had to say before I had opened my lips." Another says: "I always felt that she would have known if I had not been in a state of grace, and in that case would have treated me differently." She could hear from a distance the cry of a soul in distress. A young girl, on her arrival in Paris, fell very ill at an hotel, and in the anguish of fever and delirium, kept all night calling on her dear Mother Barat, and begging her not to forsake her. The Mother General sent the next day to know how she was after her delirious night, and to assure

her that she would never forsake her or cease to be a Mother to her. How she discovered her arrival in Paris, her abode, her sufferings, and her prayers, no one could ever tell. A Mother Vicar relates that one evening at six o'clock she went into Mother Barat's room and found her sitting at her window, looking very much absorbed and preoccupied: "She did not attend to what I was saying, and said to me, 'My dear child, if you will do me a kindness, go and ask for Masses to be said for one of our Sisters who has just died in Italy, and is in need of prayers.' She gave me to understand that this person had appeared to her and asked for her assistance." Facts of this nature were frequently noticed.

Her prayers were supposed on one occasion to influence the elements. One of the nuns in the house of Paris states that during a storm she went one night into the room of the Mother General, who was ill at that time, and found her looking anxious and disturbed. "We must go to the chapel," she said, "and pray." And then, though the house seemed to shake with the violence of the thunder-claps, she came out with a perfectly serene, and even radiant countenance, and called upon the Community to join with her in thanksgiving. She felt her prayers had been heard. Her belief in the almighty power of prayer was such, that it made her exclaim, when the news reached her that the house at Blumenthal had been burnt to the ground, "Was there not then in that house a soul given to prayer?"

After the picture we have drawn of Mother Barat, it will not seem wonderful that her contemporaries, who witnessed her life and her virtues, should have forestalled the decision of the Church, and predicted that it would place her on its altars. One of them says, "She was another Jane Frances of Chantal, adorned with the halo of virginity and full of the suavity of the Heart of Jesus. A Spaniard declared

that she was a second St. Theresa—an amiable and clever saint. A holy religious described her soul as a pure crystal, in which the Sun of Justice found no obstacle to its rays, and through which it diffused light and warmth on every side. Mgr. Dupont, Archbishop of Bourges, said that her humility was beautiful in the eyes of God, of the angels, and of the saints. Mgr. Tâché, Bishop of St. Boniface, in America, declared that the two most precious remembrances he carried away with him from Europe were those of the audience he had from Pius IX., and his conversation with Mother Barat.

All sorts of persons wished to see, to hear, and to consult her. In 1847 a young priest asked to pay a visit to the Mother General. He did not know her, but had heard that she was a woman of extraordinary wisdom and prudence. This was the Abbé Gratry, who was at that time chaplain of the superior normal school. “She has far surpassed my expectations,” he said. “Nothing that I had heard of her came up to what she is.” He continued as long as she lived to visit and to consult Mother Barat. It would have been very good for him if a few years later he could have sought her counsel.

The Comte de Montalembert, to whom Father Gratry had spoken of the servant of God, wished also to see so remarkable a person. It was with difficulty that he obtained admission, for he was himself a remarkable person, and the humble Mother General was not fond of receiving famous people. However, by the express wish of her confessor, she came down to see the great orator. M. de Montalembert thus speaks of this interview in a letter to his daughter, on the 21st of June, 1864: “I have had the happiness of seeing and conversing with Madame Barat. I cannot tell you how much this visit has impressed and interested me. As I watched her leaving the room leaning on her two companions, I thought of Moses on the mountain

with the Israelites uplifting his arms whilst he prayed to the Lord, I have liked all the nuns of the Sacred Heart whom I have known, but none so much as this venerable Mother."

We have gone step by step through every period of the saintly life of a great servant of God, and endeavoured to give an idea of her virtues. It only remains for us now to describe in a last chapter the closing scene of that wonderful existence.

## CHAPTER XX.

### *Last days and death of Mother Barat.*

1864—1865.

IN spite of a natural feebleness of constitution and an habitual state of ill-health, which increased at times so as to bring her to death's door, Madame Barat's life had lasted beyond the ordinary limits assigned to earthly existence. During the first half of her days she looked like a person almost too delicate to live long, but after the period of repose, which her accident and its consequent infirmity necessitated, from 1829 to 1832, she became less thin and appeared stronger. She felt herself as if she had taken a new lease of life, and foresaw that God meant to doom her love to what Bossuet calls the martyrdom of a long existence, St. John's martyrdom. We have no authentic portrait of Mother Barat. Her humility resisted all the solicitations of eminent persons, and baffled the oft-repeated and unsuccessful attempts to take her likeness. The picture at the beginning of this volume was drawn from memory, but though every effort was made to reproduce faithfully the venerable lineaments of the departed saint, it only proves the impossibility of representing that wonderful and expressive countenance, which was the exact counterpart of her soul.

Mother Barat was short of stature, and in latter years her form was somewhat bent. There was nothing at first sight remarkable in her appearance, but the charm of her refined and delicate features was indescribably attractive.

A high forehead and thoughtful brow, a slightly aquiline nose, and cheek bones and a chin rather prominently marked, gave her face an expression of energy and power tempered by extreme sweetness and kindness. Her mouth was charming, her smile irresistibly captivating, her hands were generally clasped together whilst she conversed, but they were opened and spread out when she spoke to those she loved or pitied, with an instinctive gesture which reminded one of the *Venite ad me* of the Gospel. When anything touched or interested her, Mother Barat's head, usually a little bent down, would be thrown back, and her eyes then beamed with expression and feeling. As long as she retained the free use of her limbs her movements were both graceful and rapid, and her way of walking so light and quick that she seemed to move on wings. A bright flush coloured her southern complexion when she talked of anything that excited her. Nothing could be more speaking than her countenance. But this remarkable vivacity never amounted to impetuosity. Her words were always measured, exact, under control, and to the purpose. Her manner showed that her spirit was under the continual influence of grace and in constant subjection to the guidance of God. Humility and recollection surrounded her with a halo through which her sanctity shone all the more brightly.

Towards the end of her life infirmities paralyzed her organs. She could hardly stand, or speak so as to be heard; she slept scarcely at all, and ate almost nothing. "Her life," somebody said, "was a sort of miracle prolonged by God for His own purposes," and the chief of these purposes we may well believe to have been, the opportunity of training to government the Vicar-General whom she had appointed as her coadjutor at the close of the Council of 1864. During long conversations, as frequent as her strength allowed, the Foundress imparted to Mother Gœtz all her plans, together with her regrets at having,

as she expressed it, so badly governed the Society. She imparted to her all the details of her administration, and left to her the management of its most important affairs. When the Superior Vicars consulted her she always said, "Send for Mother Goetz, she must hear what you have to say." Thus was her successor initiated in her system of government and imbued with her spirit.

A great sorrow saddened the last days of the Mother General. On the 13th of December, 1864, her own birthday, the last she was to spend on earth, one of her Assistants General, Mother Gertrude DeBrou, died. This holy nun had said to the infirmarian, "When a religious hears that she is going to depart from this world, what graces God then gives her, what peace and courage and trust!" Her last act was to thank the Mother General for having received her into a Society in which she had known such happiness. Her last words were, "Lord Jesus Christ, my God and my All, come and fetch Thy spouse. Take me into Thy eternity."

Mother Barat was longing herself, more ardently than ever, to be united to her Divine Spouse; she hastened to carry out the last decisions of the Council, and sometimes said, "I must do this," or, "I must finish that, and then I shall say my *Nunc dimittis*." She often spoke of the joys of heaven, and when paraphrasing the words *In terra viventium* from the hymn *Lauda Sion*, it seemed as if, like St. Monica, she was already hailing "that land where an inexhaustible life flows from a Divine fount." A professed religious, who was at that time fulfilling the office of portress, states that she found her one day absorbed in God, her hands clasped together, and her eyes fixed on heaven. "The noise I made in coming in," she says, "did not rouse her. She kept repeating from time to time the name of Jesus, in so supernatural a tone, that I felt strongly affected, and then she exclaimed, 'Heaven! Heaven!' I fell on

my knees before her little table and gazed on her face, which was transfigured, and beaming with the anticipated joy of Paradise. After a few minutes she bent down her eyes and saw me. 'O Reverend Mother! Reverend Mother!' I said in an agitated voice. She tried to explain away what I had noticed, and pointing to a heap of papers on her table said with a smile, 'I was thinking as I looked at all this labour that heaven will be our reward. It is a relief to bear that in mind. I must now and then give myself a little rest.'"

Mother Barat suffered much from fatigue and exhaustion during the winter of 1864 to 1865, the last she was to spend on earth. She gratefully thanked her daughters for all the care they bestowed upon her, and said to them: "I give you a great deal of trouble, my poor children, but it will soon come to an end, and God will reward you for all your goodness to His poor servant." One of her nuns who saw her in December felt that her parting words were a farewell. "Her body," she wrote, "seemed to be disappearing, and the flame of Divine love the only thing alive in her. I was kneeling with my hands resting upon her knees and her own venerable hand in mine. 'Tell your daughters,' she several times repeated, 'tell them to love with all their hearts our Blessed Lord, and to love souls, to love them as He has loved them, that is, to sacrifice themselves for their sake.' She was always dwelling on that theme. It almost appeared as if she could not speak of anything else. I went away convinced that I should never see her again. She seemed hardly to belong to this world, and to be as it were already in heaven."

At the beginning of the year 1865, Mother Barat made an effort to address the Community, and thus alluded to the recent death of Mother DeBrou. "The year which has just elapsed ended with a cross. The one which is now commencing begins also with a cross. This gives me

hope that it will be marked with many graces ;” and then as usual she spoke of the love of God. “In a letter,” she said, “we underline the words which we think most important. Well, my children, these are the words I underline for you : ALL, *absolutely* ALL, *for the Heart of Jesus.*”

She expressed regret at not being able oftener to see her daughters, and added, pointing to Mother Goetz, “But I resign myself to my inability all the more readily, as God has now supplied my place.” On the 19th of March, feast of St. Joseph, she said : “What gratitude we owe to St. Joseph for the Mother Joséphine he has given us. She has indeed been a gift from heaven.” The Mother General did not appear again till Holy Week. Pope Pius IX. had granted in those days the graces of a great jubilee to the Universal Church, and the Community had just concluded its last prescriptions. The state of Mother Barat’s health did not allow her to communicate at that moment, and on Holy Wednesday she said to her daughters, “How happy I should have been, my children, to eat of the crumbs of your Communion . . . but I was not worthy of that grace, and I felt as if our Lord might say as He looked at you and then at me, ‘You are clean, but not all,’ though indeed I hope not in the same sense.”

On Easter day she was able to go to Holy Communion, and her soul was filled with joy. “I felt,” she said, “this morning when we were kneeling together at the altar that the Lord was within us, clothed in that fine white garment which symbolizes His state of glory. We have no occasion to envy the holy women. But let us bear in mind what He said to Magdalen : ‘Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father.’ This means that the time has not arrived for the enjoyment of Divine love, we are still in the midst of struggles and conflicts. ‘But go to my brethren and say to them : I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and to your God.’ Or in other

words: 'Be apostles!' And what words they are! And to think that they are addressed also to us!" Mother Barat was often obliged to stop whilst delivering this exhortation, but afterwards she continued to converse on the same subject in a familiar manner. "This festival is the feast of the holy women, and we must be very grateful to our Lord, who allowed His Resurrection to be announced to His Apostles by poor insignificant women. It must have been a good humiliation for St. Peter and St. John to receive this information from them." "But do you think, Reverend Mother," asked Madame de Valancise, who happened to be then at Paris, "that St. John did not see our Lord?" The Mother General laughed and said, "I never can believe that the beloved disciple did not see his Master. I am sure he must have seen Him when He appeared to the Blessed Virgin. He must have been in her ante-room that day. Oh, my children, let us rejoice and be glad. St. Theresa used to be so delighted at the thought that the sufferings of her Divine Spouse were at an end. Let us also rejoice."

On the Sunday of the Good Shepherd she appeared again at recreation, but could hardly raise her voice; still when her daughters recited a little poem in which they spoke of her as a faithful shepherd, Mother Barat contrived to scold them a little: "Your poetry," she said, "has touched my heart, for my heart is not dead yet; but I cannot accept such words as addressed to myself. How odd it is, that I who have a little good sense, the sort of good sense everybody has, and you who have a great deal more of it than I have, we cannot at all agree, and yet such good, excellent nuns cannot be supposed to say what is not true! Well, I imagine the only way to account for it is to suppose that all these fine praises are addressed to our Lord, whose unworthy representative I am in your eyes." Then she found strength to go on and describe the mercies of Christ our Shepherd, our Saviour, and our Redeemer,

and she exhorted His flock to be ever faithful to Him. "If so," she said in conclusion, "we shall only have to thank our true Shepherd that He employed this old sheep to help Him in His work till the day that He calls her into His eternal fold."

In the first days of spring Mother Barat appeared to revive. Health, strength, spirits, and sanctity, all seemed on the increase. Delighted at witnessing this sort of resurrection, Madame Gœtz could not help saying, "Our Mother General will live for ten years to come!" and perhaps secretly hoped that she would precede her in eternity.

But this was not Mother Barat's own feeling; on the contrary, she was calmly and peacefully taking leave of the persons, the places, and the things that were dear to her.

To the great regret of all the Society of the Sacred Heart, it had become necessary to pull down the remains of the old house at Amiens, which had been its first religious home. Mother Barat wrote at that moment: "If Jesus allows it, I wish to see it again. He will give me strength, I think, to take a last leave of that dear house. There are such affecting thoughts connected with those old walls! May they ever live in our hearts. If once the love of the Sacred Heart is stamped in red hot characters on our souls, we need not regret the loss of the old material building." In another letter she said: "That beloved cradle of the Society becomes dearer to me as the number of years which separates me from it increases. It is thus that extremes meet. Shall I ever see it again? Jesus only knows! I only wish His will to be done."

She was expected at Amiens in the summer of 1865, for the consecration of the new chapel, and she wrote in March: "I shall indeed be happy to go there. The feelings awakened by the sight of that first home of our religious life will increase a hundredfold our gratitude to Jesus Christ for the vocation He has given us." But

Mother Barat was not to enjoy this compensation for the sacrifice she was making of that relic of other days; she never saw Amiens again, and by the time that the church of her first foundation was consecrated, the Foundress of the Sacred Heart was no longer in this world.

Every day her soul was detaching itself more entirely from earth, and there is not one of the letters she wrote during those last weeks which does not contain a farewell or an allusion to a hoped-for meeting in heaven. On the 23rd of March she wrote to her nephew, the Abbé Dusaussoy: "Do not forget me during the Holy Sacrifice; my end is approaching, and my excessive weakness warns me it is very near. Help me to find mercy with our Lord; my need of it is great." On the 22nd of April she said to Madame de Portes: "As your Mother advances in age she is losing her strength, her eyes, and even her memory, as far as her intellect is concerned; but as to the memory of the heart, it rather increases than diminishes. This means, my dear daughter, that I can never forget you. Shall we meet again? When I say this my eyes turn to heaven. Pray for your Mother, that she may soon find a refuge in the mercy of the Heart of Jesus. Eighty-five years! If I had worked better, my life would have ended long ago, but I am very near to its utmost limits. Obtain for me that even now I may hasten to make up for the past." On the 29th of April she exclaimed, "Oh, how rapidly years go by! and when the end comes what a blessing it is to have fought for Jesus Christ, to have loved and imitated our humble and meek Lord. I suppose, my child, you hardly expect to live as long as your old Mother General. Well, this long life seems like a short dream by the side of eternity. Let us then make haste to fill our remaining days with virtues and merits." On the 15th of May she wrote: "We who have grown old and grey in the service of Jesus and in a perfect vocation, we ought to have

attained to the utmost height of virtue. I trust this is the case with you, dear Alexandrine; but your Mother is still far from it." And on the following day: "I am often afraid that I have been an obstacle to a greater outpouring of Divine grace on the Society. I have not time to make up for the past. Help me to redeem it." On the 20th she addressed this last farewell to the young children of the Nicolay family: "Soon I shall see them no more, those dear children. But brought up as they are, my dear Marie, I feel that this separation will not be eternal. How sweet it will be for their aunts and their old friend to meet again and for ever. Oh, beg of our Lord to show us this mercy."

The spring of the year, the Month of Mary, and the First Communion of the school children were combining to fill Mother Barat's heart with a holy joy. It was a festival time, and it preceded a still higher bliss. On the 9th of May, under the cedar tree in the garden, she received a deputation from the younger portion of the school, gave the little children presents of fruit, and spoke loving, motherly words to them. "Promise me, my little ones," she said to them, "never to offend God, and then we shall meet in heaven with Jesus and Mary, whom you love, I know." She then gave them her blessing, the last blessing given by this servant of God to children, those life-long objects of her love and care.

On the following day she wrote to Mother Prevost: "It was so pleasant to look at your children yesterday; one could see in their pure and sweet faces that God has taken possession of their hearts. Our labours are amply rewarded when we see the divine results of our teaching in these young souls." And she added gratifying words regarding the state of the Community: "Everything goes on prosperously in your dear and numerous family of the Rue de Varennes, and with all that peace, order, and self-devotion which you know belongs to it."

On the 21st of May, the Sunday before the feast of the Ascension, she went into the room of the probanists at the time of recreation. "My dear daughters," she said, "I was bent upon seeing you to-day, for *on Thursday we go to heaven*, and we must spend a little time together before that happens." Only a figurative sense was ascribed to those words which were to be so literally fulfilled.

She had never been more kind and gracious in her manner. Some of her daughters were sitting at a distance from her. She told them to come closer, and said: "I want to have you all near me;" and added, that as she had not seen them for some time, she reckoned on their having made great progress, as each successive day ought to be marked by improvement. Then some letters from her little schoolboys at Marmoutier were read aloud. One of them wrote: "We pray to God that you may still live a long while." She raised her eyes to heaven with an expressive look. Another said: "Reverend Mother, I pray that I may meet you in Paradise." "Ah! it is there," she exclaimed, "I shall be indeed glad to see them!" And she spoke of the harm done to the lower classes by knowledge when separated from faith, and exhorted her daughters not merely to instruct children, but to bring them up in the fear of God.

In the garden she spoke to the Lay-sisters who had assembled there to see her. "My children," she said to them, "be very humble, I beseech you, for if that step is wanting in the ladder of virtue, you will not get to heaven." The two Sisters on whom she was leaning wanted to hurry her away, but she turned back to ask for prayers after her death. To Matthieu, the gardener, she spoke of his flower beds with her usual sweet manner.

That same day she also wrote to Mother Mayer, Superior at Riedenbourg, a letter which, more than anything else perhaps, evinces the freedom, joy, and holy strength of

that beautiful soul on the eve of its departure: "Dear Marie, I am sure that God will reward your fidelity. He said to you as He said to St. Peter, *Feed My lambs*, when you were at the head of the school; and when you were made Superior He charged you to *feed His sheep*. What He requires of you in this position is, to be humble, simple, and docile, as a good and well-educated child of five years old. Be obedient, for obedience and humility are twin sisters." And then the Mother General sent affectionate messages and holy recommendations to the young Princesses, Marguerite and Alix, daughters of the Duchess of Parma, who were educated at Riedembourg.<sup>1</sup> In this letter of eight pages Mother Barat poured forth the rich treasures of her heart and soul. It was the last she ever wrote.

The Mother General assisted at Benediction with the children who were preparing for their First Communion. In the evening, she was again in the chapel during the few minutes of adoration after supper. The probanists saw her kneeling in her stall, and she gave herself the signal for withdrawal, thus realizing her own saying, "That a religious of the Sacred Heart must die sword in hand."

The next day, Monday, the 22nd, was to be an eventful one, but nothing in the morning seemed to forbode what was about to happen. Mother Barat rose as usual at five and began her hour of prayer. Her recollection was so profound that she did not hear the sound of the infirmarian's knock often repeated at her door. That good Sister gave the following account of what then took place: "I opened the door and saw our Mother General on her knees absorbed in prayer and holding her crucifix in her hands. I knelt down near her, but she was so lost in God, that she neither saw nor heard me. I hardly ventured to breathe, but as

<sup>1</sup> Princess Marguerite became the wife of Don Carlos of Spain, and during the last unhappy war gave striking examples of piety, courage, and devoted charity.—*Translator's note.*

I was about to go away she turned towards me with her beautiful smile, and asked me what I wanted. I reminded her that she had desired me to let her know in the morning how Madame Gøetz, who was ailing at that time, had passed the night. She made minute inquiries on the subject, and recommended me to take great care of her. I then went away." Madame Barat continued absorbed in prayer during Mass, and remained in the chapel till half-past eight. Nothing announced the impending change. She went back to her room, and was quietly reading her letters, some of which she sent to her Vicar-General, when, just as she was about to sit down to her breakfast, she said to the Sister who waited upon her: "I am not well this morning," and then holding her head with her hands, exclaimed: "Oh, my head! my head!" and seemed ready to faint. Courageous to the end, she objected to go to bed, but was soon obliged to submit to it. Mother Gøetz arrived, and was alarmed at seeing her dear Mother with her eyes shut, her features altered, and appearing very much prostrated. She asked her what she was suffering from. Madame Barat, speaking with difficulty, said that it was from her head. Mother Gøetz spoke of applying a blister, and she answered, "You will do well." Those were the last words she spoke. Once again she tried to speak, but her tongue had lost the power of utterance. Three physicians were sent for, and immediately ascertained that there was congestion of the brain, which nothing could relieve. Speech never returned: the silence of the grave had begun for Madame Barat. Several years before some of her nuns had been mentioning in the presence of the Mother General the edifying words which a dying Superior had addressed to her Community: "And you, Reverend Mother," one of them said, "Will you say nothing to your daughters when you leave them?" "Oh, if God grants my wish, Madame Barat replied, "I shall say nothing; no

last words of mine shall be recorded." Her humble desire was fulfilled.

At ten o'clock that day her director, Father Gamard, S.J., confessed her by means of signs, gave her absolution, and suggested to her several ejaculations to prepare her for gaining the Indulgence of the Jubilee. At twelve he brought her Holy Viaticum, which she received in a spoonful of water. At that instant a beautiful expression of heavenly fervour reappeared in Mother Barat's countenance. All the Community were present at this solemn moment. For some time afterwards it seemed doubtful whether she was conscious or not; her eyes were closed, and she did not move for many hours; but on Tuesday morning, at about one o'clock, whilst the Litanies of the Blessed Virgin were being said, it was observed that she seemed to pray, and even tried to strike her breast each time that the words *Agnus Dei* were pronounced. They gave her holy water, which she took, and succeeded in making the sign of the Cross with the assistance of those near her. Father Gamard, rejoicing at these symptoms of consciousness, said to her: "Reverend Mother, if you are aware that yesterday I gave you absolution of all the sins of your life, let me know it by pressing Mother Goetz's hand." An energetic pressure answered this question. Similar interrogations were addressed to her with regard to the reception of Holy Viaticum, Extreme Unction, and the Indulgence of the Jubilee. Each time the mute reply was quickly and earnestly made, and it was evident that though Madame Barat had ceased to utter in this world, her soul had its full freedom, and in consequence the entire merit of the sacrifice she was offering up to God. When Mother Prevost and Mother Lehon, who had been telegraphed for—one from Lyons and the other from Marseilles—arrived, Doctor Gouraud said to the Venerable Superior: "Give your blessing if you can to your good Mother Prevost,

who is so grieved to find you in this state: raise your finger to show that you do so." The request was immediately complied with, and then Madame Gœtz hastened to ask for a blessing on all the Society. The hand of the Mother General was raised with an eagerness which moved to tears all her children. Dr. Bauchet, her habitual physician, then said: "And will you not also bless your doctors?" But she made no sign. Humble to the end, Mother Barat did not feel that it belonged to her to bless any one but her own daughters.

The night from the 23rd to Wednesday the 24th was very trying. The dying Foundress kept striking her breast whenever in the Litanies of the Sacred Heart and the Blessed Virgin, or in the Prayers for the Dying, the words of the *Agnus Dei* occurred. Her little crucifix never left her hand and was frequently raised to her lips, she moved it in her hands so as to place the face of our Lord just before her. Mother Gœtz had telegraphed to ask for the Holy Father's blessing. The answer which Mgr. de Merode transmitted arrived in the night, and Madame Barat received this additional grace in the morning of the 24th. That day Dr. Bauchet lifted up her right eyelid and begged her in token of consciousness to press the hand of her Vicar-General. Glancing at Mother Gœtz, the dying servant of God seemed to express in that last pressure of her hand all the feelings of her soul. "Never can I describe," her successor said, "what I felt in receiving that farewell."

Thursday, the 25th, was Ascension Day. Mother Barat's weakness was increasing and her pulse failing. Madame Gœtz relates as follows what took place during those last hours: "Mothers Lehon, Cahier, and I had passed the greatest part of the preceding nights by our dear Mother's side. In the evening as she seemed a little better we withdrew for a few moments, not expecting the end to

be so near. But at half-past nine, having been informed that death was at hand we all went back and surrounded the bed where our Mother seemed to be yielding herself up more and more completely into the hands of the Divine Master ; she was sinking by degrees. We were all watching the least movements of that face so full of heavenly peace, in order not to miss its last expression. Father Gamard gave her absolution over and over again and recited the prayers of the Church. Her breathing became less and less audible and at last scarcely perceptible. At eleven o'clock exactly, without the least effort, our dear Mother gave up her soul to God." It was the last hour of the feast of the Ascension. She had said on the Sunday before, "Thursday we go to heaven."

Thus died Mother Barat. Her death was humble and sweet as her life. With her crucifix in her hands and surrounded by her Community, which she had silently blest in her last hour, blest herself by Pius IX., by Rome, which she had so dearly loved, visited on her death-bed by her Divine Spouse, and on the same day on which He left this earth, she went to that eternal place of rest where thirteen hundred and sixty-eight nuns of the Sacred Heart were waiting to lead her to Jesus Christ, to whom she had so often said, like St. Theresa, "It is time, Lord, that we should meet."

Mother Barat's body was exposed in her room on a funeral couch, visited and venerated not only by the nuns and children of her houses in Paris, but by numbers of pious persons of all ranks. During three days an ever-increasing crowd came to touch those holy remains with medals, rosaries, and pictures. The deceased Foundress was dressed in her religious habit, a crown of white roses encircled her head, in her hands were placed her crucifix, her rosary, and a bunch of lilies. Her countenance was serene and sweet as in life, and her lips seemed to smile.

On the 29th of May the funeral service was performed in the chapel of the mother-house. When at the end of the Mass the coffin was carried through the door of the inclosure, the little children whom Mother Barat had blessed a few days before burst into tears and with outstretched arms seemed to call back their holy Mother. The Mother General was buried in a vault at Conflans, under the chapel of our Lady of Seven Dolours, by the side of her dear and faithful Assistants, Mothers de Charbonnel, DeBrou, and Coppens. The funeral was attended by the Communities, the orphans, and the pupils of the Rue de Varennes and Conflans and by a multitude of strangers, and last not least by a number of poor people whom Madame Barat had assisted.

There rests the Foundress of the Sacred Heart, and on a plain marble slab over her grave, surmounted by the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary framed with lilies, is inscribed this simple epitaph—

HIC QUIESCIT IN PACE CHRISTI  
 MAGDALENA LUDOVICA SOPHIA BARAT,  
 QUÆ SOCIETATEM VIRGINUM A CORDE D.N. JESU CONSTITUIT  
 ET MIRA SUAVITATE ET PRUDENTIA REXIT AN. LXII.  
 QUO LATIUS EAM FUNDI ET FLORERE CONSEXIT  
 EO DEMISSIUS SE ABJECIT UNI DEO OMNIA TRIBUENS.  
 DECESSIT VIII. KAL. JUN., FESTO DIE CHRISTI ASCENDENTIS IN CÆLUM,  
 AN. MDCCCLXV., ANNOS NATA LXXXV., M.V., D. XIII.  
 AVE ET VALE, BONA MATER,  
 VIVE IN DEO, MEMOR NOSTRUM  
 QUAS DIVINO CORDI GENUISTI.\*

It had been hoped that in a box that contained Mother Barat's private papers and which she had left in the hands

\* Here rests in the peace of Christ, Madeleine Louise Sophie Barat, Foundress of the Society of the Virgins of the Sacred Heart, which she governed for sixty-two years with admirable suavity and prudence. In proportion to its extension and its prosperity did her self-abasement increase. She attributed all its success to God. She died on the feast of the Ascension of our Lord, the 25th of May, 1865, aged eighty-five years five months and thirteen days. Hail and farewell good Mother. Live in God and do not forget your children in the Sacred Heart.

of her successor, records might be found of her inward life, notes and reminiscences of retreats, which would have revealed some of the secrets of her soul and of her intimate communications with our Lord. But to Madame Gœtz's great astonishment it turned out that the Mother General had destroyed all her papers, except a short document bearing the date 1863, and left so as to be opened at once after her death. It was addressed to the Council of the Order, but part of it was communicated to the Community. It began thus—

“I thought it right to address to our Mother Councillors this short abstract of my feelings as I look back to my long life and my defective and more than miserable administration of the Society. May the merciful Heart of Jesus vouchsafe to forgive these faults.”

After some advice about government, the Mother General then continued: “I am persuaded that the Mothers who will succeed me, and all the members of that dear family of the Sacred Heart, will profit by this acknowledgment, and repair the defects which I lament; that they will strive with renewed zeal to consolidate the true religious spirit, particularly humility the beloved virtue of our Lord, its twin sister poverty, and likewise obedience, the link and safeguard of all the other virtues, which will secure if they reign in it the prosperity and even the existence of the Society. I ought to ask for prayers, I expect them from your charity. I rely chiefly on the intention I see in all your souls to maintain at the cost of every sacrifice fidelity to our holy rules, to promote and spread everywhere the knowledge and love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to carry wherever we go the perfume of Him whose name we bear, unworthy as we are.”

After again asking forgiveness for her numerous faults, and expressing her gratitude for the tender care of her daughters, she concludes with these words: “If in His

mercy God calls me soon to Himself I will ask Him to reward you for it. I ask that good Master to bless you all, and to imprint in your souls the will and the earnest desire to sacrifice yourselves, up to the last moment of your lives, to His Sacred Heart and the salvation of souls, according to the spirit of your vocation."

As soon as the news of Mother Barat's death was known, expressions of regret and admiration came pouring in at the mother-house. Under every form and variety of praise the same thought prevails in all these letters; a conviction of the sanctity and a belief in the felicity of the servant of God. When Father de Ponlevoy heard of her illness he wrote: "She has indeed well deserved of God and of the Church and her religious family. It is our Lord's will to make her ascend from the Cross to heaven; be sure that what she has begun in time she will continue in eternity." Another Father wrote: "And so your holy Mother Barat is in heaven! God has called her there in the very year in which the Blessed Margaret Mary has been placed on the altars of the Church. She sowed the holy seed and your Mother gathered in the harvest. They are now rejoicing together at having been chosen by God to kindle the love of His Divine Son." Many a prevision was formed as to her becoming herself one day the object of public veneration. Father Billet, Rector of Feldkirch, wrote only one line to Mother Mayer, Superior at Riedenbourg, in answer to her announcement of the Mother General's death: "This news augurs a new feast some time hence."

Supernatural revelations of the beatitude of this chosen soul were not wanting. A religious saw her in a dream surrounded by a dazzling light and holding in her hand a rosary containing as many diamond beads as she had founded houses. Another beheld her entering heaven accompanied by the Spouses she had given to our Lord.

At Sarria in Spain she was said to have appeared to the priest who was offering up the Holy Sacrifice on the day of the renovation of vows by the aspirants, and to have charged him to tell her daughters that she was present amongst them and would joyfully offer their vows to our Lord.

Soon from different places in America, as well as Europe, letters arrived with accounts of cures effected by the relics and the prayers of the servant of God. We shall not relate these facts, which have often been renewed and are now submitted to the judgment of the Church; only mentioning that the persons favoured by these miraculous graces were Lay-sisters, poor people, and children, as if Mother Barat had even in glory preserved the sympathy she had on earth for humble souls.

On the 31st of May, Mgr. Parisi, a faithful friend to the last, paid a tribute of affectionate veneration to the memory of the holy Foundress. In a simple and paternal discourse addressed to the nuns of the mother-house he ventured to say that her life had been one of the great events of this century, as in other epochs had been those of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Dominic, St. Catherine of Sienna, and St. Theresa. He spoke of the origin of her work, its development, and its results. He described the days which had followed the first French Revolution, when there was no religious instruction or training for Christian girls. At that moment God raised up an obscure humble woman, quite unconscious of her own merits, who under the guidance of His grace carried on her undertaking in the fashion in which saints work. Soon a transformation took place in the education of women. The benefits of this new Institute extended from France to other countries, and from the Old World to the New. Its Divine type was the Heart of Jesus, and everywhere the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, better known and better appreciated, prepared the regeneration of Christian families. "What a work

this has been!" the Bishop exclaimed. "What a glory for your Mother, and what a triumph has been awaiting her in that heavenly home where she was greeted by so many souls who under God owed to her their salvation!"

The Bishop of Arras ended his discourse by expressing three wishes: first, that Mother Barat's work might always remain unaltered in her Society; secondly, that her spirit might always live in it; and thirdly, that her life should be written and faithfully depicted for the greater glory of God and the spiritual good of her Society.

We have fulfilled the last of Mgr. d'Arras' wishes as far as regards the history of this wonderful life, but we hardly venture to hope that it will answer to the picture which has remained impressed on the hearts and memories of those who were intimately acquainted with Mother Barat, for we have painfully felt ourselves whilst we studied its details, how inferior was the portrait we were drawing to the original we were contemplating. At any rate this biography may prove to a sceptical age that saints still exist in our times. May it excite in many Christian souls the desire themselves to become saints. May it induce them to seek in the adorable Heart of our God those graces of generosity, humility, and self-devotion which lead to sanctity. If this work produces such results we shall be indeed richly rewarded. And if to this earnest desire we venture to add another, it is that we may see the day when the Church will place on her altars this holy spouse of our Lord, and will sanction our addressing her in the words of the Office of Virgins: *Veni, Sponsa Christi; accipe coronam quam tibi Dominus præparavit in æternum. Quia concupivit rex speciem tuam, et cum angelis in paradisum introisti.*





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The life of the very Reverend  
Mother Madeleine Louise Sophie  
Barat

