

AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF
MADAME GUYON

TRANSLATED IN FULL

BY

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF
MADAME GUYON

IN TWO VOLUMES

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PART II.—*Continued.*

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER Father La Combe had returned from Rome much praised for his doctrine, he performed the duties of preaching and confessing as usual, and as I had for myself a permission from the Bishop of Geneva to confess to him, I made use of him. He at once told me I should return, as I have said. I asked him the reason. It is, he said, because I believe God will do nothing by you here, and my lights are deceptive. What made him speak thus was that while at Loretto, at devotion in the chapel of the Holy Virgin, he was suddenly withdrawn from the way of illumination and put into the way of simple faith. Now, as this state causes a failure of all distinct light, the soul which finds herself plunged in it finds herself in a trouble so much the greater as her state had been more full of lights. It is this which makes her think all the lights on which she previously supported herself to be nothing but deceptions. This is true in one sense, and not in another, since the lights are always good and true lights when they come from God ; but it is that in resting on them we

understand them or interpret them ill: and it is in this lies the deception, for they have a signification known to God, but we give them a different sense; then the self-love, disgusted that things do not happen according to its lights, accuses them of falsity. They are, nevertheless, very true in their sense. For example, a nun had told Father La Combe that God had caused her to know that the Father would one day be confessor of his Sovereign. In one sense this might be taken to mean that he would be confessor or director of the Princess, and it was in this sense it was understood; but I was given to know that it meant the persecution, where he has had occasion to confess his faith, and to suffer for the will of God, which is his Sovereign. And thus with a thousand other things. Have I not also been daughter of the Cross of Geneva—which had been predicted to me—since the journey to Geneva has drawn upon me so many crosses? and mother of a great people, as will be seen in the sequel, by the souls which God has given me, and which he still gives me every day in the midst of my captivity?

I gave an account to Father La Combe of what I had done and suffered in his absence, and I told him the care that you, O my God, took of my affairs. I saw your providence even in the smallest matters, unceasingly spread itself over me. After having been many months without any news of my papers, and when people even pressed me to write, blaming me for my indifference, an invisible hand held me back, and my peace and confidence were so great that I could not interfere in anything. Some time after I received a letter from our domestic ecclesiastic, telling me he was ordered to come and see me, and bring my papers. I had sent to me from Paris a considerable package for my daughter. It was lost on the lake, and I could get no news of it, but I gave myself no trouble. I believed still it would be found. The man who had put it on board had for a month made search in all

the neighbourhood, without being able to learn any news of it. At the end of three months a person had it brought to us. It was found in the house of a poor man. He had not opened it, and did not know who had brought it there.

Once when I had sent for all the money which had to supply my wants for an entire year, the person who had been to cash the letter of exchange, having placed the money in two bags on a horse, forgot that it was there, and gave his horse to a boy to lead. He let the money fall from the horse in the middle of the market-place of Geneva. I arrived at that moment, coming from the other side, and having got out of my litter, the first thing I found was my money, over which I walked; and what is surprising is that, though there was a great crowd on that spot, no one had seen it. Many similar things have happened to me, which I do not mention, to avoid tediousness, contenting myself with these examples to show the protection of God.

The Bishop of Geneva continued to persecute me, and when he wrote to me it was always with expressions of politeness and thanks for the charities I bestowed at Gex; on the other hand, he said I gave nothing to that House. He even wrote against me to the Ursulines, where I was staying, commanding them to prevent my having conference with Father La Combe, "for fear of disastrous results." The Superior of the House, a man of merit, and the Prioress, as well as the Community, were so indignant that they could not avoid declaring it to himself. He excused himself by an outward professed respect, and a "I did not intend it in that sense." They wrote him that I saw the Father only at the confessional, not in conference, that they were so edified by me that they were very happy to have me, and that they considered it a great favour from God. What they said out of pure love was displeasing to the Bishop, who, seeing I was loved in this House, said that I gained over every one, and he wished I was out of the diocese. Although I knew all this, and that these good

Sisters were much pained at it, I could feel none, owing to the fixedness of my soul, your will, my God, rendering everything alike to me. I find you as well in one thing as in another, and since your will is yourself, everything in this will is to me you, O my Love; so that all the pains which creatures can cause, however unreasonable and even passionate they may appear, are not regarded in themselves, but in God—not that the soul has this actual view, but it is so: and the habitual faith makes everything be seen in God without distinction. So when I see poor souls give themselves so much trouble for idle talk, being always on the watch beforehand, or clearing up matters, I pity them for their lack of enlightenment; and the more of grace souls have, the more strange that appears to me. Nevertheless, one has reasons which self-love makes appear very sound.

To relieve me a little from the fatigue which continual conversations caused me (I say fatigue, for the body was quite languishing from the strength of God's operation), I asked Father La Combe on his arrival to allow me a retreat, and to say that he wished me to make one. He told them so, but they could hardly leave me in repose. It was then that I allowed myself the whole day to be devoured by love, which had no other operation but to consume me little by little. It was then also that I felt the quality of "spiritual Mother," for God gave me a something for the perfection of souls, which I could not conceal from Father La Combe. It seemed to me that I saw into the depth of his soul, and the minutest recesses of his heart. Our Lord made me see that he was his servant, chosen among a thousand to honour him in a special degree, and that there was not a man upon the earth at that time on whom he looked with such complaisance as on him; but that he wished to conduct him by total death and entire annihilation, that he wished me to help in it, and he would make use of me to cause him to travel the

road, by which he had first made me pass, only that I might be able to conduct others by it, and to tell them the routes by which I had passed; that at present my soul was far more advanced than his, that God wished to render us one and conformable, but that one day he would pass her by a bold and impetuous flight. God knows what joy I had at it, and with what pleasure I would see my children surpass their mother in glory, and that I would willingly give myself over in any way that it might be so.

In this retreat there came to me such a strong movement to write that I could not resist it. The violence I exercised over myself not to do it made me ill, and took away my speech. I was very much surprised to find myself thus, for this had never happened to me. It was not that I had anything particular to write. I had absolutely nothing, not even an idea of any kind. It was a simple instinct with a fulness I could not support. I was like one of those mothers who have too much milk, and suffer greatly. After much resistance I told Father La Combe the disposition in which I found myself; he answered that on his side he had had a strong movement to command me to write, but owing to my weak state he had not ventured to prescribe it for me. I told him the weakness was only due to my resistance, and I thought it would pass away as soon as I wrote. He asked me, "But what do you wish to write?" "I know nothing about it," I replied. "I wish nothing, I have no idea, and I think I should commit a great infidelity in giving myself one, or thinking for a moment on what I might be able to write." He ordered me to do it. On taking up the pen I did not know the first word of what I was about to write. I set myself to write without knowing how, and I found it came to me with a strange impetuosity. What surprised me most was that it flowed from my central depth, and did not pass through my head. I was not yet accustomed to this manner of writing, yet wrote an entire treatise on the

whole interior way under a comparison with streams and rivers. Although it was tolerably long, and the comparison was kept up to the end, I have never formed a thought, nor even taken any care where I left off, and, in spite of continual interruptions, I have never read over anything, except at the end, where I read over a line or two owing to a word having been left cut; even then I thought I had committed an infidelity. Before writing I did not know what I was going to write. When it was written I thought no more of it. I should have committed an infidelity in retaining any thought to put it down, and our Lord gave me grace that this did not happen. As I wrote I found myself relieved, and I became better.

As the way by which God was leading, Father La Combe was very different from that by which he had hitherto walked, which had been all light, ardour, knowledge, certitude, assurance, feelings, and that now he made him go by the narrow path of faith and of nakedness, he had very great trouble in adapting himself to it; which caused me no small suffering, for God made me feel and pay with extreme rigour all his resistance. Who could express what he has cost my heart before he was formed according to yours and according to your will? Only you, O my God, who have done it, know. The more precious that soul is in your eyes, the more dearly have you made me pay. I can indeed say that it is upon me the robe of the new life you have given him has been remade. I was subjected to a double pain; the one was that the possession which God had of my soul became every day more strong, so that sometimes I passed the day without it being possible for me to pronounce a word: for God then wished to bury me more deeply into himself, and to annihilate me more in him, in order to make me pass into him by a complete transformation. Although my state was without sensibility, it was so profound, and God became more and more so powerfully the master, that he did not leave me a

movement of my own. This state did not prevent me from condescending to my sister and the other nuns; however, the useless things in which they were occupied could hardly suit my taste, and this was the reason which led me to ask for keeping a retreat, that I might let myself be possessed to the good pleasure of him who held me closely clasped in an inexpressible manner. At this time he purified a remnant of nature, very subtle and delicate, so that my soul found herself in extreme purity. It was then the partitions of which I have spoken were consumed. I have seen nothing of the kind since, for the intimate union of lover and loved took place, so that both were made one and identical.

It was then it was given me to write in a purely divine manner. All I had written formerly was tested, was condemned to the fire by Love, the examiner, who found defects in all that appeared the most perfect. I resisted, as I have said, but God became so powerfully the master that he harassed me to death when I resisted in the least thing. O God, how I then experienced those words, "Who can resist God and live in peace?" I was not yet experienced in the way he makes himself obeyed by a soul which he perfectly possesses. Owing to this I did not surrender at first, but finally I followed the movement of the Spirit in what he caused me to do, and although I did not take thought to arrange the matter, nor even as to what I was writing, it was found as connected and as correct as if I had taken all imaginable care to put it in order.

You desired, O my God, in order to accustom me to the suppleness of your Spirit, to exact of me for a time things which cost me much and caused me serious crosses. Our Lord bound me more closely with Father La Combe, but by a union as pure as it was spiritual. He willed that I should tell him the minutest of my thoughts, or write them to him; for as he was often absent either on missions,

which he was continually engaged in, or for the business of the House, he was not often at Tonon. This cost me much, for it was a thing I had never done when formerly I might have conveniently done it, while I was still in myself, and when I could speak to directors; but now it appeared to me mere loss of time. I imagined even for lack of experience that it could not be done without reflection, and as reflection was entirely opposed to my state, it would be very injurious to me. I said with the Bride, "I have washed my feet; how shall I soil them? I have put off my robe; how shall I put it on again?" My mind, which is naked, shall it again be filled? After having been subjected to God alone, must I be so to the creature? For I did not then understand the design of God therein. If I had been mistress of myself, I would have gladly escaped, but I could not; for besides that our Lord chastised me very rigorously when I resisted him in the least, my mind remained always occupied by the thought until I had obeyed, and, far from having its former clearness, it defiled itself by these particulars; and although they were good things, or at least indifferent, that pure and clear void was thereby spoiled. If you stir up water with a rod of gold or of wood, it is none the less disturbed; but as soon as I had mentioned the thought my mind resumed its former peace, its clearness and its emptiness. I was surprised to see that the need of writing to him increased each day in the design and order of God: but what reassured me was, that I was so disengaged from any feeling or attachment in respect of him, that I was astonished. The more powerful the union became, the more we were united to God, and removed from human sentiments. I was still more led to pardon nothing in him, and to desire his self-annihilation, that God alone might reign. With much fidelity I told him all that God gave me to know he desired of him, and this I would gladly have evaded. The obligation God imposed on me to tell him

the radical defects of the Sister who had charge of my daughter (as he was prejudiced in her favour, owing to the illumination she had told him she had) irritated him against me several days. When I told him anything, this produced in him disgust for me and alienation. Our Lord made me painfully feel it, although he said nothing to me. I experienced that our Lord obliged me to keep hold on him, and made me pay by suffering for his infidelity. On the other hand, if I wished to say nothing to him, and to keep back views which only served to offend him, our Lord harassed me to death, and gave me no rest until I had declared to him both my pain and my thought; so that I suffered thereby a martyrdom exceeding anything that can be told, and which has been very protracted.

CHAPTER XII.

OUR Lord, willing that I should bear him in all his states, from the first to the last, as I shall tell, and willing to make me perfectly simple, gave me in regard to Father La Combe such a miraculous obedience that, in whatever extremity of illness I might be, I grew well when, either by word of mouth or by letter, he ordered it. I believe our Lord did it to make me express Jesus Christ the Child, and also to be a sign and evidence to this good Father, who, having been conducted by evidences, could not leave that way; and in whatever was told him, or which God made him experience, he still kept seeking evidences. It is where he had the greatest trouble to die, and that by which he has made me suffer so much. Our Lord, to make him enter more easily into that which he desired of him and of me, gave him the greatest of all evidences in this miraculous obedience: and to show that it did not depend on me, and that God gave it for him, when he was sufficiently strong to do without any evidence, and God wished to make him enter upon self-annihilation, this obedience was taken away from me, so that, without paying any attention to it, I was unable longer to obey: and this was done to annihilate him the more, and to take from him the support of this evidence; for then all my efforts were useless: I had inwardly to follow him who was my master, and who gave me this repugnance to obeying,

which lasted only so long as was necessary to destroy the support he would have found—and perhaps I also—in obedience. I had then so strong an instinct for his perfection and to see him die to himself, that I would have wished him all the ills imaginable, far from pitying him. When he was not faithful, or took things so as to nourish the self-life, I felt myself devoured; and this surprised me not a little after the indifference I had hitherto maintained. I complained of it to our Lord, who with extreme kindness reassured me, and also as to the extreme dependence he gave me, which became such that I was like a child.

My sister had brought me a maid, whom God wished to give me to fashion in his manner, not without crucifying me—a thing that I expect will never be; for when our Lord gives me persons, he always gives them at the same time the means of making me suffer, whether to direct those persons themselves to the interior way, or in order that I should never be without a cross. She was a girl to whom our Lord had given singular grace, and who was so highly reputed in her country that she passed for a saint. Our Lord brought her to me to make her see the difference of sanctity conceived and comprised in gifts—with which she was then endowed—and sanctity which is acquired by our entire destruction, by the loss of those very gifts, and of that which we are. This girl fell seriously ill. Our Lord gave her the same dependence on me as I had on Father La Combe—with some distinction, however. I helped her to the best of my ability, but I found that I had hardly anything to say to her, except to command her ailment and her disposition; and whatever I said was done. Then I learned what it is to command by the Word, and to obey by the same Word. I found in me Jesus Christ commanding and likewise obeying. Our Lord gave power to the Devil to torment this poor girl, as in Job's case. The Devil, as if he was not strong enough

alone, brought with him five, who reduced her to such a state with her disease, that she was at death's door. These wretches fled when I approached her bed, and I had hardly gone out when they returned with greater fury, and they said to her: "It is to have compensation for the ill she has done us"—speaking of me.

As I saw she was too much crushed, and her weak body could no longer endure the torment they caused her, I forbade their approaching her for a time: they left at once. But the next day at waking I had a strong impulse to allow them to visit her; they returned with so much fury that they reduced her to extremity. After having thus given some relaxation at different intervals, and allowed them to return, I had a strong movement to forbid them to attack her any more. I forbade them: they returned no more. Nevertheless she still continued ill, until one day she had received our Lord in such weakness that she could scarcely swallow the sacred Host. After dinner I had a strong impulse to say to her, "Get up, and be no longer ill." The nuns were very much astonished, and as they knew nothing of what was going on, and they saw her on foot after having been in the morning at extremity, they attributed her illness to the vapours.

As soon as the devils were withdrawn from this girl, I felt as if by an impression the rage they were in against me. I was in my bed, and I said to them, "Come and torment me if your Master allows it;" but, so far from doing this, they fled from me. I understood at once that the devils fear worse than hell a soul that has been annihilated, and that it is not the souls who are conducted by faith they attack, for the reason I have already given. I felt in myself such an authority over the devils that, far from fearing them, it seemed to me I would make them fly from hell if I was there. It should be known that the soul of whom I speak, in whom Jesus Christ lives and acts, does not perform miracles as those who perform them by

a power in them of performing miracles. They are performed by the annihilation of the soul, for as she is no longer anything, nothing of all this can be attributed to her; therefore when the movement urges, she does not say, "Be healed in the name of Jesus Christ," for this "Be healed in the name of Jesus Christ" is a power in the person of performing miracles in the name of Jesus Christ. Here it is not the same; it is Jesus Christ who performs the miracle, and who says through that person, "Be healed," and the man is healed; "Let the devils depart," and they depart. When one says this, one knows not why one says it, nor what causes one to say it; but it is the Word who speaks and operates what he says. "He spoke, and they were made." One does not utter prayers beforehand, for these miracles are performed without any previous design, and without the soul looking upon it as a miracle. One says quite naturally what is given one to say. Jesus Christ willed to pray at the resurrection of Lazarus, but he said that he did it only for the sake of those who were present, for he says to his Father, "I know that you hear me always, but I say it that these may believe you have sent me." Other servants of God, honoured with the gift of miracles, pray, and thereby obtain what they desire; but here it is the Word who uses his authority, and who acts by the speech of the person in whom he lives and reigns.

Hereupon I must remark two things: one, that the souls of whom I speak do not ordinarily perform miracles by giving anything, or by simply touching; but it is by the word, although they sometimes accompany it with touching. It is the all-powerful Word. The other thing is that these miracles require the consent, or at least that there should be no opposition, in the person on whom they are performed. Our Lord Jesus Christ asked the good people he healed, "Do you wish to be healed?" Was there a doubt in the matter, that people who came to him

for it, or who desired nothing else, wished it? Here is the secret of the operation of the Word, and of the liberty of man. On the dead, or on inanimate substances, it is not the same. He said, and his saying is doing; but here the consent of the soul is required. I have many times experienced it, and I felt in myself how God not only respects the liberty of man, but even how he wishes a free consent; for when I said "Be healed," or for interior pains "Be delivered from your pains," if they acquiesced without any answer, they were healed, and the word was efficacious; if they resisted under good pretexts, as saying, "I shall be healed when it will please God," "I do not wish to be healed but when he wills," or in despair, "I shall never escape from my pain," then the word had no effect, and I felt it in myself. I felt that the virtue retired into me, and I experienced what our Lord said, when the diseased woman touched him, and he asked, "Who touched me?" The apostles answered, "The crowd surrounds you, and you ask who has touched you." "It is," answered our Lord, "that a divine virtue has gone out from me." In the same way Jesus Christ in me, or rather through me, made this divine virtue to flow out by means of his word; but when this virtue was not received in the subject, owing to want of correspondence, I felt it suspended in its source, and this caused me a kind of pain. I would be in a way vexed with those persons; but when there was no resistance, and a full acquiescence, the divine virtue had its full effect. One cannot conceive the delicacy of this divine virtue; although it is so powerful on inanimate objects, on man the least thing either arrests it altogether or restrains it.

There was a worthy nun afflicted with a violent temptation. She went and told a Sister, whom she believed very spiritual and in a state to help her: but, far from finding help, she was violently repulsed. The other despised her, and even harshly treating her because she

had temptations, said to her, "Do not come near me, I pray, since you are of that kind." This poor girl came to see me in terrible distress, believing herself lost, owing to what the Sister had said to her. I consoled her, and our Lord relieved her at once; but I could not refrain from saying that assuredly the other would be punished, and that she would fall into a worse state. The one who had so used her came to see me, very well satisfied with herself; and she told me what she had answered, adding that she had a horror of persons who are tempted, that for herself she was safe from all this, and that she never had had a bad thought. I said to her, "My Sister, for the friendship I have for you, I wish you the trouble of her who has spoken to you, and even a more violent one." She answered me proudly enough, "If you ask it of God for me and I ask the contrary, I think I shall be as soon heard as you." I answered her firmly, "If it is my own interest I regard, I shall not be heard; but if it is the interest of God only and yours, he will do it sooner than you fancy." I said this without reflection. The same night—it was evening when we were speaking—she entered into such a violent and furious temptation, the like of which was hardly ever seen; it continued with the same strength for a fortnight. It was then she had full opportunity to recognize her weakness, and what we should be without grace. At first she conceived an excessive hatred for me, saying I was the cause of her trouble; but as it served, like the mud which enlightened the man born blind, she saw very well what had brought on her such a terrible state.

I fell exceedingly ill. This illness was a means to cover the great mysteries which God desired to operate in me. Never was there a malady more extraordinary or more continued in its intensity. It lasted from Holy Cross Day of September to that of May. I was reduced to the state of a little child, but a state which was apparent only

to those who could understand; for as to the others, I appeared in an ordinary condition. I was reduced to the dependence of Jesus Christ, the Child, who wished to communicate himself to me in his state of childhood, and that I should bear him as such. This state was communicated to me almost immediately on my falling ill, and a dependence corresponding to the state. The further I advanced, the more was I set free from this dependence, as children gradually emerge from dependence in proportion to their growth. My illness at first was a continuous fever of forty days. From the Holy Cross of September up to Advent it was a less violent fever, but after Advent it seized me in a more violent manner. In spite of my illness the Master willed I should receive him at Christmas midnight. Christmas Day my childhood became greater, and my illness increased. The fever intensified so that I was delirious; besides, there was an abscess at the corner of the eye, which caused great pain. It opened entirely at this time, and they dressed it, for a long time passing in an iron up to the bottom of the cheek. I had such burning fever and so much weakness that they were obliged to allow it to close again without healing, for my exhausted body could not endure the operations without danger of instantly expiring. I suffered with extreme patience; but it was like a child, who knows not what is done to him. I experienced at the same time both the strength of a God and the weakness of a little child, with a corresponding dependence. This mode of action was so foreign to my natural character that nothing less than the power of a God was needed to make me enter into it. I gave myself up to it, however, for my interior was such and was so powerfully urged by God, that I could not resist him. I was, not to press the comparison, like those who are possessed by the Evil Spirit, who makes them do what he wishes; thus the Spirit of God was so completely the master, that I had to do everything that pleased him.

His will was not concealed from me; he led me from within like a child, while he rendered my whole exterior childlike. They often brought me the Eucharist; the Superior of the House having ordered that this consolation should be allowed me, seeing the extremity I was in. As Father La Combe often brought it to me, when the confessor of the House was not there, he remarked, and the nuns who were familiar with me also remarked it, that I had the face of a little child. In his astonishment he several times said to me, "It is not you; it is a little child that I see." For myself, I saw nothing within but the candour and innocence of a little child. I had its weaknesses; I sometimes wept from pain, but this was not known. I played and laughed in a way that charmed the girl who attended me; and those good nuns, who knew nothing about it, said that I had something which surprised and charmed them at the same time.

Our Lord, however, with the weaknesses of his childhood gave me the power of a God over souls, so that with a word I cast them into trouble or peace, according as was necessary for the good of those souls. I saw that God made himself obeyed in me and through me, as an absolute Sovereign, and I no longer resisted him. I took no part in anything; you might have performed, O my God, in me and through me the greatest miracles, and I should not have been able to reflect upon it. I felt within a candour of soul, without taint, which I cannot express. Moreover, I had to continue telling my thoughts to Father La Combe, or else writing them to him and aiding him, according to the light that was given to me. I often was so weak that I could not raise my head to take food, and when God desired I should write to him, either to aid and encourage him, or to explain what our Lord gave me to know, I had the strength to write. As soon as my letters were finished, I found myself in the same weakness. I was very much surprised to understand by experience that what you had

wished of me, O my God, in obliging me thus to tell all my thoughts, had been to perfect me in simplicity, and to make Father La Combe enter into it, rendering me supple to all your wishes; for whatever cross it was to me to tell my thoughts, and although Father La Combe often was offended to the point of disgust at serving me, and he let me know it (while yet through charity he got the better of his repugnance), I never for that ceased from telling them to him.

Our Lord had made us understand that he united us by faith and by the cross, so that it has indeed been a union of the cross in every way; as well from what I have made him suffer himself, and he in turn has made me suffer (which was very much more than anything I can tell), as from the crosses which this has drawn upon us from outside. The sufferings I had in respect of him were such that I was reduced to extremity, and they endured many years; for although I have been longer at a distance from him than near him, this has not relieved my ill, which has continued until he has been perfectly annihilated and reduced to the point God wished for him. This operation has made him suffer pains the more severe in proportion as the designs God had for him were the greater, and he has caused me cruel pains. When I was a hundred leagues away from him, I felt his disposition. If he was faithful in allowing himself to be destroyed, I was in peace and free; if he was unfaithful, in reflection or hesitation, I suffered strange torments until it was over. There was no necessity for him to tell me his state, that I should know it. I was often laid upon the ground the whole day, without being able to move, in agony, and after having for a fortnight in this way endured sufferings which surpassed all I ever suffered in my life, I received letters from him, by which I learned his state to be such as I had felt it. Then suddenly I felt that he had re-entered on the state in which God wished him; and then I experienced that gradually

my soul found a peace and a great freedom, which was more or less, according as he gave himself up more or less to our Lord. This was not a voluntary thing in me, but compulsory; for if nature could have shaken off this yoke, more hard and painful than death, it would have done so. I said, O union necessary, and not voluntary, thou art not voluntary only because I am not any more mistress of myself, and I must yield to him who has taken so powerful a possession of me after I have given myself to him freely and without any reserve. My heart had in itself an echo and counter-stroke, which told it all the dispositions this Father was in; but while he resisted God I suffered such horrible torments that I sometimes thought it would tear out my life. I was obliged from time to time to throw myself on the bed, and in that way bear the suffering which seemed to me unbearable; for, in short, to bear a soul, however distant the person may be from us, and to suffer all the rigours that Love makes her suffer, and all her resistance: this is strange.

CHAPTER XIII.

My sister was in no way capable of understanding my state, so that often she was offended at it. She got vexed when one concealed one's self in the least from her, and she could not appreciate a state that many persons more spiritual than she would have been unable to understand; so that I suffered much from every quarter in this malady. The distress from the great pain was the least; that from the creature was very different. My only consolation was to receive our Lord, and sometimes to see Father La Combe; moreover, I had to suffer much from him, as I have said, bearing all his different dispositions. I was strangely exercised by my sister, by that nun, and by the maid who wanted to return to France. Whatever extremity I might be in, I had to listen to their differences, which they told me, the one after the other; then they quarrelled with me for not taking their side. They did not let me sleep—for as the fever was more intense at night, I could only sleep for an hour, and I would gladly have slept by day: but they would not have it, saying it was only to avoid speaking to them—so that I required very great patience to bear with them. It lasted more than six months. I think this partly was the cause of a revery I had for two days together; for I did not sleep, and I continued to hear a noise, with a terrible headache. I complained of nothing, and I suffered gaily, like a child.

Father La Combe commanded them to give me some rest: for some days they did so, but it did not last; they recommenced immediately.

I cannot express the mercies which God showed me in this illness, and the profound lights he gave me on the future. I saw the Devil let loose against prayer and against me, and that he was about to stir up a strange persecution against people of prayer. I wrote all this to Father La Combe, and unless he has burned the letters, they ought to be still in existence. The Devil did not dare attack me myself; he feared me too much. Sometimes I defied him, but he did not venture to appear, and I was for him like a thunderbolt. I understood then what power a self-annihilated soul has. Our Lord made me see all that has since happened, as the letters of that time prove. One day that I was thinking to myself of the nature of a dependence so great, and a union so pure and intimate, twice in a dream I saw Jesus Christ, the Child, of surpassing beauty, and, it seems to me, he united us very closely as he said, "It is I who unite you, and who wish you to be one." Another time he made me see the Father, as he was wandering away from me through want of fidelity, and he brought him back with extreme kindness, and willed him to aid me in my state of childhood, as I aided him in his state of death; but I did not cause suffering to him. It was only I who had to suffer. He had an extreme charity for me, treating me as a real child, and he often said to me, "When I am near you I am as if I was near a little child." I was repeatedly reduced to extremity every ninth day, and ready to die, without, however, dying. I had, as it were, the last agony. I was many hours without breathing, except at long intervals; then I came back on a sudden. Death flattered me, for I had for it a great tenderness, but it only appeared as flying away. The Father forbade me to rejoice at dying, and I at once knew that it was imperfect, and did it no more. I remained in supreme

indifference. During this illness so many extraordinary things happened that it would be impossible for me to relate them. God continually performed miracles by Father La Combe, as well to relieve me and give me new strength when I was at extremity, as to show to him the care he ought to have of me, and the dependence I should have on him. I was like a little child, without thinking of myself or my illness. I would have gone without food every day for want of thinking of it, and whatever was given I took, though it might be fatal to me. In my illness I was wrongly treated; the remedies increased it, but I could not trouble myself in the matter. I always had a smiling face in my greatest sufferings, so that every one was astonished. The nuns had extreme compassion for me; it was I alone who had no feeling for myself. Many times in dreams I saw Father La Mothe stirring up persecutions against me. Our Lord made me know that he would greatly torment me, and that Father La Combe would leave me during the time of persecution. I wrote to him, and this hurt him much, because he felt his heart too united to the will of God, and too desirous of serving me in this same will, to act so. He thought that it was through distrust, but it turned out perfectly true; he left me in the persecution, not of his will, but through necessity, having been himself the first persecuted.

The day of the Purification, when I had relapsed into a very severe fever, the Father ordered me to go to the Mass. For twenty-two days I had had continued fever, more violent than ordinary. I did not give a single thought to my state, but I got up and attended at the Mass, and returned to my bed much worse than before.

It was a day of grace for me, or, rather, for the Father. God showed him very great grace in regard to me. Near Lent the Father, without giving attention to the fact that he had to preach at Lent, when he saw me so ill, said to our Lord to relieve me, and that he would bear a part of

my disease. He told our maids to ask the same thing, namely, that he might relieve me in the way he meant.

It is true I was a little better, and he fell ill, which caused great alarm in the place, seeing he had to preach. He was so much run after that people used to come from five leagues' distance and pass several days there to hear him. When I learned he was so ill on Shrove Tuesday that they thought he would die, I offered myself to our Lord to become more ill, and that he would restore health to him, and enable him to preach to his people, who were hungering to hear him. Our Lord heard me, so that he mounted the pulpit on Ash Wednesday.

It was in this illness, my Lord, that by degrees you taught me that there is another way than by speech for conversing with the creatures, who are entirely yours. You made me conceive, O Divine Word, that as you are always speaking and working in a soul, although you there appear in a profound silence, there was also a means of communication in your creatures, and by your creatures in an ineffable silence. I learned then a language unknown to me before. I perceived gradually that when Father La Combe was brought in either to confess me or give me the Communion, I could no longer speak to him, and that there took place in my central depth towards him the same silence which took place towards God. I understood that God wished me to learn that even in this life men might learn the language of the angels. Little by little I was reduced to speaking to him only in silence; it was then that we understood each other in God, in a manner ineffable and quite divine. Our hearts spoke and communicated to each other a grace which cannot be told. It was an altogether new country for him and me, but divine beyond expression. At the commencement this took place in a more perceptible manner, that is to say, that God so powerfully penetrated us with himself, and his divine Word made us so entirely one in him, but in a manner so pure

and so sweet, that we passed hours in this profound silence, still communicating, without being able to say a single word. It was there we learned by our experience the communications and operations of the Word, in order to reduce souls into his unity, and to what purity one may attain therein. It was given me to communicate in this way with other good souls, but with this difference, that for the others I alone communicated the grace with which, in this sacred silence, they were filled from me, communicating to them an extraordinary strength and grace; but I received nothing from them. In the case of the Father, I experienced that there was a flux and reflux of communication of graces, which he received from me and I from him; that he gave to me and I to him the same grace in an extreme purity.

It was then I understood the ineffable intercourse of the Holy Trinity communicated to all the Blessed, how there is an outflow from God into all the souls of all the Blessed, and that this same God who communicates himself to them causes in them a flux and reflux of his divine communications; that the Blessed spirits and the saints of a like degree or hierarchy reciprocally give by a flux and reflux of communication these divine outflowings, which then they distribute upon the inferior hierarchies, and that everything is reduced to its first principle, whence all these communications proceed. I saw that we were created to participate during this life in the ineffable happiness of intercourse with the Trinity, and in the flux and reflux of the divine Persons, which end in Unity of principle, and become again Unity without ever for a moment arresting the fruitfulness and communication between them; principle without principle, which incessantly communicates, and receives all it communicates; that it was necessary to be very pure to receive God in simplicity, and to allow him to flow back in himself in that purity; and that it was necessary also to be very pure

to receive and communicate the Divine Word, and then to distribute him by a flux and reflux of communication upon the other souls which God gives us. It is this which makes us one in God himself, and perfects us in the divine Unity, where we are made one same thing in him from whom all originates.

I learned by experience then this hierarchic order, and these reciprocal communications between the saints of a similar rank and the angels of a similar order, and this outflow on the inferior saints and spirits, and that with such fulness that they were all filled according to their degree. This communication is God himself, who communicates himself to all the Blessed in a personal flux and reflux; such as he communicates himself from within, such he communicates himself from without, to his saints, and they are all rendered participators of the ineffable commerce of the Holy Trinity. It is to render the soul capable of this communication, that it is necessary for her to be purified so powerfully and so radically; otherwise she would still be self-moved; she would still retain something in her, and by such retention would not be suitable for the ineffable commerce of the Holy Trinity. Further, it is necessary to enlarge her capacity of reception, which, being extremely restricted and limited by sin, can only by fire and hammer-blows be put in a state suitable to the eternal designs of God in her creation. It was shown me how this hierarchic order existed even in this life, and that there were souls who without knowing it communicated with an infinity of others, and to whom grace for the perfection of the others was attached; and that this hierarchy would last through all eternity, where the souls of the Blessed would receive from the same persons through whom grace had been communicated to them; and that those who mutually communicated would be in the same degree. It was then I learned the secret of spiritual fruitfulness and maternity; and how the

Holy Spirit renders souls fruitful in himself, giving them to communicate to others the Word which he communicates to them—what St. Paul calls “the formation of Jesus Christ, and begetting in Jesus Christ”—and that it was in this way that children without number would be given to me, as well known as unknown. All those who are my true children have from the first a tendency to remain in silence near me, and I have an instinct to communicate to them in silence what God has given me for them. In this silence I discover their wants and their deficiencies, and I communicate to them in God himself all that is needed for them. They very well feel what they receive and what is communicated to them in abundance. When once they have tasted this manner of communion, all others become troublesome. For myself, when I use speech and pen with souls, it is only owing to their weakness I do it, and because either they are not sufficiently pure for the interior communication, or it is still needful to use condescension, or to settle external matters.

Our Lord made me experience with the saints of heaven the same communication as with the saints on earth; and this is the way of being truly united to the saints in God. I experienced these communications very strong and very intimate, especially with those with whom one has a greater relation of grace, and to whom one will be more closely united in heaven. At the commencement it was more sensible, because our Lord had the kindness to instruct me by experience. It is the way he has always acted with me; he has not enlightened me by illumination and knowledge, but while making me experience the things, he has given me the understanding of what I experienced.

I understood also the maternity of the Holy Virgin, and in what manner we participate in her maternity, and how the saying of Jesus Christ is real, when he says, that he who does the will of his Father, becoming one

will with his, is made his mother, his brother, and his sister. They are truly made his mothers, producing him in souls.

It was in this ineffable silence I understood the manner in which Jesus Christ communicated himself to his intimates, and the communication of St. John on the breast of our Lord at the Last Supper. It was not the first time that he had so placed himself, and it was because he was very fit to receive those divine communications that he was the chosen and loved disciple. It was at this great banquet that Jesus Christ, as Word, flowed into John, and discovered to him the most profound secrets, before communicating himself to him in the mastication of his body. And it is then there was communicated to him that wonderful secret of the eternal generation of the Word, because he was rendered a participator in the ineffable intercourse of the Holy Trinity. He knew that therein is the characteristic of the true children of God, and how the silent speech operated; for this speech in silence is the most noble, the most exalted, the most sublime of all operations. It was then he learned the difference of being “born of the flesh, of the will of man, or of the will of God.” The operations of the flesh are those of carnal men, those of the will of man are those which are virtuous, being done by the goodwill of the man; but those of which I speak are those of the will of God, where man has no other part but the consent which he gives to them, as Mary did: “Let it be unto me according to thy word.” She not only gave her consent for herself alone that the Word should become incarnate in her, but she gave it for all men who are her children—that is, for all those who are regenerated in Jesus Christ; she gave, I say, a consent for them that the Word should communicate himself to them and that, as the consent which Eve had given to the Devil for sin, had caused death to enter into all her children, so the consent

which Mary would give should communicate the life of the Word to all her children.

It is for this that Jesus Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life," and that he comes "to enlighten every man who comes into the world." "He has come unto his own, and his own have not received him." He is not known in his most intimate communications except to those to whom he has given "to be made children of God," and to become children. It was this wonderful mystery which was effected at the foot of the cross, when Jesus Christ said to St. John, "Behold your mother," and to the Holy Virgin, "Behold your son." He taught St. John that he wished him to receive from the Holy Virgin what he used to receive immediately from himself before his death; and he made known to the Holy Virgin that he had given to her to communicate herself to St. John as to her son, and through him to all the Church. It was at that moment that those divine communications were given to men through Mary and St. John, and it was for this that he wished that his heart should be opened, to show that he sent his Spirit through his heart, and that it was the spirit of his heart that he communicated. Mary received then the gift of producing the Word in all hearts: and as Jesus Christ gave himself by the mastication of his body to all men, he wished also to communicate himself as the Word to all spirits of which he is the life. It was not only to St. John that this communication was made, but it was for us a sensible example of this kind of communication. Therefore our Lord said of St. John, "If I will that he tarry until I come, what is it to thee?" He did not say that he should not die, but if I will that he continue thus, in this ineffable communication, what is it to thee? I propose to communicate myself also to the men prepared to receive me in that way.

O wonderful communications, those which passed between Mary and St. John! O filiation quite divine,

who art willing to extend thyself even to me, all unworthy as I am! O divine Mother, who art willing to communicate your fruitfulness and your altogether divine maternity to this poor nothing! I mean this fecundity of hearts and spirits. In order to instruct me thoroughly in this mystery, for the sake of others, our Lord willed that a maid—she is the one I have spoken of—should have need of this help. I have experienced it in all ways, and when I did not wish her to remain near me in silence, I used to see her interior gradually sink, and even her bodily powers diminish, until she was on the point of falling in a faint. When I had made sufficient experiments of this to understand these ways of communication, her extreme needs passed away, and I commenced to discover, especially with Father La Combe when he was absent, that the interior communication took place at a distance as well as near. Sometimes our Lord made me stop short in the midst of my occupations, and I experienced that there went out an outflow of grace, like that I had experienced when with him—a thing I have also experienced with many others, not altogether in a similar degree, but more or less, feeling their infidelities and infallibly knowing their faults by inconceivable impressions; as I shall tell in the sequel.

CHAPTER XIV.

In this long sickness, your love alone, O my God, constituted my occupation without occupation. I was consumed night and day. I could not see myself in any way, so was I lost in you, O my Sovereign Good, and it seems indeed to my heart that it has never gone out from this Divine Ocean, although you have dragged it through the mud of the most severe humiliations. Who could ever comprehend, O my Love, that you made your creatures to be so one with you, that they so lose sight of themselves as no longer to see anything but you? O loss, which is the blessing of blessings, although all is effected in crosses, deaths, and bitterness!

Jesus the Child was then all living in me, or rather, he was existing alone; I was no longer. You taught me, O my Love, that your state of childhood would not be the only one I must bear; you impressed upon me these words as of a real state, into which you wished me to enter: "The birds of the heaven have nests, and the foxes have holes, but the Son of Man has not where to rest his head." You have indeed made me experience this state in all its extent since that time, having never left me even an assured dwelling, where I could rest for more than a few months, and every day in uncertainty as to being there on the morrow; besides this, in a total deprivation of all creatures, finding refuge neither with my friends, who

were ashamed of me, and who openly renounced me when they saw me decried, nor among my relatives, the greater part of whom have declared themselves my adversaries and my greatest persecutors. The rest have never regarded me but with contempt and indignation. My own children ridiculed me in society. It is indeed, O my Love, this second time much more strongly than the first, although in a manner less sensible, that the state of Job should be attributed to me; "I was," as David says, "a reproach to my neighbours, the object of public ridicule." But before going on I must continue what took place in my illness.

One night that I was quite awake you showed me to myself under the figure—who says figure does not say reality; the brazen serpent which was the figure of Jesus Christ was not Jesus Christ—you showed me, I say, under the figure of that woman in the Apocalypse, who has the moon under her feet, encircled with the sun, twelve stars upon the head, who, being with child, cried in the pains of childbirth. You explained to me its mystery. You made me understand that the moon, which was under her feet, signified that my soul was above the vicissitude and inconstancy of events; that I was surrounded and penetrated by yourself; that the twelve stars were the fruits of this state, and the gifts with which it was honoured; that I was pregnant of a fruit, which was that spirit you wished me to communicate to all my children, whether in the manner I have mentioned, or by my writings; that the Devil was that terrible dragon who would use his efforts to devour the fruit, and cause horrible ravages through all the earth, but that you would preserve this fruit of which I was full in yourself, that it should not be lost—therefore have I confidence that, in spite of the tempest and the storm, all you have made me say or write will be preserved—that in the rage in which the Devil would be at not succeeding in the design he has conceived against this fruit, he would attack me, and would send a

flood against me to swallow me up ; that this flood would be that of calumny, which would be ready to sweep me away, but the earth would open—that is to say, the calumny would little by little subside.

You made me see, O my God, all the world incensed against me, without any one whatever for me, and you assured me in the ineffable silence of your eternal speech that you would give me millions of children that I should bring forth for you by the Cross. I was no longer in a state to interest myself in this in the way either of humility or joy. I let you do with me, O my Divine Love, what you pleased, as with a thing that was yours, in which I no longer took any personal interest ; my sole interest was yours. You made me know how the Devil was about to stir up against Prayer a strange persecution, which would be the source of this very Prayer, or rather, the means you would make use of to establish it. You made me further know how you would lead me into the desert, where you would support me a time, times, and half a time ; the wings which were to carry me were the utter abandonment of myself to your holy will and the love of that same will. I believe that I am now in the desert, separated from all the world by my captivity, and I see, O my God, already one part of what you made me know in course of accomplishment. I wrote all this to Father La Combe, to whom you united me still more strongly, impressing upon me in relation to him the same words that you had yourself impressed upon me : “ I unite you in faith and in cross.” O God, you promise nothing in the matter of crosses that you do not abundantly give. Could I tell, O God, the mercies you showed me ? No, they will remain in yourself, being of a nature that cannot be described, owing to their purity and their depth, free from all distinction.

During my illness I was often at the point of death, as I have said. One day, when they thought me almost well, at four o'clock in the morning I perceived the Dragon, not

under any form. I did not see him, but I was certain it was he. I had no fear, for, as I have said, I could not fear him, because my Lord protects me, and keeps me safe under the shadow of his wings. He emerged as if from the place between the side of my bed and the wall, and gave me a furious blow on the left foot. I was immediately seized with a great shivering, which lasted continuously four hours ; it was followed by a very sharp fever. Convulsions seized me, and the side on which he had struck was half dead. The attacks came every morning at the same hour as the blow, and the convulsions increased in a marked way every day. On the seventh day, after having been all the night sometimes without pulse and without speech, and sometimes a little better, in the morning I felt the convulsions were coming on. I felt at the same time that life left the lower parts in proportion as the convulsions came higher : they fixed themselves in my entrails. I felt then very great pains, and a movement in my entrails, as if I had thousands of children, who all moved at the same time. In my life I have never felt anything approaching that. This lasted a very long time with extreme violence. I felt little by little my life was contracting itself round the heart. Father La Combe gave me the Extreme Unction, the Prioress of the Ursulines having prayed him to do so, as they had not their ordinary priest. I was very glad to die, and he was not troubled at it. It would be difficult to understand without experience how a union, so close that there is nothing like it, can bear, without feeling any pain, a division such as that of seeing a person die to whom one is so firmly attached ; he himself was astonished at it. But, nevertheless, it is not difficult to conceive that, being united only in God himself, in a manner so pure and so intimate, death could not divide us ; on the contrary, it would have united us still more closely.

It is a thing I have many times experienced, that the least resistance he made to God caused me to suffer

inexplicable torments; and to see him die, a prisoner, at a distance for ever, did not cause me the shadow of pain. He showed then great contentment at seeing me die, and we laughed together at the moment which constituted all my pleasure; for our union was different from any that can be imagined. However, death still drew near my heart, and I felt the convulsions which seized my entrails mount up there. I can say I have felt death without dying. The Father, who was on his knees near my bed, remarked the change in my face, the clouding of my eyes; he saw I was on the point of expiring. He asked me, Where was death and the convulsions? I made a sign that they were reaching the heart, and I was about to die. O God, you did not want me yet; you reserved me for far other pains than those of death, if one can call pains what one suffers in the state in which you have placed me by your goodness alone. You inspired Father La Combe to place his hand over the coverlet in the region of my heart, and with a strong voice, heard by those in the room (which was almost full), he said to death to pass no further. It obeyed his voice, and my heart, recovering a little life, came back. I felt those same convulsions descend again into my entrails, in the same way as they had mounted up, and they continued all the day in the entrails with the same violence as before, then descended gradually to the place where the Dragon had struck, and this foot was the last revived. For two months on that side a very great weakness remained, and even after I was better, and in a condition to walk, I could not support myself on that foot, which could hardly bear me. I continued still ill, and in languor, and you gave me, my God, yet new evidence of your love. How many times did you make use of your servant to restore life to me, when I was on the point of expiring!

As they saw that my ailments did not cease, it was thought the air of the lake, on which the convent was

built, was entirely unsuited to me, and was the cause of so many mishaps. It was settled that I must leave it. While I was thus ill, our Lord gave Father La Combe the idea of establishing a hospital in this place, where there was none, to receive the sick poor, and also of instituting a Congregation of Dames of Charity, to furnish those who could not quit their family to go to the hospital with the means of living during their sickness—such as we have in France; no institution of the kind being in this country. I readily entered into it, and without any capital but providence and some useless rooms that the authorities of the town gave, we commenced it. It was dedicated to the Holy Child Jesus, and he willed to give the first beds there from the money of my annuity which belonged to him. He gave such a blessing that many other persons joined. In a little time there were about twelve beds, and for the service of this hospital he gave three persons of great piety, who, without any payment, consecrated themselves to the service of the sick. I gave them ointments and remedies which they distributed to rich people, who paid, to the profit of the sick poor, and to the poor of the town they gave them without charge. These good Dames are so well disposed that through their charity, and the care of these nuns, this hospital is very well maintained. These Dames formed a union also to provide for the sick who could not go to the hospital; and I gave them some little rules I had observed when in France. They have kept this up with love and charity. We had also the devotion to cause every twenty-fifth of the month a service of blessing to be celebrated in the chapel of the Congregation, which is dedicated to the Holy Child Jesus; and for this we gave a complete outfit to the chapel.

All these trifling things, which cost little, and which succeeded only in the blessing that you gave them, O my God, drew upon us new persecutions. The Bishop of Geneva was more offended than ever, and because he saw

that these little things made me to be loved, he said I gained over every one. He openly declared that he could not endure me in his diocese, where, however, I had done nothing but good, or, rather, you through me. He commenced even to extend his persecutions to the worthy nuns who had kindness for me. The Prioress had severe crosses through me, but they did not last long; for as I was obliged, owing to the air, to withdraw, after having been there about two years and a half, they had greater quiet. On the other hand, my sister was very tired of that House, and as the time for the mineral waters approached, the occasion was seized to send her back, together with the maid I had brought, and who tormented me so much during all my illness. I kept with me only her whom Providence had sent me by means of my sister; and I have always believed that God had permitted her journey merely that she might bring her to me, God having chosen her for me, as suitable for the state he wished me to bear.

While I was still ill at the Ursulines, the Bishop of Verceil, who was a very great friend of the Father General of the Bernabites, urgently asked him to select among his monks a man of merit, piety, and doctrine, in whom he could have confidence, and who might serve him as theologian and adviser; that his diocese was in great want of this help. The General at once cast his eyes on Father La Combe. This was the more feasible, as his six years of priorship were coming to an end. The Father General, before engaging him with the Bishop of Verceil, wrote to him to know if he would have any objection, assuring him he would do only what was pleasing to him. Father La Combe answered that his only wish was to obey him, and he might give whatever order he pleased. He told me of this, and that we were about to be entirely separated. I had no chagrin thereat. I was very well content that our Lord should make use of him under a Bishop who knew him, and did him justice. There was still some delay in

sending him off, as well because the Bishop was still at Rome, as that the period of the Father's priorship was not yet completed.

Before leaving the Ursulines, the good hermit, of whom I have spoken, wrote me that he urgently prayed me to go to Lausanne, which was only six leagues from Tonon on the lake, because he still hoped to withdraw his sister, who lived there, and convert her. One cannot go there and speak of religion without risk. As soon as I was in a state to walk, although still very weak, I resolved to go at the request of the worthy hermit. We took a boat, and I asked Father La Combe to accompany us. We got there easily enough; but as the lake was still a quarter of a league distant from the town, in spite of my weakness, I had to summon strength to make the journey on foot. We could find no carriage. The boatmen supported me as well as they could, but this was not enough for the state in which I was. When I reached the town, I did not know if I had a body; if it was upon my legs I walked, or on those of somebody else. I spoke to that woman with Father La Combe: she had been just married, and we could do nothing but incur risk ourselves; for this woman assured us that, except for her regard for her brother, whose letters we brought, she would have denounced us as having come to corrupt the Protestants. We were afterwards near perishing on the lake in a dangerous place, where a tempest came on that would have swallowed us up, had not God protected us in his usual way. A few days later, in that very spot, a boat with thirty-three persons perished.

CHAPTER XV.

I LEFT then the Ursulines, and a house at a distance from the lake was sought for me. The only empty one available had every appearance of the utmost poverty. There was no chimney except in the kitchen, through which we had to pass to reach the room. I took my daughter with me, and gave the largest room to her and the maid who attended her. I was placed in a little hole with some straw, which we went up to by a wooden ladder. As I had no furniture but our bedsteads, which were white, I bought some rush-seated chairs, with plates and dishes of earthenware and wood. Never have I tasted such contentment as I found in this little spot; it seemed to me so in harmony with Jesus Christ. I relished everything better on wood than on silver. I made all my little provisions, thinking to live there for a long time. But the Devil did not allow me to enjoy so sweet a peace. It would be difficult to tell the persecutions I was subjected to. Stones were thrown through my windows, falling at my feet. I had got the little garden put in order; at night people came, tore up everything, broke the trellis-work, and overturned everything, as if soldiers had been through it. All night long they came to the door and abused me, making a show of breaking in the door. These persons have since told who had set them on. Although from time to time I gave in charity at Gex, I was none the less persecuted. A *lettre de*

cachet was offered to a person to compel Father La Combe to remain at Tonon, in the belief that it would be a support to me during the persecution; but we prevented it. I did not then know God's designs, and that he would soon withdraw me from the place. I can say I have never tasted an equal pleasure to that in this poor and solitary little place where I lived; I was happier than kings. But, O my God, it was still a nest for me, and a place of repose, and you willed I should be like you. The Devil, as I have said, embittered my persecutors. I was requested to leave the diocese, and the good which you caused me to do there, O my Lord, was more condemned than the greatest crimes: the latter were tolerated; they could not endure me. During all this time I never felt grief or regret at what I had done in giving up all, nor even a trouble as to not having done your will; not that I was assured of having done it—that assurance would have been too much for me—but I was so lost that I could neither see nor regard anything, taking all equally as from the hand of God, who served out to me these crosses either through justice or mercy. The Marquise de Prunai, sister of the chief State Secretary and Minister of His Royal Highness, had sent an express from Turin during my illness, to invite me to go to her; that, being persecuted as I was in this diocese, I should find an asylum with her; that meantime things would soften down; and when people should be well disposed, she would return with me, and join me and my friend from Paris, who also wished to come to work there according to the will of God. I was not then able to carry out what she desired, and I made my account to remain at the Ursulines until things changed. She spoke no more of it. This lady is of the most extraordinary piety, having quitted the Court for retirement and to give herself to God. At twenty-two years of age, with good natural advantages, she remained a widow, and has refused all offers in order to consecrate herself to our Lord, whose she is without any reserve.

When she knew I was obliged to quit the Ursulines, without knowing the manner in which I was treated, she obtained a *lettre de cachet* to oblige Father La Combe to go to Turin, and spend some weeks for his own business, and to bring me with him, where I should find a refuge. She did all this without our knowledge, and, as she has since said, a superior power made her do it without knowing the cause. If she had thought on the matter, being so prudent as she is, she perhaps would not have done it, for the persecutions the Bishop of Geneva brought on us in that place caused her many humiliations. Our Lord has permitted him to pursue me in a surprising manner in all the places where I have been, without allowing me truce or respite, although I have never done him any ill; on the contrary, I would have given my blood for the good of his diocese.

As this was done without our participation, unhesitatingly we believed it was the will of God, and perhaps a means that he wished to use to withdraw us from disgrace and persecution, seeing that I was hunted away on the one side and sought for on the other; so that it was settled I should go to Turin, and that Father La Combe should escort me, and go thence to Vercell. I took in addition, in order to do things with perfect propriety, and deprive our enemies of all subject for talk, a monk, a man of merit, who for fourteen years was teaching theology. I further took with me a boy I had brought from France, who had learned the trade of tailor. They hired horses, and I had a litter for my daughter, my maid, and myself. But all these precautions are useless when it is God's pleasure to crucify. Our adversaries wrote at once to Paris, and they invented a hundred ridiculous stories—pure fictions, and utterly false—about this journey. It was Father La Mothe who set all that going—perhaps he believed it true; even had it been so, out of charity he should have concealed it, but, being as false as it was, he was still more bound to do this. They said that I had gone

alone with Father La Combe, running from province to province, and a thousand malicious fables. We suffered all in patience without justifying ourselves or complaining. If things were looked at without passion, could I have done better under the circumstances? and was it not honourable, and even advantageous, according to all rules of propriety to be in the house with a lady of that rank and merit? Was it not enough to cut short slander? and when one is irregular, does one select houses of that character? But passion has no eyes, and calumny is a torrent which carries away everything. Hardly had we arrived at Turin when the Bishop of Geneva wrote against us. He persecuted us by his letters, being unable to do it any other way.

Father La Combe went to Vercell, and I remained at Turin, in the house of the Marquise de Prunai. What crosses had I not to endure from my family, the Bishop of Geneva, the Bernabites, and numberless persons? My elder son came to see me on the subject of my mother-in-law's death, which was a very serious addition to my crosses; but after we had heard all his reasons—seeing without me they had sold all the movables, elected guardians, and settled everything independently of me—I was quite useless. It was not thought well for me to return, owing to the severity of the season. You alone, O my God, know what I suffered; for you did not make me know your will, and Father La Combe said he had no light to guide me. You know, my Lord, what this dependence has made me suffer; for he, who to every one else was gentle, often had for me an extreme hardness. You were the author of all this, O my God; and you willed that he should so behave in order that I might remain without consolation; for those who applied to him he advised very correctly; but when it was a question of deciding me on any matter, he could not, telling me he had no light to guide me, that I must do what I could. The more he said these things to

me the more I felt myself dependent on him, and unable to decide. We have been a real cross, the one to the other; we have truly experienced that our union was in *faith* and in *cross*, for the more we were crucified, the more were we united. It is fancied that our union was natural and human: you know, O my God, that we both found in it only cross, death, and destruction. How often did we say that if the union had been natural, we should not have preserved it a moment amidst so many crosses. I avow that the crosses which have come to me from this quarter have been the greatest of my life. You know the purity, the innocence, and the integrity of that union, and how it was all founded on you yourself; as you had the goodness to assure me. My dependence became greater every day; for I was like a little child who neither can nor knows how to do anything. When Father La Combe was where I was (which was seldom, since my departure from the Ursulines), I could not exist long without seeing him, as well owing to the strange ills which overwhelmed me suddenly, and reduced me to the point of death, as owing to my state of childhood. When he was absent, I was not troubled at it, and I had no need. I did not even think of him, and I had not the slightest desire to see him, for my need was not in my will, nor in my choice, nor even in any leaning to him or inclination; but you were the author of it, and as you were not contrary to yourself, you gave me no need of him when you took him away from me.

At the commencement of my stay at Turin, Father La Combe remained there some time waiting for a letter from the Bishop of Verceil; and he availed of the opportunity to pay a visit to his intimate friend the Bishop of Aosta, who was acquainted with my family. As he knew the bitter persecution which the Bishop of Geneva set on foot against us through the Court at Turin, he made me an offer to go into his diocese, and he sent me the kindest letters possible by Father La Combe. He wrote that

previous to his acquaintance with St. Paulina, St. Jerome was a saint; but how was he spoken of afterwards? He wished me thereby to understand how Father La Combe had always passed for a saint before that persecution that I had innocently brought on him. At the same time he showed me that he preserved a very great esteem for him. He even desired, as he was very old, to give up the Bishopric in his favour. The Marquise de Prunai, who had so much wished for me, seeing the great crosses and the abjectness of my state, became disgusted with me: my childlike simplicity, which was the state God then kept me in, seemed to her mind stupidity, although in that state our Lord made me utter oracles; for when it was a question of helping any one, or of anything our Lord wished of me, with the weakness of a child, which appeared only in the candour, he gave me a divine strength. Her heart remained closed for me all the time I was there. Our Lord, however, made me tell what would happen to them, and which, in fact, has happened, not only to her, but also to her daughter and the virtuous ecclesiastic who lived with her. She, nevertheless, towards the end, took to me with more friendship, and she saw that our Lord was in me. But it was the self-love and the fear of abjectness (seeing me so decried), which had shut her heart. Besides, she believed her state more advanced than it was, owing to the time she was without trials; yet she soon saw by experience that I had told her the truth. She was obliged for family reasons to quit Turin, and go to her estate. She strongly urged me to go with her, but the education of my daughter did not permit me. It was out of the question to remain at Turin without the Marquise de Prunai, and the rather, as having lived very retired in that place, I had made no acquaintances. I knew not what to do. Father La Combe, as I said, lived at Verceil. The Bishop of Verceil had written to me most kindly, strongly urging me to go to Verceil and live near him,

promising me his protection and assuring me of his esteem, adding that he would look upon me as his own sister, that from the account he had received of me he extremely desired to have me.

It was his sister, a nun of the Visitation at Turin, a great friend of mine, who had written to him about me; also a French gentleman he knew. But a certain point of honour prevented me. I did not wish that any one could say that I had been running after Father La Combe, and that it was with a view to going there I had come to Turin. His reputation was also at stake, which would not allow him to consent to my going there, however strongly the Bishop of Verceil urged it. If, however, he and I had believed it was the will of God, we would have got over all other considerations. God kept us both in such a dependence on his orders that he did not let us know them; but the divine moment determined everything. This served much to annihilate Father La Combe, who had very long walked by certainties. God in his goodness deprived him of them all, for he willed him to die without reserve.

During all the time I was at Turin our Lord showed me very great favours, and I found myself every day more transformed into him, and I had still greater knowledge of the state of souls, without being mistaken, or deceiving myself therein, however they might try to persuade me of the contrary, and though I might myself have used all my efforts to entertain other thoughts; which has cost me not a little. For when I told Father La Combe, or wrote to him the state of some souls, which appeared to him more perfect and more advanced than what I was given to know of them, he attributed it to pride, got very indignant against me, and even conceived a repugnance to my state. My grief was not because he esteemed me less—by no means; for I was not even in a state to reflect whether he esteemed me or not—but it was that our Lord did not allow me to change my thoughts, and he obliged me to tell them

to him. He could not reconcile—God so permitting it in order to destroy him more thoroughly, and take from him every support—he could not, I say, reconcile a miraculous obedience in a thousand things and a firmness which seemed to him then extraordinary, and even criminal in certain things. This made him even distrustful of my grace: for he was not yet established in his way, and did not enough understand that it in no way depended on me, the being of one manner or the other; and that if I had had any power, I would have reconciled myself to what he said, in order to spare myself the crosses which it caused me; or at least would have cleverly dissimulated. But I could do neither the one nor the other; and though everything should perish, I had to tell him matters as our Lord made me tell them. God has given me in this an inviolable fidelity to the end, without the crosses and griefs having made me for one moment fail in this fidelity. These things, then, which seemed obstinacy to him for want of light, and which God so permitted to deprive him of the support he would have found in the grace that was in me, set him in division from me; and although he told me nothing of it, and, on the contrary, tried with all his power to conceal it, however distant from me he might be, I could not be ignorant; for our Lord made me feel it in a strange way, as if I had been divided from myself. This I felt with more or less pain, according as the division was more or less strong; but as soon as it diminished or ended, my pain ceased, and I was set at large, and this at however great a distance I might be from him. On his side he experienced that when he was divided from me he was also from God, and many times he has said and written to me: “When I am well with God, I am well with you, and as soon as I am ill with God, I am ill with you.” These were his own words. He experienced that when God received him into his bosom, it was in uniting him with me, as if he did not

want him except in this union. And our Lord made me very heavily pay for all his infidelities.

While he was at Turin a widow came to him to confession. She is a good servant of God, but all in illumination and sensibility. As she was in a state of sensibility she told him wonders. The Father was delighted, for he felt the sensible of her grace. I was at the other side of the confessional. After I had waited a long time, he said one or two words to me; then he sent me away, saying he had just found a soul which was devoted to God; that it was truly she who was so; that he was quite refreshed by her; that it would be a long time before he would find this in me; that I no longer produced anything in his soul but death. At first I was glad that he had found such a holy soul, for I am always, my Lord, greatly rejoiced to see you glorified. I returned home without giving it any more attention, but while returning our Lord made me see clearly the state of that soul, which was in truth very good, but which was only at the commencement, in a mixture of affection and a little silence, quite full of the sensible; that it was owing to this the Father felt sympathetically her state; that as for me, in whom our Lord had destroyed everything, I was very far from being able to communicate to him the sensible. Moreover, our Lord made me understand that, being in him, as I was, without anything of my own, he communicated to Father La Combe through me only what he communicated to him directly himself, which was death, nakedness, a stripping of everything; and that anything else would make him live his self-life and hinder his death; that if he stopped at sentiment, it would be hurtful to his interior. I had to write all this to him. On receiving my letter, he remarked in it at first a character of truth, but reflection having succeeded, he judged all I told him to be only pride, and this caused him some estrangement from me; for he had still in his mind the ordinary rules of humility, conceived and understood in our

manner, and did not see that there could be no other rule for me but to do the will of my God. I thought no longer of humility nor of pride, but I let myself be led as a child who says and does without distinction all he is made to say or do. I easily understand that all persons who are not entered into self-annihilation will accuse me of pride in this, but in my state I cannot give it a thought. I allow myself to be led where I am led, high or low; all is for me equally good.

He wrote to me that at first he had found in my letter something which seemed to him true, and that he entered into it, but after having re-read it with attention he had found it full of pride, obstinacy, and a preference of my lights to others. I could not give a thought to all this, to find it in myself, nor, as formerly, to convince myself, believing it though I did not see it. That was no longer for me; I could not reflect on it. If he had thought, he might have seen that a person who has neither will nor inclination for anything, is far removed from obstinacy, and he would have therein recognized God. But our Lord did not then permit him. I wrote again to him to prove the truth of what I had advanced; but this only served to confirm him in the unfavourable sentiments he had conceived of me. He entered into division. I knew the moment he had opened my letter, and had entered into it, and I was thrown into my ordinary suffering. When the maid who went to him with that letter (and who was the same I have spoken of, whom our Lord had brought to me) had returned, I told her, and she said it was precisely at that hour he had read my letter. Our Lord did not give me any thought of writing to him again on this subject; but the following Sunday, when I went to confess, and was on my knees, he at once asked me if I still persisted in my sentiments of pride, and if I still believed the same thing. Up to this I had not made any reflection either upon what I had thought or what I had

written to him; but at this moment having done so, it appeared to me pride, as he told me. I answered, "It is true, my Father, that I am proud, and that person is more devoted to God than I." As soon as I had pronounced these words, I was cast out as if from Paradise to the depth of Hell. I have never suffered such torment; I was beside myself. My face changed suddenly; and I was like a person about to expire, whose reason is gone. I sank back. The Father at once perceived it, and was at the moment enlightened as to the little power I had in these things, and how I was obliged to say and do without discernment what the Master made me do. He said to me at once, "Believe what you before believed. I order you." As soon as he said this to me I commenced gradually to breathe and to come to life; in proportion as he entered into what I had said to him my soul recovered her freedom, and I said as I turned away, "Let no one speak to me again of humility. The ideas people have of the virtues are not for me; there is but one single thing for me, which is to obey my God." A little time after, from her manner of acting, he recognized that that person was very far from what he had thought. I relate a single example, but I could give many similar.

CHAPTER XVI.

ONE night our Lord made me see in a dream that he wished also to purify the maid he had given me, and to make her truly enter upon the death of Self, but that it was necessary this also should be done through me, and by means of suffering. I, therefore, had to make up my mind to suffer for her what I suffered for Father La Combe, although in a different manner. She has made me suffer inconceivable torments. As she resisted God much more than he, and the selfhood was far stronger in her, she had more to purify; so that I had to suffer martyrdoms that I could not make conceivable should I tell them: but it is impossible for me. What augmented my trouble was that Father La Combe never understood this as long as it lasted, always attributing it to defect and imperfection on my part. I bore this torment for that girl three entire years. When the resistances were strongest, and the Father approved her, without my knowing it, I entered into torments I cannot tell. I fell sick from it, so I was almost continually ill. Sometimes I passed whole days upon the ground, supported against the bedstead, without being able to stir, and suffering torments so excessive that had I been upon the rack I think I should not have felt it, so terrible was the internal pain. When that girl resisted God more strongly, and came near me, she burned me; and when she touched me I felt so strange a pain that material fire

would have been only its shadow. Ordinarily I allowed myself to burn with inconceivable violence; at other times I asked her to withdraw, because I could not any longer support the pain. She sometimes took this for aversion, and told Father La Combe, who was angry at it, and reproved me. However, when herself, she could not judge altogether in that manner, for our Lord made me constantly perform miracles for her. I had absolute power over her soul and her body. However ill she was, as soon as I told her to be cured, she was so; and as to the interior, as soon as I said to her, "Be at peace," she was so; and when I had a movement to deliver her to pain, and I delivered her to it, she entered into an inconceivable pain; but almost all her pain it was I bore, with inexpressible violence.

O my God, it seems to me you have made me understand by my own experience something of what you have suffered for men; and it seemed to me, by what I suffered, that a part of what you have suffered for men would have consumed ten thousand worlds. It needed no less than the strength of a God to bear that torment without being annihilated. Once, when I was ill, and this girl was in her resistances and her selfhood, she approached me. I felt so violent a fire that I could not, it seemed to me, bear it without dying. This fire, it appears to me, is the same as that of purgatory. I told her to withdraw, owing to what I suffered. As she thought it was only opposition to her, she persisted, out of friendliness, in remaining. She took me by the arms. The violence of the pain was so excessive, that without paying any attention to what I did, being altogether beside myself from the excess of pain, I bit my arm with such force that I almost took out the piece. She saw the blood and the wound I had caused myself before perceiving the manner. This made her understand that there was something extraordinary in it. She informed the Father, as he was then at Turin, and for some time he had

not come to see me, because he was in division and in trouble. He was much surprised at the hurt I had caused myself: he could not understand what caused me to suffer; and I had difficulty to explain myself to him, and make him know it. In the evening she wished to approach me. I commanded the pain which I suffered for her to seize upon her. At once she entered into so strange a pain that she believed she was about to die, and I was delivered from it for the moment; but as she could not bear it, I took it back away from her, leaving her in peace.

Our Lord made me see in a dream the resistances she would make to me under the figure of numerous animals which issued from her body, and he made me feel the pain of that purification, as if when the animals were drawn out I was burned with a red-hot iron on the right shoulder. Those animals appeared to me transparent, so that the outside looked pure and clear as a glass, and the inside full of unclean animals; and I was given to know that she had passed through the first purification, which is that of the exterior, and for this reason she had been held a saint in the world; but she had not yet been purified radically, and so far from it, the exterior purification had, as it were, fortified her self-love, and rendered the selfhood more dominant in the central depth of her being. I saw that in proportion as I suffered, those animals destroyed one another; so that at last only one remained, who devoured all the others. He appeared to have in himself all the malice of the others, and he struggled against me in a surprising manner.

It should be known that as soon as this was shown me, and it was given me to suffer for her, she exteriorly entered into a state which might have passed for madness. She was no longer fit to render me any service; in continual anger, everything offended her without rhyme or reason—jealousy of everybody, and a thousand other defects. Although she exercised me enough for the exterior, all this

gave me no trouble; it was only that extreme pain which made me suffer. She became frightfully awkward, breaking and destroying everything, not being able to endure any one. All who saw me served in this way, pitied me, for she had the disgrace that, whatever eagerness she had to do well, she did everything ill; our Lord so permitting it. If I was ill in a sweat or a shivering fit, she, without thinking, threw pots of water over me; if any one, or she herself, had prepared anything, hoping to give me an appetite, she threw it in the cinders; if I had anything useful, she broke or lost it; and I never said anything to her, although things went so far that there was reason to think my income would not suffice for the half year. She was greatly distressed because I never said anything to her about what concerned me; for her affection for me was such that she was more grieved at this than at other faults which did not affect me, while for me it was the contrary. I had not the shadow of trouble from this. What I could not suffer in her was the self-love and the selfhood. I strongly reproved her for it, and I said to her, "All which concerns me gives me no trouble, but I feel such a terrible opposition for your self-love and selfhood, I could not have greater for the Devil." I saw clearly that the Devil could not hurt us, but for our self-love and selfhood; and I had more aversion and more horror for that self-love and that selfhood than for all the devils. At the beginning I was pained at the opposition I had for this girl, whom I otherwise so loved, that it seemed to me I would rather have sent away my own children than get rid of her. Father La Combe, not understanding this, reproved me, and made me suffer much. However, it was not in me from myself, but from God; and when the Father supported her, it made me suffer doubly, for I suffered from the infidelity of the one and the selfhood of the other. Our Lord made me understand that this was not a defect in me, as I persuaded myself; that it was because he gave me the discernment

of spirits, and my central depth would reject, or accept, that which was of him, or was not.

Since that time, although I have not borne the purification of other souls, as in her case, I nevertheless recognize them not by any light, nor by what they tell me, but by the central depth. It is well to say here that one must not mistake; and souls which are still in themselves, whatever degree of light and ardour they may have arrived at, should not apply this to themselves. They often think they have this discernment, and it is nothing but the antipathy of nature. It has been seen that our Lord (as I have told) had previously destroyed in me all sorts of natural antipathy. It is necessary that the central depth be annihilated—that it depend on God alone, and that the soul no longer possess herself, for these things to be from God. This lasted three years.

In proportion as this soul was purified the pain diminished, until our Lord made me know that her state was about to change, and that he would have the goodness to harmonize her to me. So it suddenly changed. Although I suffered such strange torments for the persons our Lord desired to purify, I did not feel all the persecutions from without; and yet they were very violent. The Bishop of Geneva wrote to different kinds of persons: to those who he thought would show his letters to me he spoke well of me, and in the letters which he thought I should not see he wrote much evil. Our Lord permitted that those persons, having mutually shown each other the letters, were indignant at a procedure so contrary to good faith. They sent them to me, that I might be on my guard. I kept them for more than two years; then I burned them, in order not to do harm to that prelate. The strongest battery was that he opened through one of the Ministers, co-Secretary of State, with the brother of the Marquise de Prunai. Moreover, he took all the trouble imaginable to render me an object of suspicion, and to decry

me. For this he used certain Abbés; and although I did not go out, and did not show myself, I was well-known from the unflattering portrait the Bishop made of me. It did not make as much impression as it would have done had he stood better with the Court; but certain letters, which Madame Royale found after the death of the Prince, which he had written him against her, made her for her part attach no weight to what the Bishop of Geneva wrote; on the contrary, she sent me friendly messages, and invited me to go and see her. I went to pay my respects; she assured me of her protection, and that she was very glad I was in her State.

Our Lord made me know in a dream that he called me to aid my neighbour. Of all the mysterious dreams I have had, there is none made more impression than this, or the unction of which has lasted longer. It seemed to me that, being with one of my friends, we were ascending a great mountain, at the bottom of which was a stormy sea, full of rocks, which had to be crossed before coming to the mountain. This mountain was quite covered with cypresses. When we had ascended it, we found at its top another mountain, surrounded with hedges, that had a locked door. We knocked at it; but my companion went down again, or remained at the door, for she did not enter with me. The Master came to open the door, which was immediately again shut. The Master was no other than the Bridegroom, who, having taken me by the hand, led me into the wood of cedars. This mountain was called Mount Lebanon. In the wood was a room where the Bridegroom led me, and in the room two beds. I asked him for whom were those two beds. He answered me, There is one for my mother, and the other for you, my Bride. In this room there were animals fierce by nature, and hostile, who lived together in a wonderful manner—the cat played with the bird, and there were pheasants that came to caress me; the wolf and the lamb lived together. I remembered that prophecy of

Isaiah, and the room that is spoken of in Canticles. Innocence and candour breathed from the whole place. I perceived in this room a boy of about twelve years of age. The Bridegroom said to him to go and see if there were any persons coming home from the shipwreck. His only duty was to go to the bottom of the mountain to discover if he could see any one. The Bridegroom, turning to me, said, “I have chosen you, my Bride, to bring here to you all who shall have courage enough to pass this terrible sea, and to be there shipwrecked.” The boy came to say he did not see any one yet returned from the shipwreck. On that I woke up so penetrated by this dream that its unction remained with me many days.

My interior state was continually more firm and immovable, and my mind so clear, that neither distraction nor thought entered it, save those it pleased our Lord to put there. My prayer, still the same—not a prayer which is in me, but in God—very simple, very pure, and very unalloyed. It is a state, not a prayer, of which I can tell nothing, owing to its great purity. I do not think there is anything in the world more simple and more single. It is a state of which nothing can be said, because it passes all expression—a state where the creature is so lost and submerged, that though it be free as to the exterior, for the interior it has absolutely nothing. Therefore its happiness is unalterable. All is God, and the soul no longer perceives anything but God. She has no longer any pretence to perfection, any tendency, any partition, any union; all is perfected in unity, but in a manner so free, so easy, so natural, that the soul lives in God and from God, as easily as the body lives from the air it breathes. This state is known of God alone, for the exterior of these souls is very common, and these same souls, which are the delight of God, and the object of his kindness, are often the mark for the scorn of creatures.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHILE I was still in Savoy God made use of me to draw to his love a monk of merit, but one who did not even dream of taking the road to perfection. He sometimes accompanied Father La Combe when he used to come to assist me in my illness, and the thought occurred to me to ask him from our Lord. The evening that I received the Extreme Unction he came near my bed. I said to him that if our Lord had pity on me after my death, he would feel the effects of it. He felt himself internally so touched as to weep; he was one of those who were most opposed to Father La Combe, and he who, without knowing me, had made out the most stories against me. Quite changed, he returned home, and could not help wishing to speak to me again, being extremely moved because he believed I was about to die. He wept so much that the other monks rallied him on it. They said to him, "Can anything be more absurd? A lady of whom only two days ago you said a thousand bad things, now that she is about to die, you weep for her as if she was your mother!" Nothing could prevent his weeping, nor take away the desire of again speaking to me. Our Lord heard his wishes, and I grew better. I had time to speak to him. He gave himself to God in an admirable manner, although he was advanced in age. He changed even as to his natural character, which was cunning and insincere, and became simple as a child.

He could not call me anything but his mother. He also acquired confidence in Father La Combe, even making his general confession to him.

People no longer knew him, and he did not know himself. For many years he was thus disposed to me. One day he exhibited more confidence and friendship than ordinary; having come a considerable distance expressly to see me and to open his soul to me, he had had a fall from his horse, from which he suffered pain, and had a dangerous swelling, that might be attended by serious consequences owing to the locality of the hurt. He told me he felt great pain, and that he was anxious about the consequences of such a dangerous hurt. I said to him, "You will never be inconvenienced by it." He believed, and was entirely cured, without ever since having felt it. As owing to that he showed me more confidence, he said to me, like St. Peter—I mean no comparison—"Though all the world should renounce you, I will never renounce you." As soon as he said this, I had a strong movement that he would renounce me and lose hold through want of fidelity, and at the same time it seemed to me that if he sacrificed himself to it and lost the esteem of himself, and of the strength he believed himself to have, this would not happen. I said to him, "My Father, you will renounce me, assuredly you will do it, and you will lose hold." He was vexed with me for this, continuing to protest the contrary; that he was not a child, that no one was more firm and constant than he. The more he protested, the more I had an inward certainty of the contrary. I said to him, "My Father, in the name of God I pray you to sacrifice yourself to him, to renounce me, and to turn against me for some time, if he permits," assuring him that if he did not enter into this disposition of sacrifice, he would infallibly do it. He never would submit to this, and became very grieved because, as he said, I distrusted him. Six months from that he came to

see me, more affectionate than ever, and said, "You see how false a prophetess you are, and that I am very far from renouncing you."

A year after, while I was with Father La Combe, I said to him, Father N—— is certainly changed, for our Lord has made me feel it. When he gives me any one specially I must always suffer something. O my God, how indeed true is it that I have brought forth children only with pain ! But also, when they became unfaithful I felt that they were taken away, and that they were no longer anything to me ; but for those whom our Lord did not remove from me, who were only wavering or unfaithful for a time, for them he made me suffer. I clearly felt that they were unfaithful, but they were not removed from me, and I knew that in spite of their infidelities, they would one day return. When, then, I said to Father La Combe that he was changed—and I had told him more than a year before that he would change—he said to me that it was my imagination. A few days after he received from him a letter full of friendship, and he said to me, "See how he is changed." While reading the letter I had again a very strong certitude that he was changed, and that a remnant of respect and shame made him continue to write thus, and that he would yet do so for some time. It happened exactly ; he continued still for some time forced letters ; then he ceased to write ; and Father La Combe learned that the fear of losing certain friends had changed him. There are some for whom our Lord makes me pray, or makes me take some steps to aid them, and others for whom it is not even given me to write a letter to strengthen them.

There was one, who was the most violent man in the world, who kept no measure, and was much more of a soldier than a monk. As Father La Combe was his Superior, and tried to gain him both by his words and his example, he could not endure him ; he even broke out in

great passions against him. When he was saying the Mass in the place where I was, I felt, without knowing him, that he was not in a good state. One day that I saw him pass with the chalice, which he held in his hand to go and say Mass, a great tenderness for him seized upon me, and an assurance that he was changed. I even knew that he was a chosen vessel, whom God had chosen in a special manner. I had to write it to Father La Combe, who sent me word that this was the falsest idea he had yet seen in me, and that he knew no man more ill-disposed than that person ; and he regarded what I had said as the most ridiculous dream that ever was. He was very much surprised when, about four or five o'clock in the evening, this Father went to see him in his room, and from the proudest of men, appeared the most gentle. He asked pardon for all the annoyance he had caused him, and said to him with tears, "I am changed, my Father, and I have suffered an utter overthrow which I do not understand." He related to him how he had seen the Holy Virgin, who had showed him that he was in a state of damnation, but that she had prayed for him. Father La Combe at once wrote me that what I had told him of a certain Father was indeed true, that he was changed, but changed in a good way, and that he was full of joy at it. I remained all night on the bare ground without sleeping a moment, penetrated with the unction of God's designs for that soul. Some days after, our Lord again made me know the same thing, with much unction, and I was again a night without sleeping, quite full of that sight. I wrote to him the designs which our Lord had for him, and I gave the letter open to Father La Combe to give him. He hesitated some time whether he should give it, not daring so soon to trust him ; but that Father passing by at the moment, he could not prevent himself giving it to him. Far from ridiculing it, he was much touched, and resolved to give himself to God utterly. He has a difficulty in breaking away from all his ties, and

seems still divided between God and connections which seem to him innocent, although God gives him many blows to thoroughly subdue him; but his resistances do not make me lose hope of what he will one day do. Before his change I saw in a dream a number of very beautiful birds that every one was eagerly hunting and desirous of catching, and I looked at them all without taking any part in it, and without wishing to catch them. I was very much astonished to see them all come and give themselves up to me, without my making any effort to have them. Among all those who gave themselves up to me, and which were numerous enough, was one of extraordinary beauty, which far surpassed all the others. Everybody was eager to catch that one; after having flown away from all, and from me also as well as the others, he gave in, and gave himself up to me, when I did not expect it. There was one of the others, which, after having come, flew about for a long time, sometimes giving himself, sometimes withdrawing; then he gave himself altogether. This last appeared to me to be the monk of whom I have spoken. Others withdrew altogether. For two nights I had the same dream; but the beautiful bird which had no fellow is not unknown to me, although he has not yet come. Whether it be before or after my death that he gives himself entirely to God, I am assured that it will take place.

While I was with the Marquise de Prunai, undecided whether I should place my daughter at the Visitation of Turin, to go with her, or whether I should take some other step, I was much surprised, when I least expected it, to see Father La Combe arrive from Verceil, and tell me that I must return to Paris without a moment's delay. It was evening. He told me to set out the next morning. I confess this unexpected news surprised me, without, however, disturbing me in the very least. It was for me a double sacrifice, to return to a place where I knew I had

been so grievously decried, to a family which had nothing but scorn for me, and had represented my journey (that necessity alone had forced me to make) as a voluntary tour caused by the human attachment I had for Father La Combe; although it was strictly true that providential necessity alone had led me to it. You alone, O my God, knew how far we were from such sentiments, and that we were equally ready never to see each other, should it be your will, or to see each other continually should that be your will. O God, how little do men comprehend these things, which you yourself do for your glory, and to be the source of an infinity of crosses, that were increasing instead of diminishing. Here, then, was I, without answering a word, ready to set out together with my daughter and a maid-servant, without any person to escort me; for Father La Combe was resolved not to accompany me, even across the mountains; because the Bishop of Geneva had written everywhere that I had gone to Turin, running after him.

But the Father Provincial, who was a man of quality of Turin, and who knew the virtue of Father La Combe, told him that I must not be allowed to go among those mountains, especially as I had my daughter with me, without some one I knew, and that he ordered him to accompany me. The Father admitted to me that he had some repugnance, but his duty of obedience and the danger to which I should have been exposed in going alone, made him get over his objections. He was to accompany me as far as Grenoble, and thence return to Turin. I set out then with the intention of going to Paris to suffer all the crosses and submit to all the confusion it might please God to make me suffer.

What made me pass by Grenoble was the wish I had to spend two or three days with a great servant of God, a friend of mine. When I was there, Father La Combe and this lady told me to go no further, and that God wished to glorify himself in me and through me in that place.

Father La Combe returned to Verceil, and I let myself be led by providence, like a child. This worthy Mother at first took me to a widow, not having found room at the inn, and I expected to spend only three days there; but as they told me to remain at Grenoble, I remained in her house. I placed my daughter in a convent, and resolved to employ all this time in giving myself up in solitude to him who is absolutely master of me. I made no visit in that place, no more than in any of the other places where I had dwelt; but I was very much surprised when, a few days after my arrival, many persons came to see me, who made profession of being in an especial manner devoted to God. I at once became aware of a gift of God, which had been communicated to me without my understanding it—namely, the discernment of spirits, and the giving to each what was suitable to him. I felt myself suddenly clothed with an Apostolic state, and I discerned the state of the souls of the persons who spoke to me, and that with such facility that they were astonished, and said one to the other that I gave to each that of which he had need. It was you, O my God, who did all these things. They sent each other to me. It reached such a point that ordinarily from six in the morning until eight in the evening I was occupied in speaking of God. People came from all sides, from far and near—monks, priests, men of the world, girls, women, and widows—all came, the one after the other, and God gave me wherewith to satisfy all in an admirable manner, without my taking any thought, or paying any attention to it. Nothing in their interior state, nor what passed in them, was concealed from me. You made, O my God, an infinity of conquests that you alone know. There was given them a surprising facility for prayer, and God gave them great graces and worked marvellous changes. I had a miraculous authority over the bodies and souls of these persons whom our Lord sent to me; their health and their interior state seemed to be in my hand. The more advanced of those

souls found near me that, without speech, there was communicated to them a grace which they could not comprehend, nor cease to wonder at. The others found an unction in my words, and that they operated in them what I said to them. They had not, said they, ever seen, or rather, ever experienced anything similar. I saw monks of different orders, and priests of merit, to whom our Lord gave very great graces; and God gave grace to all, without exception—at least, to all who came in good faith.

What is surprising is, that I had not a word to say to those who came to surprise and to spy on me; and when I wished to force myself to speak to them, besides being unable, I felt that God did not desire it. Some went away, saying, "People are mad to go and see that lady: she cannot speak;" others treated me as stupid, and I did not know those persons had come to spy on me. But when they had gone out, some one came and said to me, "I was not able to come soon enough to tell you not to speak to those persons; they came from So-and-so to spy on you, and to catch you." I said to them, "Our Lord has been beforehand with your charity, for I have been unable to say a word to them."

I felt that what I said came from the fountain-head, and that I was merely the instrument of him who made me speak. In the midst of this general applause our Lord made me understand what was the Apostolic state with which he had honoured me, and that to be willing to give one's self up to aid souls in the purity of his Spirit, was to expose one's self to cruel persecutions. These very words were impressed upon me: "To sacrifice yourself to aid your neighbour is to sacrifice yourself to the gibbet. Those who now say of thee, 'Blessed be he who cometh in the name of the Lord,' will soon say, 'Take away; crucify.'" One of my friends speaking of the general esteem in which I was held, I said to her, "Notice what I say to you this day, that you will hear curses proceed from the same

mouths which are giving blessings ;” and our Lord made me understand that it was necessary for me to be conformable to him in all states, and that if he had always remained with the Holy Virgin and St. Joseph in an obscure life, he would never have been crucified ; and when he wished to crucify any of his servants in an extraordinary manner, he employed him in the service of his neighbour. It is certain that all the souls who are thus employed by God by an Apostolic destination, and who are truly placed in the Apostolic state, have to suffer extremely. I do not speak of those who intrude themselves into it, and who, not being called there by God in a special manner, and having nothing of the grace of the Apostolate, have also nothing of the crosses of the Apostolate ; but for those who give themselves up to God without any reserve, and who are willing with all their heart to be the plaything of providence without restriction or reserve—ah, as for those, they are assuredly a spectacle for God, for angels and for men : for God, of glory, by the conformity with Jesus Christ ; for angels, of joy ; and for men, of cruelty and disgrace.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BEFORE I came to Grenoble, on the road, I went into a convent of the nuns of the Visitation. Suddenly I was struck by a picture of Jesus Christ in the garden, with these words : “ Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass ; however, your will be done.” At once I understood that this was addressed to me, and I sacrificed myself to the will of God. There I experienced a very extraordinary thing ; it is, that among so great a number of souls all good and with grace, and for whom our Lord, through me, did much, some were given me as simple plants to cultivate, in whom I did not feel our Lord desired me to take any interest. I knew their state ; but I did not feel in myself that absolute authority, and they did not in especial manner belong to me. Here I understood better the true maternity. The others were given to me as children, and for these I always had something to pay, and I had authority over their souls and their bodies. Of these children some were faithful, and I knew they would be so, and they were united with me in charity. Others were unfaithful, and I knew that of these last some would never recover from their faithlessness, and they were taken away from me ; as for others, that it would be merely a temporary straying. For both the one and the other I suffered heart-pains that are inconceivable, as if they were

being drawn out of my heart. These are not those heart-pains which are called failure or faintness of the heart. It was a violent pain in the region of the heart, which was yet spiritual, but so violent that it made me cry out with all my strength, and reduced me to my bed. In this state I could not take food, but I had to allow myself to be devoured by a strange pain. When these same children left me, and by cowardice, lack of courage to die to themselves, they gave up everything, they were torn from my heart with much pain.

It was then I understood that all the predestinated came forth from the heart of Jesus Christ, and that he gave birth to them on Calvary in pangs that are inconceivable, and it was for this reason he wished his heart to be opened externally, to show that there was the fountain whence came forth all the predestinated. O heart which has brought me forth, it will be in thee we shall be received for ever! Our Lord, amongst so many who followed him, had so few true children. It is for that reason he said to his Father, "I have lost none of those whom thou hast given me, except the son of perdition," making us thereby see that he did not lose, not only any of the Apostles, although they made so many false steps, but even of those whom he was about to bring forth on Calvary by the opening of his heart. O my Love, I can say that you have made me a participator in all your mysteries, making me experience them in an ineffable manner. I was then associated in this divine maternity in Jesus Christ, and it has been that which caused me most suffering; for two hours of this suffering changed me more than several days' continued fever. I have sometimes so borne these pains as for two or three days to cry out with all my strength, "The heart!" The maid who attended me saw that the ailment was not natural, but she did not know what caused it. If we could understand the least of the pangs we have cost Jesus Christ, we should be in amazement.

Amongst the various monks who came to see me, there was one order which felt more than any other the effects of grace; and it was some members of this very order who had been to a small town where Father La Combe had held a mission, and by a false zeal troubled all the worthy souls who had given themselves sincerely to God, tormenting them inconceivably, burning all their books which spoke of prayer, refusing absolution to those who used it, throwing into consternation, and even despair, those who had withdrawn from a criminal life and preserved themselves in grace by means of prayer, and lived in a perfect manner. Those monks proceeded to such excess in their indiscreet zeal that they caused a sedition in the town, and in the open street they had a respectable and meritorious Father of the Oratory beaten with sticks, because he used prayer at evening, and on Sundays made a short and fervent prayer, which insensibly accustomed those good souls to use prayer.

I have never in my life had so much consolation as in seeing in that little town so many good souls who vied with each other in giving themselves to God with their whole heart. There were young girls of twelve and thirteen years of age, who worked all day in silence in order to converse with God, and who had acquired a great habit of it. As they were poor girls, they joined in couples; and those who knew how to read, read out something to those who could not read. It was a revival of the innocence of the early Christians. There was a poor washerwoman, who had five children and a husband paralysed in the right arm, but more halt in his spirit than in his body: he had no strength except to beat her. Nevertheless, this poor woman, with the sweetness of an angel, endured it all, and gained subsistence for that man and her five children. This woman had a wonderful gift of prayer, preserving the presence of God and equanimity in the greatest miseries and the most extreme poverty. There was also the wife

of a shopkeeper greatly influenced by God, and the wife of a locksmith. They were three friends. Both of them sometimes read for that washerwoman, and they were surprised how she was instructed by our Lord in all they read for her, and how she spoke of it divinely. These monks sent for this woman, and threatened her if she would not give up prayer, saying it was only for monks, and that she was very audacious to use prayer. She answered them—or, rather, he who taught her, for she was in herself very ignorant—that our Lord had told all to pray; and that he had said, “I say unto you *all*,” not specifying either priests or monks; that without prayer she could never support the crosses, nor the poverty she was in; that she had formerly been without prayer, and she was a demon; and that since she used it, she had loved God with all her heart; and therefore to give up prayer was to renounce her salvation, which she never could do. She added, let them take twenty persons who have never used prayer, and twenty of those who use it; then, said she, make yourselves acquainted with their lives, and you will see if you have reason in condemning prayer. Such words as those from a woman of that condition ought to have convinced them; they only served to embitter them. They assured her she should not have absolution unless she promised to give up prayer. She said it did not depend on her, and that our Lord was the Master to communicate himself to his creature, and to do what pleased him. They refused her absolution; and after having gone so far as to abuse a worthy tailor, who served God with all his heart, they had brought to them all the books which treated of prayer, without any exception, and themselves burned them in the public place. They were greatly puffed up with their expedition; but the town rose up because of the blows given to the Father of the Oratory; and the principal men went to the Bishop of Geneva, to tell him the scandal created by these new missionaries, so different from the

others, alluding to Father La Combe, who had on another occasion been there on a mission; and it was said that the only object of sending these last was to destroy the work he had done. The Bishop of Geneva was obliged himself to come to that town, and to get into the pulpit, protesting that he had no part in it—that the Fathers had pushed their zeal too far. The monks, on the other hand, said that they had done everything under orders. There were also at Tonon girls who had withdrawn together into retirement; they were poor village girls, who, in order the better to gain their subsistence and serve God, had several in number joined together. There was one who read from time to time, while the others worked; and they never went out without asking leave to go out from the senior. They made ribbons; they spun and gained a livelihood, each in her own trade: the strong supported the weak. These poor girls were separated, and others also, and dispersed among several villages; they drove them away from the Church. It was, then, monks of this same order of whom our Lord made use to establish prayer in I know not how many places, and they carried a hundred times more books on prayer into the places where they went than their brothers had burnt. God appears to me wonderful in these things. I had then opportunity of knowing these monks in the way which I am about to tell.

One day that I was ill a friar, who is well versed in the treatment of sick persons, came begging, and having learnt I was ill, came in. Our Lord made use of him to give me the proper remedies for my illness, and permitted that we entered into a conversation, which woke up in him the love which he had for God, and which was, according to him, stifled by his important occupations. I made him understand that there is no occupation which could hinder him from loving God, or thinking of him. He had no trouble in believing me, having already much piety and disposition for spiritual religion. Our Lord showed him

great grace, and gave him to me as one of my true children. What is admirable is, that all those whom our Lord has given me in this way, I felt that he accepted them in me to be my children; for it is he who accepts them, and who gives them. I only bring them forth upon the cross, as he has brought forth all the predestinated on the cross; and it is further in this sense that he makes me "fill up what remains wanting of his passion," which is the application of the divine filiation. O goodness of a God, to associate poor petty creatures in such great mysteries!

When our Lord gives me some children of this kind, he gives them, without my having ever exhibited anything of this, very great inclination for me; and without themselves knowing why or how, they cannot help calling me their mother—a thing which has happened to many persons of merit, priests, monks, pious girls, and even to an ecclesiastical dignitary, who all, without my having ever spoken to them, regard me as their mother—and our Lord has had the goodness to accept them in me, and to give them the same graces as if I was in the habit of seeing them. One day a person who was in a very trying state, and in manifest danger, without thinking what she did, cried aloud, "My mother, my mother!" thinking of me. She was at once delivered, with a fresh certainty that I was her mother, and that our Lord would have the goodness to succour her in all her needs through me. Many whom I knew only by letters, have seen me in dreams answer all their difficulties, and those who are more spiritual took part in the conversation, or intimate union of unity; but these last are few in number, who at a distance have no need for letters nor for discourses to understand; the others are interiorly nourished from the grace which our Lord abundantly communicates to them through me, feeling themselves filled from that outflow of grace.

For when our Lord honours a soul with spiritual fecundity, and associates her in his maternity, he gives her

what is necessary to nourish and sustain her children according to their degree. It is in this way that, willing to bring forth all the predestinated, he gives them his flesh to eat. It is for this reason those who eat his flesh and drink his blood dwell in him and he in them, and they are thereby made his children; but those who do not eat the flesh cannot be his children, because they are not associated in the divine filiation, the new bond of which is effected in his blood, at least, unless by their conversion at death the efficacy of that blood be applied to them. It is true that to the holy Anchorites the Word communicated himself from the centre, and gave them through the central depth the food of angels, which is no other than himself as Word, although they may have been unable to eat his flesh with the bodily mouth.

I say, then, that when Jesus Christ associates any one in spiritual maternity he provides a means of communicating himself; and it is this communication of pure spirit which forms the nourishment and essential support of souls, but a sustenance which they taste, and which they find by experience to be all they need. I know that I shall not be understood, for only experience can make this intelligible. I was sometimes so full of these pure and divine communications, which flow out from "that fountain of living water which shall spring up to eternal life," mentioned by St. John the Evangelist, that I used to say, "O Lord, give me hearts on whom I may discharge from my abundance, otherwise I must die," for these outflowings from the Divinity into the centre of my soul were sometimes so powerful that they reacted even on the body, so that I was ill from it. When some of those whom our Lord had given me as children approached, or he gave me new ones in whom grace was already strong, I felt myself gradually relieved, and they experienced in themselves an inconceivable plenitude of grace and a greater gift of prayer, which was communicated to them according to

their degrees ; and it surprised them much at the commencement, but afterwards by their experience they understood this mystery, and they felt a great need of me ; and when necessity separated me from them, or—as I have said—I was unacquainted with them, from not having seen them, things were communicated to them from a distance.

CHAPTER XIX.

THERE were some worthy girls here who were specially given to me, in particular one, and over her I had great power, both over her soul and her body, to establish her health. At the commencement, when this girl came to me, she felt a great attraction to come, and our Lord gave her through me all she had need of ; but as soon as she was at a distance, the Devil excited in her mind a frightful aversion to me, so that when it was necessary for her to come and see me, it was with repugnance and terrible efforts that she did it, and sometimes when half way she turned back through faithlessness, not having the courage to continue ; but as soon as she was faithful to persist she was delivered from her trouble. When she came near me it all vanished, and with me she experienced that abundance of grace which has been brought to us by Jesus Christ. It was a soul greatly influenced by God from her childhood, to whom our Lord had given much grace, and whom he had led with great gentleness. One day she was with me I had a movement to tell her she was about to enter on a serious trial. She entered on it the next day in a very violent manner. The Devil put into her mind a terrible aversion to me. She loved me by grace, and hated me through the impression, which in a strange manner the Devil made on her ; but as soon as she came near me he fled, and left her in quiet. He put into her

mind that I was a sorceress, and that it was by this means I drove off the devils, and that I told her what was about to happen, in consequence of which things happened as I had told them to her. She had a continual vomiting, and when I told her not to vomit, and to retain the food, she retained it. One day before entering on the trial which I shall tell, she came to see me in the morning (because it was my *fête*), intending to come to Mass with me, and to communicate. She could hardly speak to me, such was her then aversion for me, and the Devil did not wish her to tell it, lest I should drive him off. He closed her mouth, and put into her mind that all I said or did was by sorcery. As she did not say a word, I knew her trouble, and I told it to her. She acknowledged it. When I was in the church I said to her: If it is through the Devil I act upon you, I give him the power to torment you; but if it is another spirit who possesses me, I will that during the Mass you participate in that spirit. The little time we were there before they commenced the Mass, the Devil made use of his interval, and more forcibly impressed on her that I was a sorceress, and it was this which made me act, and that she saw how she was worse since I had said that to her. While she was in the crisis of her pain, and an aversion to me that amounted to rage, the Mass commenced. As soon as the priest made the sign of the cross, she entered into a heavenly peace, and so great a union with God, that she knew not whether she was on earth, or in heaven. We communicated in the same manner, and she was saying to herself during this time, "Oh, how certain I am it is God who moves and leads her!" After the Mass was over, she said to me, "O my mother, how have I felt what God is in you! I have been in Paradise." These are her words. But as I had only said "until after Mass," the Devil came to attack her with more rage than before.

The greatest mischief he did was hindering her from

telling me her state, for although our Lord made me well enough acquainted with it, he yet wished her to tell it to me. She was very ill; she thought she had an abscess, and the faints she fell into, joined to a pain of the head, made the doctor think so. She believed that when I touched the place on her side the abscess broke; but our Lord gave me no knowledge that it was so. I said nothing to her about it, and I have not attached faith to it, although she tried to persuade me; but what is certain is that our Lord made use of me many times to cure her. The Devil attacked her violently, and not being content alone, he took as allies a fine gang, and caused her much trouble. I drove him away when I had the movement for it, or I handed her over as I had done before, according as our Lord inspired me; but always as soon as she approached me and kept herself in silence to receive grace, he left her in repose. In my absence he thought he would be revenged to his full; as many as sixteen of them came to torment her. She wrote it to me. I told her when they came to torment her more violently, to threaten them that she would write to me. They left her for moments.

Then I forbade them for a time to approach her, and when they presented themselves at a distance she said to them, "My mother has told me that you should leave me in quiet until she permits it." They did not approach her. At last I forbade them once for all, and they left her in quiet. She was faithless to God, and practised on me evasions and deceptions, which only came from self-love. I at once felt it, and that my central depth rejected her, not that she ceased for that to be among the number of my children; but it is that our Lord could not endure her deception or her duplicity. The more she concealed things, the more our Lord made me know them, and the more he rejected her from my central depth.

I saw, or rather, I experienced therein, how God rejects the sinner from his bosom, and especially those who act with

concealment and deceit; that it is not God who rejects them, by a volition of rejecting them, or by hatred, but by necessity, owing to their sin; that in God the unchangeableness of love is entire for the sinner, so that as all the cause of that rejection is in the sinner, God cannot receive him into himself or into his grace until the cause of this rejection cease. Now, this cause does not subsist in the effect of the sin, but in the will and inclination of the sinner; so that as soon as this will and inclination ceases on the side of the sinner, however foul and horrible he may be, God purifies him by his charity and his love, and receives him into his grace; but as long as there remains in the man the will of sin, although from powerlessness or lack of opportunity he does not commit the sin he wills, it is certain he would be rejected from God, owing to this perverse will. It must be understood that the rejection does not come from a will in God to reject this sinner, "for his will is that all should be saved," and that they should be received into him, who is their Origin and their End; but the indisposition which the sinner contracts, which is entirely opposed to God, and which he cannot, God though he be, receive into himself without destroying himself, causes a necessary rejection on the part of God of that sinner, who returns into his proper place (which is no other than God) as soon as the cause of this rejection ceases. It is for this reason the Scripture says, "Turn unto me, I will return unto you;" cease to will that sin which obliges me, in spite of my love, to reject you, and I will return to you, to take you, and draw you to me, far from rejecting you.

When this sinner is rejected by God, as I have said, because the matter of his rejection subsists, he can never be admitted into grace until the cause ceases, which is in the will to sin. However disorderly and however abominable the sinner may have been, he ceases to be a sinner as soon as he ceases to will to be so: for all rebellion is in

the will. This rebellious will causes all the incongruity, and hinders God from acting on this sinner; but as soon as the sinner ceases to be rebellious, in ceasing to will sin, God by an infinite goodness incessantly works to purify him from the filth and the consequences of the sin, in order to make him fit to be received into himself. If all the life of this sinner pass in falling and getting up again, all the operation of God on this same sinner during all his life will be to purify him from the fresh stains which he contracts, and nothing will be done for his perfection. But if this sinner dies during the time that his will is rebellious, and turned towards sin, as death fixes for ever the disposition of the soul, and the cause of his impurity is still subsisting, this soul can never be purified by the charity of God, and can consequently never be received into him; so that his rejection is eternal. And this rejection is the pain of damnation, for this soul necessarily tends to her Centre, owing to her nature, and is continually rejected from it, owing to her impurity subsisting in the cause, and not merely in the effect. For if it subsisted only in the effect, as I shall immediately tell, it would be purified; but her sin being still subsisting in the cause, which is the rebellious will, it is utterly impossible for God to purify the sinner after his death; because he can only purify the effect and not the cause, as long as it subsists. Now, as it is rendered subsisting and immortal by the death of the sinner, it is of necessity that the sinner should be eternally rejected, owing to the absolute opposition there is between essential purity and essential impurity. No; God, all God though he be, cannot admit a sinner into his grace as long as his sin subsists in the cause, which is rebellion to God, because he cannot ever be purified as long as the cause subsists. It is the same in this life. But as soon as the cause is removed, and no longer subsists, the sin is no longer subsisting, but in its effect, and thus this sinner can be purified, and God

works at this from the moment the cause no longer subsists, for that cause absolutely hinders God from working, the sinner being then in actual revolt.

But if this sinner dies penitent—that is to say, that the cause, which is the will to sin, is removed, and only the effect remains, which is the impurity caused by sin—however horrible and filthy the sinner may be, he ceases to be a sinner, although he does not cease to be filthy. He is then in a state to be purified. God, by an infinite charity, has provided a bath of love and justice, but a painful bath, to purify this soul, and that bath is Purgatory, which is not in itself painful, yet is so in the cause of the pain, which is impurity. Were this cause removed, which is nothing else than sin in its effect, the soul, being quite purified, would suffer nothing in that place of love. Now, God rejects from his grace the cause of the sin, that is the rebellious will, and he rejects from himself the damned owing to his impurity, which causes that not only can he not be received into God, but he cannot be received into his grace, owing to the rebellion of the will, entirely opposed to grace. It is not the same with the soul in Purgatory, who, having no longer the cause of sin, that is, the rebellion, is admitted into the grace of God, but she cannot for that be received into God until all impurity, the effect of sin, is removed; so that the pain of damnation and of the senses both proceed from her impurity and incongruity; as soon, however, as all impurity is removed, according as it pleases God to give a degree of glory to this soul, then she ceases to be rejected from God, and to suffer. There are, however, souls who die so pure that they do not suffer the pain of the senses, only some retardation. I have explained it elsewhere, therefore will not say anything of it here.

Now, I say that in this life it is quite the same; souls are received into grace as soon as the cause of sin ceases, but they are not received into God until all effect of sin is

purified. If one continually defiles himself, or also, if being defiled, one has not the courage to allow himself to be purified by God as much as he wishes, one never enters into God in this life. Those souls who have not the courage to allow God to act are not thoroughly purified in this life, because these purifications are effected only by pain and overthrow, and this it is which makes many holy and wonderful souls still need Purgatory; for it must be known there are in us two things which need purifying: the effect of sin, and the cause of sin. I have said that those who die have subsisting in them only that which is there at their death. If they die in grace, their will not being rebellious, they no longer have the cause of sin, and cannot have it, since their will remains fixed in good. It is not the same on earth with a man who is not confirmed in charity; for, not being in the unmovable, he can always change, and his will may rebel until it dies and passes into that which renders it immovable. It is, therefore, necessary on the earth for God to purify not only the impurity and the remains of sin, but also the cause in its source, which is that root of sin, that leaven, that ferment, which may always give birth to it, and render our will rebellious, and consequently make us fall from grace, that is, the SELFHOOD. And herein is that radical purification of our nature, ever disposed to revolt, which God desires to purify in this life, and which he effectively purifies in the souls, that he wills not only to receive into his grace, but into himself. He purifies them not merely from the effect of sin, but from the radical cause, from that leaven, from that ferment, which always may make the will revolt; and this is effected only by the death of the soul through her annihilation, which is attended by extreme pains, and by the loss of all. It is for this reason that an extraordinary courage is needed to pass into God in this life, and to be annihilated to the necessary point, losing all that is "*own*." Therefore the

souls truly “transformed into him,” as St. Paul says, who are transformed, not merely in grace, but into himself, are more rare than I can tell.

To return to my subject. I say, this girl was rejected from my central depth; the cause was subsisting in her, not in my will. I experienced that she was still held to me by a certain bond, as the sinner to his God, which renders it possible for him always to be received into him in this life, as soon as the cause of the rejection ends. God incessantly solicits that will to cease to be rebellious, and he spares nothing on his side, but it is free; yet grace never fails, for as soon as the will ceases to rebel, it finds grace at its door, quite ready to give itself. Oh, if people conceived the goodness of God, and the wickedness of the sinner, they would be surprised, and it should make us die of love. I felt then how this girl, and many other souls, were bound to me by a link of filiation, but I could no longer communicate myself to this girl as I did before, owing to the want of simplicity, which was not in fleeting matters, but in her will to dissemble, and that it was impossible for that flow of grace to take place until this subsisting voluntary dissimulation was destroyed. I said to her what I could, but she dissimulated afresh to conceal her dissimulation, so that this caused God to reject her still more in me, and she became more opposed to me; not that I ceased to love her, for I knew well that I loved her, but it was she who caused her rejection, which could be ended only by her. O God, how admirable are you, to be willing to give petty creatures the knowledge by experience of your most profound secrets! What I experienced with this girl I have experienced with many souls: I have given this as an example. Father La Combe was not yet in a state to discern these things, and I could not explain them to him, except by saying that this person was artful and dissembling; but he took it in the sense of virtues, with which I had no longer anything

to do, and he told me I formed rash judgments. I did not even understand what was a rash judgment—all that was far removed from my mind; and I remember that once, when I was in Piedmont, he wanted to make me confess it. I did so because he told me, and thereby suffered inconceivable torments; for our Lord was angry because they regarded that in me as a defect, in place of regarding it in him, the Supreme Truth, who judges things not as man judges, but who sees them as they are. Father La Combe made me suffer much in regard to this person; he was, however, himself enlightened, our Lord making him see falsities and manifest duplicity. Before my arrival at Grenoble, the lady, my friend, saw in a dream that our Lord gave me an infinity of children: they were all children and small, clothed in the same way, bearing on their dresses the marks of their candour and innocence. She thought I was coming there to take charge of the children of the Hospital, for the meaning was not given to her; but as soon as she related it to me, I understood it was not this; that our Lord by spiritual fecundity meant to give me a great number of children, that they would be my true children only by simplicity and candour, and that he would draw them through me into innocence. Therefore there is nothing I have so much opposition to as trickery and duplicity. I have wandered far from what I commenced; but I am not my own mistress.

CHAPTER XX.

THIS worthy friar of whom I have spoken, and who had already previously received from God sufficient grace to dispose him to spiritual views, though for want of help and, perhaps, of faithfulness, he had not advanced—this good friar, I say, felt himself led to open his heart to me like a child. Our Lord gave me all that was necessary for him, so that, not being able to doubt the impression of his grace, he said to me, without knowing what he was saying, “You are my true mother.” From that time our Lord had the goodness to show him much mercy through this petty nothing, and I felt indeed that he was my son, and one of the most united and faithful. Whenever he came to see me, our Lord showed him fresh mercies, and he used to go away full, strengthened, encouraged to die really to himself, and certified of the power of God in me, which he experienced with his dependence. Our Lord gradually taught him to speak in silence, and to receive grace without the intervention of words; but this took effect in him only in proportion as he died to himself. Our Lord had promised that where several should be assembled in his name, he would be in the midst of them. It is in this way the promise takes effect very really. As he was already far advanced in prayer, and was only arrested and retarded, he was soon re-established.

In proportion as his soul advanced so as to be able to

remain in silence before God, and the Word operated in him in this silence—which is fruitful and full, not a mere indolence, as those who have not experienced it imagine—he increased in grace and prayer. O immediate speech, ineffable speech, who say everything without articulating anything, who are the expression of what you say! He who has not experienced you knows nothing, however wise he may think himself. It is in you is the source of all knowledge, and when you are in plenitude in a soul, what is she ignorant of? In proportion, then, as the Word communicated himself to him in silence ineffable, it was given him in silence to communicate with me, and to receive through me in silence the operations of the Divine Word—operations which he could not be ignorant of, for the plenitude became in him more abundant; like a sluice opened up which profusely discharges itself, and that with such force and such grace in well-disposed souls, that a river does not run with greater impetuosity. But, alas, how few souls there are pure enough for it to pass thus in them! This plenitude which he continually received, emptied him more of himself, and put him into a state of greater silence before God and profounder death and separation from all things. The more he died to everything, the more he was inclined towards God and towards me. O my God, I understood so well that it is in this manner you communicate yourself profusely to those souls, who are entirely yours; it is in these souls that your grace flows as a river, and it is in them that you become a “spring of water springing up unto life eternal,” and that with such abundance that there is enough to fill an infinity of hearts, each according to his degree, without ceasing to be full. It was that plenitude, great and unrivalled, with which the angel saluted the Holy Virgin. She was in such perfect plenitude that she flowed out and will flow out eternally into all the saints as their Hierarchic Queen, and it is in this sense that all the graces which

God gives men pass all through Mary. What abundance do not you experience, you who communicate to all, and who are the first receptacle, who, overflowing from your plenitude, furnish to other souls all that is needed for them !

O wonderful Hierarchy, which commences in this life to continue through all eternity ! Yes, there is a Hierarchy among the Saints as among the angels, and those who shall have served as a channel in their plenitude to water other souls will so serve through all eternity in Hierarchic manner.

And it is in this sense that the divine Eve is mother of all living, since there will be an outflow from her plenitude into the souls of all those who will live by grace, greater or less, according as the hearts are more disposed, more extended and dilated to receive from that plenitude and superabundance. It needs a great largeness and extent of soul to receive much and enough to give to others. Those who are dead through sin receive nothing from this plenitude of life, and that is the reason they are dead ; because all the passages by which life might flow into them are stopped ; but for souls living in charity, they all receive of that plenitude, more or less according as they are more or less disposed by purity and largeness of soul. The good friar then received in this way, as well as many others of my spiritual children ; for what I say of him, I say of many others, but I give him as an example. He was also given the means of aiding other souls, not in silence, but by words ; for as to the communication in silence, those who are in a state to receive are not thereby in a state to communicate : there is a long road to travel before. Father La Combe communicated and received, as I have said ; but as for the others, they received without communicating. This same worthy friar had occasion to bring to me some of his companions, and God took them all for himself. Not that they were my children, as he was ; they were only

conquests. And it was at the very time God was giving me these worthy monks, that the other monks of the same order were committing the ravages of which I have spoken, and endeavouring to destroy spiritual religion. I marvelled how our Lord compensated himself on these worthy monks—in pouring out his Spirit upon them with fulness—for what the others tried to make him lose, but without much effect ; for those other good souls which were persecuted were strengthened by the persecution, instead of being shaken. The Superior and the master of the novices of the House where this worthy friar was declared against me without knowing me, and were vexed that a woman, they said, should be so sought after. As they regarded things in themselves and not in God, who does what he pleases, they had only scorn for the gift which was contained in so miserable a vessel, in place of esteeming only God and his grace, without regard to the baseness of the subject in which he pours it out. This worthy friar contrived that his Superior came to thank me for the charities, he said, that I gave them. Our Lord permitted that he found in my conversation something which pleased him. At last he was completely gained over, and it was he who, being made Visitor some time afterwards, distributed so great a quantity of those books, which they, out of extreme charity, purchased at their expense, and which the others had tried to destroy by causing them even to be burnt. How admirable are you, O my God, in your conduct, all wise and all loving, and how well you know how to triumph over the false wisdom of men and over all their precautions !

In the Noviciate there were several novices. He who was the senior of them was so disgusted with his vocation that he did not know what to do. The temptation was such that he could neither read, nor study, nor pray, nor perform almost any of his duties. The begging friar, one day that he acted as his companion, had a movement to

bring him to me. We talked a little together, and our Lord made me discover the cause of his trouble and the remedy. I told it to him, and he set himself to pray, but a prayer of affection. He suddenly changed, and our Lord gave him great grace. In proportion as I spoke to him, an effect of grace was produced in his heart, and his soul opened herself like a parched land to the dew. He felt he was changed and freed from his trouble before leaving the room. He performed at once with joy, and even to perfection, all his exercises, which previously he performed with disgust, or did not perform at all. He studied and prayed with ease, and discharged all his duties, so that he no longer knew himself, nor did the others. But what astonished him more was a germ of life which had remained with him, and a gift of prayer. He saw that there was given to him without trouble what previously he could not have, whatever trouble he took; and that vivifying germ was the principle which made him act, and gave him grace for his occupations and a root of God's presence, which brought with it all good. He gradually brought to me all the novices, who all felt the effects of grace, but differently and according to their degree; so that never did Noviciate appear more flourishing.

The Father, who was master, and the Superior, could not help wondering at so great a change in their novices, although they did not penetrate the cause; and one day as they spoke of it to the begging friar, and said to him—for they had him in great esteem, being men of merit and virtue—that they were surprised by the change in the novices, and the blessing that the Lord had given to their Noviciate, he said to them, “My Fathers, if you permit me, I will tell you the cause. It is that lady, against whom you cried out so strongly without knowing her, of whom God has made use for this.” They were very much surprised, and that Father, although very aged, had the humility, as well as his Guardian, to use prayer

in the way taught in a little book which our Lord had made me compose, and of which I shall speak immediately. They so much profited by it that the Guardian said, “I am a new man. I could not pray because my reasoning was dulled and exhausted, and now I do it without trouble as much as I wish, with much fruit and a quite different presence of God.” The other Father said to him, “For forty years I am a monk, and I can say that I have never known how to pray, nor known and tasted God until this time.” As my true children I had only the first of the novices of whom I have spoken, the begging friar, and another Father, nephew of the begging friar. There were many others won for God in a special manner. I saw clearly that they were gained, but I did not feel in their case that maternity and that inward flowing out of which I have spoken, although they were, however, our Lord's through my means. I do not know if I can make myself understood.

Our Lord gave me a very great number of children, and three famous monks, from an order by which I have been, and am still, much persecuted. These are very closely bound to me, especially one. He made me help a great number of nuns and virtuous girls, and even men of the world, among others a young man of rank, who has given himself to God, and is his in a very special manner. He is a man very spiritually minded, and who, while married, is very holy. Our Lord sent me also an Abbé of rank, who had left the Order of Malta, to take up that of the priesthood. He was relative of a Bishop of that neighbourhood, who had plans for him. Our Lord gave him great grace, and he is very faithful to prayer. I could not write the great number of souls then given to me—maids and wives, monks and priests; but there were three curés, and one canon, who were more especially given to me, and a grand vicar. There was also a priest who was given to me very intimately, for whom I suffered

much ; but as he was not willing to die to himself, and too much loved himself, he was entirely torn away from me, and I suffered terribly. I suffered before he was torn from me, and I knew by my suffering that he was about to be torn from me, and to fall. As for the others, some remained unshaken, and others were a little shaken by the tempest, but they are not torn away : although these stray, they still return ; but those who are torn away never return.

Among the great number of persons whom our Lord caused me to aid, and who all entered on the way of spirituality, and gave themselves particularly to God, there were some who were given to me as true daughters, and all recognized me as their mother, and of these last some were in a state to remain in silence : but that was rare. There was one whom our Lord made use of to gain many others to him. She was in a strange state of death when I saw her. Our Lord gave her peace and life. She afterwards fell sick to death, and although the doctors said she would die, I had a certainty to the contrary, and that God would make use of her, as he did, to gain souls. There was in a convent a girl whom people without light had caused to be confined because she was in trouble. I saw her ; I understood her distress, and that she was not what she was thought to be. As soon as I had spoken to her she was restored ; but the Prioress was displeased at my telling her my thoughts, because the person who for want of light had reduced her to that state was her own friend. So that they tormented her more than before, and threw her back into her trouble.

A Sister of another convent was for eight years in an inconceivable trouble without finding any one to relieve her ; for her director increased it by giving her remedies quite unsuited to her disease. I had never been in that convent, as I used not to go to convents unless I was sent for. Our Lord gave me no inclination nor movement

to thrust myself in of myself ; but I used to allow myself to be led by providence, and to go where I was sent for. I was very much surprised, when, at eight in the evening, I was sent for by the Prioress. It was in summer, and the days long. As I was very near I went at once. I found a Sister who told me her trouble, and that she had been driven to such a point that she had taken a knife to kill herself, seeing no other remedy ; but that the knife had fallen from her hand, and a person who had been to see her, without her disclosing the nature of the trouble, had advised her speak to me. Our Lord made me recognize at once what the matter was, and that he wished her to abandon herself to him, instead of resisting him, as they had made her do for eight years. I made her give herself up to our Lord, and she entered at once into a heavenly peace ; all her pains were taken away in a moment, and since that time have never returned. She is the most capable girl in that House. She was at once so changed that she was the admiration of the community. Our Lord gave her a very great gift of prayer, his constant presence and ability for everything. She was given to me as a daughter ; and a Sister, who was servant, a very holy woman, troubled for twenty-two years, was also delivered from her pain. This caused a friendship to be formed between the Prioress and me (and in her manner she was a very holy person), because the change and the peace of that Sister surprised her, having seen her in such terrible pains. I formed yet other connections in that convent, where there are souls to whom our Lord has shown great mercies through the means he had chosen.

CHAPTER XXI.

You were not content, my God, with making me speak, you further gave me an impulse to read the Holy Scripture. There was a time that I did not read, for I found in myself no want to fill up; on the contrary, rather too great a plenitude. As soon as I commenced reading the Holy Scripture, it was given me to write out the passage I read, and immediately the explanation of it was given to me. In writing out the passage I had not the least thought on the explanation, and as soon as it was written out it was given to me to explain it, writing with inconceivable quickness. Before writing I did not know what I was going to write; while writing I saw that I was writing things I had never known, and during the time of the manifestation light was given me that I had in me treasures of knowledge and understanding that I did not know myself to possess. As soon as I had written I remembered nothing whatever of what I had written, and there remained to me neither species nor images. I could not have made use of what I had written to aid souls; but our Lord gave me while I spoke to them (without my paying any attention to it) all that was necessary for them. In this way our Lord made me explain all the Holy Scripture. I had no book except the Bible, and that alone I used without searching for anything. When, in writing on the Old Testament, I took passages from the New to support what I was saying, it was not that

I sought them out, but they were given to me at the same time as the explanation; and exactly the same with the New Testament. I there made use of passages from the Old, and they were given to me without my searching for anything. I had no time to write except at night, for I had to speak all day, without reflection any more for speaking than for writing, and as little careful of my health, or of my life, as of myself. I used to sleep only one or two hours every night, and with that almost every day I had fever, ordinarily a quartan, and yet I continued to write without inconvenience, without troubling myself whether I should die or live. He whose I was without any reserve did with me as he pleased, without my meddling in his work. You yourself, O my God, used to wake me up, and I owed such an entire dependence and obedience to your will that you were not willing to suffer the least natural movement. When the least thing mingled therewith you punished it, and it ceased at once.

You made me write with such a purity that I had to stop and begin again as you wished. You tried me in every way; suddenly you made me write, then stop immediately, and again begin. When I wrote by day I was suddenly interrupted, and often left words half written, and you gave me afterwards what you pleased. What I wrote was not in my head; my head was so free that it was a perfect vacuum. I was so detached from what I wrote that it seemed strange to me. A reflection occurred to me: I was punished for it; my writing at once dried up, and I remained like a fool until I was enlightened thereon. The least joy in the graces you gave me was very rigorously punished. All the faults which are in my writings come from this, that, not being accustomed to the operation of God, I was often unfaithful: thinking I was doing well in continuing to write when I had the time without having the movement for it, because I had been ordered to finish the work; so that it is easy to see passages which are

beautiful and sustained, and others which have neither taste nor unction. I have left them as they are in order that people may see the difference between the Spirit of God and the natural human spirit; being, however, ready to correct them according to the present light which is given me, in case I am ordered to do so.

Previous to this time what test did you not make of my abandonment? Did you not give me a hundred different aspects to see if I was yours without reserve, under every test, and if I had yet some little interest for myself? You still found this soul supple and pliable to all your wishes. What have you not made me suffer? Into what humiliation did you not cast me to counterbalance your graces? To what, my God, did you not deliver me, and by what painful straits did you not make me pass? That which before I could not touch with the tip of my finger became my ordinary food. But I was not troubled at all that you did to me. I saw with pleasure and complaisance—taking no more interest in myself than in a dead dog—I saw, I say, with complaisance your divine play. You lifted me up to heaven, then immediately you cast me down into the mud, then with the same hand you replaced me in the place from which you had cast me down. I saw that I was the sport of your love and of your will, the victim of your divine justice, and all was alike to me. It seems to me, O my God, that you treat your dearest friends as the sea does its waves. It drives them at times with impetuosity against the rocks, where they are broken; at other times against the sand or the mud, and then immediately it receives back into its bosom and buries there that wave with so much the more force as it had with greater impetuosity cast it forth. This is the play which you make of your friends who, nevertheless, are one in you, changed and transformed into yourself, although you make a continual play of casting them off and receiving them back into your bosom; like as the waves are a part

of the sea, and after a wave has been thrown forward with greater impetuosity, the gulf which swallows it up is deeper in proportion. O my God, what things I should have to tell! but I am not able to say anything of the operations of your just and beneficent love, because they are too subtle.

This love delights in making those whom it has made one in you the continual victims of its justice. It seems that these souls are made holocausts to be burnt up by love on the altar of the divine Justice. Oh, how few the souls of this kind! They are almost all the souls of Mercy, and it is much; but to belong to the divine Justice, Oh, how rare that is! but how great it is! These are the souls of God alone, who have no longer any interest in themselves, or for themselves; all is for God, without reference or relation to themselves as to salvation, perfection, eternity, life, or death. All that is not for them: their business is to let the divine Justice satiate itself in them, as says Deborah, with blood of the dead; that is to say, with this soul already dead through love; and take on her vengeance for the sins of the others. This is too little; it satiates itself with a glory which is peculiar to that attribute—glory which does not permit the smallest reference to the creature, and which desires everything for itself. Mercy is altogether distributive in favour of the creature; but Justice devours and carries off everything, and cannot desire anything save for itself, without having any regard for the victim which it sacrifices; it is for this reason that it does not spare. Yet it desires voluntary victims, who have no other object than itself in what they suffer, no more than it has any other object than itself in what it makes them suffer. It is not that the soul thus devoured pays attention to this loving cruelty, which treats her pitilessly; no, she has neither thought nor reflection. She thinks on it only when it is given her to write or to speak on the subject. This Justice, thus devouring, nourishes itself only from sufferings, opprobrium and ignominy, and with the same

hand with which it has struck the Author of justice, it strikes with so much the more force those who are predestinated, the more conformed they are to be to him.

But it will be said, How, then, is such a soul sustained in the cruelty of the divine Justice? She is sustained without sustenance by the same cruelty; the more she is deserted, as it seems, by God, the more is she sustained in God above all sustenance: for it must not be thought that such a soul has anything for herself which can satisfy her, either within or without—absolutely nothing. All is rigour without any rigour; all that is given her is only given for the neighbour, and to make him know and love and possess his God.

My friend commenced to conceive some jealousy at the applause which was given me, God so permitting in order to further purify that holy soul through this weakness and the pain which it caused her. Her friendship changed into coolness and something more. It was you, O my God, who permitted it, as I have said. Certain confessors also commenced to stir themselves, saying that it was not for me to meddle with helping souls, that there were some of their penitents who had for me an entire openness. It was here one might easily remark the difference between those confessors who sought only God in the conduct of souls, and those who sought themselves; for the former used to come to see me, and were delighted with the graces which God bestowed on their penitents, without paying attention to the channel of which he made use. The others, on the contrary, secretly moved to stir up the town against me. I saw that they would have been right in opposing me if I had intruded of myself; but besides that I could only do what our Lord made me do, it was a fact that I did not seek any one. Each one came to me from every direction, and I received all indifferently. Sometimes they came to oppose me. There were two monks of the same order as the begging friar of whom I have spoken; the one was

Provincial, very learned, and a great preacher, the other was Lent preacher at the cathedral. They came separately, after having studied a quantity of difficult subjects to propose to me. They did this, and although they were matters beyond my scope, our Lord made me answer with as much correctness as if I had studied them all my life; after which I said to them myself what our Lord gave me. They went away not only convinced and satisfied, but smitten with your love, O my God.

I still continued to write, and with incredible quickness, for the hand could hardly follow the spirit which dictated, and during this long work I did not change my conduct, nor make use of any book. The copyist could not, however diligent, copy in five days what I wrote in a single night. What is good in it comes from you alone, O my God; and what is bad comes from me. I mean to say, from my unfaithfulness and the mixture which, without knowing it, I have made of my impurity with your pure and chaste doctrine. At the commencement I committed many faults, not being yet broken in to the operation of the Spirit of God, who made me write. For he made me stop writing when I had time to write and I could conveniently do it, and when I seemed to have a very great need of sleeping, it was then he made me write. When I wrote by day there were continual interruptions, and I had not time to eat, owing to the number who used to come. I had to give up everything as soon as I was asked for, and in addition I had the maid who served me in the state of which I have spoken, and she without cause used to come and suddenly interrupt me, according as her whim took her. I often left the meaning half finished, without troubling myself whether what I was writing was connected or not. The places which may be defective are so only because sometimes I wished to write as I had the time, and then it was not grace at its fountain head. If these passages were numerous it would be pitiable. At last I

accustomed myself to follow God in his way, not in mine. I wrote the Song of Songs in a day and a half, and in addition received visits. The quickness with which I wrote was so great that my arm swelled up and became quite stiff. At night it caused me great pain, and I did not believe I could write for a long time. There appeared to me as I slept a soul from purgatory, who urged me to ask her deliverance from my divine Spouse. I did so, and it seemed to me that she was at once delivered. I said to her, If it is true that you are delivered, cure my arm; and it was instantly cured, and in a condition for writing. I will add to what I have said about my writings, that a very considerable part of the Book of Judges was lost. I was asked to make it complete. I rewrote the lost parts. A long time afterwards, having broken up house, it was found where one never would have looked for it. The earlier and the later were found to be exactly alike—a thing which astonished many persons of learning and merit, who verified the fact.

There came to see me a counsellor of the Parliament, who is a model of holiness. This worthy servant of God found on my table a "Method of Prayer," which I had written a long time before. He took it from me, and having found it much to his taste, he gave it to some of his friends, to whom he thought it would be useful. All wished to have copies of it. He resolved with that worthy friar to have it printed. The printing commenced and the approbation given, they asked me to put a preface to it. I did so, and it is in this way that the little book, which has been made the pretext for my imprisonment, was printed. This counsellor is one of my closest friends, and a great servant of God.

This poor little book, notwithstanding the persecution, has nevertheless been printed five or six times, and our Lord gives a very great blessing to it. These worthy monks took fifteen hundred copies. The begging friar

wrote perfectly, and our Lord inspired him to copy my writings, at least a part. He also gave the same idea to a monk of a different order, so that each of them took some to copy. Being one night engaged in writing something which he thought urgent (for he had misunderstood what had been said to him), as it was extremely cold, and his legs were naked, they so swelled that he could not move. He came to see me, quite sad, and as if disgusted with writing. He told me his ailment, and that he could not go on his begging rounds. I told him to be cured; he was so on the instant, and went away very well pleased and very desirous of transcribing that work, through which he declares our Lord has bestowed on him great graces. There was also a worthy girl, but very fickle; she had a great pain in the head. I touched it for her, and she was immediately cured.

The Devil became so enraged against me, owing to the conquests that you made, O my God, that he beat some of the people who came to see me. There was a worthy girl of great simplicity, who gained her livelihood by her work; she is a girl who has received very great grace from our Lord. The Devil broke two teeth in her mouth; her jaw swelled to a prodigious size, and he told her that if she came to see me any more he would give her worse treatment. She came to see me in this state, and said to me in her innocence, "The villain! he has done this to me because I come to you; he utters great abuse against you." I told her to forbid him from me, touching her. Seeing that he was caught, and dared not touch her, for he could not do what God through me forbade him to do, he uttered much abuse, and made horrible gestures before her, and assured her he would stir up against me the most strange persecution I ever had. I laughed at all this, for I have no apprehension of him. Although he stir up persecutions against me, I know that in spite of himself he will serve for the glory of my God.

CHAPTER XXII.

THIS poor girl came to see me one day quite distressed. She said to me, "O my mother, what strange things I have seen!" I asked her what it was. "Alas!" she cried, "I saw you like a lamb in the midst of a pack of furious wolves. I have seen a terrible gang of people of all kinds, of every age, sex, and condition—priests, monks, married people, maids, wives—with pikes, halberts, naked swords, who were trying to stab you. You let them do so without stirring, or showing astonishment, or defending yourself. I looked on all sides if any one would come to assist or defend you, but I have not seen any one." Some days after those who through envy were preparing a secret battery against me suddenly broke out like a thunderbolt. Libels commenced to circulate everywhere, and letters were shown me of the most dreadful character, which, without knowing me, envious persons had written. They said that I was a sorceress; that it was by magic I attracted souls; that whatever was in me was diabolic; that if I bestowed charities, it was with false money I did so; and a thousand other crimes they accused me of, which were as false and as ill founded the one as the other. As the tempest each day increased, and they in truth said "Crucify!" exactly as our Lord had at the first let me know, some of my friends advised me to withdraw for a time. The Almoner of the Bishop of Grenoble told me to go to St. Baume and to

Marseilles, to spend some time; that they wished for me there, where were some very spiritually minded persons; that he would accompany me, together with a worthy maid and another ecclesiastic, and meantime the tempest would pass off. But before speaking of my departure from Grenoble, I must say something more of the state which I bore in that country.

I was in such a great plenitude of God that I was often either lying down or entirely confined to bed, without being able to speak; and when I had no means of pouring out this plenitude, our Lord did not permit it to be so violent, for in that violence I could no longer live. My soul only wished to pour out into other hearts her superabundance. I had the same union and the same communication with Father La Combe (although so far away) as if he was near. Jesus Christ was communicated to me in all his states. It was then his Apostolic state, which was most marked. All the operations of God in me were shown me in Jesus Christ, and explained by the Holy Scripture; so that I bore in myself the experience of what was there written. When I could not write or communicate myself in another manner, I was then quite languishing, and I experienced what our Lord said to his disciples: "I desired with ardour to eat this Passover with you." That was the communication of himself through the Last Supper, and through his Passion, when he said, "All is consummated, and bowing the head, gave up the ghost" (because he communicated his spirit to all men capable of receiving him), "and returned it into the hands of his Father" and his God, as well as his kingdom; as if he had said to his Father, "My Father, my kingdom is to reign through you, and you through me, over men. This can only be by the pouring out of my Spirit upon them. Let, then, my Spirit be communicated to them through my death." And herein is the consummation of all things. Often a too great plenitude took from me the capacity to

write, and I could do nothing except lie down without speech. I used, notwithstanding, to have nothing for myself; everything was for the others, like those nurses who are full of milk, and who for this reason are not the more supported—not that anything was wanting to me, for since my new life I have not had one moment of emptiness.

Before writing on the Book of Kings of all that refers to David, I was put into such a close union with this holy patriarch that I communicated with him as if he had been present, not in images, species, or figures—my soul was far removed from these things—but in a divine manner, in an ineffable silence, and in perfect reality. I understood what this holy patriarch was; the greatness of his grace, the conduct of God with him, and all the circumstances of the states through which he had passed; that he was a living figure of Jesus Christ, and a shepherd chosen for Israel. It seemed to me that all our Lord made me, or would make me, do for souls, would be in union with this holy patriarch, and with those to whom I was at the same time united in a manner similar to what I had been with David, my dear King. O Love, did you not make me know that the wonderful and real union between this holy patriarch and me would never be understood by any one? for none was in a state to understand it. It was then you taught me, O my Love, that by this admirable union it was given me to carry Jesus Christ, Word-God, into souls. Jesus Christ is born of David according to the flesh. Oh, how many conquests did you cause me to make in this quite ineffable union! My words were efficacious, and produced effects in hearts. It was the formation of Jesus Christ in souls. I was in no way the mistress of speaking or saying things; he who led me made me speak them as he wished, and for as long as was pleasing to him. There were souls to whom he did not let me say a word, and others for whom there were deluges of grace. But that pure love did not suffer any superfluity nor

trifling. Sometimes there were souls who asked several times the same things, and when they were answered according to their need, and it was only a desire of speaking, without my paying any attention to it, I could not answer them. They then said to me, “You said this last; must we hold to this?” I used to say to them, “Yes,” and then I was enlightened that because the answer would have been useless, it was not given to me. It was exactly the same with those whom our Lord was leading through the death of themselves, and who came to seek for human consolation. I had for them merely the strictly necessary, after which I was unable to speak. I would rather have spoken of a hundred indifferent matters (because that is what comes of myself, which God allows, that I may be all things to all, and not vex my neighbour), but as for his Word, he himself is the dispenser of it. Oh, if preachers spoke in this spirit, what fruit would they not have! There were others, as I have said, to whom I could communicate myself only in silence, but a silence as ineffable as efficacious. These last are the most rare, and it is the special characteristic of my true children. It is (as perhaps I have already said) the communication of the Blessed Spirits.

It was then that I learned the true manner of treating with the Saints of heaven in God himself, and also with Saints on earth. O communication so pure, who will be able to comprehend thee, save he who experiences thee? If men were spirit, we would speak in spirit, but because of weakness we must have recourse to words. I had the consolation some time ago to hear this read from St. Augustine in a spiritual conversation he had with his mother. He complains that he must have recourse to words, owing to our feebleness. I used sometimes to say, “O Love, give me hearts large enough to contain such a great plenitude.” It seemed to me that a thousand hearts would be too small. I had intelligence of the communication between

Jesus Christ and St. John during the Last Supper. My intelligences were not lights, but intelligences of experience. How did I truly experience, O well-beloved disciple, the communication of my divine Master to your heart, and the manner in which you learned ineffable secrets, and how you continued a like commerce with the Holy Virgin ! Oh, how one may well call that communication a wonderful intercourse ! It was given me to understand that herein was the language of the cradle, and how the Holy Child communicated himself to the kings and shepherds, and gave them the knowledge of his Divinity.

It was also (as I have said somewhere) in this way that when the Holy Virgin came to Elizabeth, a wonderful intercourse took place between Jesus Christ and St. John—intercourse which communicated to him the spirit of the Word, and the holiness which was so efficacious that it always continued. It is for this reason St. John Baptist showed no eagerness to come and see Jesus Christ after this communication, for they used to communicate at a distance as well as if near ; and in order to receive these communications with more plenitude, he retired into the desert. So when he preached penitence, what did he say of himself ? He did not say he was the Word, for he knew quite well that was Jesus Christ, Eternal Word, but he only said he was a voice. The voice serves as passage to the word, and emits it ; so that after being filled with the communication of the divine Word, he was made the expression of that same Word, propelling by his voice that divine Word into souls. He knew it from the first : he had no need any one should tell him who he was ; and if he sent his disciples to him, it was not for himself, but for them, to make them disciples of Jesus Christ. He baptized only with water, to let it be seen what was his function, for as the water in flowing away leaves nothing, so the voice leaves nothing. It is only the Word who impresses himself. He was made, then, to carry the Word, but he was

not the Word ; and he who was the Word baptized with the Holy Spirit, because he had the gift to impress himself on souls, and to communicate himself to them by the Holy Spirit. I understood that Joseph and Mary mutually communicated through Jesus. Jesus was the principle and the end of their communications. O adorable intercourse ! It is not observable that Jesus Christ said anything during his obscure life, although it is true that none of his words will be lost. O Love, if all you have said and operated in silence were written, I do not believe that all the world could contain all the books which should be written. All that I experienced was shown me in the Holy Scripture, and I saw with wonder that nothing passed in the soul which is not in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Scripture. When I communicated with narrow hearts I experienced a very great torment. It was like an impetuous stream of water, which, not finding an issue, returns upon itself, and I was sometimes ready to die. O God, could I describe or make to be understood all I suffered in that place, and the mercies you showed me there ? I must pass over many things in silence, as well because they cannot be expressed as that they would not be understood. What caused me the most suffering was Father La Combe ; as he was not yet established firmly in his state, and that God exercised him in crosses and overthrows, his doubts and his hesitations gave me strange blows. However far distant from me he was, I felt his pains and his dispositions. He was bearing a state of interior death and alternations the most cruel and terrible that ever were. According to the knowledge which God has given me of it, he is therefore of all his servants now on earth the most agreeable to him. It was impressed upon me that he is a vessel of election, whom God had chosen to carry his Name among the Gentiles ; but that he would show him how much he must suffer for that very Name.

When in those trials he found himself, as it were,

rejected by God, he found himself at the same time separated from me. He doubted of my state, and had great griefs against me; and as soon as God received him into himself, he found himself more powerfully united to me than ever, and he found himself enlightened on my state in a wonderful manner, God giving him an esteem which went as far as veneration: so that he could not conceal his sentiments, and he often repeated to me, "I cannot be united to you out of God, for as soon as I am rejected by God, I am the same by you, and I feel myself divided from you, in continual doubt and hesitation as to what concerns you; and as soon as I am well with God, I am well with you. I know the grace he bestows on me in uniting me to you, and how dear you are to him, and the central depth he has put into you."

O God, who will ever comprehend the pure and holy unions which you form among your creatures! The carnal world only judges of them carnally, attributing to a natural attachment that which is the highest grace. You alone, O God, know what I have suffered on this head. All the other crosses, although very hard, appeared to me shadows beside that. Our Lord made me one time understand that when Father La Combe should be established in him in a permanent state, and he should have no more interior vicissitudes, he would have none also in regard to me, and that he would remain for ever united to me in God. That is so at present. I saw that he felt the union and the division only owing to his weakness, and that his state was not yet permanent. I felt it only because he divided himself, and that I had to bear all this; but ever since the union has been without contrariety, without hindrance and in its perfection, he has no longer felt it, no more than I; except by an awakening in interior conversation in the manner of the Blessed.

The union of the soul with God is felt only because it is not entirely perfect; but as soon as it is consummated in

unity, it is no more felt: it becomes, as it were, natural. One does not feel the union of the soul and the body. The body lives and operates in this union without one thinking, or paying attention to the union. It exists—we know it; and all the functions of life which the body performs do not allow us to be ignorant of it—yet one acts without attention to that. It is the same for the union with God and with certain creatures in him, for what shows the purity and eminence of this union is that it follows that with God; and it is so much the more perfect as that of the soul to God and in him is more perfected. Yet were it necessary to break this pure and holy union, one would feel it the more, in proportion as it is more pure, perfect, and insensible; as one very well feels when the soul is about to separate from the body by death, although one does not feel the union.

As I was in the state of childhood of which I have spoken, and Father La Combe got offended, and separated himself from me, I used to weep like a child, and my body became quite languishing; and what is surprising is that I found myself at the same time weaker than a little child and strong as God. I found myself quite divine, enlightened on everything, and firm for the severest crosses; and yet the weakness of the smallest child. O God, I can say that I am perhaps the creature in all the world from whom you have desired the greatest dependence. You placed me in all kinds of states and in different positions, and my soul neither wished to, nor had the power to resist. I was so utterly yours that there was nothing in the world that you could have exacted of me, to which I would not have submitted with pleasure. I had no interest for myself, and if I could have perceived that "myself," I would have torn it into a thousand pieces; but I no longer perceived it.

Ordinarily I do not know or recognize my state, but when God wishes anything from this miserable nothing,

I feel that he is absolute master, and that nothing, not to say, resists him, but even objects to his wishes, however rigorous they may seem. O Love, if there is a heart in the world over which you are fully victorious, I can say that it is this poor nothing. You know it, O Love, and that your most rigorous volitions are its life and its pleasure; for it subsists no more but in you. I have wandered; that is a common thing with me, as well owing to interruptions and that I have had two severe illnesses since I commenced to write, as that I give myself up to what carries me away.

CHAPTER XXIII.

To resume, the Almoner of the Bishop of Genoble persuaded me to go and pass some time at Marseilles, to let the tempest blow over, and said that I should there be very well received, that it was his country, and that many good persons were there. I wrote to Father La Combe, that I might have his approval. He permitted it. I might have gone to Vercel, for the Bishop of Vercel had sent me by express the strongest, most pressing, and most attractive letters possible, to induce me to go into his diocese; but deference to man's opinion and the fear of giving opportunity to my enemies (when I use the term enemy it is not that I consider any person such, nor that I can look upon those whom God makes use of otherwise than as the instruments of his justice, but it is to explain myself)—these two reasons, I say, made me extremely unwilling. Besides, the Marquise de Prunai, who since my departure had been more enlightened by her own experience, having found true some of the things which I had believed were about to happen to her, had conceived for me a very strong friendship, and a very intimate union, so that the most united sisters could not be more so than were we. She wished extremely I should return to her as I had before promised; but I could not resolve upon it, lest it should be thought I was going where Father La Combe was. But, O my God, how this remnant of

self-love was overthrown by the action of your adorable providence! I had still this interior support of being able to say that I had never been running after Father La Combe, and that this could not be said of me, nor could I be accused on this head of any attachment to him, since when it depended only upon me to live near him, I did not do so. The Bishop of Geneva had not failed to write against me to Grenoble, as he had done elsewhere. His nephew had been from house to house decrying me. All this was indifferent to me, and I nevertheless procured for his diocese all the good I could. I even wrote politely to him; but his heart was too wounded in the matter of worldly interest, he said, to give in. These were his own words.

Before setting out from Grenoble, that worthy child of whom I have spoken, whom the Devil had severely ill-treated, came to see me, and said to me, weeping, "The Devil has told me that you are going away." It should be observed that I had not told a single person. The Devil, then, told her that I was going away, and that I had concealed it from her, because I did not wish any one should know; but that he would soon catch me, and that he would be before me in all the places where I should go; that hardly should I arrive in any town, but he would stir up the whole town against me. And he made her understand that he was enraged against me, and would do me all the ill he could. What had obliged me to keep my departure secret was that I feared being overwhelmed with visits and testimony of friendship from numbers of good people, who had much affection for me.

I embarked, then, on the Rhone, with my maid and a worthy girl of Grenoble, to whom our Lord had through my means given much grace. She was to me a genuine source of crosses. The Almoner of the Bishop of Grenoble accompanied me, together with another ecclesiastic, a very excellent man. We had many adventures,

and were near perishing; for in a very dangerous place the cable broke, and the boat went right against a rock. The master pilot fell overboard at the shock, and would have been drowned but for the gentlemen who saved him. Another accident also happened to me. Having with the gentlemen gone down the Rhone in a small boat managed by a child, in expectation of finding a large boat, without success, we had to return to Valence, after having gone down more than a league. Every one got out of the boat because it was too heavy to reascend the river, and as I could not walk I remained in it at the mercy of the waves, which bore us where they pleased without resistance; for the child who managed the boat, and did not know his business, took to tears, saying we were about to be drowned. I encouraged him, so that, having contended for more than four hours with the waves, while those who were on the bank believed us at one time utterly lost, then again saved, at last we arrived.

These manifest dangers, which frightened the others, far from alarming me, increased my peace—a thing which astonished the Bishop's Almoner, who was in a horrible fright when the boat ran against the rock and split; for, attentively looking at me in his emotion, he noticed that I did not frown, and that my tranquillity was not in the least altered. It is true that I did not feel even the first movements of surprise, which are natural to every one on these occasions, and which do not depend on us. What caused my peace in these perils that suddenly surprise, was my inmost centre being in an abandonment always fixed and firm in God, and because death is to me far more agreeable than life; I should need much more abandonment to God for living than for dying, if I could have any wish. I am indifferent to everything, and that is why nothing alters my central depth.

On leaving Grenoble a man of rank, a great servant of God and an intimate friend of mine, had given me a letter

for a very devout Knight of Malta, whom I have always regarded since I knew him as a man our Lord destines to be very useful to the Order of Malta; to be its example and support through his holy life. I told him even that I believed he would go to Malta and that God would assuredly make use of him to inspire with piety many of the Knights. He has, in fact, gone to Malta, where at once the highest offices were given to him. That man of rank sent him the little book on prayer entitled, "A Short Method," printed at Grenoble. This knight had an almoner very much opposed to spirituality. He took the book and at once condemned it, and set about stirring up a party in the town, among others seventy-two persons who openly called themselves the seventy-two disciples of M. de St. Cyran. I had only arrived at ten o'clock in the morning, and a few hours after noon everything was in commotion against me. They went to see the Bishop of Marseilles, telling him that, owing to that little book, he must drive me away from Marseilles. They gave him the book, which he examined with his theologian, and which he found very good. He sent to fetch M. Malaval and a worthy Recolet Father who he knew had been to see me a little after my arrival, to ascertain from them whence arose this great tumult (which made me laugh a little, when I saw so soon accomplished what the Devil had told that worthy girl). M. Malaval and the monk told the Bishop what they thought of me, so that he expressed great displeasure at the insult which had been put on me. I was obliged to go and see him. He received me with extreme kindness, and asked my pardon. He prayed me to remain at Marseilles, that he would protect me; he even inquired where I lodged, that he might come and see me. The next day the Almoner of the Bishop of Grenoble, with that other priest who came with us, went to see him. The Bishop again expressed to them the vexation he felt at the insults which had been cast upon me without cause,

and he said that it was the usual practice of those persons to insult all who were not of their faction; that they had insulted himself. They were not content with that; they wrote me the most offensive letters possible, although these persons did not know me.

I understood that our Lord was commencing in earnest to deprive me of any dwelling-place, and these words came afresh to me: "The birds of heaven have nests, and the foxes have holes, and the Son of Man has not where to lay his head." I willingly entered upon that state.

Our Lord nevertheless made use of me during the short time I remained at Marseilles to aid in supporting some good souls, among others an ecclesiastic who did not know me. He used to say Mass in a church where I went to hear it. After he had said the Thanksgiving, seeing me go out, he followed me, and having come to the house where I lodged, he told me that our Lord had inspired him to address me, and had made him know that I was the person to whom he should open himself for his spiritual state. He did it with as much simplicity as humility. Our Lord gave me all that was necessary for him, from which he was filled with happiness and gratitude to our Lord; for although many spiritual persons, even near friends of his own, were there, he never had the movement to open himself to them. He was a great servant of God, and had been favoured with a wonderful gift of prayer from even eight years of age. He had employed all his life in missions, and had a very great gift of discernment of spirits. In the eight days that I was at Marseilles I saw there many good souls; for I used to have this consolation, that, in spite of the persecution, our Lord used always to perform some stroke of his hand; and this good ecclesiastic was delivered from a strange trouble in which he had been several years.

As soon as I had left Grenoble those who, without knowing me, hated me, set in circulation libels against

me. One person for whom I had had a very great charity, and whom I had even withdrawn from an engagement in which she was for many years, having contributed to remove to a distance the person to whom she was attached, became so furious thereat that she went herself to see the Bishop of Grenoble, to speak to him against me, going so far as to say that I had advised her to do an evil which I had broken off even at my expense ; for it cost me money to get away the person. They had lived together for eight years, and I knew her only for one month. She went from confessor to confessor saying the same thing, in order to excite them against me. The fire was kindled in all directions : only those who knew me and who loved God supported my side, and they found themselves more bound to me by the persecution. It would have been very easy for me to destroy the calumny, as well with the Bishop as the town. It was only needed to say who the person was and to exhibit the fruits of her disorder, for I knew everything ; but as I could not declare the guilty one without making known her accomplice, who was very repentant and touched by God, I thought it better to suffer everything and remain silent. There was a very holy man who thoroughly knew the whole story ; he wrote to her that if she did not retract her lies he would publish her evil life, so as to make known her wickedness and my innocence. That poor girl persevered still for some time in her malice, writing that I was a sorceress, and that she knew it by revelation and many other things. However, some time after she had, according to her account, such cruel remorse of conscience that she wrote to the Bishop and others to retract. She got a letter written to myself, that she was in despair at what she had done, that God had punished her in such a manner that never had she been treated in a similar way. After her retraction the rumour subsided, the Bishop was disabused, and from that time he has shown me great

kindness. This creature had said, among other things, that I caused myself to be worshipped, and such strange absurdities that the like were never seen. As she had been formerly mad, I believe there was more weakness than malice in what she did.

Being then at Marseilles, I knew not what to do, for I saw no possibility either of remaining there or returning to Grenoble, where I had left my daughter in a convent. On the other hand, Father La Combe had written me that he did not think I ought to return to Paris. I felt even great repugnance to it, without knowing the reason, which made me think that it was not yet the time. One morning I felt myself interiorly urged to depart. I took a litter to go and visit the Marquise de Prunai, who was, it seemed to me, the most respectable refuge for me in the state things were. I thought to be able to go by Nice, as I had been assured by people ; but I was very much astonished, when at Nice, to learn that the litter could not pass the mountain to go where I wanted. I knew not what to do, nor what side to turn to, being alone, abandoned by all the world, without knowing, O my God, what you wished of me. My confusion and my crosses increased each day. I saw myself without refuge or retreat, wandering and vagabond. All the workmen that I saw in their shops appeared to me happy in having a dwelling-place and a refuge, and I found nothing in the world so hard for a person like me, who naturally loved honour, as this wandering life. While I knew not what course to take, I was told that next day a small sloop was about to start, which would go to Genoa in a single day, and that if I wished they would land me at Savona, whence I could be carried to my friend the Marquise de Prunai. I consented to this, having no possibility of other conveyance. I had some joy in embarking on the sea, and I said to you, O my God, "If I am the excrement of the earth, the refuse and scorn of nature, I am about to embark on the element the

most faithless of all; you can sink me in its waters, and I shall be pleased to die in that way." A storm came on in a place dangerous enough for a small boat, and the sailors were very bad. The turbulence of the waves constituted my pleasure, and I was delighted to think that these mutinous waters would serve perhaps for my grave. O God, perhaps I committed some infidelity in the pleasure I took at seeing myself beaten and tossed by these raging waves. I thought I saw myself in the hands of your providence: it seemed to me I was its plaything; and I said to you, O my God, in my language, "Let there be, then, in the world victims of your providence, and let me be one. Do not spare me." Those who were with me saw my intrepidity, but they were ignorant of its cause. I asked of you, O my Love, a little hole in a rock, to place myself there and to live separated from all creatures. I pictured to myself that a desert island would have ended all my disgraces, and would have placed me in a state to perform infallibly your will; but, O my Love, you destined me to another prison than a rock, another exile than that of the desert isle. You reserved me to be beaten by waves more irritated than those of the sea. Calumny was the mutinous and pitiless sea to which you desired I should be exposed, to be thereby beaten without mercy: blessed for ever, O my God, be you for this!

We were stopped by the storm, and in place of a short days' journey, the proper time to reach Genoa, we were eleven days on the way. How peaceable was my heart during this great agitation! The tempest of the sea and the fury of the waves were only the symbol of that which all creatures had against me. I said to you, "O my Love, arm them all to avenge yourself on my infidelities and those of all creatures." I saw with pleasure your arm raised against me, and I loved more than a thousand lives the strokes it gave me. We could not disembark at Savona; it was necessary to go on to Genoa. We arrived

there in the Holy Week. I had to endure the insults of the inhabitants, owing to their irritation against the French for the injuries caused by the bombardment. The Doge had just left, and he had taken with him all the litters; for this reason I could not get one. I had to remain several days at an excessive expense, for these people demanded exorbitant sums, and as much for each person as would be charged in Paris at the best inn for the whole party. I was almost without money; but the fund of providence could not fail me. I begged most earnestly, at whatever cost, that I might be supplied with a litter, so as to be able to go and spend Easter with the Marquise de Prunai; yet there were only three days remaining to Easter, and I could not make myself understood. Owing to my entreaties, a bad litter was brought me, the mules belonging to which were lame, and I was told that for an exorbitant sum they would take me to Verceil, which was two days' distance, but not to the Marquise de Prunai; because they did not even know where her estate was. I was strangely mortified, for I did not wish to go to Verceil, and yet the nearness of Easter, and the want of money in a country where they practised a sort of tyranny, left me no choice, but under an absolute necessity of allowing myself to be taken to Verceil.

You led me, O my God, by your providence, where I did not wish to go. Although the sum I had to give for such a bad conveyance for two days' journey was ten louis d'or, each sixteen livres of that country, nevertheless I accepted the unreasonable bargain from extreme necessity, and that in a country where conveyances are very cheap. The voiturier was the most cruel man possible, and for crown to our trouble, I had sent on the ecclesiastic, who accompanied us, to Verceil, in order to break the surprise of their seeing me after I had protested that I would not go there. This ecclesiastic was very badly treated on the road, from hatred against the French, and part

of the journey he had to do on foot, so that, although he had set out in advance, he reached only a few hours before me. The man, then, who led us, seeing that he had only women to deal with, insulted us in every way possible.

We passed through a wood full of robbers. The muleteer was afraid, and told us that if any one met us on the road we were lost, and that they spared no one. Hardly had he told us this, when four well-armed men appeared. They at once stopped the litter. The muleteer was very much terrified. They came to us and looked at us. I made them a bow with a smile, for I had no fear, and I was so abandoned to providence, that it was equal to me to die in that way or another, in the sea, or by the hand of robbers. But, O my God, what was your protection over me, and what was my surrender into your hands! How many dangers have I run on the mountains, and on the edge of precipices! How many times have you stopped the foot of the mule, already sliding over the precipice! How many times have I expected to be precipitated from those frightful mountains into terrible torrents, which were hid from view by the depth, but which made themselves heard by their fearful noise! Where the dangers were more apparent, it was there my faith was stronger, as well as my intrepidity, which sprung from an inability to desire anything else but what would happen, whether it should be to be smashed on the rocks, to be drowned, or to be killed—all being alike in your will, O my God. The people who led me said they never saw a similar courage, for the most terrifying dangers, and where death seemed most certain, were those which pleased me more. Was it not you, O my God, who held me back in the danger, and prevented me from rolling into the precipice, to which we were already slipping down? The more reckless I was of a life, which I endured only because you yourself endured it, the more did you take care to preserve it. It was, O

my God, like a challenge between us two: I to abandon myself to you, and you to preserve me. The robbers then came to the litter, but I had no sooner saluted them than you made them change their purpose, one pushing the other to hinder him from hurting me. They saluted me very politely, and with an air of compassion, unusual in such persons, they withdrew. I was at once impressed, O my Love, that it was a stroke of your right hand, which had other designs for me than to make me die by the hands of robbers. You are, O my divine Love, that famous robber, who yourself take away everything from your lovers, and after having spoiled them of all, you become their pitiless murderer. Oh, how different is the martyrdom you make them endure, from that which all men taken together could invent! The muleteer, seeing me alone with two maids, thought he could illtreat me as much as he pleased, perhaps imagining to extort money. Instead of taking me to the inn, he took me to a mill, where there was no woman; there was only a single room, with several beds, where the millers and the muleteers slept together. It was in this room he wanted to compel me to remain. I said I was not a person to lie down where he had brought me, and I tried to oblige him to take me to the inn. He would do no such thing. I had to set out on foot at ten o'clock at night, carrying a part of my clothes, and travel more than a quarter league of that country (where the leagues are very long) in the midst of darkness, without knowing the road, crossing even one end of the robbers' wood, to go and find the inn. That man, seeing me leave the place where he had wanted to make us sleep, not without wicked intentions, cried out after us, abusing and ridiculing us. I bore my humiliation with pleasure, not without seeing and feeling it; but your will, my God, and my abandonment made everything easy to me. We were very well received at the inn, and those worthy people did their best to refresh us from our fatigue, assuring us that the

place where we had been taken was very dangerous. The next day we had again to return on foot to find the litter, that man refusing to bring it to us. On the contrary, he poured out insults, and for crown of disgrace, he sold me to the post, and forced me thereby to go in a post-chaise, instead of in the litter.

I reached Alexandria in that conveyance. It is a frontier town dependent on Spain, on the side of the Milanais. Our postilion wished to take us, as usual, to the post. I was much astonished to see the mistress of the house come to meet him, not to receive, but to hinder him entering. She had been told that there were women, so, thinking us other than we were, she did not wish for us. The postilion wished to persist. Their dispute grew so warm that a number of officers of the garrison, with a great crowd, assembled at the noise, astonished at the strangeness of the woman not wishing to lodge us. They thought she knew us for persons of bad livelihood, so that we had to submit to insults. However I urged the postilion to take us elsewhere; he would not do it, and persisted obstinately in trying to enter, assuring the mistress that we were honourable and even pious persons, the signs of which he had seen. By his persistence he compelled the woman to come and see us. As soon as she had looked at us she did like the robbers, allowed herself to yield, and made us come in. I had no sooner got out of the chaise than she said to me, "Go and shut yourself in that room, and do not stir, that my son may not know you are there, for if he knows it, he will kill you." She said this to us with so much emphasis, and her servant also, that if death had not for me the many charms it has, I should have died of fear. The two poor girls were in terrible alarm; when any one stirred, or came to open the door, they thought that our throats were about to be cut. In short, we remained between death and life until the next day, when we learned that the young man had taken an oath to kill all women

who should lodge at his house, because a few days before he had had a very serious business which threatened his ruin; a woman of evil life having assassinated a respectable man at their house. This had cost them much, and with reason he feared similar persons.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AFTER such adventures and others which it would be tedious to relate, I arrived at Verceil the evening of Good Friday. Going to the inn, I was very badly received, and I had the opportunity of passing a genuine Good Friday, which lasted very long. I sent to find Father La Combe, believing him already informed by the ecclesiastic I had sent in advance, but the latter had only just arrived. I had many genuine mortifications to swallow for the time I was without this ecclesiastic, which I should have escaped had I had him; for in this country, when ladies are accompanied by an ecclesiastic they are regarded with veneration, as persons of respectability and piety. Father La Combe was strangely displeased at my arrival, God so permitting; he even could not hide it from me. Thus I saw myself at the moment of arrival on the point of setting out again; and I would have done this, notwithstanding my extreme fatigue, but for the Easter festival. Father La Combe could not prevent himself showing his mortification. He said that every one would think I had come to see him, and this would injure his reputation. He was in very high esteem in that country. I had no less pain in going there, and it was necessity alone which had made me do it, in spite of my objections; so that I was placed in a state of sufferings, and our Lord adding his hand, made them very severe. The Father received me coldly, and in a manner which showed me his sentiments, and this redoubled

my pain. I asked him if he wished me to return, that I would set out on the moment, although I was overwhelmed with the fatigues of such a long and dangerous journey; besides that I was much weakened by the Lent fast, which I kept as strictly as if I had not been travelling. He told me he did not know how the Bishop of Verceil would take my arrival, when he had ceased to expect it, after I had so long obstinately refused the obliging offers he had made me; that he no longer showed any desire to see me since that refusal. It was then, it seemed to me, that I was cast out from the surface of the earth, without the means of finding any refuge, and that all creatures were combined together to crush me. I spent the rest of the night in this inn, without being able to sleep, and without knowing what course I should be compelled to take, being persecuted to the degree I was by my enemies, and a subject of shame to my friends.

As soon as they knew at the inn that I was an acquaintance of Father La Combe they treated me very well, for he was there esteemed as a saint. The Father did not know how to tell the Bishop of Verceil that I was come, and I felt his trouble more keenly than my own. As soon as the Prelate knew I had arrived, as he thoroughly understood the proprieties, he sent his niece, who took me in her carriage and brought me to her house; but things were only done for appearance, and the Bishop, not having yet seen me, did not know how to take such an inopportune journey, after my having three times refused to go there, although he had sent expresses to ask me to do so. He was disgusted with me. However, as he was informed that my design was not to remain at Verceil, but to go to the Marquise de Prunai, and that it was necessity owing to the festival which detained me, he let nothing appear; on the contrary, he took care that I was very well treated. He could not see me until after Easter, as he officiated all the Vigil and on the day. In the evening, after

all the duty of Easter Day was over, he had himself carried in a chair to his niece's house to see me, and although he understood French no better than I did Italian, he was none the less very well satisfied with the conversation that he had with me. He seemed to have as much kindness for me as he previously had indifference. The second visit finished in gaining him entirely.

One could not be under greater obligations than I was to this good Prelate. He conceived as much friendship for me as if I had been his sister, and in the midst of his continual occupation, his sole diversion was to spend a half-hour with me, speaking about God. He began a letter to the Bishop of Marseilles to thank him for having protected me in the persecution. He wrote also to the Bishop of Grenoble, and there was nothing he left undone to mark his affection. He no longer thought of anything but devising means to keep me in his diocese. He was not willing to let me visit the Marquise de Prunai; on the contrary, he wrote to her, inviting her to come herself with me into his diocese. He even sent Father La Combe expressly to urge her to come, assuring her that he wished to unite us all and form a small Community. The Marquise de Prunai entered into it readily enough, and her daughter also, and they would have come with Father La Combe but for the Marquise having fallen ill. She thought of sending her daughter to me, and the matter was deferred until she should be in better health. The Bishop commenced by hiring a large house, which he even treated for the purchase of, in order to locate us in it. It was very suitable for a Community. He wrote also to a lady at Genoa, an acquaintance of his, sister to a cardinal, who expressed much desire to unite with us, and the matter was considered already settled. There were also some devout girls, who were quite ready to set out to come to us. But, O my God, your will was not to establish me, but rather to destroy me.

The fatigue of the journey made me fall ill; the girl I had brought from Grenoble also fell ill. Her relatives, persons very full of self-interest, got into their heads that if she died in my hands I might cause her to make a will in my favour. They were much mistaken; for, far from wishing for the property of others, I had even given away my own. Her brother, full of this apprehension, came as quickly as possible, and the first thing he spoke to her of, although he found her recovered, was to make a will. This caused a great fracas at Verceil; for he wanted to take her away, and she was not willing to go. However, as I noticed little solidity of character in this girl, I thought it was an opportunity which divine providence offered me of getting rid of her, as she was not suited to me. I advised her to do what her brother wished. He formed friendship with some officers of the garrison, to whom he told ridiculous stories, that I wanted to ill-use his sister, whom he represented as a person of quality, although she was of quite humble birth. This brought me many crosses and humiliations. They commenced to say, what I had always dreaded, that I had come for the sake of Father La Combe. They even persecuted him on account of me.

The Bishop of Verceil was extremely vexed, but he could not apply any remedy; for he could not make up his mind to let me go, besides that I was in no state to do so, being ill. The friendship he had for me increased each day, because, as he loved God, he had a friendship for all those he believed wishing to love him. As he saw me so ill, he came to see me constantly, when he was free from his duties and occupations. This caused him and me also no slight crosses. He used to make me little presents of fruit, and other things of that nature. His relatives became jealous, saying I had come to ruin him, and carry away into France the money of the Bishop. It was what was furthest from my thoughts. This worthy Bishop swallowed all the crosses, through the friendship

he had for me, and still confidently calculated on keeping me in his diocese as soon as I was recovered.

Father La Combe was his theologian and his confessor : he esteemed him greatly ; and the Father did a great deal of good in that garrison, God making use of him to convert many of the officers and soldiers. Some of very scandalous life became models of virtue. He induced the subaltern officers to make retreats ; he preached and instructed the soldiers, who profited greatly, and as a consequence made general confessions. In this place there was a constant mixture of crosses and of souls gained for our Lord. There were some of his brother monks, who, after his example, were working for their perfection, and, although I hardly understood their language and they did not at all understand mine, our Lord brought it about that we understood each other in what regarded his service. The Father Rector of the Jesuits, having heard me spoken of, took the opportunity of Father La Combe's absence from Verceil to come and, as he said, try me. He had studied theological subjects that I did not understand, and put numbers of questions to me. Our Lord gave me the means of answering, and he went away so satisfied that he could not help speaking of it. Father La Combe stood well then with the Bishop of Verceil, who looked on him with veneration.

But the Bernabites of Paris, or rather Father La Mothe, bethought himself of bringing him away from there, to make him go and preach at Paris. He wrote of it to their General, saying that they had none at Paris qualified to uphold the House ; that their church was deserted ; that it was a mistake to leave a man like Father La Combe in a place where he was merely corrupting his language ; that his great talents should be exhibited at Paris ; that for the rest, he could not bear the burden of the House at Paris, if he was not given a man of that stamp. Who would not have believed that all this was

sincere ? The Bishop, who was a great friend of the General, hearing of it, offered opposition, and wrote to him that it was to do him the very greatest injury to take away a man who was so useful to him, and at a time when he had the greatest need of him. He was right, for he had a Grand Vicar whom he had brought from Rome, who, after having been Nuncio of the Pope in France, had by his evil life been reduced to live off his Masses, even in Rome itself, where he was in such great need as to attract the compassion of the Bishop of Verceil, who took him, and gave him very good allowances for acting as his Grand Vicar. This Abbé, far from gratitude to his benefactor, following the whim of his humour, was constantly in opposition to the Bishop, and if any ecclesiastic was disorderly or discontented, it was with him the Abbé took part against his Bishop. All those that complained against the Prelate or insulted him, were at once friends of the Grand Vicar, who, not content with this, laboured with all his might to embroil him with the Court of Rome ; saying he was entirely devoted to France, to the prejudice of his Holiness's interests, and as a proof, that he had several Frenchmen with him. He also by his secret intrigues embroiled him with the Court of Savoy ; so that this worthy Bishop had very severe crosses from this man. Not being able to bear it, the Bishop requested him to retire, and with great generosity gave him all that was necessary for his return journey. He was extremely offended at having to leave the Bishop, and turned all his anger against Father La Combe, against a French gentleman, and against me.

The General of the Bernabites was not willing to grant Father La Mothe's request, for fear of hurting his great friend the Bishop, and to take away from him a man who in that conjuncture of affairs was very necessary to him. As for me, my ills increased day by day. The air, which there is extremely bad, caused me a constant cough,

together with the fever which I often had, accompanied with inflammation of the chest, so that I had to be severely bled. I became swollen. In the evening I would be swollen to a great size, in the morning nothing was apparent; the fever which I had every night consumed the humours. It was all the right side which first swelled; at first only the right arm, afterwards it extended and became so considerable that it was thought I should die. The Bishop was very much distressed, for he could not make up his mind to let me go, nor yet to see me thus die in his diocese. But after having consulted the doctors, who told him that the air of the place was fatal to me, he said to me with many tears, "I prefer you should live away from me rather than to see you die here."

He gave up his design for the establishment of a Community; for my friend was not willing to settle there without me, and the Genoese lady could not leave her town, where she was highly thought of. The Genoese prayed her to do there what the Bishop wished to do at his place. It was a Community something like that of Madame de Miramion; for in that country there are only cloistered nuns. From the beginning, when the Bishop proposed the matter to me, I had a presentiment that it would not succeed, and that it was not what our Lord desired of me. Nevertheless, I gave in to all that was wished of me in recognition of the Prelate's kindness, sure as I was that our Lord would be able to prevent anything he did not desire of me. When this good Prelate saw that he must resolve to let me go, he said to me, "You would like to be in the diocese of Geneva, and the Bishop persecutes and rejects you; and I, who would so gladly have you, am not able to keep you." The Bishop wrote to Father La Mothe that I would go away in the spring, as soon as the season would allow; that he was very distressed at being obliged to let me go; and he said of me things that might throw me into confusion, if I could take to myself anything. He

wrote that he regarded me in his diocese as an angel, and a thousand other things which his goodness suggested. From this out I made my account for returning; but the Bishop expected to keep Father La Combe, and that he would not go to Paris. That would have been the case, indeed, but for the death of the General, as I shall tell hereafter.

Almost all the time I was in this country our Lord made me there suffer many crosses, and at the same time he multiplied upon me graces and humiliations; for with me one has never been without the other. I was almost always ill and in a state of childhood. I had with me only that girl of whom I have spoken, who, in the state which she was in, could not give me any relief, and who seemed to be with me merely to try me and make me suffer strangely. It was there I wrote upon the Apocalypse, and I was given a greater certainty of all I had known of the persecution which should come upon the most faithful servants of God, in accordance with what I wrote touching the future. I was, as I have said, in the state of childhood; when I had to write or speak there was nothing greater than I—it seemed to me I was quite full of God—and yet nothing smaller or feebler than I, for I was like a little child. Our Lord wished that not only should I bear his state of childhood in a way that charmed those who were prepared for it, but he desired further that by an external cult I should commence to honour his Divine Childhood. He inspired that worthy begging friar to send me a Child Jesus of wax, of ravishing beauty, and I perceived that the more I looked at it, the deeper were the dispositions of childhood impressed on me. One cannot believe the trouble I had to allow myself to pass to this state of childhood, for my reason was lost in it, and it seemed to me that it was I who gave myself this state. When I reflected, it was taken away, and I experienced an intolerable pain; but as soon as I allowed myself to go

into it, I found myself with the candour, the innocence and simplicity of a child, something divine within. I have committed many infidelities to this state, not being able to bring myself down to a state so low and so small. O Love, you desired to place me in all sorts of positions in order that I should resist no longer, and should be subject to all your wishes without reflection or reserve.

While I still was at Verceil I had a movement to write to Madame de C——. It was some years since she had ceased writing to me. Our Lord made me to know her disposition, and that he would make use of me to help her. I asked Father La Combe if he would approve of my writing to her, telling him of the movement I had; but he did not wish it. I remained submissive, and at the same time assured that our Lord would unite us, and would provide me one way or another with the means of serving her. Some time after I received a letter from her, which not a little surprised Father La Combe, and he then left me free to write to her whatever I wished. I did it with great simplicity, and what I wrote was like the first foundation of what our Lord desired of her, having willed to use me afterwards to help her, and to cause her to enter into his ways; for she is a soul to whom I am closely tied, and through her to others.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE Father-General of the Bernabites, the friend of the Bishop of Verceil, died. As soon as he was dead Father La Mothe wrote to the person who was Vicar-General, and who held his place until a new election. He told him the same things he had told the other, and the necessity there was to have at Paris men like Father La Combe; that he had no one to preach the annual sermon in their church. This worthy Father, who believed Father La Mothe was acting in good faith, having learned that I was obliged to return to France owing to my indisposition, sent an order to Father La Combe to go to Paris, and to accompany me the whole journey, Father La Mothe having asked him to do so, on the ground that as he would accompany me, their House at Paris, which was already poor, would be saved the expenses of such a long journey. Father La Combe, who did not penetrate the venom concealed under this fair appearance, consented to accompany me, knowing that it was my custom to take with me ecclesiastics or monks. Father La Combe set out twelve days before me, in order to attend to some matters of business, and to accompany me only at the crossing of the mountains, which appeared to him the place where I had most need of escort. I set out in Lent, the weather being very fine, to the grief of the Prelate, who excited my compassion by the trouble he was in at losing Father La Combe, and

seeing me go away. He had me taken at his expense to Turin, giving me a gentleman and one of his ecclesiastics to accompany me.

As soon as the resolution was taken that Father La Combe should accompany me, Father La Mothe at once set going everywhere the story that he had been obliged to do it, in order to make me return to France; although he knew very well that I was intending to return before we knew that Father La Combe would return. He exaggerated the attachment I had for him, making himself out a subject of pity; and on this every one said that I ought to put myself under the direction of Father La Mothe. However, he dissimulated towards us, writing to Father La Combe letters full of esteem and of tenderness to me, praying him to bring his dear sister, and to serve her in her infirmity on such a long journey, and that he would be deeply obliged for his care, and a hundred similar things.

I could not bring my mind to leave without going to see my friend the Marquise de Prunai, notwithstanding the difficulty of the journey. I had myself carried, for it is impossible to go there otherwise, except on horseback, owing to the mountains, and I could not go in that way. I spent twelve days with her. I arrived exactly the Eve of the Annunciation, and as all her tenderness is for the mystery of the childhood of Jesus Christ, and she knew the part our Lord gave me in it, she received extreme joy at seeing me arrive to spend that festival with her. Nothing could be more cordial than what passed between us with much openness. It was then she told me that all I had said to her had happened, and a worthy ecclesiastic who lived with her, a very holy man, told me the same. We together made ointments, and I gave her the secret of my remedies. I encouraged her, and so did Father La Combe, to establish a hospital in that place, which she did while we were there. I gave the little contribution of the Holy Child Jesus, who has always made successful all the

hospitals which have been established in reliance on providence. I think I forgot to say that our Lord also made use of me to establish a hospital near Grenoble, which subsists without other capital than providence. My enemies have made use of this subsequently to calumniate me, saying that I had spent my children's property in establishing hospitals; although the truth is, that, far from having expended their money, I had even given them my own, and that these hospitals have been established merely on the capital of divine providence, which is inexhaustible. But our Lord has had this goodness for me, that all he has ever made me do for his glory is always turned into a cross. I have forgotten to speak in detail of many crosses and illnesses, but there are so many some must be kept back. In the illnesses I had at Verceil I had still the same dependence on Father La Combe, owing to my state of childhood, with the impression of these words: "And he was subject to them." It was that state of Jesus Christ which was then impressed on me.

As soon as it was determined that I should come into France, our Lord made me know that it was in order to have there the greatest crosses I had ever yet had, and Father La Combe also had knowledge of it; but he said to me, that I must immolate myself to all the divine wishes and anew be a victim immolated to new sacrifices. He wrote to me: "Would it not be a fine thing, and very glorious to God, if he desired to make us in that great city serve as a spectacle to men and angels!" I set out, then, on my return with a spirit of sacrifice, to immolate myself to new kinds of sufferings. All along the road something within said to me the same words as St. Paul: "I go up to Jerusalem, and the Spirit tells me everywhere that crosses and chains await me." I could not prevent myself from expressing it to my most intimate friends, who used their efforts to stay me on the road. They even wished all to contribute of what they had to stop me and prevent my

going to Paris, in the belief that the presentiment I had was very true. But I had to go on and come there to immolate myself for him who first immolated himself.

At Chambéry we saw Father La Mothe, who was going to the election of a General. Although he affected friendship, it was not difficult to see that his thoughts were other than his words, and that he had formed in his mind the design of destroying us. I speak of the behaviour of this Father only in obedience to the command which has been laid upon me to omit nothing. I shall be obliged, in spite of myself, to speak often of him. With all my heart I would gladly suppress what I have to say. If what he has done regarded only myself, I would willingly suppress it; but I think it a duty I owe to truth and the innocence of Father La Combe, who has so long been grievously oppressed and overwhelmed by calumny and by an imprisonment of many years, which according to all appearance will continue as long as his life. I feel myself, I say, obliged to expose all the artifices made use of to blacken him and render him odious, and the motives which have led Father La Mothe to adopt such a course. Although Father La Mothe appears heavily charged in what I say of him, I protest before God that I yet omit many facts.

I saw, then, very clearly his design. Father La Combe also remarked it, but he was resolved to sacrifice himself and to immolate me to all which he believed the will of God. Some even of my friends informed me that Father La Mothe had evil designs, but yet they did not imagine them so extreme as they were in reality. They thought he would send away Father La Combe after having made him preach, and that for this purpose he would get him into trouble. At Chambéry it was interiorly said to Father La Combe, in the same way as it had been told him that we should be together, that "we should be separated." We separated at Chambéry. Father La Mothe went to the Chapter after begging Father La Combe with affected

urgency every day not to leave me, but to accompany me as far as Paris. Father La Combe asked his permission to leave me alone at Grenoble, because he was very desirous of going to Tonon to see his family, and he expected to rejoin me at Grenoble after three weeks. It was with difficulty this was granted, such was the affectation of sincerity.

I set out for Grenoble and Father La Combe for Tonon. As soon as I arrived I fell ill of a continued fever, which lasted fifteen days, when that worthy begging friar had an opportunity of practising his charity. He gave me remedies, and these, joined to the fever and the change of climate, gradually consumed my disease. All those whom God had given me on my first visit to Grenoble came to see me during my illness, and exhibited extreme joy at seeing me again. They showed me the letters and retractations of that poor impassioned girl, and I did not see a person who continued influenced by her stories. The Bishop of Grenoble expressed more kindness than ever, assured me he had never believed any of them, and even offered me to remain in his diocese. They again pressed me to remain at the General Hospital, but it was not where you wished me, O my God; it was upon Calvary. Father La Combe and I were so penetrated by the cross that everything announced to us *Cross*. That good girl of whom I have spoken, who had seen so much persecution, and whom the Devil, so threatened, had many presentiments of the crosses that were about to pour upon us, and she said, "What do you want to go there for, to be crucified?" All along the road souls that were spiritual and influenced by grace spoke to us only of crosses, and this impression that "chains and persecutions await me" never quitted me for a moment. I came then, O my Love, to sacrifice myself to your hidden will. You know what crosses I have had to bear from my relatives. Oh, in what ill fame am I! In spite of all that, you nevertheless

win souls in every place and at every time; and one deems such troubles amply paid should they procure the salvation and perfection of a single soul. It is in this place that you desired, O God, to make a theatre of your designs through the cross and the good that you will to do to souls.

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

HARDLY had I arrived at Paris when it was easy for me to discover, by the conduct of the persons, the evil designs they had against Father La Combe and against me. Father La Mothe, who directed all the tragedy, dissimulated as much as he could, and in his usual manner, giving secret blows and making semblance of flattering whilst he was dealing the most dangerous strokes. Through self-interest they desired to make me go to Montargis, hoping thereby to seize upon the wardship of my children, and to dispose of my person and my property. All the persecutions which have befallen me from the side of Father La Mothe and of my family have been solely due to selfish motives. Those which have been directed against Father La Combe have been only due to the fact that he did not oblige me to do what they wished of me, and also to jealousy. I might give many particulars on this head which would convince everybody, but to avoid tediousness I suppress them. I will only say that they threatened to deprive me of the fief that I had reserved for myself by my deed of settlement. As I never betrayed the sentiments of my heart, I replied that I would not litigate, but if they wished to take away the little I had reserved for myself, though so trifling in comparison with what I had given up, that

I would yield it cheerfully ; being delighted to be not only poor, but in the extremity of want, in imitation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

After our Lord had made Father La Combe suffer much in our union, in order to purify it thoroughly, it became so perfect as to be henceforth an entire unity ; and this in such a way that I can no longer distinguish him from God. I cannot in detail describe the graces God has given me, for everything passes in me in a manner so pure that one can tell nothing of it. As nothing falls under the senses, nor can be expressed, it must all remain in him, who himself communicates himself in himself ; as well as an infinity of circumstances, which I must leave in God with the rest of the crosses.

What formerly caused my sufferings with Father La Combe is that he had not then a knowledge of the total nakedness of the soul lost in God, and that having always conducted souls in gifts, extraordinary graces of visions, revelations, interior speech, and not yet knowing the difference that there is between these mediate communications and the immediate communication of the Word in the soul, which, having no distinction, has also no expression, he could not understand a state of which I was unable to tell him almost anything. The second thing that had been the cause of his troubles was the communication in silence, to which he had difficulty in adapting himself, desiring to see it by the eyes of reason. But when all obstacles had been removed, O God, you have made of him one same thing with you and one same thing with me in a consummation of perfect unity. All that which is known, understood, distinguished, and explained are mediate communications, but for the immediate communication—communication of eternity rather than of time, communication of the Word—it has nothing that can be expressed, and one can only say of it what St. John has said of it : “ In the beginning was the Word, and the

Word was in God, and God was in the Word.” The Word is in that soul, and that soul is in God by the Word and in the Word. It is very important early to accustom one’s self to get beyond everything that is distinct and perceived, and mediate speech, to allow room for the speaking of the Word, which is none other than a silence ineffable and yet eloquent.

I had arrived at Paris the Eve of St. Magdalen, 1686, exactly five years after my departure thence. Shortly after his arrival Father La Combe was very much run after and applauded for his sermons. I perceived, indeed, some little jealousy on the part of Father La Mothe, but I did not think that things would go to such a length. Doubtless it will be a matter of surprise that the greater part of the Bernabites of Paris and the neighbouring Houses should join against Father La Combe. There were two causes for it. First, the selfish motives and the jealousy of Father La Mothe, which made him invent all sorts of artifices. He told them all that in ruining Father La Combe they would have a pretext for shaking off the yoke of the Savoyards ; for it should be known that every six years the Bernabites had a Savoyard as Provincial. This, he said, was an insult to the French nation. They all fell in with it, and for this purpose betrayed their brother, without, however, obtaining what they desired, except for a few years ; for, as a fact, they have at present a Savoyard as Provincial. The second reason was the special jealousy of their Provincial, who, owing to a Lent service taken away from one of his friends and given to Father La Combe, became his enemy, though previously his friend. That united the interests of the Provincial and of Father La Mothe.

This latter pushed artifice so far as to say that Father La Combe had accompanied me from Turin to Paris without entering their Houses, and that he remained in the inn with me to the great scandal of their Order. He

did not tell them that there was no convent of their Order on the route; but, on the contrary, he made it to be understood that there were, and that it was to the shame of these Houses that he had not been there. Who would not have believed a calumny told with such art? This began to stir up every one against me; but the excellent sermons of Father La Combe and his success in the conduct of souls, counterbalanced these calumnies.

I had deposited a small sum with Father La Combe (his superiors permitting), which I destined for the dowry of a girl professing as a nun. I thought I was bound in conscience, for owing to me she had left the New Catholics. She is the young woman of whom I have spoken, that the priest of Gex tried to gain over. As she is beautiful, although extremely discreet, there is always ground for fear when one is exposed without any fixed settlement. I had then assigned this moderate sum for that worthy girl. Father La Mothe desired to have it, and made Father La Combe understand that if he did not cause me to give it for a wall that he wished to rebuild in his convent, they would get him into trouble. But Father La Combe, always upright, said that he could not conscientiously advise me to do anything else than what he knew I had resolved to do in favour of the girl. All this, joined to jealousy at the success of Father La Combe's sermons, made him determine to unite with the Provincial, and to betray Father La Combe to satisfy the grudge of each.

They no longer thought except of the means to arrive at their end, and to do it successfully they sent to confession to Father La Combe a man and a woman who were united in practising all sorts of villainy with impunity, and persecuting God's servants. I believe there never were such artifices as theirs. The man writes all kinds of hands, and is ready to execute anything one desires. They pretended devotion, and amongst so great a number of worthy souls who came from all parts to Father La Combe

for confession, he never discerned those devilish spirits, God so permitting it, because he had given power to the Devil to treat him like Job.

Previous to this, when I was alone in my room on my knees before an image of the Child Jesus, where I usually prayed, suddenly I was, as it were, cast back from this image, and sent to the Crucifix: all that I had of the state of childhood was taken away from me, and I found myself bound anew with Jesus Christ Crucified. To tell what this bond is would be very difficult for me, for it is not a devotion, as is commonly supposed. It is no longer a state of suffering by conformity with Jesus Christ; but it is the same Jesus Christ borne very purely and nakedly in his states. What passed in this new union of love to that Divine Object he alone knows; but I understood it was no longer a question for me of bearing him, the Child, or in his states of nakedness: that I must bear him Crucified; and it was the last of all his states. For in the commencement I had indeed borne crosses, as may be seen in the narrative of my life, which is quite full of them; but they were my own crosses, borne through conformity with Jesus Christ. Then, my state becoming more profound, it was given me to bear the states of Jesus Christ, which I have borne in the middle of my life in nakedness and crosses. And whilst one bears in this manner the states of Jesus Christ one does not think on Jesus Christ—he is then removed; and even from the commencement of the path of faith one has him no longer thus objectively. But the state I am now speaking of is quite different; it is of a vastness almost infinite, and few souls bear him in this way. It is to bear Jesus Christ himself in his states. Only experience can make intelligible what I wish to say. At this time these words were impressed upon me: "He has been numbered among the malefactors;" and it was put into my mind that I must bear Jesus Christ in this state in all its extent. O God, if there has not been enough of insult and ignominy

complete, finish me by the last punishment! All that comes from you will be sweet to me. Your arm is raised. I await the blows from moment to moment. "Let him who has commenced, finish; and let me have this consolation, that in torturing me cruelly he does not spare me." I am fit only to suffer, and to suffer insults; it is the contract of our sacred marriage—it is my dowry, O my Love! You have been liberal of it in the case of your servant.

At this period I received a letter from Father La Combe, who wrote me in these terms: "The weather is very lowering" (speaking of Father La Mothe's humour towards him). "I do not know when the thunderbolts will fall, but all will be welcome from the hand of God." Meantime the husband of this wicked creature who counterfeited the saint ceased coming to confession to Father La Combe, in order the better to play his game. He sent his wife, who said she was very sorry for her husband having left this Father; that her husband was a fickle man; that she did not resemble him. She counterfeited the saint, saying that God revealed to her future events, and that he was about to have great persecutions. It was not difficult for her to know this, since she plotted them with Father La Mothe, the Provincial, and her husband.

During this time I went to the country to the Duchess of C—. Many extraordinary things happened to me, and God gave me great graces for my neighbour: it seemed as if he desired to dispose me thereby for the cross. Many persons of those whom our Lord caused me to spiritually help, and who were my spiritual children, were there. I was given a strong instinct of communicating myself to them in silence, and as they were not prepared for this and it was a thing unknown to them, I knew not how to tell them. In this I was wanting in fidelity to God through natural timidity. A passage of Scripture was read, and explained in a manner quite different from the

understanding of it that was given to me, and this caused in me such a contrariety (because, owing to the presence of certain persons, whose constraint I felt, I dared not speak) that they had to unlace me. In the afternoon I had an opportunity of speaking to Father G— and two other persons, and this was a relief to me. I have, besides, at different times had other plenitudes, which made me suffer much, and oftentimes I discharged them upon my best disposed children, though they were absent, and I felt that there was an outflow from me into their souls; and afterwards, when they wrote to me, they mentioned that at such a time much grace had been communicated to them. Our Lord had also given me a certain spirit of truth, which I called the spirit of the Word, which "causes one to reject the evil and to choose the good." When, in a sermon or discourse, any things about devotion, or pious thoughts, or probable opinions on any matter, or sentiments as to the Holy Virgin or the Saints, were advanced, I felt in me a something which rejected at once what was merely human opinion, and accepted the pure truth: this was without attention or reflection.

Father La Combe wrote to me while I was in the country that he had found an admirable soul (meaning that woman who counterfeited the saint), and mentioned certain circumstances which made me apprehensive for him. However, as our Lord gave me nothing special on the subject—and, besides, I feared that if I told him my thoughts it would be ill taken, as at other times; and as our Lord did not urge me to say anything (for if he had required it of me, at any cost I would have done it) I wrote to him that I abandoned him to God for that as for the rest.

While this woman was counterfeiting the saint, and exhibiting great affection and esteem for Father La Combe, her husband, who imitated all kinds of writing, was induced (evidently by the enemies of Father La Combe, as the

sequel has shown) to write defamatory libels, to which they attached the propositions of Molinos, which for two years were circulating in France, and said these were the sentiments of Father La Combe. They had them carried everywhere amongst the Communities, and Father La Mothe and the Provincial, who was more tricky, caused these libels to be sent back to themselves; then assuming the rôle of persons much attached to the Church, they themselves carried these libels to the Official, who was in their plot, and brought them to the notice of the Archbishop. They said that zeal urged them, and that they were in despair that one of their monks should be heretic and execrable. They also slightly mixed me up in the matter, saying that Father La Combe was always at my house. This was utterly false, for I could hardly see him, except at the confessional, and then only for a moment. They renewed their old calumnies about the journeys, and went from house to house among honourable families, saying that I had been on horseback behind Father La Combe—I, who was never so in my life!—that he had not been to their Houses along the road, but that he remained at the inn.

Previous to this I had had many mysterious dreams, which told me all this. They bethought them of one matter which favoured their enterprise. They knew that I had been to Marseilles; they thought they had discovered a good foundation for a calumny. They forged a letter from a person of Marseilles (I even believe I heard it said, from the Bishop of Marseilles), addressed to the Archbishop of Paris, or to his Official, in which they stated that at Marseilles I had slept in the same room with Father La Combe; that there he had eaten meat in Lent and behaved very scandalously. This letter was carried, this calumny was retailed everywhere, and after having circulated it, Father La Mothe and the Provincial, who had concocted it together, resolved to tell it to me. Father La Mothe came

to see me, apparently to make me fall into the trap and to make me say in the presence of people he had brought with him, that I had been to Marseilles with Father La Combe. He said to me, "There are horrible stories against you sent by the Bishop of Marseilles, that you have there committed frightful scandals with Father La Combe; there are good witnesses of it." I began to smile, and said to him, "The calumny is well imagined, but it ought to have been first ascertained if Father La Combe had been to Marseilles, for I do not believe that he has ever been there in his life; and when I passed through it was Lent. I was with such and such persons and Father La Combe was preaching the Lent sermons at Verceil." He was dumbfounded, and withdrew, saying, "There are, however, witnesses that it is true;" and he went immediately to ask Father La Combe if he had not been at Marseilles. He assured him he had never been in Provence, nor further than Lyons and the road from Savoy to France; so that they were somewhat taken aback. But they devised another expedient. Those who could not know that Father La Combe had never been to Marseilles, they left in the belief that it was Marseilles, and to the others they said that it was Seissel in the letter. This Seissel is a place where I have never been, and where there is no bishop.

Father La Mothe and the Provincial carried from house to house the libels and those propositions of Molinos, saying they were the errors of Father La Combe. All this did not prevent Father La Combe from making a wonderful harvest by his sermons and at the confessional. From all sides people came to him. It was gall to them.

The Provincial had just held his Visitation, and had passed quite close to Savoy without going there; because he did not wish, he said, to hold the Visitation that year. They plotted together, Father La Mothe and he, to go there in order to collect some reports against Father La Combe and against me, and to gratify the Bishop of

Geneva, whom they knew to be very bitter against me and against Father La Combe, for the reasons I have mentioned. The Provincial set out, then, immediately on his return from the Visitation of Provence, to go into Savoy, and gave orders to Father La Mothe to do everything he could to ruin Father La Combe.

They plotted with the Official, a man skilful and clever in this sort of affair; but as it would have been very difficult to mix me up in the business, they instigated that woman to ask to see me. She told Father La Combe that God made known to her admirable things of me, that she had an inconceivable love for me, and wished very much to see me. As besides she said she was very much in want, Father La Combe sent her to me to give her something in charity. I gave her a half louis-d'or. At first she did not strike me in her true character; but after half an hour's conversation with her, I had a horror of her. I hid it from myself, for the reasons I have mentioned. Some days from that—three days after, I think—she came to ask me for the means of getting herself bled. I told her that I had a maid very skilful at bleeding, and if she wished I would have her bled. She indignantly refused, and said she was not a person to allow herself to be bled by any one but a surgeon. I gave her fifteen sous. She took them with a scorn which made me see she was not what Father La Combe believed her. She immediately went and threw the fifteen-sous piece before Father La Combe, asking if she were a person to be given fifteen sous. The Father was surprised; but as in the evening she had learned from her husband that it was not time for breaking out, but for feigning, she went to see Father La Combe, asked his pardon, and said it was a strong temptation that had made her act so, and that she asked back the fifteen sous-piece. He told me nothing of all this, but several nights I suffered strangely owing to this woman. In sleep sometimes I saw the Devil, then suddenly I saw this woman; sometimes it

was the one, sometimes it was the other. This made me wake with a start. For three nights I was thus, with a certainty that she was a wicked woman who counterfeited devotion to deceive and to injure. I told it to Father La Combe, and he reprimanded me very severely, saying it was my imagination, that I was wanting in charity, that this woman was a saint. I therefore kept quiet. I was very much astonished when a virtuous girl, whom I did not know, came to see me, and told me that she felt bound to warn me, knowing that I was interested in Father La Combe, that he confessed a woman who was deceiving him; that she knew her thoroughly, and she was, perhaps, the most wicked and the most dangerous woman in Paris. She related to me strange things this woman had done and thefts committed at Paris. I told her to declare it to Father La Combe. She said that she had told him something of it; but that he made her acknowledge it as a fault in confession, on the ground that she was uncharitable, so that she no longer knew what to do. That woman was overheard in a shop speaking evil of Father La Combe. It was told to him, but he would not believe it. She sometimes came to my house. I, who am without natural antipathy, had such a violent one, and even such horror for this creature, that the force I put upon myself to see her, in obedience to Father La Combe, made me turn so extraordinarily pale, that my servants perceived it. Among others, a very worthy girl—she who made me suffer so much for her purification—felt for her the same horror that I felt. Father La Combe was again warned that there was one of his penitents who went about decrying him to all the confessors, and saying execrable things of him. He wrote them to me, and told me at the same time that I should not imagine it was this woman; that it was not she. I was perfectly certain it was the same. Another time she came to my house; the Father was there. She told him something of the intimations she had that he was about to

have great crosses. I had an immediate conviction that it was she who was causing them. I told it to Father La Combe; but he would not believe me, our Lord so permitting it, to render him like to himself. One thing which seemed extraordinary, is that Father La Combe, so soft and so credulous to any other who did not tell him the truth, was not at all so for me. He himself was astonished at it, yet I am not astonished, because in God's conducting of me my nearest are those who crucify me the most.

CHAPTER II.

ONE day a monk, at one time my confessor, to whom this woman went to retail her calumnies, sent to ask me to come and see him. He related to me all that she had told him, and the lies in which he had detected her. As for me, I continually detected her in falsehood. I at once told Father La Combe. He was suddenly enlightened, and, as if scales had fallen from his eyes, he no longer doubted the villainy of this woman. The more he recalled what he had seen in her, and what she had said to him, the more convinced he was of her villainy, and avowed to me there must be something diabolic in the woman to enable her to pass as a saint. As soon as I returned home she came to see me. I gave orders not to let her in. She wanted me to give her alms, to pay for the hire of her house. I was very ill that day, and in consequence of an excessive thirst my body was swollen. One of my maids told her plainly that I was ill, that they were alarmed because I had been dropsical, and that for two days I had been swollen. She wanted to enter in spite of the maid, when the one who knew something of her villainies came to prevent her, and told her that nobody could speak with me. She wrangled with them, but they patiently bore it. She straightway went to see the Superior of the Premontrés and retailed to him frightful calumnies. She said that I was pregnant. This man, who hardly knew me, believed

her, and sent for my daughter's maid whom he had given me. He told her this frightful calumny. She, who perfectly knew the thing was impossible, said to him, "My Father, by whom? she never sees a man, and she is very virtuous." This astonished him. She told me of it. That wretched creature went everywhere retailing the same story, thinking that I should be a long time swollen, and it would be easy for her to make it believed; but as the swelling passed away in a couple of days, owing to a trifling remedy, this calumny had no consequence. Besides, they knew that if they had recourse to calumny they must reckon with secular judges, and they would find it a bad bargain. They determined therefore to attack me also in the matter of faith, in order to throw me into the hands of the Official, and that by means of a little book, entitled "Short Method, etc.," to which my name did not appear, and which had been approved by doctors of the Sorbonne appointed for that purpose at Lyons and also at Grenoble. But before turning to myself, I must tell how they went to work.

Father La Mothe came to see me, and said that at the Archbishop's office there were frightful reports against Father La Combe, that he was a heretic and a friend of Molinos. I, who well knew he had no acquaintance with Molinos, assured him of this (for at the commencement I could not believe Father La Mothe was acting in bad faith, and that he was in concert with that woman). I further said to him, that I knew he had great power with the Archbishop, and I begged him to take Father La Combe there, that, as soon as the Archbishop had spoken to him, he would be undeceived. He promised he would next day, but he took very good care not to do so. I told him of the villainy of this woman, and what she had done to me. He coldly answered that she was a saint. It was then I commenced to discover that they were acting in concert, and I saw myself reduced to say with David,

"If my enemy had done this to me, I should not be surprised, but my nearest!" It was that which rendered these calumnies more hard and the whole matter more incomprehensible.

I went to see Father La Combe at the confessional, and told him what Father La Mothe had said to me, and that he should ask to be taken to the Archbishop by him. He went to Father La Mothe, who said that he would take him to the Archbishop, but there was no hurry; that the reports were not against him, but against me: and for nearly a month he played see-saw with us, saying to Father La Combe that the reports were not against him but against me, and to me that they were against him, and that I was not mentioned in them. Father La Combe and I were confounded when we spoke of all these things and this deceit. Nevertheless Father La Combe preached and heard confession with more applause than ever, and this augmented the vexation and jealousy of those people. Father La Mothe went for two days into the country, and Father La Combe, being senior, remained as Superior in his absence. I told him to go to the Archbishop, and to take the opportunity when Father La Mothe was not there. He answered me that Father La Mothe had told him not to leave the House during his absence; that he saw clearly that it would be very necessary for him to see the Archbishop, and that perhaps he would never have this opportunity again; but that he wished to die observing his obedience, and, since his Superior had told him to remain in his absence, he would do so. It was merely to prevent his going to the Archbishop, and making him acquainted with the truth, that this had been said to him.

There was a doctor of the Sorbonne, Monsieur Bureau, who came to see me two or three times, on the occasion of a visit from the Abbé de Gaumont, a man of wonderful purity, nearly eighty years of age, who has passed all his life in retreat, without directing, preaching, or hearing

confession: he had known me formerly, and brought Monsieur Bureau to see me. Against this latter Father La Mothe was indignant, because one of his penitents, who had left him, had been to see Monsieur Bureau, who is a very honourable man. With reference to him, Father La Mothe said to me, "You see Monsieur Bureau; I do not wish it." I asked him the reason, telling him that I had not been to seek him, but that he had come to see me, and that rarely; that I did not think it proper to turn him out of my house, that he was a man in high repute. He told me that he had done him a wrong. I wished to know what this wrong was. I learned it was because that penitent, who had given much to Father La Mothe and had left him only because he was grasping, had been to Monsieur Bureau. I did not deem this reason sufficient to alienate a man who had done me service, and to whom I was under obligation, and who was, besides, a true servant of God. Father La Mothe himself went to the Official's office to depose that I held assemblies with Monsieur de Gaumont and Monsieur Bureau; that he had even broken up one of them—an utter falsehood. He said it also to others, who repeated it to me; so that I learned it from the Official and from others. He further accused me of many other things. Without any regular process they attacked Monsieur Bureau, the Official being delighted to have this opportunity of illtreating a man whom he had hated for a long time. They set to work the scribe, husband of that wicked woman, against Monsieur Bureau, and in a short time there were counterfeit letters from Superiors of religious Houses where Monsieur Bureau directed and heard confession, who wrote to the Official, that Monsieur Bureau preached and taught errors, and introduced trouble into the religious Houses. It was not difficult for Monsieur Bureau to prove the falseness of these letters, for the Superiors disavowed them. Madame de Miramion, friend of Monsieur Bureau, herself proved their falsity; yet, far from doing

justice to Monsieur Bureau, they made His Majesty believe he was guilty, and exiled him, as I shall tell hereafter, abusing the King's zeal for religion by making his authority subservient to the passion of these people.

One day Father La Mothe came to me, and said it was absolutely true that there were horrible reports against Father La Combe, and insinuated that I should get him to withdraw, hoping thereby to make him appear guilty; for it was hard to find the means of ruining him, because, whether they judged him themselves, or sent him to their General, the latter would have knowledge of everything, and the innocence of Father La Combe, as well as the wickedness of the others, would have been known. They were very much embarrassed to discover something. I said to Father La Mothe, that if Father La Combe was guilty he should be punished (I spoke very boldly, knowing thoroughly his innocence), and therefore there was nothing for him to do but to wait in patience what God would bring about; that, for the rest, he ought to have taken him to the Archbishop to let his innocence be seen. I even asked him to do this with all the urgency I could. Father La Combe on his side besought him to let him go, if he was unwilling to take him. He always said he would take him to-morrow or some other day; then he had business to prevent him; and yet he many times went there by himself.

Seeing that Father La Combe patiently waited his evil fortune, and not having yet discovered the last expedient, by which they have succeeded in ruining him, Father La Mothe raised the mask. He sent to warn me at church, where I was, to come and speak to him, and, having brought with him Father La Combe, he said to me, in his presence, "My sister, it is you who now must think of flying: there are against you execrable reports; you are accused of crimes that make one shudder." I was no more moved, nor confused by it, than if he had told me an idle tale

that in no way touched me. With my ordinary calmness I said to him, "If I have committed the crimes of which you speak I could not be too severely punished, and therefore I am far from desiring to fly; for if, after having all my life professed to be in an especial manner devoted to God, I made use of piety to offend him—him that I would give my life to love and to make loved by others—it is right that I should serve as an example, and that I should be punished with the utmost rigour: but if I am innocent, flying is not the means to make it believed." Their design was to incriminate Father La Combe by my flight, and to make me go to Montargis as they had planned.

When he saw that, far from entering into his proposal, I remained unmoved, and firm in the determination to suffer everything rather than fly, he said to me, quite in anger, "Since you will not do what I tell you, I will go and inform the family" (meaning that of my children's guardian) "in order that it may compel you to do it." I said to him that I had told nothing of all this to my children's guardian, nor to his family, and that it would surprise them; that I begged him to allow me to go the first to speak to them, or at least to consent that we should go together. He agreed that we should go together next day. As soon as I had left him, our Lord, desiring me to see the whole conduct of this affair, in order that I might not remain ignorant of it (for our Lord has not permitted anything to escape me, not that I should cherish a grudge against any one, since I have never felt the least bitterness against my persecutors—but, in fine, that nothing should be hid from me, and that in suffering everything for his love, I should make a faithful relation of it)—our Lord, I say, at once inspired me, suggesting that Father La Mothe was hurrying off to prejudice the family against me, and tell them whatever he pleased. I sent my footman to run and see if my suspicion was true, and to get a carriage for me to go there myself. Father La Mothe was already

there before me. When he knew I had discovered he was there, he became so furious he could not prevent its appearing, and, as soon as he had returned to the convent, he discharged his vexation on poor Father La Combe. He had not found the guardian of my children; but he had spoken to his sister, the wife of a *Maitre des Comptes*, a person of merit. When he told her that I was accused of frightful crimes, that they must induce me to fly, she replied, "If Madame," meaning me, "has committed the crimes you say, I believe I have committed them myself. What—a person who has lived as she has lived! I would answer for her with my own life. To make her fly! Her flight is not a matter of indifference, for if she is innocent it is to declare her guilty." He added, "It is absolutely necessary to make her fly, and it is the sentiment of the Archbishop." She asked him where I should fly to. He answered, "To Montargis." That aroused her suspicion. She told him her brother must be consulted, and that he would see the Archbishop. At this he was quite confounded, and begged they would not go to see the Archbishop; said he was more interested than any other; that he would himself go there." I arrived just as he had left. She told me all this, and I related to her from beginning to end all he had said to me. As she is very clever, she understood that there was something in it. He came back, and contradicted himself many times before us both.

The next day, the guardian of my children, having ascertained the Archbishop's hour, went there. He found Father La Mothe before him, but he had not been able to get admitted. When he saw the guardian of my children, a Counsellor of Parliament, he was much disturbed; he grew pale, then he grew red, and, at last accosting him, he begged that he would not speak to the Archbishop—that it was his place to do so, and that he would do it. The Counsellor remained firm that he would speak to him.

The Father, seeing he could not prevent it, said, "You forget, then, what my sister has done this winter," referring to a misunderstanding that he himself had caused. The Counsellor very honourably answered him: "I forget all that, in order to remember that I am obliged to serve her in a matter of this nature." Seeing that he could gain nothing, he besought him that at least he might be the first to speak to the Archbishop. This made the Counsellor believe he was not acting straightforwardly. He said to him, "My Father, if the Archbishop calls you the first, you will go in the first, otherwise I will go in." "But, sir," added he, "I will tell him that you are there." "And I," said the Counsellor, "will tell him that you are there." Upon that the Archbishop, knowing nothing of this tangle, called the Counsellor, who said to him that he was informed there were strange reports against me; that he knew me for a long time as a woman of virtue, and that he answered for me with his own person; that if there was anything against me it was to him they should address themselves, and he would answer for everything. The Archbishop said he knew nothing at all about it; that he had not heard mention of me, but of a Father. Upon this the Counsellor told him that Father La Mothe had said that his Grace had even advised me to fly. The Archbishop said this was not true, he had never heard a word about it. Upon which the Counsellor asked him if he would consent to cause Father La Mothe to be called to say this to him. He was brought in, and the Archbishop asked him where he had picked up that; as for himself, he had never heard a word about it. Father La Mothe defended himself very badly, and said he had it from the Father Provincial. On leaving the Archbishop's he was quite furious, and came to look for Father La Combe to discharge his anger, telling him they should repent of the affront put upon him, and that he would find means to make them repent.

CHAPTER III.

SOME days after, having consulted with Monsieur Charon, the Official, they discovered the means of ruining Father La Combe. Since I had been unwilling to fly, it was what seemed the most hopeful. They caused His Majesty to be informed that Father La Combe was a friend of Molinos, and of the same opinions, pretending even, on the evidence of the scribe and his wife, that he had committed crimes which he had never done; whereupon His Majesty, believing the thing true, with as much justness as kindness, ordered that Father La Combe should not leave his convent, and that the Official should go and inform himself as to his opinions and his doctrines. There was never an order more equitable than this, but it did not suit the enemies of Father La Combe, who well knew it would be very easy for him to defend himself against matters so false. They concerted a means of withdrawing the affair from the cognizance of the General, and interesting His Majesty in it. The only one they found was to make him appear disobedient to the commands of the King, and, in order to succeed (for they well knew the obedience of Father La Combe was such that if he knew the order of the King he would not contravene it, and their designs would come to nothing), they resolved to conceal the order from Father La Combe; so that, going out for some exercise of charity or obedience, he should appear rebellious.

Father La Combe preached and heard confession as usual, and even gave two sermons, one at the Grand Cordeliers at St. Bonaventura, and another at St. Thomas de Villeneuve at the Grand Augustinians—sermons which carried away everybody. They carefully concealed from him, I say, the orders of the King, and plotted with the Official in all that they did; for they could avail nothing in this matter unless they were in concert.

Some days previously Father La Mothe told me that the Official was his intimate friend, and in this business would not do anything but what was pleasing to him. He pretended to make a spiritual retreat in order not to absent himself from the House, and the better to accomplish his business, and also to have a pretext for declining to serve Father La Combe, and take him to the Archbishop. One afternoon news was brought to Father La Combe that a horse had passed over the body of one of his penitents, and that he must go and take her confession. Without delay the Father asked permission from Father La Mothe to go and take the woman's confession: it was willingly given. Hardly had he set out, when the Official arrived. He drew up his *procès verbal* that he had not found Father La Combe; that he was disobedient to the orders of the King (which were never told to him). Quite openly they told the Official he was at my house, although they well knew the contrary, and that it was more than six weeks since he had been there. They informed the Archbishop that he was constantly at my house; but, as a single exit by the order of his Superior was not sufficient to make Father La Combe appear as black to His Majesty as they desired to make him appear, it was necessary to have other instances. However, Father La Combe, having learned that during his absence the Official had come to speak to him, resolved on no account to go out. This slightly embarrassed them: so they made the Official come one morning, and, as soon as he entered, they told Father

La Combe, who knew not that he was there, to go and say Mass. He was surprised, because it was not his turn. No sooner had he finished the Mass, than he saw the Official leaving. He went to his Superior, and said to him, "My Father, is it that they wish to entrap me? I have just seen Monsieur Charon, the Official, leaving." The Superior said to him, "He wished to speak to me. I asked him if he wished to speak to you; he said 'No.'" Yet that very morning there had been drawn up a second *procès verbal* that Father La Combe was not present, that he was again disobedient to the orders of the King. The Official came a third time. Father La Combe saw him from the window, and asked to speak to him. He was not allowed to appear, on the ground that the business was with the Superior, and that he had not come for Father La Combe. The latter came to see me at his confessional, where I was waiting, and told me that he much feared a snare; that the Official was there, and they would not let him speak to him. A third *procès verbal* was drawn up, that Father La Combe was for a third time disobedient to the orders of His Majesty.

I asked for Father La Mothe, and I said to him that I begged him not to behave thus; that he had told me he was very much the friend of the Official, and that assuredly they were trying to use stratagem. He said to me coldly, "He did not wish to see Father La Combe; he had not come for that." I advised Father La Combe to write to the Official, and to beg him not to refuse him the favour which is not refused to the most guilty—that of hearing them; to do him the kindness to come and ask for him. I myself sent the letter by an unknown person. The Official said he would go in the afternoon without fail. Father La Combe was somewhat troubled at having written this letter without the permission of his Superior, for he could not believe things were at the point they were: he went and told him. As soon as he knew it, he sent two

monks to the Official, to request him not to come, as the event proved. As I passed by, on my way to a house I had hired, I met these two monks. I had a suspicion of the fact (for our Lord willed I should be witness of all) : I had them followed. They went to the house of the Official. I felt certain Father La Combe had confided to Father La Mothe the letter he had written. I went to see Father La Combe, and asked him. He admitted it to me. I told him I had met these two monks on the road, and had had them followed. We were still speaking when Father La Mothe came to say the Official would not come, that things were changed. Father La Combe from this saw clearly that the affair would be one of simple trickery.

However, Father La Mothe pretended to be anxious to serve him. He said to him, "My Father, I know you have attestations of your doctrine from the Inquisition and the Sacred Congregation of Rites and the approbation of Cardinals for your security. These documents are beyond reply, and, since you are approved at Rome, a mere Official has nothing to say to you on the subject of doctrine." I was still at the Bernabites when Father La Combe went to look for those documents, and to draw up a memorial. Believing that Father La Mothe was acting in as good faith, as he protested, and seeing that he assured me that the Official would only do what he pleased, that he was his friend, and that he wished to serve Father La Combe, that Father in his simplicity believed him, and brought him his papers, which were unanswerable on the point of doctrine—as to morals, that was not within the province of the Official. After Father La Combe had given these necessary papers, they were suppressed, and in vain did the poor Father ask them back again. Father La Mothe said he had sent them to the Official. The Official said he had not received them. They were no more heard of.

On St. Michael's Day, five days before the imprisonment of Father La Combe, I was at his confessional. He

could only say these words to me : "I have so great a hunger for disgrace and ignominy I am quite languishing from it. I am going to say the Mass : listen to it, and sacrifice me to God, as I myself am going to immolate myself to Him." I said to him, "My Father, you will be satiated with them." And, in fact, on October 3, 1687, the Eve of St. Francis his patron, when at dinner, they came to carry him off, to place him with the Fathers of Christian Doctrine. During this time his enemies piled falsehood upon falsehood, and the Provincial sent for the Abbé who had been Grand-Vicar to the Bishop of Vercell and dismissed by him. He came express to Paris to make false depositions against Father La Combe ; but this was cut short, and served merely as a pretext for putting him into the Bastille. The Provincial had brought some unsigned reports from Savoy, and boasted everywhere that he had the means of putting Father La Combe in the Bastille. In fact, two days afterwards, he was put in the Bastille, and although he was found perfectly innocent, and they have been unable to support any judgment, they have been able to persuade His Majesty that he is a dangerous spirit ; therefore, without judging him, he has been shut up in a fortress for his life. And when his enemies learned that in the first fortress the officers esteemed him and treated him kindly, not content with having shut up such a servant of God, they have had him removed to a place where they believed he would have more to suffer. God, who sees all, will render to each according to his works. I know by the spirit communication that he is very content and abandoned to God.

After Father La Combe was arrested, Father La Mothe was more eager than ever to make me fly. He urged it upon all my friends ; he urged it upon me myself, assuring me that, if I went to Montargis, I should not be involved in this business : if I did not go, I should be involved in it. He then conceived the notion that, to dispose of me and

the little that remained to me, and to exculpate himself in the eyes of men for thus having handed over Father La Combe, it was necessary that he should be my director. He skilfully proposed it to me, at the same time holding out threats. He added, "You have no confidence in me, all Paris knows." I admit this stirred my pity. Some of his intimate friends came to see me, and said that, if I consented to put myself under his direction, I should keep out of the trouble. Not content with this, he wrote in all directions and to his brothers to lower me in their esteem. He so well succeeded that they wrote me the most outrageous letters imaginable, and especially that I should be ruined if I did not place myself under Father La Mothe. I still have the letters. There is a Father who prayed me to make a virtue of necessity; that if I did not put myself under his direction I should expect nothing but utter discomfiture. There were even some of my friends weak enough to advise me to pretend to accept his direction, and to deceive him. O God, you know how far I am from evasions and disguises, and trickery, especially in this matter. I replied that I was incapable of treating direction as a farce, that my central depth rejected this with a fearful force. I bore all this with extreme tranquillity, without care or anxiety to justify or defend myself, leaving to my God to appoint for me what he should please. He augmented my peace in proportion as Father La Mothe exerted himself to decry me, and this to such a degree I dared not show myself; every one cried out against me, and regarded me as an infamous character. I bore it all with joy, and I said to you, O my God, "It is for love of you I suffer these reproaches, and that my visage is covered with confusion" (Ps. xliii. 16). Every one without exception cried out against me, save those who were personally acquainted with me, who knew how far removed I was from these things; but the others accused me of heresy, sacrilege, infamies of every kind, the nature of which I am

even ignorant of, of hypocrisy, knavery. When I was at church I heard people behind me ridiculing me, and once I heard priests say that I ought to be thrown out of the church. I cannot express how content I was inwardly, leaving myself entirely without reserve to God, quite ready to suffer the last penalty if such was his will.

I did not take a step, leaving myself to my God, yet Father La Mothe wrote everywhere that I was ruining myself through my solicitations for Father La Combe. I have never, either for him or for myself, made any solicitation. O my Love, you know that I wish to owe everything to you, and that I expect nothing from any creature. It was what I wrote at the commencement to one of my friends, who was in a position to serve me effectually, that I begged him not to meddle with the matter; that I did not wish it should be said that any other but God had "enriched Abraham"—that is to say, I wished to owe everything to him. O my Love, I desire no other safety but what you yourself effect; to lose all for you is my gain; to gain all without you would be loss for me. Although I was in such universal disrepute, God did not cease to make use of me to win for him many souls, and the more the persecution increased, the more children were given to me, on whom our Lord bestowed the greatest graces through his insignificant servant.

There was not a day passed without a new attack on me, and sometimes many in the day. Reports were brought of what Father La Mothe was saying of me: and a Canon of Notre Dame told me that what made the ill he said of me so very credible was that he pretended to love and esteem me; he exalted me to the clouds, then he cast me down to the abyss. Five or six days after he had said that horrible reports against me had been brought to the Archbishop, a pious girl went to the scribe Gautier, and, not finding him, his little boy of five years of age said to her, "There is great news. My papa is gone with papers

to the Archbishop." In consequence of this, I learned that in fact the reports of which Father La Mothe had spoken had been carried to the Archbishop after the arrest of Father La Combe.

Father La Mothe, to excuse himself, said to me, "You were indeed right in saying that woman was wicked; it is she who has done all this." But our Lord, who wished to leave him without excuse, and who did not wish that I should be ignorant that these things came from him, so permitted that two merchants of Dijon came to Paris. They spoke to me of a wicked woman, who had fled from a refuge at Dijon, and had come and got married at Paris. She had committed thefts at Lyons of the silver of a famous confraternity, and was near having her nose cut off in some disreputable place. I had heard this woman say that she had dwelt at Dijon. I suspected that she was the person, and the more so because a worthy girl, who had seen her at service in a house, assured me that she there had committed theft, and changed her name and residence. I had a presentiment that this was the person. I asked those merchants—who were very honourable men, and brought me a letter from the Procurer-General's wife, a friend of mine, who is a saint—if they could recognize her. They said "Yes." As she gains her livelihood by sewing gloves, that devout girl who knew her brought about an interview with those merchants. They recognized her at once, and told me that they were ready to depose she was the person. I could not take up the cause, for I had not been attacked, but Father La Combe. I sent to Father La Mothe to tell him that I had discovered a means of proving both the knavery of this woman, and the innocence of Father La Combe: that there were merchants who knew her, and were ready to go and depose against her before the authorities, after which, a thousand witnesses would be found at Dijon. Father La Mothe answered me, that he did not wish to mix himself

up in it. He did indeed wish to mix himself up in betraying his monk, but not in defending him. I saw thereby accomplished all that our Lord had made known to me five years before, regarding Father La Combe and me, and how he should be sold by his brethren. I even made verses on it at the time; for truly it was given me to know that he should be a second Joseph, sold by his brothers, and the persecution of Father La Mothe was shown to me with the same clearness that I have since seen it carried out: therefore I could have no doubt of it; for in all that happened, I had an inner certainty that he was the mover, and God showed me in a dream how this Father was managing matters before I learned it elsewhere. Servants of God must not be judged by what their adversaries say of them, nor by the fact that one sees them succumb to calumny without any deliverance. Under the ancient law, God tried his most cherished servants by the greatest afflictions, as, for instance, the holy patriarchs, Job and Tobias; but he lifted them up from their disgrace, and seemed to pile upon them wealth and prosperity in proportion to the pains that they had suffered. But it is not the same under the new law, where Jesus Christ our legislator and divine model has been willing to expire in agonies. God, at the present day, treats his most cherished servants in exactly the same manner; he does not relieve them during their life, finding pleasure in seeing them expire in crosses, discredit, and confusion; and he acts in this way to render them conformable to his well-beloved Son, in whom he has especial pleasure; so that the conversion of an entire people could not be more agreeable to the eyes of the Eternal Father than this conformity to his Son: and as the greatest glory that God can draw from outside himself, is to see his Son expressed in men, whom he has created to be his images, the more extent this expression has in all its circumstances, and the more perfect that resemblance is, the more love and

complaisance does God also have for those souls. But no one places that conformity where it ought to be. It is not in the troubles one procures for one's self, but in those, whencesoever coming, which are suffered in this submission to the wills of God, uniform, in whatever manner or on whatever subject they may show themselves: in that abandonment or renunciation of all that we are in order that God may be all things in us; that he may lead us according to his views, and not according to ours, which, in general, are entirely opposed: in short, all perfection consists in this entire conformity with Jesus Christ, not in striking things of which men make account. Only in eternity will it be seen who are the true friends of God. Jesus Christ alone is pleasing to him, and nothing is pleasing to him but that which bears the character of Jesus Christ.

They still kept pressing me to fly, although the Archbishop had told me myself not to quit Paris, and they wished to incriminate me and Father La Combe also by my flight. They did not know how to work to get me into the hands of the Official, for if they accused me of crimes I must have other judges, and any other judge that might have been assigned me would have seen my innocence, and the false witnesses would have incurred risk. Yet they wished to make me pass for guilty to be master of me and shut me up, in order that the truth of this business might never be known; and for this purpose it was necessary to put me out of the way of ever being able to make it heard. They still circulated the same rumour of horrible crimes, although the Official assured me there was no mention of them, for he feared I should withdraw myself from his jurisdiction. They then made known to His Majesty that I was a heretic, that I had constant correspondence with Molinos—I, who did not know there was such a person as Molinos in the world until I learned it from the Gazette; that I had written a dangerous book;

and that therefore His Majesty should give a *lettre de cachet*, to place me in a convent, in order that they might interrogate me; that, as I was a dangerous spirit, it was necessary I should be shut up under key, cut off from all intercourse either without or within; that I had held assemblies. This they strongly maintained, and therein was my greatest crime; although this was utterly false, and I had never held one, nor seen three people at the same time. In order to better support the calumny about the assemblies, they counterfeited my writing, and concocted a letter in which I wrote that I had great designs, but that I much feared they would come to nothing, owing to the detention of Father La Combe; that I no longer held my assemblies at my own house; that I was too closely watched; but that I would hold them in such and such houses, and in such streets, at the houses of persons whom I did not know and never heard named. It was on this fictitious letter, which was shown to His Majesty, that the order to imprison me was given.

CHAPTER IV.

THEY would have executed it two months sooner, but I became very ill with excessive pains and fever. It was thought I had an abscess in the head, for the pain there during five weeks was enough to make me lose my senses ; besides this, I had a pain in my chest, and a violent cough. Twice I received the Holy Sacrament as for one dying. As soon as Father La Mothe knew I was ill, he came to see me. I received him in my usual way. He asked if I had not some papers ; that I ought to entrust them to him, rather than to any one else. I told him that I had none. He had learned from one of my friends, who, knowing who he was, but not that he was the author of this business, told him that he was sending me the attestation of the Inquisition for Father La Combe, having learned that his own had been lost. This attestation was a very important document, for they had informed His Majesty that Father La Combe had avoided the Inquisition.

Father La Mothe was very much alarmed to know I had this document, and, making use of his ordinary artifice and of the opportunity of my extremity, which did not allow me the full freedom of my intelligence, owing to excessive pain and confusion of my head, he came to see me. He assumed the rôle of the affectionate and joyous person, telling me that Father La Combe's matters were getting

on very well (though he had just caused him to be put into the Bastille) ; that he was on the point of coming out victorious, at which he was extremely glad ; that only one thing was wanting—that it had been said he had fled from the Inquisition, and they needed an attestation of the Inquisition : if he had that, he would be set free at once. He added, “I know you have one. If you give it to me, this will be done.” At first I made a difficulty about giving it to him, having such good cause for distrust ; but he said to me, “What ! you wish to cause the ruin of that poor Father La Combe, when you might save him, and you will cause us this affliction for want of a document that you have under your hand.” I gave way, and sent for this document and placed it in his hands. He immediately suppressed it, and said that it was gone astray ; and however I urged him to restore it to me, he has never done so. As soon as I had given the attestation to Father La Mothe, he went out, and the Ambassador of Turin sent a page to ask me for this attestation, which he would have an opportunity of using to the advantage of Father La Combe. I asked him if he had not seen two monks go out as he came in. He said, “Yes.” I told him I had just given it into the hands of the elder. He ran after, and asked it from him. Father La Mothe denied that I had given it to him, asserting that I had an affection of the brain, which made me imagine it. The page came to tell me his answer. The persons who were in my room bore witness that I had given it to him. It could not be recovered from his hands.

When Father La Mothe saw that he had nothing more to fear from this quarter, he no longer observed any measure in insulting me, dying as I was. There was hardly an hour passed that they did not put upon me new insults. They told me that they were only waiting for my recovery, to imprison me. He wrote still more strongly against me to his brothers, informing them that I

persecuted him. I wondered at the injustice of creatures. I was alone, deprived of everything, seeing nobody; for since the imprisonment of Father La Combe, my friends were ashamed of me; my enemies triumphed; I was abandoned and generally oppressed by all the world. On the other hand, Father La Mothe, in credit, applauded by all, doing what he pleased, and oppressing me in the most extraordinary manner; and he complains I illtreat him at the very time I am at the gates of death! He is believed, and I, who do not utter a word and preserve silence, am illtreated. His brothers wrote to me all in concert—one, that it was for my crimes I suffered; that I should place myself under the direction of Father La Mothe, or I should repent of it: and with that he said to me the most insulting things of Father La Combe. The other told me that I was mad, and must be tied; lethargic, and must be roused up. The first wrote to me again that I was a monster of pride and such like, since I was unwilling to be cleansed, directed, and corrected by Father La Mothe: and the other let me know that I wished to be thought innocent while I did everything that resembled sin. This was my daily fare in the extremity of my ills; and with this, Father La Mothe cried with all his force against me, that I illtreated him. To all these insults I opposed only kindness, even making him presents. As the royal prophet says: “I sought some one to take part in my pain, but I found none.” My soul continued abandoned to her God, who seemed to be joined with creatures to torment her. For besides that in all this affair I have never had perceptible support nor interior consolation, I might say, with Jesus Christ, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” and, in addition, inconceivable bodily pains. I had not a friend, nor any corporal relief. I was accused of every crime, of infamy, error, sorcery, and sacrilege. It seemed to me that I had only one business henceforth, which was to be for the rest of my life the plaything of providence;

continually tossed about, and after that an eternal victim of divine justice. In all this my soul is unresisting, having no longer an “own” interest, and unable to desire to be anything but what God shall cause her to be, for time and for eternity. Let those who read this reflect a little on the meaning of a state of this kind, when God appears to range himself on the side of creatures; and, with that, a perfect steadfastness which never belies itself. It is indeed your work, my God, where the creature avails nothing.

As soon as I was in a condition to have myself carried to the Mass in a chair, I was informed that I must speak to M. the Theologian. It was a trap arranged between Father La Mothe and the Canon, at whose house I lodged, in order to furnish a pretext for arresting me. I spoke with much simplicity to that man, who is quite of the party of the Jansenists, and whom M. N—— had gained over to torment me. We only spoke of things within his grasp, and of which he approved. Nevertheless, two days afterwards, it was reported I had declared many things and accused many persons; and they used this to exile all the people who displeased them. A great number were exiled, who they said had formed assemblies with me. They were all persons whom I never saw, whose names are unknown to me, and who never knew me. This is what has been most painful to me, that they should have made use of this invention to exile so many men of honour, although they well knew I had no acquaintance with them. One person was exiled because he said that my little book was good. It is to be remarked that nothing has been said to those who have formally approved it. Far from condemning the book, it has been reprinted since I am a prisoner, and advertised at the Archbishopric and throughout all Paris. Yet this book is the pretext which has been seized upon to bring me under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop. The book is sold, is distributed,

is reprinted, and I am still kept a prisoner. In other cases when anything bad is discovered in books, they are content to condemn the books and leave the persons at liberty. In my case, it is the exact opposite; my book is approved anew, and they detain me a prisoner. The same day that all those gentlemen were exiled, a *lettre de cachet* was brought commanding me to go to the convent of the Visitation in the Faubourg St. Antoine. I received the *lettre de cachet* with a tranquillity which extremely surprised the person who brought it. He could not help showing his astonishment, as he had seen the grief of those who were only exiled. He was touched even to tears, and though he had an order to carry me with him, he left me the whole day on my promise, and only prayed me in the evening to betake myself to St. Mary. That day many of my friends came to see me. I spoke of it only to some of them. All that day I had an extraordinary gaiety, which astonished those who saw me, and who knew the business. I was left free all the day, and they would have been very well pleased had I fled; but our Lord gave me quite other sentiments. I could not support myself on my legs, for I still had fever every night, and it was not yet fifteen days since I had received the Holy Viaticum. I could not, I say, stand when I had to sustain so rude a shock. I thought that my daughter would be left to me, and a maid to attend me. My heart clung the closer to my daughter for the trouble she had cost me to rear, and that I had endeavoured, with the help of grace, to uproot her faults, and to bring her to the disposition of having no will, which is the best disposition for a girl of her age: she was not twelve years.

CHAPTER V.

On the 29th of January, 1688, the Eve of St. Francis de Sales, I had to go to the convent of the Visitation. As soon as I was there it was signified to me that I could not have my daughter, nor any one to attend upon me; that I should be a prisoner, confined by myself in a room. This was the entertainment I had to restore me in my extreme feebleness; but I keenly felt the separation when they tore from me my daughter. I asked that she might be left in the same house, and that I would not see her. Not only was this refused; but they had, further, the harshness to forbid any news of her being given to me. My trouble was that I feared her exposure in the world, and lest she should in a moment lose what I had with so much care endeavoured to secure to her. From this moment I had to sacrifice my daughter as if she no longer belonged to me.

They selected the House of the Visitation in the street of St. Antoine, as being the one where I had no acquaintance, and in which they had most confidence. They thought I should there be kept with more rigour than in any other; and they were not mistaken, for they knew the zeal of the Mother Superior in executing the King's orders. Besides, such a frightful portrait of me had been given to them, that the nuns regarded me with horror. It is a House where faith is very pure, and God is very well served, and

for this reason, believing me a heretic, they could not regard me with favour. In the whole House they chose for my gaoler the person who they knew would treat me rigorously. To make my cross complete this girl was needed.

As soon as I had entered they asked me who was my confessor since the imprisonment of Father La Combe. I named him. He is a very good man, who even esteems me, yet terror had so seized upon all my friends, owing to my imprisonment, that this worthy monk, without realizing the consequences, renounced me; saying he had never heard my confession, and he never would. That had a bad effect, and having detected me, according to their story, in falsehood, there was no further doubt of all the rest. This made me pity that Father, and wonder at human weakness. My esteem for him was not lessened, yet there were many persons who had seen me at his confessional, and who might have served as witnesses. I was content to say, "Such a one has renounced me. God be praised!" It was who would disavow me. Each one brought himself to say he did not know me, and all the rest accused me of strange wickedness; it was who would invent the most stories.

The girl I had by me was gained over by my enemies to torment me. She wrote all my words, and spied everything. The smallest thing could not reach me but she ripped it entirely. She used her whole endeavours to catch me in my words. She treated me as a heretic, deceived, empty-headed. She reproached me for my prayers, and a hundred other things. If I was at church she gave great sighs, as if I was a hypocrite. When I communicated she was still worse, and she told me she prayed God that he would not enter into me. In short, she regarded me with only horror and indignation. This girl was the intimate of the Superior of the House, so that he saw her almost every day, and this Superior was in the party of Father La Mothe

and the Official; so that, although this girl was ready enough to obey him from the inclination she had for him, he made it a matter of conscience for her to illtreat me. God alone knows what she made me suffer. Moreover, the Official said I should be judged on the testimony of the Prioress; yet she never saw me, and only knew me through this girl, who perpetually told her ill of me; and being prejudiced against me, the most innocent words appeared to her crimes, and actions of piety, hypocrisy. I cannot express to what point her aversion for me went. As she was the only person of that Community I saw, being always locked into a small room, I had matter for the exercise of patience. Our Lord has not permitted me to lose it.

Yet I committed an infidelity, which caused me strange suffering: it is that when I saw her eagerness to make me speak in order that she might catch me in my words, I tried to watch myself. O God what torment for a soul become simple as a child! I tried to guard my words that they might be more exact; but the only result of this was to make me commit more faults, our Lord permitting it so, to punish the care I had wished to take of myself—I, who am his without reserve, and who ought to regard myself only as a thing that belongs to him, with no more thought of myself than if I had no existence. Therefore, so far from my precaution serving me, I was surprised into faults in my words, which but for that I would not have committed; and, owing to the care I had wished to take of myself, I was for some days thrown back upon myself with a torment that I cannot better compare than to that of hell. There is this difference between a soul in purgatory and the Rebel Angel—that the soul in purgatory suffers an inexplicable torment because she has a very powerful tendency to unite herself immediately to her Sovereign Good, but yet her pain is not equal to that of a spirit who has in heaven enjoyed her Sovereign Good and

who is rejected from it. This was the state in which my soul was. She was, as it were, in rage and despair, and I believe if it had lasted I should have died of it; but I quickly recognized whence came my fault. I abandoned myself freely, and I resolved, though this girl, by her false reports, should bring me to the scaffold, I would take no care of myself, and would have no more concern for myself than if I had ceased to exist. This gradually passed away, and I returned into my former state.

Shortly after I entered the convent I had a dream. I suddenly saw the heaven opened, and like a rain of golden fire which appeared to me to be, as it were, the fury of God, which sought to satisfy itself and do justice to itself. There were with me a great number of persons who all took to flight to avoid it. As for me, I did quite the contrary. I prostrated myself on the earth, and I said to our Lord, without speaking to him otherwise than in the manner he knows and understands: "It is I, my God, am the victim of your divine justice; it is for me to endure all your thunder-bolts." Immediately all that rain, which was of flaming gold, fell upon me with such violence that it seemed to deprive me of life. I woke with a start, fully certain that our Lord did not desire to spare me, and that he would make me pay well for the title of "victim of his justice."

Immediately after I came into this House, Monsieur Charon, the Official, and a Doctor of the Sorbonne came to interrogate me. They commenced by asking me if it was true that I had followed Father La Combe, and that he had taken me from France with him. I answered that he was ten years out of France when I left it, and therefore I was very far from having followed him. They asked me if he had not taught me to practise prayer. I declared I had practised it from my youth; that he had never taught it to me; that I had no acquaintance with him except from a letter of Father La Mothe, which he had

brought me on his way to Savoy, and that, ten years before my departure from France. The Doctor of the Sorbonne who was acting in good faith, who has never known anything of the knaveries (for I was not allowed to speak in private to him), said aloud that there was no ground there for a serious inquiry. They asked me if it was not he who had composed the little book, "Short and Easy Method." I said, "No;" that I had written it in his absence, without any design it should be printed; that a Counsellor of Grenoble, a friend of mine, having taken the manuscript from my table, found it useful, and desired it might be printed; that he asked me to make a preface for it and to divide it into chapters, which I did in a single morning. When they saw all I said tended to acquit Father La Combe, they no longer questioned me about him. They commenced by interrogating me on my book. They have never interrogated me on my faith, nor on my prayer, nor on my morals.

I at once made a formal protest, written and signed with my own hand, that I had never wandered from the sentiments of the Holy Church, for which I would be ready to give my blood and my life; that I had never joined with any party; that I had all my life professed the most orthodox sentiments; that I had even laboured, all my life, to submit my intellect and destroy my own will; that if anything were found in my books that might be ill interpreted, I had already submitted all, and I again submitted it, to the opinion of the Holy Church, and even to that of persons of doctrine and of experience; that if I answered to the interrogatories upon the little book it was merely through obedience, and not to support it, as my only design had been to help souls, not to hurt them. That was the first interrogation. I was interrogated four times. On my coming into the House they told the Prioress that I would be there only ten days, to the end of my interrogation. I was not at first surprised that I was

prohibited from all communication outside the house or within, because I thought the motive was that I might not have any advice in the interrogation.

The second interrogation was on the little book; whether I had desired to do away with vocal prayer from the church, and particularly the Chaplet, referring to the place where I had taught the saying of *Pater Noster* with application, and had explained the *Pater*, and that a *Pater* so repeated was worth more than many said without attention. It was not difficult to answer this, for to teach a prayer with attention and application is not to destroy prayer; on the contrary, it is to establish it, and to render it perfect. They then put to me other questions on the same book, which I then had not; and I have so little memory, that I did not even know if what they asked me was in the book. Our Lord gave me the grace that he promised to the Apostles, which was to give me a much better answer than I could have found for myself. They said to me, "If you had explained yourself like this throughout the book, you would not be here."

Suddenly I remembered I had put at the foot of the chapter the same reason that they approved, and I stated it. They would not write it down. After this, I saw they had simply taken the passages of the book that were not explained, and they had omitted their explanation; and it was merely to serve as a pretext for persecution, as the sequel has shown. After I had declared to them the explanations were in the book, and if there was anything wrong in it, they should not hold responsible me, a woman without learning, but the doctors who had approved it even without my asking them, since I was not acquainted with them; from that time they no more interrogated me on this book, nor on that on "The Song of Songs," being satisfied with the submission I had made.

The last interrogation was on a forged letter, where

I was made to write, that I had held assemblies in houses that I was not acquainted with, and all the rest I have already mentioned. They read the letter to me, and as the writing was not at all like mine, I was told it was a copy, and that they possessed the original, which was similar to my writing. I asked to see it, but it has never appeared. I said I had never written it, and that I had no acquaintance with the Minim, to whom it was addressed. To understand the malignity of this letter, it should be known that a worthy Minim Father came to see me on behalf of certain nuns of my acquaintance. One of the hostile persecutors said to me, "You see then Minims also." Father La Mothe and the woman saw him, and one of the two asked me his name. I did not know it, for I was not acquainted with him, so I was unable to tell it. They concocted then a letter to a Minim to whom they gave the name Father Francis, although I have since learned his name to be quite different. They made me, then, write to this Father, on the 30th of October, a letter in which I wrote to him as if he were residing at Paris, the Place Royale, "My Father, do not come to see me at the Cloister Notre Dame." The reason why they had put this was, that they had watched that he had not come to the Cloister Notre Dame, and were ignorant of the cause. It continued, that I no longer held assemblies because I was being spied on. This letter convicted me also of designs against the State, cabals, and assemblies; and they added, "I do not sign because of the evil times." As they were reading this letter to me, I maintained I had never written it. The very style would have shown this to all who have seen or received my letters. As to the assemblies, I always said I had no acquaintance with those persons; that I knew no other Minim but one, who had come to me on behalf of certain nuns; that he did not belong to Paris, that he was Corrector of Amiens. At the time, I did not recollect other reasons to mention, and the Official would not even

let these reasons be written. He made them merely put that I said it was not mine. After having read this letter, he turned to me, and said, "You see, Madame, that after a letter like this there was good reason to put you in prison." I answered him, "Yes, Sir, if I had written it." He maintained still, in the presence of the Doctor, it was my writing. But our Lord, who never fails at need, made me remember, as soon as they were outside, that the worthy Father was at Amiens from the commencement of the month of September, and it was impossible for me to have written to him as being in Paris on the 30th of October; that he had gone away five weeks before I lodged at the Cloister Notre Dame, and therefore I could not have written to him from there before his departure, on the subject of that arrest, and pray him to come and see me on the 30th of October, in such and such houses with which I was not acquainted, and where I never was—the more so as he was at Amiens. I sent all this in writing to the Official, who took very good care not to show it to the Doctor. I further wrote him that, if he was unwilling to take the trouble to prove its falseness, he should give a commission to the guardian of my children, who would willingly do it. But far from this, what did they do? I am shut up more closely than before. I am accused and defamed everywhere, and they deprive me of the means of justifying myself. They fabricate letters for me, and they are unwilling I should prove my innocence of them. For two months after the last interrogation not a word was said to me, while the same rigour was practised towards me; that Sister treating me worse than ever.

Up to this I had not written anything for my justification to the Archbishop or to the Official; for I had no liberty to write to others, no more than I have at present. I had been, up to the time that I tried to watch myself in the manner I have mentioned, without any sensible or perceptible support, but in a peace of paradise, leaving

myself as a mark for all the malice of men. My diversion was to express my state in verse. It seemed to me that, though shut up in a close prison, my soul had the former liberty, larger than the whole earth, which appeared to me but as a point in comparison with the vastness I experienced; and my contentment was without contentment for myself, because it was in God alone, above every *own* interest. Twelve days before Easter I went to confession. I raised my eyes without knowing why, and I saw a picture of our Lord fallen under his cross, with these words: "See if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow." At the same time, I received a powerful impression that crosses were about to fall on me in greater crowds. I had always, until then, entertained some hope justice would be done me; but when I saw that the more I appeared innocent the more they endeavoured to obscure my innocence, and the more closely I was kept confined, I concluded they sought not my innocence, but only to make me appear guilty. What happened confirmed me still more in this thought.

The Official came to see me by himself, without the Doctor, who had been present at the interrogations, and he said to me, "We must not talk about the false letter; it was nothing" (after having previously told me it was for that I was imprisoned). I said to him, "What, Sir, is it not the point in question—the counterfeiting the writing of a person and making her pass for one who holds assemblies and has designs against the State?" He immediately said to me, "We will seek the author." I said to him, "He is no other than scribe Gautier," whose wife had told me he counterfeited all sorts of writing. He saw well I had hit the mark. Then he asked me where were the papers I had written on the Scripture. I told him I would give them when I should be out of prison. I did not wish to say to whom I had confided them. He said to me, "If we happen to ask them from you, say the same thing," making me offers of service. Yet he went away very

pleased thinking he had a means of ruining me beyond remedy, and satisfying Father La Mothe's desire that I should never be let out of prison.

He drew up a *procès verbal* as if he had interrogated me judicially, although it was nothing but a simple conversation. The *procès verbal* ran, that up to that having been in appearance docile, I had rebelled when they had demanded my papers. I knew nothing of all this. I wrote a very strong letter to the Official on what he had said to me, that the letter they had forged was nothing. I also wrote to the Archbishop, who is himself mild enough, and who would not have been led to treat me with so much rigour if he had not been solicited by my enemies. He gave me no answer. But the Official thought he had found a means of ruining me by saying I had been rebellious, and I would not give up my writings. Three or four days before Easter he came with the Doctor of the Sorbonne and his *procès verbal*. To the latter I answered that I had made a great difference between a private conversation and an interrogation, and that I had not deemed myself obliged to tell a thing which had been asked me only hypothetically, and that the papers were in the hands of my maid. They asked me if I was willing to hand them over to be disposed of as they pleased. I said, "Yes; that having written only to do the will of God, I was as content to have written for the fire as for the press." The Doctor said nothing could be more edifying. The copies of my writings were placed in their hands, for as to the originals they had long ceased to be at my disposal. I do not know where those who took them from me have placed them; but I have this firm faith, that they will all be preserved in spite of the tempest. As for me, I had no more of them than I gave, and I did not know where were the others; thus I could say it with truth.

The Prioress of the House where I am a prisoner asked the Official how my affair went, and if I would soon be let

out of prison. It escaped him to say to her (and perhaps he did it owing to the Doctor, the better to screen himself): "My Mother, what could one do to a person that does and says all that one desires and in whom nothing is found? She will be released on a very early day." Yet they did not justify me. The Archbishop declared himself well satisfied with me, and my release and innocence were openly spoken of. Father La Mothe was the only one who had apprehensions. They sought to catch me by surprise.

The more I was innocent, the more troubles I had. I was informed my affair went well, and I should be released at Easter. In the depth of my soul I had a presentiment to the contrary.

CHAPTER VI.

Up to this I had been in a state of inexplicable contentment and joy at suffering and being a prisoner. It seemed to me that the captivity of my body made me better taste the liberty of my spirit. The more I was confined externally, the more I was large and extended within. My prayers still the same, simple and nothing; although there are times when the Spouse clasps more closely and plunges deeper into himself. I had been in this way up to the time that I committed the infidelity of trying to watch myself in the manner I have told. On St. Joseph's Day I was introduced into a more marked state, one rather of heaven than of earth. I went to the Calvary, which is at the bottom of the garden; my gaoler having had permission to take me there. It was in this place (which has always been my delight), and there I remained a very long time; but in a state too simple, pure, and naked for me to be able to speak of it. The most elevated dispositions are those of which one can say nothing. I am not astonished nothing is said of those of the Holy Virgin and St. Joseph. All those which have anything marked are much inferior.

By this state—so much above anything that can be told, although in the same central depth which does not change—I understood there was some new cup for me to drink: like as the Transfiguration of Christ, where he conversed

on his sufferings, was, as it were, the pledge of that which he had to suffer, and an introduction into his Passion; where, in fact, he entered internally from that very hour, depriving himself for the rest of his life of the outpourings of the Divinity upon the humanity; so that he was deprived from that moment of all the supports he previously had. Then his Glory, exhibiting itself upon his body, made, as it were, a last effort to withdraw for ever; and having to be altogether shut up in his Divinity, it left the humanity in a privation so much the greater as the state of glory and enjoyment was to him more natural. As, then, from the Transfiguration, so far as I can understand, up to the death of Jesus Christ, all outpourings of beatitudes were suspended, to leave him in pure suffering, I can also say that the same happened to me, although unworthy to participate in the states of Jesus Christ, and with the disparity between an insignificant and weak creature and a God Man. For the day of St. Joseph, a saint with whom I am in a very intimate manner united, was as a day of Transfiguration for me. It seemed to me that I had no longer anything of the creature, and from this time a sort of suspension has taken place, so that I have been as much abandoned by God as persecuted by creatures: not that I have any pain or trouble at this abandonment or that my soul has the least inclination for anything else—that can no longer be, for she is without inclination or tendency for anything whatsoever; but nevertheless she is in such an abandonment that I am sometimes obliged to reflect to know if I have a being and subsistence. The whole of St. Joseph's Day I was the same, and it began to diminish gradually up to the day of the Annunciation, which is the day my heart rejoices in: yet on that day it was signified to me that I must enter upon new bitterness, and drink to the dregs of the indignation of God. The dream that I had where all the indignation of God fell upon me came back to my

mind, and I had to sacrifice myself anew. The evening of the Annunciation I was put into an agony I cannot express. The fury of God was entire, and my soul without any support from heaven or from earth. It seemed to me that our Lord desired to make me experience something of his agony in the Garden. This lasted until Easter, after which I was restored to my former tranquillity with this difference, that all co-operation is removed, and that I am, whether in regard to God or in regard to creatures, as that which no longer exists. I have to make an effort to think if I am and what I am; if there are in God creatures and anything subsisting.

Although I have been treated in the manner I have said, and I shall hereafter tell, I have never had any resentment against my persecutors. I have not been ignorant of the persecution they caused me. God has willed that I have seen all and known all; he gave me an interior certainty that it was so, and I have never had a moment's doubt of it: but although I knew it, I had no bitterness against them, and, had it been necessary to give my blood for their salvation I would have given it, and I would still give it with all my heart. With regard to them, I have never had anything to mention in confession. There are feeble minds who say that we ought not to believe that people do that which nevertheless they do. Did Jesus Christ and the Saints pluck out their eyes to avoid seeing their persecutors? They saw them, but they saw at the same time that they would not have "had any power except it had been given them from above." Therefore it is that, loving the blows which God inflicts, one cannot hate the hand he uses to strike us, although one well sees which it is.

On Holy Thursday the Official came to see me by himself, and told me he gave me the freedom of the cloister—that is to say, that I could go about in the House; that he would not give any liberty for outside. I could not even

obtain permission to speak to the guardian of my children. Yet they did not cease continually urging my daughter to consent to a marriage which would have been her ruin; and, in order to succeed, they had put her into the hands of the cousin of the gentleman to whom they wished to give her. That would have caused me great anxiety if I was capable of feeling it; but I had all my trust in God, and that he would not permit it to take place, the person in question having no tincture of Christianity, and being utterly ruined. The Official told me, at the same time, that I was entirely acquitted; that I was left here only for a short time for form's sake, that they might have the opinion of the Prioress, whose merit and uprightness was long known. The Prioress and all the community gave me the best character that one can give of a person, and the community conceived a very great affection for me, so that the nuns could not help speaking good of me to everybody. Had I my choice of all the convents in Paris, even those where I am known, I could not be better than in this one. It was there, O my Love, that I recognized yet more your providence over me, and the protection you afforded me; for they had chosen this Community as the one where they believed I should be treated with the greatest rigour, after having in the strongest manner prejudiced it against me.

As soon as Father La Mothe learned they spoke well of me in this House, he persuaded himself they could not speak well of me without speaking ill of him; and although I saw nobody, he wrote and complained to all the world, that I decried him everywhere, and that the community were speaking much ill of him; so that he embittered anew against me the minds of the Archbishop and of the Official, whose confessor he is. Far from releasing me at the end of ten days, as they had said, they left me there many months without saying anything to me. They even circulated new calumnies and, after having said I was innocent, they blackened me worse than ever. The Archbishop said I

must expect nothing but from my repentance. He told Père de la Chaise that I had errors, and that I had even retracted them with tears, but that there was good ground to believe it was only through dissimulation, and therefore it was necessary to keep me shut up. On this I demanded only one thing, that they should punish me if I was guilty, but that they should exhibit my interrogation. It was what they never would do : on the contrary, the only answer was fresh calumnies.

What has been most painful to me in all this affair, is that it was impossible to take any measures. I was continually tossed between hope and despair. They suddenly came to tell me my persecutors had the upper hand, that they had made His Majesty believe I was guilty of all the crimes of which I was accused. Practically all my friends withdrew, and said they did not know me. My enemies cried Victory ! and redoubled their rigours and severities against me. I continued content and resigned to remain in disgrace, believing I must there end my days, and no longer thought but of remaining all my life a prisoner. Then suddenly there came days of hope, which showed the business almost concluded in my favour, and that I was on the point of being declared and recognized as innocent. When the matter seemed settled and hope revived, there came a new turn, and a fresh calumny of my enemies, who made it believed they had found new documents against me, and that I had committed new crimes. This was continual, so that I regarded myself in the hands of God as a reed beaten by the wind, laid flat then suddenly lifted up, unable to continue either in disgrace or in hope. My soul has never changed her position from being incessantly beaten : she was always in the same state.

I was suddenly told that Father La Mothe had succeeded in having me placed in a House of which he is the master, and where it was believed he would make me suffer extremely, for he is very harsh. He so fully

believed it, that he had given orders to keep a room ready to shut me up in. They brought me this news, which was of all what I should dread. All my friends were weeping bitterly. I did not feel even the first movement of trouble or pity for myself ; my soul did not even for an instant change her position. Another time a person of weight offered to speak for me, and was confident of my immediate deliverance. The thing seemed done. I had not a first movement of joy at it. It seems to me my soul is in an entire immobility, and there is in me so entire a loss of all which regards myself, that none of my interests can cause me pain or pleasure. Besides, I belong so entirely to my God, that I cannot wish anything for myself but what he does ; death, the scaffold, with which numberless times I have been threatened, does not make the least alteration. Shall I say it, O my Love, that there is in me a sovereign love for you alone above all love, which even in Hell would make me content in the disposition in which I am ; because I cannot content myself or afflict myself with anything which should be my own, but with the sole contentment of God. Now, as God will be infinitely happy, it seems to me that there is not any misfortune, either in time or in eternity, which can hinder me from being infinitely happy ; since my happiness is in God alone.

No justice was rendered me ; on the contrary, they endeavoured to invent new calumnies against me, and thereby to conceal the strange persecution to which I was subjected. The only confessor allowed me was one who hears confession from the nuns, and he is deaf ; so that they were obliged to have extraordinary ones brought. All I could obtain was on the eve of Pentecost to make my confession to a monk, who came because the confessor was ill, and it was out of the question to pass that festival without confession. I admit the very frequent confession practised in this House has been my greatest trouble ; for our Lord keeps me in such an oblivion of myself, that

I could not confess anything but generalities, or matters long passed: but as to the present, I do not know where I am and what I am; I can say nothing of it. A lady of the world whom Providence caused me to meet in this House, and who has conceived much affection for me, and has rendered me all the services she was able, seeing the injustice done to me, resolved to ask a Jesuit Father of her acquaintance to speak to Père de la Chaise. This worthy Father did it: but he found Père de la Chaise much prejudiced against me, because they had made him believe that I was in errors, and that I had even retracted them, but that many still clung to me; so that this worthy lady advised me to write to Père de la Chaise. I wrote him this letter:—

“MY REVEREND FATHER,

“If my enemies had attacked only my honour and my liberty, I would have preferred silence to justifying myself, it being my habit to adopt this course; but at present, when they attack my faith, saying that I have retracted errors, and when I am even suspected of having still more, I have been obliged, while asking the protection of your Reverence, to inform you of the truth. I assure your Reverence I have done nothing of the kind, and what surprises me is, that, after the Official himself has acknowledged that the memoirs which were given in against me were false, and that the letter forged against me was recognized as coming from a forger, as a consequence of the incontestable proofs I gave him it was not mine: after those who have been given me for examiners, who have never demanded from me a retraction, but petty explanations, with which they appeared satisfied, have declared me innocent, and I have even placed in their hands writings which I had only made for my own edification, offering them to their judgment with all my heart—that after, I say, these things, I have

reason to believe your Reverence is not informed of my innocence. I cannot, my Reverend Father, dissimulate that, for any other article but that of faith, it would be easy for me to suffer calumny, but how could I keep silence for the most righteous grief that ever was? I have all my life made so open a profession of the most orthodox sentiments, that I have even thereby attracted enemies. If I dared open my heart to your Reverence with the secrecy of a perfect confidence, it would be very easy to prove to you, by incontestable facts, that it is temporal interests which have brought me where I am. After having refused things which in conscience I could not do, I was threatened with being involved in trouble. I have seen the menaces; I have even felt their effects, without being able to defend myself, because I am without intrigue and without party; and how easy is it, my Reverend Father, to oppress a person destitute of all protection! But how can I expect your Reverence to believe me, when, unfortunately, I am only known to you by calumny? However, I advance nothing that I cannot prove, if you consent to be informed of it. It would be a favour that would win the eternal gratitude of your, etc.”

This letter had an effect the exact opposite of what was anticipated. I wrote it only through complaisance and to avoid scandal; for they regarded as obstinacy my resolution to make no step for my justification. They said that I was expecting God to do everything, and that this was to tempt him. I felt within that this letter and all they made me write would be without effect; that, on the contrary, they would do more harm than good. Yet our Lord willed I should write, to make them see that all one does for a soul given up to God is an exceedingly small thing, if he does not himself do it. I had known from the commencement that our Lord wished to be my sole deliverer. Therefore I had a joy that cannot be expressed when I saw all the

intrigues of the best-intentioned creatures only serve to spoil everything. Père de la Chaise spoke of me to the Archbishop. This only served to give rise to new falsifications and new persecutions. The Archbishop assured him I was very criminal, and, the better to prove it, he feigned to wish to show me favour. He sent here a Bishop, one of his friends, to solicit the Prioress underhand that she should make me write a letter of submission and civility, in which I should declare that I was criminal and that I had retracted, promising that, if I wrote this letter, they would release me at once.

I forgot to say that, a month previous to this, the Official came with the Doctor to see me, and, in the presence of the Mother Superior, proposed to me that, if I would consent to the marriage of my daughter, I should be released from prison before eight days. I said I would not purchase my liberty at the price of sacrificing my daughter; that I was content to remain in prison as long as it should please our Lord. He answered that the King would not do any violence but he desired it. I said that I knew the King was too just and too equitable to act otherwise. Yet, a few days afterwards, they reported to Père de la Chaise, that I had said that the King wished to keep me in prison until I had consented to the marriage of my daughter; that the Archbishop had himself told the guardian of my children that I should not be released until I had consented to it; and, although I saw nobody and had no communication with outside, they accused me of having invented this, and they said I was a State criminal, and should again be shut up under key. But before this they made another attempt to see if I would write the letter they desired of me, as preliminary to my deliverance. They had no intention to deliver me, but a strong wish to have an incontestable proof against me, in order to confine me for the rest of my days—the one object my enemies had in view.

CHAPTER VII.

A FEW days later I saw, by night in a dream, the same man who had made the first false document and he made two others. I also saw another intrigue of Father La Mothe and a persecution he raised against me, so that I found no refuge. Our Lord made me know, either by presentiment or by dream, what they were doing against me. Three or four days afterwards the Official and the Doctor came to tell the Prioress that I must again be shut up under key. She represented to them that the room I was in was small, opening only on the side where the sun shines all day; and in the month of July, how was it possible? it was to cause my death. They paid no attention to this. The Mother asked why they shut me up again. They told her I had done frightful things for a month back in her House, that I had had strange bursts of violence in this same House and that I scandalized the nuns. In vain the Mother protested the contrary, and assured them the whole community were edified by me, and they could not tire of admiring my patience and my moderation. The Official said he knew it at first hand, and I had done terrible things in her House. The poor woman could not restrain her tears at seeing an invention so utterly remote from the truth.

They then sent to fetch me, and they maintained to me that I had done horrible things in this House for a month

back. I asked what they were. They would not tell me. I asked who could give an account of what I had done beside the Prioress and the nuns, yet they would not accept their testimony; that I would suffer as long as it pleased God: that they had commenced this business on forgeries, and would continue it on the same. The Doctor said to me I ought not to embitter matters, nor do the horrible things they said I had done. I answered him that God was witness of all. He told me that, in this sort of affairs, to take God for a witness was a crime. I told him that nothing in the world could prevent me having recourse to God. I then withdrew, and I was shut up more closely than the first time; and because they had not got a key, they fastened the room with a wooden bar across. All who passed by there were astonished. I had much joy at this new humiliation. Oh, what pleasure, my Love, to be, for you, in the most extreme abjections!

When the Official was asked why he had caused me to be shut up, he said, he did not know; that they must ask the Prelate. The guardian of my children went to see the Archbishop, and asked him why they had imprisoned me, since he himself had said I was exonerated. He answered him, "You, Sir, know, being a Judge, that ten documents do not condemn, but a single one may be found which condemns absolutely." The Counsellor said to him, "But, my Lord, what has my cousin done anew?" "What," says he, "you do not know it! She has done frightful things for a month back." He, very greatly surprised, asked what they were. He said to him, "After having declared she was innocent, she has written with tears, and as if under force, a retraction, in which she states that she recognizes she has been in error and in evil sentiments, that she is guilty of the things of which they accuse her, and that she cursed the day and the hour she became acquainted with that Father" (meaning Father La Combe). The Counsellor was strangely surprised, but he suspected it was an invention.

He requested to see that, and also my interrogations. The Archbishop told him it was a thing which would never be shown, and that it was the affair of the King. The Counsellor, for greater certainty came here to see my friend, to know if I had written and signed anything. My friend assured him that neither the Official nor the Doctor had come here for four months—that is, since the Holy Thursday, when they came to propose the marriage of my daughter, on which occasion the Counsellor was present. Thus he saw I had signed nothing, and that I had written nothing, except, at the instance of the Mother, one letter to the Archbishop, of no importance, the copy of which she had and showed him. Here it is:—

"MY LORD,

"If I have so long preserved a profound silence, it is, not to be troublesome to your Greatness, but at present the necessity of my temporal concerns indispensably requires me: I earnestly pray your Greatness to ask my liberty from His Majesty. It will be a favour for which I shall be under infinite obligations to you. I am the more hopeful of obtaining it, because the Official told me, before Easter, that I should not remain longer here than ten days, although many times that period has since passed; but I shall in no way regret this if it has served to persuade you, my Lord, of my perfect submission and of the profound respect with which I am, etc."

This letter said nothing at all; yet he asserted he had a frightful one which I had written against the King and against the State. It was not difficult for the scribe who had written the first false letters to write others.

It was, then, these frightful counterfeit letters, which were shown to Père de la Chaise, for which I was shut up. O God, you see all this, and my soul was content in the face of such falsities and such knaveries. As soon as I was

again shut up, a fresh rumour was set going that I had been convicted of crimes, and that I had committed fresh ones. Every one broke out against me; even my friends found fault with me, and blamed me for the letter I had written to Père de la Chaise. They commenced, also, in the House to have doubts of me; and the more desperate I saw everything, the more content was I, O my God, in your will. I said, "O my Love, now they will no longer oblige me to have recourse to creatures. I await everything from you alone. Do with me, then, for time and for eternity, whatever is pleasing to you. Gratify yourself with my trouble." The guardian of my children was not firm. He was sometimes for me, but as soon as Father La Mothe spoke to him he was against me; so that he was continually wavering.

Three days before I was shut up, Father La Mothe had said that they would shut me up again, and he wrote to my sister, the nun, a violent letter against me. He also said, "We have learned that, in the place where Father La Combe is imprisoned, there is a commandant who is one of his friends. They will take care to imprison him." It should be known that when Father La Combe was transferred to the Isle of Oleron, the commandants did justice to his virtue. As soon as they saw him they recognized he was a true servant of God. Consequently the commandant, full of love for the truth, wrote to Monsieur de Chateauneuf, that this Father was a man of God, and that he begged some alleviation of his imprisonment might be granted. De Chateauneuf showed the letter to the Archbishop, who showed it to Father La Mothe, and they decided he must be transferred from there. This has been done. He was taken to a desert isle, where he cannot see those commandants. O God, nothing is concealed from you. Will you for long leave your servant in ignominy and grief?

Before I was arrested, M. — had sent for a woman,

who is a person of honour, but who did not know me, to tell her that she must go to the Jesuits and depose against me many things which he mentioned to her. She answered him, that she did not know me. He said that was of no importance, it must be done; that his design was to destroy me. Thereupon this woman went to consult a virtuous ecclesiastic, who told her it was a sin and a falsehood. She did not do it. He then proposed it to another person who excused himself. Another, a monk, against whom there were subjects of complaint, to bring himself into credit, wrote against me. It was who would write most violently. I have a cousin-german, whom I believe our Lord has provided for me; for I expect sooner or later he will finish his work. This relative, who is at Saint-Cyr, spoke on my behalf to Madame de Maintenon. She is the only person who has spoken for me. Madame de Maintenon found the King much prejudiced, Father La Mothe having been even with him to speak against me. There was, therefore, nothing to be done. They came to tell me there was no more hope, and all my friends said that the only thing which could be expected was perpetual prison.

I fell dangerously ill, and the physician considered me in great peril. It could not be otherwise, as I was shut up in a place where the air was so hot it was like a stove. They wrote to the Official to procure for me the necessary alleviations, and even the Sacraments, and to permit some one to enter my chamber to attend me. He gave no answer, and but for the Superior of the House, who thought they could not in conscience allow me to die without treatment, and who told the Mother Superior to give it to me, I had died without help; for when it was mentioned to the Archbishop, he said: "What, she is ill, is she, at being shut up within four walls after what she has done!" and although the Counsellor asked it of him, he would yield nothing. I had a very violent continuous fever,

inflammation of the throat, a cough, and a continual discharge from the head upon the chest, which, it seemed, must suffocate me. But, O God, you did not want me, since you inspired the Superior of the House to give orders I should be seen by the physician and the surgeon; for I should have died but for the promptness with which they bled me. I believe few examples of like treatment can be found. I knew all this, and that all Paris was let loose against me, but I felt no pain at it. My friends feared lest I should die; for by my death my name would remain in disgrace, and my enemies have the upper hand. These latter believed I was already dead, and they rejoiced at it; but you, O my Love, did not will they should rejoice over me; you willed, after having abased me to the abyss, to make your mercy shine forth.

The day of Pentecost it was put into my mind that, under the ancient law, there were many martyrs of the Divinity; for the prophets, and so many other Israelites have been martyrs of the true God, and have suffered only for maintaining the Divinity; that in the Primitive Church the martyrs have shed their blood to maintain the truth of Jesus Christ Crucified, God and man; their martyrdom also was bloody: but at present there are martyrs of the Holy Spirit. These martyrs suffer in two ways—first, because they maintain the reign of the Holy Spirit in souls; and, secondly, because they are the victims of the will of God; for the Holy Spirit is the will of the Father and of the Son, as he is the love of it. These martyrs must suffer an extraordinary martyrdom—not in shedding their blood, but in being captives of the will of God, the plaything of his providence, and martyrs of his Spirit. The martyrs of the Primitive Church have suffered for the message of God, which was announced to them by the Word. The martyrs of the present time suffer for dependence on the Spirit of God.

It is this Spirit, which is about to be poured out on all

flesh, as is said in the prophet Joel. The martyrs of Jesus Christ have been glorious martyrs, Jesus Christ having drunk all confusion and disgrace. But the martyrs of the Holy Spirit are martyrs of shame and ignominy. It is for this reason the Devil no longer exercises his power upon the faith of these last martyrs; the question is no longer of that: but he attacks directly the domain of the Holy Spirit, opposing the celestial movement in souls, and discharging his hatred on the bodies of those whose spirit is beyond his attack. Oh martyrdom most horrible and most cruel of all! So will it be the consummation of all martyrdoms. And as the Holy Spirit is the consummation of all graces, so the martyrs of the Holy Spirit will be the last martyrs, after which, during a very long time, this Holy Spirit will so possess hearts and minds, that he will cause his subjects to do through love all that is pleasing to him, as the devils by tyranny made those whom they possessed do all that they wished. O Holy Spirit, Spirit of Love, make, then, of me all that pleases you for time and for eternity. Let me be slave to your will, and as a leaf is moved at the pleasure of the wind, may I allow myself to move at your divine breath: but as the impetuous wind breaks and tears away all that resists it, break all that opposes itself to your empire, break the cedars, as your prophet expresses it,—yes, the cedars shall be broken, all shall be destroyed; but “Send out thy Spirit, and thou wilt renew the face of the earth.” It is this same Spirit which destroys, that will renew the face of the earth.

This is very certain. Send your Spirit, Lord; you have promised it. It is said of Jesus Christ, he expired, “breathed out his spirit;” marking thereby the consummation of his sufferings and the consummation of the ages. Also, it is said, he gave up his spirit after having said, “It is consummated,” which shows us the consummation of all things will be effected by the extension of

that same Spirit through all the earth; and that this consummation will be that of eternity, which will never be consummated, because it will no more subsist but by the vivifying and immortal Spirit. Our Lord in expiring gave up his spirit into the hands of his Father, as if to let us know that after this Spirit (which is, which was, and which will be, the will and love of God communicated to men) had come out from God to visit the earth, it would return to God almost entirely withdrawn from earth and continuing immovable for a time.

The reign of the Father has been before the Incarnation; that of the Son through the Incarnation, as it is said of Jesus Christ, that he came to reign; and, since his death, St. Paul says that "he will hand back his Kingdom to God his Father," as if this Apostle would put into the mouth of Jesus Christ these words: "I have reigned, O my Father, in you and through you. You have reigned in me and through me. I now hand back my Kingdom to you, that we may reign through the Holy Spirit." Jesus Christ asks his Father for us in the Pater, "that his Kingdom may come." Is not this Kingdom come since Jesus Christ is King? But let us hear what Jesus Christ himself teaches us: "That your will be done on earth as in heaven." It is as if he asked that his true reign, which must come through that of the Holy Spirit, may come,—reign where that Holy Spirit, by communicating himself to them, shall make men accomplish his will upon the earth, as it is accomplished in heaven, without repugnance, without resistance, without delay, and infallibly. "It will be then," Jesus Christ means to say, "that our reign, O my Father, will be consummated upon the earth. It will be then my enemies shall be made my footstool;" and thus it will be, because the Holy Spirit, in subjecting all wills to himself, will subject all men to Jesus Christ, and that, all wills being subjected, all spirits will also be subjected. It is this which will bring about that, when the

Holy Spirit shall have renewed the face of the earth, there will be no more idolaters; all will be subjected by the Spirit to the Lord.

O Spirit, Consummator of all things, reduce everything to one! But before that can be, you will be a Spirit-Destroyer. Accordingly, Jesus Christ, speaking of the Spirit that he is about to send, says: "I am not come to bring peace, but the sword. I am come to bring fire. What do I wish, but that it should burn?" It is necessary to be re-born of the Spirit and of water. The message (speech) is like water that flows away; but it is the Spirit which renders it fruitful. It is this "Spirit, which will teach us all things;" as Jesus Christ says, "He will take of mine:" for it is by the Holy Spirit the Word is communicated to us, as in Mary:—Spirit who teaches through the central depth.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALTHOUGH the Archbishop had told the Counsellor, who is guardian of my children, that I had written to him those retractations and those dreadful letters of which I have spoken, which, as the Lord showed me in a dream, they had got written by the forger who had done the first one, they did not cease, in an underhand way, urging me to write something similar, promising me complete liberty. They wished to draw from me retractations, and yet neither in the interrogations nor judicially had they ever required them of me, because the Doctor, who is an honorable man, was witness to it, and there was nothing which called for them, as I was never interrogated upon anything of this kind. But they hoped, in procuring this letter from me, to declare me guilty to posterity, and to show thereby they had reason for imprisoning me; thus covering all their artifices. They further wished a pretext which might appear, and which would prove it was with justice they had caused Father La Combe to be imprisoned; and they tried by menaces and by promises to make me write that he was a deceiver. To this I answered, that I was not unhappy in the convent nor in prison, however rigorous it might be; that I was ready to die, and even to ascend the scaffold, rather than write a falsehood; that they had only to show my interrogations; that I had spoken the truth as I had sworn to speak it.

As they saw they could extract nothing from me, they composed an execrable letter, wherein they make me accuse myself of all sorts of crimes, even of those our Lord has given me the grace to be ignorant of: that I recognize Father La Combe has deceived me; that I hate the hour I knew him. O God, you see this, and you keep silence: you will not always keep silence. When Father La Mothe saw that people were beginning to believe he was the author of the persecution and of the imprisonment of Father La Combe, in order to excuse himself to the world, he caused it to be conveyed to Father La Combe that I had accused him. He said, "I have intreated the Archbishop to show me the interrogations of my monk. I even wished to follow this up, and to demand the reason why he was a prisoner, but the Archbishop told me that they were matters concerning the King, with which I should not meddle." He published to all the world that I was on the point of ruining their House: that I tried to make them Quietists—I, who never spoke to them. He bethought him of another trick, in order it might never be known to His Majesty that he was the author of our persecutions. He made the Archbishop, whose director he is, consult him to know if in conscience he, the Archbishop, could set me free; because he feared Madame Maintenon might speak in my favour. To an answer making me appear guilty, Father La Mothe, in a concerted letter, writes as if in my interest: "I think, my Lord, you may let my sister go, notwithstanding all that is past; and I answer you after having consulted God, and I do not find any objection to it." This letter is carried to His Majesty to show the probity of Father La Mothe, and to arrest any suspicion touching him. Yet they did not cease to say openly, notwithstanding the consultation, that they do not believe in conscience they could set me at liberty, and it is on this footing they speak of it to His Majesty; making me appear so much the more criminal as they make Father La Mothe the more

zealous. A Bishop, speaking of me one day to one of my friends, who tried to defend me: "How," said he, "do you wish to make us believe her innocent,—I, who know that Father La Mothe, her own brother, has been compelled by zeal for the good of the Church and by a spirit of piety, to carry frightful reports against his sister and his monk to the Archbishop? He is a good man, who has done this only through zeal." This Bishop is intimate with the Archbishop: a Doctor of the Sorbonne, who is everything with the Archbishop, said the same.

Although Father La Combe is in prison, we do not cease to communicate together in God, in a wonderful manner. I have seen a letter of his where he writes it to a person in his confidence. Many spiritual persons to whom our Lord has united me by a kind of maternity, experience the same communication, although I be absent, and find in uniting themselves to me the remedy for their ills. O God, you who have chosen this poor insignificant creature to make her the throne of your bounties and of your rigours, you know I omit many things from not knowing how to express them and from want of memory. I have told what I have been able, with an extreme sincerity and an entire truth. Although I have been obliged to write the proceedings of those who persecute me, I have not done it through resentment: since I bear them in my heart and pray for them, leaving to God the care of defending me and delivering me from their hands, without my making a movement for that purpose. *I have believed and understood that I should sincerely write all things in order that he might be thereby glorified, and that he willed that what had been done in secret against his servants should one day be published upon the house-top, and the more they endeavour to hide themselves from the eyes of men the more will God make manifest all things.*

I experience at present two states both together. I bear Jesus Christ Crucified and Child. As a consequence

of the one, crosses are in great number, very severe and without cessation; there being few days I have not many of them. As a consequence of the other, I have something childlike, simple, candid; something so innocent that it seems to me, if my soul were put under a press, only candour, innocence, simplicity and suffering would issue from it. O my Love, it seems to me you have made of me a prodigy before your eyes for your sole glory. I cannot tell how it sometimes happens that when I approach the image of Jesus Christ Crucified, or Child, I feel myself, without feeling, suddenly renewed in one or other of these states; and there takes place in me something of the original, which communicates itself to me in an inexplicable manner, and which experience alone can make understood—this experience is rare. It is, then, to you, O my Love, that I make over what I have written for you.

Written this 21st of August, 1688, aged forty years, from my prison which I love and cherish.

I will write the memoirs of the rest of my life through obedience, with a view to completing them one day, if it is deemed suitable.

I forgot to say that I believe I felt the state of the souls who approached me, and that of the persons who were given to me, however distant these were. I call "feeling" an interior impression of what they were; especially in the case of those who passed for spiritual. I knew at once if they were simple or dissimulating; their degree and their self-love, for which things I had a repugnance to them. I recognized when they were strong in themselves, and resting on the virtue they believed themselves to have, and by which they measured others, and condemned in their mind those who were not like them, although more perfect. These persons, who believe themselves and are believed righteous, are much more disagreeable to God than certain sinners through weakness; whom the world

regards with horror, and to whom, nevertheless, God shows very great mercies. This will only be seen at the Day of Judgment. Yet God suffers with difficulty these strong souls, of themselves so full, although they think themselves humble, because they practise certain forms of humility ; which most often only serve to augment their self-opinion. If these souls had to suffer some real humiliation, whether for some unexpected fall or public infamy, where would they be ? Then one would know their lack of solidity. If it were known how God loves true littleness, men would be astonished at it. When people speak to me of some persons of piety, my central depth rejects those who are not in the littleness of which I speak, and it admits those who are devoted to God as God wishes them, without my knowing how this takes place. I find there is in me something which rejects the evil and approves the true good. It is the same in the practise of the virtues ; this upright spirit discerns at once the true virtue from that which is it not. It is, again, the same with the Saints of heaven as with those of earth. Our Lord makes me know that which constitutes the principal character of their sanctity ; who those are who have been more annihilated, or those whom God has sanctified by action : and when some prerogative is attributed to a Saint, and it is not the one which belongs to him, this central depth rejects it without my paying attention ; but as soon as that which belongs to them is said, it acquiesces.

The 21st of August, 1688, it was thought I was about to be released from prison, and everything seemed arranged for it. Our Lord made me feel in my central depth that, far from intending to deliver me, it was new snares they were spreading for me, and that they were taking counsel together the better to destroy me ; that all they had done was only to make the King acquainted with Father La Mothe, and to give him an esteem for him.

The 22nd at my waking, I was put into a state of agony,

like that of Jesus Christ agonizing and seeing the counsel of the Jews against him ; and the certainty of that plot was again given to me. I saw that there was none but you, O my God, who could withdraw me from their hands. I comprehend that you will one day do it by your right hand ; but I am ignorant of the manner, and I abandon all things to you. I am yours, O my Love, for time, and for eternity. My soul has long been completely independent of all which is not God : she has not need of any creature, and though she should be alone in the world, she would find herself infinitely content. Her indifference is entire and perfect, and she does not depend on anything whatsoever under the heaven : nothing but God occupies and fills her. This deadness of all desire, this powerlessness to have need of any creature (I am not speaking of things necessary for a corporal life) and this perfect satiety exempt from all desire, because nothing is wanting, is the greatest mark of the entire possession of God, who alone as Sovereign Good can content the whole soul.

One day, as I was thinking to myself how it happens that the soul who commences to be united to God, although she finds herself united to the Saints in God, has yet hardly any instinct to invoke them, it was put into my mind that servants have need of credit and intercessors, but the wife obtains all from her husband even without asking him for anything. He anticipates her with an infinite love. O God, how little they know you ! They examine my actions ; they say I do not repeat the Chaplet, because I have no devotion to the Holy Virgin. O divine Mary, you know how my heart is yours in God, and the union which God has made between us in himself, yet I cannot do anything but what Love makes me do. I am altogether devoted to him and to his will.

The Official came with the Doctor, the guardian of my children, and Father La Mothe, to speak to me of the marriage of my daughter. Father La Mothe, who heard

all this, did not say a word, except that he whispered to me (believing thereby to hide his part in the persecutions, and to persuade me he had no part in them) that I was detained in the convent only about the marriage of my daughter. I made little answer to him, and I treated him as civilly and as cordially as was possible; our Lord giving me the grace easily for love of himself to treat him so. They said to Father La Mothe I had received him very well and they were edified at it. He answered that, while I was showing him outward civility, I was abusing him under my breath. He wrote the same to my brothers, saying I had strangely illtreated him. I declare I was surprised at such an invention, and I would not have believed that one could invent in such a way.

God, who never abandons those who hope in him, has done that which he had made me know he would do for me by the hand of Madame de Maintenon. It happened in the way I am about to describe: which should make us marvel at the conduct of God, and the care he takes of those who are his, while he appears most to abandon them.

God had permitted the affairs of my only uncle to fall into disorder. He had a daughter, a canoness of intelligence and merit. She had a very pretty little sister, and, as Madame de Maintenon had lately established a House for girls whose fathers were ruined in the service of the King, the canoness went to present her sister to Madame de Maintenon, who was very much pleased with her, and also with her own cleverness. She begged her to remain at the House until her little sister got used to it; but when she had become acquainted with the cleverness and the capacity of the canoness, she engaged her to remain altogether, or at least for some time, begging her to see the House fairly started. Shall I say, oh my Love, that I believe you have done this only for me? My cousin wished to speak in my favour to Madame de Maintenon, but she found her so prejudiced against me

by calumny that she had the grief to see nothing could be done in this quarter. She let me know it. I remained very content in the will of God, with this rooted conviction, that nothing would be done except through Madame de Maintenon, and that this was the way of which God had resolved to make use.

I remained then very peaceful, waiting the moment of the good God, when Madame de Miramion, who had been very much prejudiced against me, and who believed me very criminal, because my enemies had persuaded her of it, came by pure providence to the convent where I was. She had much esteem for the Prioress. She asked her if she believed me misled, as she had been told. The Prioress and the nuns told her a thousand good things about me, which their charity made them see. She was amazed, for she had been assured I caused great evils in this House. She resolved to serve me through pure charity, and to speak to Madame de Maintenon, and this had a good effect. But that which above all makes us marvel at the providence of God with regard to me is that the Abbess with whom I had placed that worthy girl, the nun, who has caused me so many crosses both at Gex, and because Father La Mothe's desire to get the money I had given for her dowry has been in part the cause of the persecution he stirred up against me—this Abbess, I say, found herself obliged to come to Paris for some business. She is a relative of Madame de Maintenon; and as she had need of arranging with me for the dowry of that girl, she complained of the Archbishop's refusal to allow me to speak to her, and she explained it was a business of charity I was doing in favour of a poor girl, whom I was making a nun in her House. This gave an opportunity to Madame de Maintenon to speak for me, that I might be able to arrange with this Abbess. Being again entreated by my cousin, she spoke to the King, who said they should

present him with a "Placet." It was brought to him, and, as it was the eve of St. Louis, I had an instinct to pray for the King that he might be enlightened as to the truth. He ordered the Archbishop to set me at liberty; which not a little surprised and vexed him. I marvelled, O my God, at your divine providence, and the markedly special springs of your adorable control; since this same money, which has been the first source of all my troubles, through Father La Mothe's desire to have it, you have made, O my God, the means of my liberty. This Abbess did much more, for by her authority she caused to be given to Father La Mothe, as it were in spite of himself, and while fearing his practices were discovered, a letter of esteem for my piety and the pious life I had led.

CHAPTER IX.

As the Archbishop was not willing to have the worst of it, and my enemies, on seeing themselves powerless to hurt me, were only the more embittered, they resolved to inform the King that I could not be released until certain formalities had been observed. They wished to draw up a deed such as to make it appear that they were in the right, and to screen themselves from all inquiries that might hereafter be made against them; and also to avoid the lie being given to them as to the forgeries and the reports they boasted of having against me, and their assertions that I had written and executed acts of retractation. The Official came on Wednesday, October 1,¹ 1688. After having taken the testimony of the Mother Superior as to my conduct in their convent, which she gave in the most distinct and favourable manner possible, he sent for me, and told me I must sign a deed which he had previously drawn up, and which he had had copied by his secretary. He produced two papers I had in truth myself given him on the 8th of February of the same year, 1688, which had been used by me as memoirs, to answer certain things he asked me, and which papers he had inserted at full length in my interrogations; but these he would never publish, lest my innocence should thereby be known, and people should see the frightful falsehoods

¹ This must be a mistake for "September." See close of chapter, dated September 20th.

which had been concocted against me, and for which reparation was due. Moreover, these papers contained the assurance and the protestations I had made of never having wandered from the sentiments of the Holy Church—my good Mother, for which I was ready to give a thousand lives. In the deed which they presented to me, he had inserted that I had given him two deeds. I refused to sign it, and, on my refusal, the Doctor, who accompanied him, told him that this word “deed” was not proper for simple papers; that they must put “papers.” He would not consent. It was necessary to put “memoirs” that I had recognized as coming from me. I saw clearly there was here some trick, and it was only for some evil purpose they brought me back two papers otherwise useless, since they were inserted at full length in my interrogation. Wherefore reproduce the two papers and suppress all the interrogations, unless to overreach me in some way? I said I would willingly sign that I had placed in his hands two memoirs of the 8th of February, 1688, provided they wrote the contents of the said memoirs; but to say simply that I had given two memoirs, without explaining what they were, I would not do it; that after all they had forged in my name, I ought to fear everything. He would not allow any explanation. He gave way to fearful violence against me, saying I should sign it, and swearing I was ruined if I did not do so. I had to waive this, in spite of all my reasons, to avoid their violence and withdraw myself from their hands. I requested that at least the Doctor who accompanied him should sign my papers, in order that they might not be able to substitute others in their place. He would not allow this. He signed them himself; but what use was that to me, since they remained in his hands? They told me if I signed all they requested of me the door of the convent would infallibly be opened, but if I refused there was no longer any safety for me. They wished to put into their deed that I had been in

error; and, in order to oblige me to sign a thing which I would rather have given my life than sign, they told me that every one makes mistakes—that this is what is meant by errors. I asked him if he meant to say “errata,” as we read in books; I would willingly do this, but as for “errors” I would never consent to that. He said to me gently enough, I should not make any difficulty; that it was for my good; that he asked this of me as the infallible means of withdrawing me from prison; that besides, St. Cyprian, whose fête was next day, had died in error, and he was none the less a saint; that he himself, on becoming priest, had made a kind of abjuration of error, which he repeated to me in Latin. But when he saw I persisted in saying that I had never been in error, and that I would never sign if they inserted the word “error,” he got into a frightful fury, declaring by his faith I should sign, or he would know the reason why, with frightful outbursts of violence to prove to me I was in error.

They told me that the letter of Father Falconi de la Merci was prohibited at Rome, and that it had been inserted in the later editions of my book as if to support it. I answered that this letter, not being mine, was no proof that I was in error. I wished to make them write that I protested I had never wandered from the faith, and that I would give a thousand lives for the Church. They would not. He spoke to me again about my books, although I had submitted them, and asked me if I did not condemn them of error. I said that if sentiments that were not altogether orthodox had slipped in, I submitted them, as I had always done. He wanted to have put in, and he put it in spite of me, that I renounced all sorts of errors. I said to him, “But why put in that?” He said if I did not put it he would say I was a heretic. Finally I had to waive that objection. He added, that I forbade all booksellers and printers to sell and distribute my books. I stopped him there, and said to him, if the books were

not good let them forbid them, that I agreed to it; but that, as for me, not having contributed to their printing, I had nothing to do in the matter. The Doctor, who saw the Official rise up in a strange fury, told me to let it pass, making me understand it was more important for me to get out of their hands. He told me afterwards he would give me, if I wished, a deed signed with his own hand, to the effect that he had advised me to sign. I was about then to sign, and I skipped one side of the sheet in order to have time for consultation.

As the Abbess had permission to come and bring to me any one she pleased, I took advice; for they had brought me back the paper which I had signed on one side, thinking it was a mistake. I was told I must at any price be got out of their hands, provided I did not insert that I had been in error. I said this was not in the deed, but that "if in my books and writings there was error, I condemned them with all my heart." They had thought to take me by surprise, but my God has not allowed it, making me see their end, in all they demanded of me. They wished to make me put, that if there was error in my books, as well those which openly appeared as in those which did not appear, I detested them. I said I had not written any book which did not appear. I knew they had set going a rumour that I had printed books in Holland, and they desired by this deed to make me admit that it was so. I said, then, I had not made any other book. To excuse himself, the Official said, that my writings were thick enough to pass for books, and he put "writings." The Doctor, who hardly dared to speak, told him, however, I was right. If he had insisted upon putting "I had errors" I would rather have let my head be cut off than sign it.

Here are the contents of the paper I had given them February 8, 1688, of which, through the mercy of God, I had kept a duplicate, in order that those into whose hands these writings may fall may see the difference

there is between these and those which have been foisted upon me.

"I urgently intreat you, gentlemen, to write two things: first, that I have never deviated from the most orthodox opinions of the Holy Church; that I have never had private opinions of my own; that I have never taken up with any party; that I am ready to give my blood and my life for the interests of the Church; that I have laboured all my life to strip myself of my own opinions, and to submit my intelligence and my will. The second, that I have never pretended to write anything which was not conformable to the opinions of the Holy Church; that if through my ignorance anything not conformable to its opinions has slipped in, I renounce it, and I with all my heart submit to its decision, from which I never wish to deviate. That if I answer the interrogations put to me upon the little book, it is purely through obedience, and not to maintain or defend it, as I submit it with all my heart."

I gave in that before the interrogation, and the one that follows some days later. It is without date. It was upon a matter they tried to persuade me of, namely that all souls who have attained to union with God, fall into ecstasy, and that this union only took place in ecstasy. "God can give a soul the same graces which produce ecstasy, although she does not lose the use of the external senses as in ecstasy, which only comes from weakness; but she so loses all sight of self in the enjoyment of her Divine Object that she forgets all which concerns her. It is then that she no longer distinguishes any operation on her part. The soul seems then to do nothing but receive what is profusely given to her. She loves without being able to give an account of her love, and without being able to tell what passes in her at that moment. Only experience can make comprehensible that which God operates in a soul faithful to him. While

receiving with all her heart, she corresponds so far as she is capable to the operations of her God, sometimes observing him act with complaisance and love, at other times she is so lost and hid in God with Jesus Christ that she no longer distinguishes her Object, which seems to absorb her in himself." There is also added in the paper which is not signed what follows: "I declare I am so much confused when interrogated, through fear of lying without thinking of it, or, rather, of making a mistake, that I know not what I say. It seems to me all interrogation ought to cease, since I give up everything and submit them entirely; besides, not having the little book with me, I cannot mention the passages which justify and explain the propositions that might seem hard—as, for example, on the subject of penitences, I remember there is in the same chapter a passage where it is said, 'I do not pretend to disapprove penitences, since mortification ought to proceed at an equal pace with prayer, and even our Lord imposes on these persons penitences of all kinds, and such as those who are not conducted by that way would not even think of doing.' There may be many propositions which, in strictness, are open to condemnation, but which, after one has seen the sequel explaining them, appear very good. I do not say this to support those which may not be approved, but to point out that there are many which carry their explanation within them."

I have forgotten to say that, when it was seen the nuns spoke much good of me and declared their esteem, my enemies and some of their friends came and told them that the fact of their having esteem for me was very injurious to their House: that it was said, I had corrupted them all and made them Quietists. They took alarm at this. The Prioress forbade the nuns to speak good of me; so that, when I was again imprisoned, it was thought they had discovered much evil, and that made even my friends doubtful. I then saw myself rejected by all, and so

abandoned by the whole world that it was only with pain they tolerated me in the House; and even my friend, fearing the esteem she had for me might be injurious to her, gradually withdrew and became cold. It was, then, O my God, that I could well say you were all things to me. I saw the nature of human respect, which leads one to betray the known truth; for at heart they esteemed me, yet, to keep themselves in repute, they pretended the opposite. Father La Mothe went and carried to the Jesuits forged letters of a frightful character that he said were from me; and he said he was in despair at being obliged to speak against me; and that it was through zeal for religion he renounced the friendship he owed me. Thereby he gained over Père de la Chaise and almost all the Jesuits.

I forget many circumstances which would be extremely pertinent, but my memory has not recalled them. If I could remember all your mercies, O my God, and your conduct of me, one would be astonished and ravished at it, but you will that many things shall remain concealed in you. As you withdraw them from my memory, I will not seek them, for I should be grieved to write anything but what you give me, without my seeking it by reflection. I have again forgotten to say that, when I told the Official that with reason I was not willing they should insert that word "error," because I felt certain it was a snare, owing to their boasting they had in their hand a retraction, he told me he must have been a great fool not to make me put it in, and that the Archbishop would dismiss him, trying to make me understand they wanted that word for their justification. Five days from that, he came to make me sign the second page. I would not have done it, being quite indifferent whether I remained as I was, provided I did your will, O my God: but Madame de Maintenon sent me word to sign, and that she would inform the King of their violence; that it was necessary to get me out of

their hands. I signed then. After which I had the liberty of the cloister.

The guardian of my children went to expedite the "lettre de cachet." You permitted, O my God, by your providence, this letter to go astray for five days through a misunderstanding: that caused me again in this House ups and downs; as for my heart and my soul they remained always at the same level. I have even had more perceptible joy on entering my prison than on leaving it. At last, on the eve of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the "lettre de cachet" was brought to me. I saw clearly, O my Love, you wished the Cross to be exalted in me, and when I saw the "lettre de cachet" came at that time, it was to me a good augury. I saw the continual miracles of your providence, and how you were conducting me bit by bit and with the hand. I saw you were taking care of me in the smallest matters, as a husband takes care of the wife he loves uniquely. Although all the time of my imprisonment had been each day an exercise of strange upsets, sometimes up and sometimes down, it is certain that the greatest was about the time of my release. My soul has never changed her situation, except as I have described. I have learned since I am at liberty, and even before, that a person who persecuted me had obtained an order to send me two hundred leagues from here, into a prison where I should nevermore have been heard of. You waited to save me, O my God, until things were utterly desperate. I learned one morning that no one was willing to meddle in my affair—neither Madame de Maintenon nor my cousin. From that I received a very great joy; and when the affair has been most desperate, then I have felt again a renewal of joy. Here, then, was I very happy, even when I learned they were striving to have me placed in perpetual imprisonment—and the measures were so well taken for it, that when the "lettre de cachet" was demanded from the secretary, after His Majesty's order

had been given to set me free, he inquired if it was not for that lady whom they were about to transfer. O God, how you overthrow the designs of men! O my Love, already I see the commencement of your promises accomplished: I do not doubt for the rest.

The Abbess and my children's guardian came to fetch me, and manifested great joy; as did all my friends. It was only the others who were extremely vexed at it. I went out, without feeling I was going out, and without being able to reflect on my deliverance. Yesterday morning I was thinking. But who are you? what are you doing? what are you thinking? Are you alive, that you take no more interest in what affects you than if it did not affect you? I am greatly astonished at it, and I have to apply myself to know if I have a being, a life, a subsistence. I do not know where I am. Externally I am like another; but it seems to me I am like a machine that speaks and walks by springs, and which has neither life nor subsistence in what it does. This is not at all apparent externally. I act, I speak like another; even in a manner more free and more large, which embarrasses no one, which pleases all; without knowing either what I do, or what I say, nor why I do it, or say it, nor what causes me to say it. On leaving the convent they took me to the Archbishop, as a matter of form to thank him. It was indeed due to him for what he had made me suffer, for I do not doubt my God has been glorified by it. Then I went to see Madame de Miramion, who indeed was rejoiced at a thing to which she had not a little contributed. I there providentially found Madame de Montchevreuil, who manifested much joy at seeing me delivered, and assured me Madame de Maintenon would have no less: which Madame de Maintenon herself showed every time we met. I wrote to her to thank her. A few days after my release, I went to St. Cyr to salute her. She received me most kindly, and in a marked manner. A few days before, she had declared

to my cousin how much my letter had pleased her, and that in truth our Lord gave her for me sentiments of particular esteem. I returned to see the Archbishop. He begged me to say nothing of what had passed. Father La Mothe, however, was in despair at my release; but he always pretended the contrary to those who had access to me. He sent persons to spy me, and to surprise me in my words. I do not yet know what effect this will have. The Official begged Madame de Miramion not to receive me into her Community, and he came to tell me not to go there. That had not much effect, for this lady still declared her intention to take me to her House, where I am at the present moment. If God wills it, I shall one day write the continuation of a life which is not yet finished. This 20th of September, 1688.

The desire I have had to obey and to omit nothing will have doubtless caused some repetitions; they will at least serve to show you my exactness in what you order me, and that if I have omitted anything, it is either because I have not been able to express it, or through forgetfulness.

Some days after my release, having heard mention of the Abbé de F——, I was suddenly with extreme force and sweetness interested for him. It seemed to me our Lord united him to me very intimately, more so than any one else. My consent was asked for. I gave it. Then it appeared to me that, as it were, a spiritual filiation took place between him and me. The next day I had the opportunity of seeing him. I felt interiorly this first interview did not satisfy him: that he did not relish me. I experienced a something which made me long to pour my heart into his; but I found nothing to correspond, and this made me suffer much. In the night I suffered extremely about him. In the morning I saw him. We remained some time in silence, and the cloud cleared off a little; but it was not yet as I wished it. I suffered for eight whole days; after which, I found myself united to

him without obstacle, and from that time I find the union increasing in a pure and ineffable manner. It seems to me that my soul has perfect rapport with his, and those words of David regarding Jonathan, that "his soul clave to that of David," appeared to me suitable for this union. Our Lord has made me understand the great designs he has for this person, and how dear he is to him.

CHAPTER X.

I SHOULD be unable to write anything more regarding my inner state; I will not do it, having no words to express what is entirely disconnected from all that can fall under feeling, expression, or human conception. I shall only say that, after the state when I came back to life, I found myself for some years, before being placed in what is called the Apostolic state—that of a Mission to help others, the selfhood having been entirely consumed in the purgatory I had passed through—I found myself, I say, in a happiness equal to that of the Blessed, save for the Beatific Vision; nothing here below affected me; and neither at present do I see anything in heaven or in earth which can trouble me as regards myself. The happiness of a soul in this state cannot be understood without experience, and those who die without being employed in helping their neighbours, die in supreme felicity; although overwhelmed with external crosses. But when it pleased God to honour me with his Mission, he made me understand that the true father in Jesus Christ, and the Apostolic pastor, must suffer like him for men, bear their languors, pay their debts, clothe himself with their weaknesses. In truth, God does not do these sorts of things without asking from the soul her consent; but how sure he is this soul will not refuse him what he asks! He himself inclines the heart for that he wishes to obtain. It seems he then

impresses upon it these words: “I was happy, I possessed glory, I was God; but I have quitted all that, I have subjected myself to pain, to contempt, to ignominy, to punishment. I became man to save man. If thou art willing to finish what remains lacking of my Passion and that I should make in thee an extension of my quality of Redeemer, it is necessary thou consent to lose the happiness thou dost enjoy; to be subjected to wants, to weaknesses, in order to bear the languors of those with whom I shall charge thee, to pay their debts, and finally to be exposed, not only to all the interior pains from which thou hast been delivered for thyself, but to all the most violent persecutions. If I had remained in my private life, I should never have suffered any persecution; only those are persecuted who are employed to help souls.” There was needed, then, a consent of immolation to enter into all the designs of God regarding the souls he destines for himself.

He made me understand that he did not call me, as had been thought, to a propagation of the external of the Church, which consists in winning heretics, but to the propagation of his Spirit, which is no other than the interior Spirit, and that it would be for this Spirit I should suffer. He does not even destine me for the first conversion of sinners; but to introduce those who are already touched with the desire of being converted, into the perfect conversion, which is none other than this interior Spirit. Since that time our Lord has not charged me with any soul without having asked my consent, and, after having accepted that soul in me, without having immolated me to suffer for her. It is well to explain the nature of this suffering, and the difference between it and what one suffers on one's own account.

The nature of this suffering is something most inward, most powerful, and most special. It is an excessive torment, one knows not where it is, nor in what part of the

soul it resides. It is never caused by reflection, nor can it produce any. It causes neither disturbance, nor embarrassment; it does not purify: and, for this reason, the soul finds it gives her nothing. Its excess does not hinder an enjoyment, without enjoyment, and a perfect peace. It takes away nothing from the sense of largeness. One is not ignorant that it is for souls one is suffering, and very often one knows the person: one finds one's self during this time united to him in a painful manner, as a criminal is attached to the instrument of his punishment. One often bears the weaknesses that those persons ought to feel; but ordinarily it is a general indistinct pain, which oftentimes has a certain relation to the heart causing extreme pain to the heart, but violent pains, as if one pressed it, or pierced it with a sword: this pain, purely spiritual, has its seat in the same place which is occupied by the Presence of God. It is more powerful than all corporal pains, and it is yet so insensible, and so removed from sentiment, that the person who is overwhelmed by it, if he was capable of reflection, would believe that it has no existence, and that he is deceiving himself. Since God willed me to participate in the Apostolic state, what have I not suffered! But however excessive my sufferings, and whatever weakness I may have had in the senses, I have never desired to be delivered from it: on the contrary, the charity for those souls augments in proportion as the suffering becomes greater, and the love one has for them increases with the pain.

There are two kinds of pains: the one caused by the actual unfaithfulness of the souls; the other, which is for the purpose of purifying them and making them advance. The former contracts the heart, afflicts it, weakens the sentiments, causes a certain agony, and as it were a pulling; just as if God were drawing it to one side and the soul to the other, so that it tore the

heart: this pain is more insupportable than any other, although it is not more deep. The pain of purification for another is a general indistinct pain, which tranquillizes and unites with the person for whom one suffers, and with God. It is a difference which experience alone can make intelligible. Every one with experience will understand me. Nothing equals what one suffers for persons, who very often are ignorant of it, or for others, who far from being grateful, have a repugnance to those who are consuming themselves for them through charity. All this does not diminish that charity, and there is not any death or torment one would not suffer with the utmost pleasure, to make them what God desires.

The divine justice applied to a soul to make her suffer while purifying others, does not cease to make her suffer, when it is for an actual unfaithfulness, until this unfaithfulness has ceased. It is not the same in the case of purification: that takes place at intervals, and one has a respite after having suffered. One finds one acquires a certain ease with that soul, which shows that what one has suffered has purified and, for the present moment, placed the soul in the condition God wishes her. When the souls are in the right path and nothing arrests them this goes on quite evenly; but when they are arrested, there is something within which makes it known.

The justice of God causes suffering from time to time for certain souls until their entire purification. As soon as they have arrived where God wishes them, one suffers no longer anything for them; and the union which had been often covered with clouds, is cleared up in such a manner that it becomes like a very pure atmosphere, penetrated everywhere, without distinction, by the light of the sun. As M. — has been given to me in a more intimate manner than any other, what I have suffered, what I am suffering, and what I shall suffer for him, surpasses anything that can be told. The least partition between him

and me, between him and God, is like a little dirt in the eye, which causes it an extreme pain, and which would not inconvenience any other part of the body where it might be put. What I suffer for him is very different from what I suffer for others; but I am unable to discover the cause, unless it be, God has united me to him more intimately than to any other, and that God has greater designs for him than for the others.

When I am suffering for a soul, and I merely hear the name of this person pronounced, I feel a renewal of extreme pain. Although for many years I am in a state equally naked and void in appearance, owing to the depth of the plenitude, nevertheless, I am very full. Water filling a basin to the utmost limits it can contain, offers nothing to distinguish its plenitude; but when one pours in more upon it, it must discharge itself. I never feel anything for myself, but when anything stirs that depth, infinitely full and tranquil, this makes the plenitude felt with such excess that it gushes over on the senses. This is the reason that makes me avoid hearing certain passages read or repeated: not that anything comes to me by external things, but it is that a word heard stirs the depth: anything said of the truth, or against the truth, stirs it in the same way, and would make it break out if continued.

It may be thought that, because, during all the time, while faith is pleasant to the taste, one has difficulty in reading, what I speak of here will be the same thing; that would be a mistake. In these last states it is impossible to avoid using an expression which has some signification analogous to that of the earlier states, owing to the paucity of terms, and only experience can clear up all this: for all persons who are in the states of simple faith, accompanied by some support, and some deep savour, believe themselves at the point I mention. These last are concentrated, or rather feel stirring in them through reading or what is

said to them, a certain occupation of God, which closes their mouth and often the eyes, preventing them from pursuing the reading. It is not the same here: here it is an overflowing of plenitude, a bursting up from a brimming depth, always full for all the souls who have need of drawing water from this plenitude: here it is the divine reservoir, where the children of Wisdom incessantly draw what is needed for them, when they are well disposed; not that they always feel what they draw there, but I indeed feel it. The things which are written must not be interpreted according to the strictness of the words; for, if so understood, there is hardly a perfected state which a soul of a certain degree might not believe herself to have experienced: but patience; she will herself hereafter see this infinite difference. Even souls of the inferior degree will often appear more perfect than those souls perfected in love and through love; because God, who wills these last to live with other men, and to withdraw from them the sight of so great a treasure, covers their exterior with visible weaknesses, which, like mean dirt, cover infinite treasures, and prevent their loss.

If God had not entirely separated the exterior of these souls from their interior, they could no longer converse with men. One experiences that in the new life. It seems nothing more remains than to die. One finds one's self so remote from the rest of men, and they think so differently from what one thinks, that the neighbour would become insupportable; the soul would then willingly say, "O my God, let your servant die in peace, since mine eyes have seen my Saviour." Souls arrived at this point are in an actual accomplished perfection, and they ordinarily die in this state, when they are not destined to aid others; but when they are so destined, God divides the Godlike central depth from the exterior, and hands over the exterior to childlike weaknesses, which keeps the soul in a continual abstraction and total ignorance of what she

is; unless this central depth, of which we have spoken, should be stirred, and that for the good of others: then one has a strange experience, but to tell what it is baffles expression. The exterior weaknesses of those souls serve them as a covering, and even hinder them from serving as support to others in the path of death, by which they are conducting them. They are all childlike weaknesses. If the souls who are conducted by those persons could penetrate below this weak exterior, to the depth of their grace, they would regard them with too much respect, and would not die to the support that such a conducting would afford them. If the Jews had penetrated beneath the commonplace exterior of Jesus Christ, they would never have persecuted him, and they would have been in a state of continual admiration. These persons are a paradox both to their own eyes and to the eyes of all who see them; for one sees in them only a coarse bark, though oftentimes there proceeds from it a divine sap; and thus those who will judge of them by the eyes of reason, know not how to go about it. Oh divine wisdom, oh savoury knowledge, you flow incessantly from the heart and from the mouth of these souls, like a stream of divine sap, which communicates life to an infinity of branches, although one sees only a coarse and moss-covered bark. "What do you see in the Shulamite," this choice soul, you others who are watching her, says the sacred Bridegroom, "except the companies of an army in array?" No, you will only see that in her. Do not therefore form any judgment, oh you who are not thus far, and be assured that, "although I am black I am very beautiful; that my sun, by his burning looks, has discoloured me in this way to preserve me for himself, and to withdraw me from the sight of all creatures." To attack those souls is to wound the heart of God. To judge them is to judge God. Those who do it err in their judgments. It is this which makes them dare, as the Apostle St. Jude says, to utter

maledictions against holy things, and to blaspheme the sacred mysteries of the interior. The soul in this state knows nothing of herself, as she is unknown by others. When she speaks or writes touching herself, she does it as in the case of divine things—she speaks and writes only by the actual light given at the present moment, and which lasts only as long as is necessary for her speaking or writing, without any possibility of her seeing or thinking afterwards of that which she previously saw; unless, indeed, the actual light of it should be restored. It is like a person to whom one opens a cabinet, full of treasures, who sees them as long as it is open, and ceases to see them when it is shut again. Therefore this soul is the fountain sealed; the Bridegroom alone opens: no one else shuts; no one else opens. Such a soul has no care for honour, wealth, or life; not only as to the will, but as to the real practice: therefore she has no longer anything to be careful for. If she was not such, she would be unable to serve souls in all the extent of the designs of God. The least circumspection hinders the effect of grace. Oh, how few are the souls who are willing to give themselves up for another without any self-respecting regard or reflection, ready to do and to suffer for others! The charity of an Apostolic soul cannot be understood. It is the charity of Jesus Christ himself. Oh, depth of this charity, free from zeal and feeling, who would be able to comprehend thee?

All the greatest crosses come in this Apostolic state (if one can call them crosses), because hell and all men are stirred up to hinder the good which is being done in souls. If Jesus Christ had not come out from his private life, he would not have been persecuted by the Jews and crucified. If God left these souls concealed in the secret of his countenance, they would be secure from the persecution of men. But how cheerfully would one suffer the wheel or the fire even for a single soul! We must not be astonished if the devils stir up all the regions of their

dominion against Apostolic souls. It is because the Devil well knows that one soul of this kind, once listened to, would destroy his empire. All devotions hurt him but moderately, for in the self-love of the devout he gets compensation for what they make him lose by their regulated practices; but there is nothing to be gained by him from a soul devoted to the truth of God and to his pure love, who allows herself to be annihilated by the sovereign dominion of God, and who, no longer subsisting in herself, gives full power to God continually to extend more widely his empire. The Devil cannot approach these souls except at a distance. The rage with which he is animated against them has no bounds. Oh, how mistaken we are when we judge devotion by exterior actions! To be devout, or to be devoted to God, we must have neither choice nor preference for one action more than for another. People form ideas and imagine that a soul which is God's in a certain manner, ought to be such and such; and when they see the opposite to the ideas they had formed for themselves, they conclude God is not there; while it is often where he especially is. Oh, sovereign independence of my God! you would not be God if you did not know how to glorify yourself by that which apparently dishonours you. God has his pleasure in all which renders us supple and small. He values not any virtue so much as to have in his hand a soul which he may elevate to the clouds and bury in the mire without her changing her situation in the slightest. A state which depends upon some goodness which one may distinguish or conceive, is indeed a virtuous state, but not a divine state.

There are the saints of the Lord, who are sanctified, not like other saints by the practise of virtues, but by the Lord himself, and by an unlimited suppleness, which is the real possession of all virtue. They are all the more the saints of God, since they are only holy in him and for him. They are holy in his style,

not in the style of men. O my Love, you have so many souls who serve you in order to be holy: make for yourself a troop of children who serve you because you are holy; who serve you in your style! These are the children for whom you have sanctified yourself, and that suffices for them. Oh, what a horrible monster, Selfhood! Yes, my God, let me at least be the plaything of your will! Let there be neither virtue nor sanctity for me, but singing with the Church, "Thou alone art holy," let me sing the same thing for myself, and for those you have given me; in order that you may be glorified and sanctified, not in them, but in you and for you. O pure Love, to what dost thou reduce thy subject!

The souls of which I speak are incapable of any sort of preference or predilection: but they are moved by a necessity, which, not being in them, for they are free, has its seat in God himself, after the sacrifice of this same liberty. They have not any natural love, but an infinite charity, applied and stirred more powerfully for certain subjects than for others, according to the design of God, the need of the persons, and the closeness of the union that God wills they should have with them. This strong, even apparently ardent love, is not in the powers as other inclinations; but in that same central depth which is God himself. He governs as a sovereign and inclines this same central depth, indistinguishably from himself, towards the thing he wishes one should love, and to which one is united; and this love is he; so that it cannot be distinguished from God, although it terminates in a particular subject. This central depth stirred towards this person, causes an attraction towards him as if towards God; and as everything which stirs this central depth renders God perceptible (which otherwise he would not be, owing to the transformation), so the radical inclination stirred towards that creature renders God

perceptible, but in a manner so much the more powerful, more pure, more detached from the sensible, as the soul is in an eminent degree. One feels something which might seem to have relation to this from the commencement of the way, where everything which carries us towards God causes a sensible inclination emanating from God; but these things are in the senses, or in the powers, according to the degree of the soul. It is not at all that which I mean. *This* is in the very central depth inaccessible to any other than God himself.

There is no state so perfected which a soul in these commencements might not attribute to herself, especially those who, in the language of Scripture, "go from faith to faith." For as one has from the commencement the firstfruits of the Spirit, and it is the same faith which grows deeper and purifies itself, expands and spreads until the perfect consummation, it is also the same from the commencement, and has almost the same effects. All the difference is, that it resides in the powers all along the way, until it loses itself in the inmost central depth, which is none other than God himself, who perfects everything in his divine unity. Even the interior movement which ought to be the sole director of souls of faith, discovers itself from the commencement in those persons destined to an eminent faith. This movement is more sensible, more distinct, more in the powers at the commencement; but finally it is this which directs and leads them to mortify themselves, to renounce themselves, to speak and to keep silence, to strip themselves until it destroys them with itself in that God-depth. Then it changes its nature, and becomes in such a way natural that it loses all which made it distinguished apart from God: then the creature acts as naturally as she breathes, her suppleness is infinite.

It is well to explain here a matter which might cause great mistakes to souls. It is, that the soul sunk in God,

and become infinitely supple in relation to God, may seem either reserved, or to have difficulty in saying certain things to others. It is not now a defect which is in her in regard to herself, but this constraint comes from the person to whom one should speak: for God makes felt as if by anticipation, all the dispositions of the soul to whom one should speak: and although that soul, if one asked, would assert confidently, there was no repugnance to receive what should be said (because, in fact, the will is so disposed), yet it is certain that, whatever the good will, the matters are repugnant, whether because they exceed the present scope of that person, or because there are still lurking secret ideas of a virtue based on reason. It is, therefore, the narrowness of the person to whom one speaks which causes the repugnance to speak. Moreover the exterior state of childhood has a thousand little things which might pass for unfaithfulnesses, similar to those of persons who through self-love do not say the things which are distasteful to them; but it is easy to see that this is not the case, because they have passed through a state which did not permit them reserve of a thought, whatever it might cost. Souls of this state must be judged by that which God has made them pass through, rather than by what one sees; for otherwise one would judge them in relation to one's own state, and not by that which they are. That which is weak in God is stronger than the greatest strength, because this weakness does not come from not having acquired all strength, virtuous and understood by reason; but because, having infinitely passed beyond this, it is lost in the divine strength, and this it is which causes those opposites, that unite so well although they appear incompatible, of the divine strength and of the child's weakness.

A.D. 1688.

CHAPTER XI.

ON leaving St. Mary's I went to Madame de Miramion. Those who were the cause of my having been placed at St. Mary's opposed this, and told me it was more suitable that I should retire into a private house. As I penetrated their intention, which was no other than to commit new forgeries, in order to have the opportunity of causing me fresh trouble, I remained firm in the resolution to enter into the Community of that lady. As soon as they saw they could not succeed with me, and that I wished to live in a Community, they bethought themselves to write to Madame de Miramion, assuring her that they themselves saw me go, at least once a week, to Faubourg St. Marceau, into discredited houses, and that I held assemblies. Father La Mothe was the author of these letters, and maintained that, being unwilling to credit it, he had been there several times during the last month, and that he had always seen me enter those houses. It is to be remarked that I had never been to the Faubourg St. Marceau, and that for three months I was confined to bed, where every day an abscess I had in the eye was dressed; besides I had a very severe fever during that time. Madame de Miramion, who was almost always present when they treated me, and who knew I did not leave the bed, was very indignant at this proceeding; so that when Father La Mothe came to see her, to confirm what he had

written, and to add still further calumnies, as to things which, he said, I had done within eight days, she spoke very strongly to him on the blackness of his accusations, assuring him she believed all that had been told her of the malignity he had practised on me; as she herself was witness that, for three months, I had not been able even to leave the bed, or go to the Mass in their chapel, and since I was with her I had not gone out four times; and then, it was a responsible member of my family who had come to fetch me in the morning and bring me back in the evening. When he saw himself so ill received, he endeavoured to put other machines in motion. He complained everywhere, I had caused him to be ill-treated by Madame de Miramion; although I was then ignorant of what passed, and only knew it some time afterwards, when, being recovered, Madame de Miramion showed me the letters.

That affection of the eye made me suffer much, and God gave me great patience. In my sufferings my disposition has always been a strong patience, and I blame myself for having made it too apparent. It would have been better to have made some slight complaint, while yet content to suffer everything without a wish that the pain should diminish. This is more free from self-love, and does not attract so much esteem from others. Childlike simplicity allows nature some complaint, especially when one no longer complains through the life of nature; for otherwise as long as nature lives through its complaints, and has a secret joy in attracting compassion, all complaint must be checked: but when it has no longer life in this, something of the selfhood is found in that admirable strength, which does not permit a sigh under the most violent pains; then one should complain in a small humble way, without affecting anything, or keeping back anything. When the soul is again become a child, she acts as a child. It is the same in eating certain things: although one swallows equally the

sweet and the bitter, there is a slight spiritual selfhood in taking without a word things which those who give them to you know to be very bad. Thus there are hidden folds in things that appear virtues, which cannot escape the pure eye of divine Love.

My daughter was married at Madame de Miramion's, and, owing to her extreme youth, I was obliged to go and remain some time with her. I lived there two years and a half. What made me leave her was the desire I had to withdraw into a convent and to live there unknown; but God, who had other designs for me, did not permit it, as I shall tell in the sequel. While I was with my daughter the persecution did not cease. They were constantly inventing something against me. When I was in the country with her, they said I instructed the peasants, although I saw none of them. If I was in the town, according to their story, they made me receive persons, or else I went to see them; and yet I neither saw them, nor knew them. All these things joined to the inclination I had all my life to pass it in retreat, determined me to write to the Mother Prioress of the Benedictines of Montargis, that I wished to end my days with her, unknown to everybody, without seeing there even any nun but her: and without the outside world, or my family, or any one in the world knowing anything of it. We had agreed upon the matter, and I was to be given a small apartment, where there was a closet with a lattice opening over the altar, and a little garden at the foot. It was what I wanted. The confessor was to be trusted, and I would have communicated in the morning by a little lattice on the days I should have made my devotions. This project made and accepted, I sent my furniture in advance; but as the Mother Prioress spoke of it to her Archbishop, he did not keep the secret. My friends and my enemies, if so one may call persons to whom one wishes no ill, opposed my project with very different views: the former, not

to lose me altogether; and the latter, in order to ruin me, and not allow their prey to escape. They considered that a life such as I wished to lead would give the lie to all the calumnies they had hitherto invented, and take from them all means of persecuting me more. I saw myself, then, obliged by both, who prayed the Archbishop to forbid my being received, to live in the world, in spite of my aversion for the world; and to be still the mark for the contradiction of men, the object of their calumnies, the plaything of Divine Providence. I then knew God was not content with the little I had suffered, and that he was about to raise against me strange hurricanes: but as it is almost impossible for me not to desire all that God desires, I submitted cheerfully, and I made him an entire sacrifice of myself; too happy to pay by such slight pains what I owed to his justice, and too honoured by being in some sort conformed to the image of his Son.

It may be thought strange that I say I made a sacrifice to God, after having in so many places noticed that I no longer found a will in me, or repugnance for anything that God would desire. Yet it is certain when God wishes to charge the soul with new crosses, different from those she has had, and to make her bear heavier ones, however conformed she may be to the will of God, yet, as he respects the freewill he himself has given man, he still obtains her consent, which never fails to be given. This I believe it is which makes the sufferings of these persons have some merit owing to the free consent of the will. We have examples of it in Jesus Christ, "who for the joy set before him endured the cross;" and David, speaking of Jesus Christ, says, "Sacrifices are not agreeable to you, therefore I have said, Here am I; you have given me a body, and there it is written at the head of the book, I will do your will." The same Jesus Christ, at the time of his death and of his agony, did he not make a striking immolation: "Not my will, but yours"? Did not the angel ask the

consent of Mary to be the mother of the Word? Did she not immolate him upon the cross, where she remained standing like a priest assisting at the sacrifice that the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek made of himself?

Some time before the marriage of my daughter, I had become acquainted with the Abbé F——, as I have already said, and the family into which she had entered being among his friends, I had the opportunity of seeing him there many times. We had some conversations on the subject of the inner life, in which he offered many objections to me. I answered him with my usual simplicity, and I had reason to believe he had been satisfied. As the affairs of Molinos were making great noise at that time, people had conceived distrust on the most simple things, and on terms the most common with those who have written on these matters. That gave me opportunity to thoroughly explain to him my experiences. The difficulties he offered only served to make clear to him the root of my sentiments; therefore no one has been better able to understand them than he. This it is which, in the sequel, has served for the foundation of the persecution raised against him, as his answers to the Bishop of Meaux have made known to all persons who have read them without prejudice.

Having left my daughter, I took a small secluded house, to follow there the disposition I had for retreat. I confined myself to seeing my family, who hardly inconvenienced me, and a small number of friends, whom I saw there only at long intervals—the greater part not ordinarily residing at Paris. Since my release from St. Mary's, I had continued to go to St. Cyr, and some of the girls of that House having declared to Madame de Maintenon that in the conversations I had with them they found something which led them to God, she permitted them to put confidence in me; and on many occasions she testified, owing

to the change of some with whom hitherto she had not been satisfied, that she had no cause for repenting it. She then showed me much kindness, and, during three or four years that this lasted, I received from her every mark of esteem and confidence; but it is this very thing in the sequel which has drawn down upon me the greatest persecution. The *entrée* Madame de Maintenon gave me at St. Cyr, and the confidence shown me by some young ladies of the court, distinguished by their rank and by their piety, began to cause uneasiness to the persons who had persecuted me. They stirred up the directors to take offence, and, under the pretence of the troubles I had had some years before, and of the great progress, as they said, of Quietism, they engaged the Bishop of Chartres, Superior of St. Cyr, to represent to Madame de Maintenon that I disturbed the order of her House by a private Direction; and that the girls whom I saw were so strongly attached to what I said to them, that they no longer listened to their Superiors. Madame de Maintenon caused me to be told in a kindly way. I ceased to go to St. Cyr. I no longer answered the girls who wrote to me, except by open letters, which passed through the hands of Madame de Maintenon.

A person of my acquaintance, a particular friend of Monsieur Nicole, had heard him often declaim against me, without knowing me; and he thought it would be easy to make him get over his prejudice if I could have some interviews with him, and by this means to disabuse many persons with whom he had relations, and who declared themselves in the most open manner hostile to me. That person urged me strongly to it, and, notwithstanding the repugnance I at first felt, certain of my friends, to whom I made known the urgency employed with me for this purpose, advised me to see him. As his ailments did not permit him to go out, I promised, after some civilities on his part, to pay him a visit. He at once referred to the

“Short Method,” and told me that little book was full of errors. I proposed to him we should read it together, and begged him to kindly tell me those which struck him, and that I hoped to remove his difficulties. He told me he was quite willing, and commenced to read the little book, chapter by chapter, with much attention; and when I asked him if there was nothing in what we had just read which struck him, or caused him trouble, he answered, “No; that what he was looking for was further on.” We went through the book, from one end to the other, without his finding anything that struck him. Oftentimes he said to me, “Here are the most beautiful comparisons possible.” At last, having long sought the errors he thought he had seen in it, he said to me, “Madame, my talent is to write, and not to hold such discussions, but if you will see one of my friends, he will state his difficulties to you, and you will perhaps be very glad to profit by his light; he is very clever, and a very good man. You will not be sorry to make his acquaintance, and he understands all this better than I. It is Monsieur Boileau, of the Hotel Luines.” I excused myself for some time, to avoid controversies, which did not suit me, not pretending to defend the little book, and letting it pass for what it was worth. But he pressed me so strongly, I could not refuse him. Monsieur Nicole proposed to me to take a house near him, and to go to confession to Father de la Tour, and spoke to me as if he had much wished me to be of his friends, and connected with his party. I answered all his proposals as civilly as possible; but I let him know that the little property I had kept for myself did not allow me to hire the house he proposed; that, wishing to live in a perfect retreat, the distance of that I occupied put it beyond my power to see there much society, which was in accordance with my inclination; and that, not having a carriage, the same distance offered an obstacle to the proposal he made me of going to confession to Father de la Tour, because he

lived at one end of Paris, and I, at the other. We parted none the less good friends, and I knew he greatly praised me to some persons to whom he had spoken of my visit.

A few days after, I saw M. Boileau, as he had wished it. He spoke to me of the “Short Method.” I repeated to him what I have so often said, of the disposition in which I had composed that little book, and of that in which I still was regarding it. He told me he was truly persuaded of the sincerity of my intentions, but that this little book, being in the hands of a great many people, might injure many pious souls, through the mischievous consequences that might be deduced from it. I begged him to be so kind as to tell me the passages which caused him trouble, and I said I hoped to remove his difficulties. We read the little book, and while reading he told me the difficulties he found. I explained the matter to him, so that he appeared to be satisfied; after which he no longer insisted. Thus we went through the whole book—he insisting more or less on the passages that stopped him, and I explaining to him simply my thoughts and my experience, without disputing on matters of doctrine, in which I relied on him entirely, as more capable than I of deciding.

This discussion finished, he said to me, “Madame, there would have been no difficulty with regard to this little book, if you had explained things somewhat more fully, and it might be very good if you explain in a preface that which is not clear in the book;” and he urged me strongly to work at it. I answered him, that never having had the intention of making public this little book (which was properly only a private instruction I had written at the entreaty of one of my friends, who had asked it from me, in consequence of some conversations we had had together on the matter), I had not been able to foresee either that it would be printed, or that the meanings he had just explained to me could be put upon it; but

that I would always be ready to give the explanations that should be desired, in order to remove objections that might be taken to it. He greatly praised me, and made me promise that I would explain, in a sort of preface, the difficulties he had proposed, after which, he assured me, the book might be good and useful. I did this some days afterwards, and sent him an explanation, with which he appeared very well satisfied. I saw him again, once or twice, and he urged me to have the little book reprinted with this preface. I represented to him, that this little book had furnished the pretext for the persecution and troubles I had been exposed to; that it was not suitable for me to put myself forward as the author; that I did not think I ought to contribute to the printing of this any more than of the former; but the strongest reason I had, was the promise I had given the Archbishop not to write any more on this subject. He approved my resolution, and we separated very well satisfied with one another.

I fell ill some time after, and as the nature of my ailment was little understood by the doctors, they prescribed the waters of Bourbon, after having in vain tried to cure me by ordinary remedies. It was a very strong poison, which had been given me: a servant had been gained over for the purpose. Immediately after he gave it, I suffered such violent pains that, without prompt help, I should have died in a few hours. The lacquey at once disappeared, and has not since been seen. That he had been instigated to do it, many circumstances proved; which I do not mention for the sake of brevity.

While I was at Bourbon, the water I threw up burned like spirits of wine. As I take no care of myself I should not have thought I had been poisoned, if the Bourbon doctors, after throwing the water on the fire, had not assured me of it. The mineral waters gave me little benefit, and I still suffered for seven years and a half. Since then people have three or four times tried to poison

me. God preserved me through his goodness, and by the presentiments he gave me of it. This illness and the journey to Bourbon caused me to lose sight of M. Nicole, of whom I no longer heard mention, except that, about seven or eight months afterwards, I learned he had composed a book against me on the subject of that little book we had read together, with which both he and his friend had appeared satisfied by the explanations I had given them: I believe his intentions were good; but one of my friends, who read that book, told me that the quotations were not exact, and that he had little understanding of the subject on which he had written. Shortly afterwards, I learned that Dom Francis L'Ami, a Benedictine of merit, well known, with whom I was not acquainted, a friend of M. Nicole, struck by the little solidity in his book, had undertaken to refute it, and, without having any knowledge of the "Short Method," in order to justify it from M. Nicole's imputations, he made use only of passages from his own book and what he quoted: he himself not having the little book. He has not printed that refutation; but it is still in existence, being in the hands of one of his friends. I let everything pass without thinking of justifying myself.

CHAPTER XII.

THE directors of St. Cyr having succeeded in what they wished, and I no longer going there, the matter made some noise. Those who had hitherto given me trouble, with some others who did not know me, set everything to work to decry me. I will not enter into the motives which influenced them: God knows them. But I believed at the time I should think of a more complete retirement: and as all the outcry they made was based upon the confidence of a small number of friends whom they said I was teaching how to pray (for that was the foundation of all the persecution), I adopted the plan of seeing nobody, expecting this would put an end to the talk. Thus the love of retirement, together with the desire I had to deprive those who hated me so gratuitously, of the opportunity of attacking me anew, made me go and spend some days in the country, in a house nobody knew; and after having let my family, my friends, and those who persecuted me believe that I would no more come back to Paris, I returned to my house, where I saw none of them for the rest of the time I remained there. M. Fouquet, uncle to my son-in-law, was the only person who knew where I was. I needed some one to receive the little income I had reserved for myself, when parting with my property, and also an upright witness who knew how I was living in my solitude. They no longer then saw me: I was, it seemed,

beyond reach. But who can avoid the malice of men when God wills to use it to make us enter into his eternal designs of crosses and ignominy?

The course I had adopted ought, it would seem, to have put an end to the murmurs, and calmed the minds: but quite the opposite happened; and I believe one of the things which most contributed to it was the silence of my friends, who, sharing the humiliation that such a procedure reflected upon them, suffered in peace without complaining of any one, and contented themselves with the witness that their conscience afforded them in secret, in no way showing to the excited minds that they knew the motives which made them so act, but also exhibiting a just reserve as to the confidence they would have wished people to place in them. My retirement, then, did not produce the effect that had been expected. It was suggested that from a distance I was spreading the poison of Quietism, as I had done near at hand; and, to give countenance to the calumny, they stirred up a number of pretended "devotees," who went from confessor to confessor, accusing themselves of crimes which they said were due to my principles. There were those I had tried to save from their irregularities, to whom, some years before, I had forbidden my house, after having failed in my endeavours.

Before I had entirely secluded myself, a very extraordinary thing happened. M. Fouquet had a valet, very well educated and a very worthy man, and a girl who lived in the house became madly in love with him. I do not tell here anything which numbers of persons of honour and probity have not learned from M. Fouquet himself. She declared her passion to that man, who was horrified. One day she said to him, "Wretch; I have given myself to the Devil that you might love me, and you do not love me." He was so frightened at this declaration he went and told his master, and he, after having questioned the girl, who told him horrible things, turned her out. As the valet was

well educated, the horror of what that wretched creature had done, led him to become a Father of St. Lazare. M. Fouquet did not neglect that unfortunate. He engaged numbers of persons, suitable alike from their learning and their virtue, to have a care of her. All gave her up, for she was so hardened that they saw no remedy but in a miracle of grace. This valet of M. Fouquet, become a Father of St. Lazare, fell mortally ill. He sent for M. Fouquet, begging him not to let him die without seeing him. He recommended that unfortunate to him, and said, "When I think it is owing to me she has withdrawn herself from Jesus Christ to give herself to the Devil, I am afflicted beyond belief." M. Fouquet promised him again to do what he could. I do not know what moved him to bring the creature to me; but it is certain that it was to make known, at least for a time, the power of God: and that, as the Devil had not been able to make M. Fouquet's valet consent to sin, so that Spirit of lies has no power over those who are God's, but what God permits him to exercise, as in Job's case. M. Fouquet then brought this girl to me, and, on seeing her, without knowing the cause, I had a horror of her. She was not less distressed at being near me; but, nevertheless, God overthrew the Devil, and Dagon was cast down before the Ark. This girl, while with me, often said to me, "You have something strong that I cannot endure," which I attributed to a piece of the true cross I had on my neck. Although I attributed it to the true cross, I nevertheless saw that God operated through me, without me, with his divine power. At last this power obliged her to tell me her frightful life, which makes me tremble as I think of it. She related to me the false pleasures that Spirit of Darkness had procured for her; that he made her pass for a saint in the place where she lived; that he allowed her to perform visible austerities; but that he did not allow her to pray: that, as soon as she wished to do it, he appeared to her under a hideous form,

ready to devour her; that in the other case, he appeared to her under a form as amiable as possible, and that he gave her all the money she wished. I said to her, "But amid all these false pleasures he procures for you, have you peace of heart?" She said to me in a terrible tone, "No; I experience a hellish trouble." I answered her, "In order that you may see the happiness there is in serving Jesus Christ, even in the midst of pain, I pray him to make you taste for one moment that peace of heart, which is preferable to all the pleasures of earth." She was immediately introduced into a great peace. Quite transported with this, she said to M. Fouquet, who was present, "Ah, Sir, I am in Paradise, and I was in Hell."

These good moments were not lost; M. Fouquet took her immediately to M. Robert, Grand Penitentiary, to whom she made a general confession and promised amendment. She was well enough for six months; but the Devil enraged, caused, I believe, the death of the Penitentiary, who died suddenly. Father Breton, a Jacobin, who had many times endeavoured to rescue her from the abyss into which she had cast herself, also died. I then became very ill, and this creature, who was allowed admittance to me because M. Fouquet begged it, came to see me. She said to me, "I knew that you were very ill. The Devil told me. He said he did all he could to cause your death, but it was not permitted to him; he will none the less cause you such evils and persecutions you will succumb to them." I answered her, there was nothing I was not ready to suffer provided she was thoroughly converted; that she should not listen to the Devil any more, whom I had forbidden her to answer, after having made her renounce him and renew the vows of her baptism. Because he had commenced by making her renounce her baptism and Jesus Christ, I made her do the contrary, and give herself anew to Jesus Christ. She said to me, "You must have great charity to be willing still to contribute to my conversion; for he

told me he would do you so much ill, and stir up so many against you that you would succumb." At this moment I seemed to see, in the imagination, a blue flame which formed a hideous face: but I had no fear of it any more than of the threats he sent me; for God for many years keeps me in this disposition, that I would cheerfully give my life, even all the repose of my life, which I value much more, for the salvation of a single soul. One day that M. Fouquet suspected nothing, a priest came to see him and asked him news of this creature. As he thought it was a good design brought him, M. Fouquet told him that they hoped for her entire conversion, and that they saw much progress towards it. This priest, or this devil in the form of a priest, asked where she lodged. He told him, and when M. Fouquet came to see me a little after, and spoke to me of the priest, it occurred to me it was that wicked priest of whom she had spoken to me, and with whom she had committed so many abominations (for she had told me her life and her crimes), and this proved only too true. She came no more. The Penitentiary died, as I have said, and M. Fouquet fell into a languishing illness, that terminated only with his life; but the girl came no more to see us.

I had been led, as I have mentioned, to see M. Boileau on the subject of the "Short Method." I had reason to believe he was satisfied with my conduct, from the things he repeated to some of my friends, of our conversations; but he was, a little after, one of my most eager persecutors. An extraordinary woman, who passed for a very devout person, having placed herself under his direction, on her arrival in Paris, made him change his sentiments. He apparently spoke of me to her on the subject of the visits I had paid him. She assured him I was wicked, and I would cause great evils to the Church. She excited then, as she has since done, much attention in Paris.¹ She was

¹ See "St. Simon," vol. ii. p. 160.

brought to visit people of every character and position, bishops, magistrates, ecclesiastics, women of rank—in a word, under pretext of a pretended miraculous ailment, they established her reputation to such a point that they could do nothing but talk of the extraordinary things that appeared in her. I could not imagine what this woman could be, nor what motive led her to speak of me in the manner she did. She seemed to have fallen from the clouds, for nobody knew who she was, nor whence she came; and it has always been a puzzle for all those who have heard her spoken of, except M. Boileau, and perhaps some one in his most intimate confidence. As her name was entirely unknown to me, I did not believe myself any more known to her; but some years after, having learned that she had borne the name of Sister Rose, it was not difficult for me to divine the reasons why she had thus spoken of me. This woman, about whom there was in fact something very extraordinary (God knows what caused it, for she prided herself on knowing the most secret thoughts, and having the most detailed knowledge, not only of things at a distance from her, but even of the future)—this woman, I say, persuaded M. Boileau, and persons of virtue and probity with whom he was in relation, that the greatest service they could render God was to decry me, and even to imprison me, owing to the ills I was capable of causing. What made her desire I should be imprisoned was the apprehension that I might proclaim what I knew of her. If she still lives, she will see by my silence that, being God's to the degree I am, she had nothing to dread; the history of her life having been confided to me under the pledge of secrecy by herself.

Immediately there was an inconceivable outburst. Had I even known all these details, which only came to my knowledge later, and had I even then known who this woman was, I believe I should have failed in any effort to disabuse minds so prejudiced: I should not have been

believed, and perhaps I should not have been willing to say anything against her; because God then kept me in that disposition of sacrifice, of suffering everything, and receiving from his hand all that might happen to me through this person, and those whom she had led away by her pretended extraordinary power. Nevertheless, she stated one circumstance which ought to have changed the opinion of so many good persons, if they had been willing to be enlightened; but the prejudice was such that they would not even examine into the truth, let alone believe it. It is indeed true, my Lord, that when you will to make one suffer, you yourself blind the most virtuous persons, and I will honestly confess that the persecution from the wicked is nothing in comparison with that from servants of God, deceived, and animated by a zeal they believe just. This circumstance was, that God had made known to her the excess of my wickedness, and that he had given her as an assured sign of the truth she advanced, that in my writings I had merely copied those of Mademoiselle Vigneron; and that it would be easy to see their correspondence with my books. A person of great consideration, to whom M. Boileau confided this, wished to prove the matter for himself. He went to the Minims and asked them for those writings. They made a great deal of difficulty, assuring him that they had never left their hands. However, not being with civility able to refuse that person, who promised to bring them back in a few days, he examined them himself; but far from seeing in them any relation with what I had written, he found a total difference. In order to disabuse M. Boileau of his prejudice, he proposed to him to satisfy himself with his own eyes, and to read for himself those writings, to see their contrariety. But, in spite of all his urgency on two different occasions, and the deference due from M. Boileau to that illustrious person, he would never do it, assuring him this woman had told him the truth, and that, knowing her as he did,

he could not suspect her of the contrary. The truth is, I had never seen those writings of Mademoiselle Vigneron, and I had never heard her name pronounced up to that time. They tried further to disabuse M. Boileau, by a number of acts of hypocrisy of which some good people, whom he himself esteemed, were witnesses. But nothing could induce him to examine things closely—God doubtless not permitting him, in order to make me suffer so many crosses, humiliations, and pains, to which he contributed not a little.

On which side might deceitfulness be looked for—from a person always submissive and obedient, who so willingly gives up her judgment and her will, who has renounced all for God, who is known for a long time by so many good people, that have followed her in all the ages of her life and offer for her a testimony little open to suspicion: or, from a person unknown, who changes her name in most of the places where she has lived (for there are at least four that have come to my knowledge),—from a person whom devotion elevates from the dust; poor, whom devotion raises and enriches: while mine, if I have any, and God knows it, has only brought me humiliations, the strangest confusions, and universal discredit? O my Lord, it is there I recognize you; and since, to please you, it is necessary to be conformed to you, I value more my humiliation at seeing myself condemned by all the world than if I saw myself at the summit of glory. How often, in the bitterness of my heart, I have said, I would fear more a reproach of conscience than the condemnation of all men! This woman persisted always in saying I must be imprisoned, I would ruin everybody. Those whom I have ruined, you know it, Lord, are full of love for you. What made this woman speak in that way was, as I have said, the fear that, if I had seen her, or had known her name, I might have spoken of things she had a great interest in keeping hid. Yet this creature attracted such

credit, and stirred up against me such persecutions, that every one had pleasure in inventing new fables against me. It was who could compose the most libels. He who was best at invention was the most welcome. They believed against me the most incredible things, and they did not believe in my favour persons most worthy of trust, of the highest probity, who knew me from my youth, and whose word would be believed in any other matter. I have digressed a little on the subject of this girl, and I resume the thread of my narrative.

Some ecclesiastics, led away by M. Boileau, or by views and motives which charity does not permit me to speak of, but known to a small number of friends who remained to me, co-operated in all this. There were also some directors vexed because some persons who appeared to have a kindness for me had left them for Father Alleaume (who was my intimate friend), with which, however, I had nothing to do. However it be, every device was used to decry me, and in order to render what they called my doctrine suspected, they thought it was necessary to decry my morals. They omitted nothing to attain their purpose, and, after having persuaded the Bishop of Chartres of the pretended danger to the Church by endless stories, he set to work to persuade Madame de Maintenon, and those of the Court he knew to be my friends, of the necessity of abandoning me, because I was wicked, and capable of inspiring them with wicked sentiments. Madame de Maintenon held out some time. The part she had taken in my release from St. Mary's, my conversation, my letters, the testimony of those of her friends in whom she had most confidence, made her suspend her judgment. At last she gave way to the reiterated urgency of the Bishop of Chartres and of some others he employed in the direction of St. Cyr. He did not succeed equally with some persons of rank, who, having been many years witnesses of my conduct, knew me for themselves, and

were acquainted with the different springs that had been put in motion to ruin me. I owe them the justice to make known that it was no fault of theirs that the authority of the King was not employed to shield me from so much injustice. They drew up a memoir likely to influence him in my favour, giving him an account of the conduct I had observed, and was still observing in my retirement. Madame de Maintenon was to have supported it by her testimony, but, having had the kindness to communicate it to me, I believed God did not wish me to be justified by that channel, and I required of them that they should leave me to the rigours of his justice, whatever they might be. They consented to defer to my request. The memoir already presented was withdrawn, and they adopted the course of silence, which they have since continued, being no longer able to do anything in my favour, owing to the outburst and prejudice.

CHAPTER XIII.

SOME of my friends thought it would be advisable for me to see the Bishop of Meaux, who was reported not to be opposed to spiritual religion. I knew that, eight or ten years before, he had read the "Short Method" and the "Canticles," and that he had thought them very good. This made me consent to it with pleasure; but, O my Lord, how have I experienced in my life that everything which is done through consideration and human views, although good, turns into confusion, shame, and suffering! At that time I flattered myself (and I accused myself of my faithlessness) that he would support me against those who were attacking me. But how far was I from knowing him! And how subject to error is that which one does not see in your light, and which you do not yourself disclose!

One of my friends, of the highest rank, the D—— de Ch—— [Duke of Chevreuse], brought the Bishop of Meaux to my house. The conversation soon fell upon that which formed the subject of his visit. They spoke of the "Short Method," and this Prelate told me that he had once read it and also the "Canticles," and that he had thought them very good. What I say here is not to support those books, which I have submitted with all my heart and which I still submit, but in order to give a simple account of all that is past, as I have been required to do. The

D—— de Ch—— gave him the "Torrents," on which he made some remarks: not of things to be condemned, but which needed elucidation. The D—— de Ch—— had the kindness to remain present. This Prelate said to us such strong things on the interior way and the authority of God over the soul, I was surprised. He gave us even examples of persons he had known, whom he deemed saints, that had killed themselves. I confess I was startled by all this talk of the Bishop of Meaux. I knew that in the primitive Church some virgins had caused their own deaths in order to keep themselves pure; but I did not believe, in this age, where there is neither violence nor tyrants, a man could be approved for such an action. The D—— de Ch—— gave him my history of my life, that he might know me thoroughly; which he thought so good, that he wrote to him, saying, "he found in it an unction he found nowhere else; that he had been three days reading it without losing the presence of God." These are, if I remember rightly, the exact words of one of his letters. What will appear astonishing is, that the Bishop of Meaux, who had had such holy dispositions while reading the history of my life, and who valued it while it remained in his hands, saw in it, a year after it had left them, things he had not seen before: which he even retailed, as if in reality I had written them.

He afterwards wrote to the D—— de Ch——, that he had just learned a thing which had been written to him from the abbey of Clairets, and which confirmed the interior way. A nun of Clairets, on the point of death, as they held the holy candle to her, called her Superior, and said to her, "My Mother, God wishes at present to be served by an entire stripping of self and the destruction of the whole selfhood. It is the way that he has chosen;" and as a proof she was speaking the truth, she made known to them, though in a manner they did not at first understand, that she should not die until that holy

candle was burned down. According to ordinary rules she could not live more than a quarter of an hour; her pulse had entirely ceased. The Superior having extinguished the holy candle, she was three days in that state, without any change in her pulse, with the same signs of death. They caused the holy candle to be lit again, and she died when it burned down. I merely relate what was in the letter. I omit the reflections of the Bishop of Meaux on such a strange case, having forgotten them; but it is certain that, after this, he did not believe there could be any doubt of the most interior ways. I forgot to say the Bishop of Meaux had requested me to observe secrecy as to his visiting me. As I have always inviolably preserved it for my greatest enemies, I was not likely to fail in it for him. The reason he alleged for the secrecy he wished observed is, that he was not on good terms with the Bishop of Paris; but he himself went and told what he had begged me to be silent on. My silence and his talk have been the source of all the trouble I have since suffered.

The Bishop of Meaux, having then accepted the proposal to examine my writings, I caused them to be placed in his hands; not only those printed, but all the commentaries on Holy Scriptures. I had previously given them to M. Charon the Official, by one of my maids; but the fear they should be lost—as, in fact, they were, the Official having never returned them—led that girl to distribute them among a number of copyists, who made the copy that was afterwards given to the Bishop of Meaux. It was a great labour for him, and he required four or five months to have leisure to go to the bottom of everything, which with much exactitude he did in his country house, where he had gone to escape interruption. To show the more confidence in him, and lay open the inmost recesses of my heart, I made over to him, as I have said, the history of my life, where my most secret dispositions

were noted with much simplicity. On that I asked from him the secrecy of the confessional; he promised an inviolable. He read everything with attention, and, at the end of the time stipulated, was in a position to hear my explanations and offer his objections.

It was at the commencement of the year 1694: he wished to see me at the house of one of his friends, who lived near the Daughters of the Holy Sacrament. He said the Mass in that Community, and gave me there the Communion: afterwards he dined. This conference, that according to him was to be so secret, was known to all the world. Many persons sent to beg him to go to the convent of the Daughters of the Holy Sacrament, that they might speak to him. He went there, and they took care to prejudice him; as he appeared to be so when in the evening he returned and spoke to me. He was not the same man. He had brought all his extracts and a memoir, containing more than twenty articles, to which all his objections were reduced. God assisted me, so that I satisfied him on everything that had relation to the dogma of the Church and the purity of doctrine. But there were some passages on which I could not satisfy him. As he spoke with extreme vivacity, and hardly gave me time to explain my thoughts, it was not possible for me to make him change upon some of those articles, as I had done upon others. We separated very late, and I left that conference with a head so exhausted, and in such a state of prostration, I was ill from it for several days. I wrote to him, however, several letters, in which I explained, the best I could, those difficulties that had arrested him; and I received one from him of more than twenty pages, from which it appeared that he was only arrested by the novelty to him of the subject and the slight acquaintance he had with the interior ways; of which one can hardly judge except by experience.

I will repeat here, as well as memory allows me, the

greater part of those difficulties. He thought, for example, that I rejected and condemned as imperfect, *distinct acts*, such as specific requests, good desires, etc. : this I was far from doing, since the contrary is scattered through all my writings, if any one will give attention to them. But as I had experienced incapacities to do those discursive acts, incapacities common to certain souls, and on which they had need to be warned in order to be faithful to the Spirit of God, who was calling them to something more perfect, I endeavoured, as well as I was able, to aid them in those straits of the spiritual life ; where, for want of a guide who has passed through, souls are often stopped, and exposed to be deceived as to what God wishes of them. It is easy, methinks, to conceive that a person who places his happiness in God alone can no longer desire his “own” happiness. No one can place all his happiness in God alone but he who dwells in God through charity. When the soul is there, she no longer desires any other felicity but that of God, in himself and for himself. No longer desiring any other felicity, all “*own*” felicity, even the glory of heaven for herself, is no longer that which can render her happy ; nor consequently the object of her desire. The desire necessarily follows the love. If my love is in God alone and for God alone, without self-regard, my desire is in God alone, without relation to me.

This desire in God has no longer the vivacity of an amorous desire, which is not in the enjoyment of what it desires ; but it has the repose of a desire, filled and satisfied : for God being infinitely perfect and happy, and the happiness of that soul being in the perfection and in the happiness of her God, her desire cannot have the activity of an ordinary desire, which awaits what it desires ; but it has the repose of that which has what it desires. Here, then, is the centre root of the state of the soul, and the reason why she no longer perceives all the good

desires, as do those who love God in relation to themselves, or those who love themselves and seek themselves in the love they have for God.

Now, this does not prevent God from changing the dispositions, making the soul for moments feel the weight of her body, which shall make her say, “I desire to depart and to be with Christ.” At another time, feeling only a disposition of charity towards her brothers without regard or relation to herself, she “will desire to be anathema and separated from Jesus Christ for her brethren.” These dispositions, which seem to be opposed, agree very well in a central depth, which does not vary ; so that though the beatitude of God in himself and for himself, into which the sensible desires of the soul have, as it were, flowed and reposed, makes the essential happiness of this soul, God does not cease to waken those desires when it pleases him. These desires are no longer the desires of former times, which are in the “own” will, but desires stirred and excited by God himself, without the soul reflecting on herself ; because God, who holds her directly turned towards himself, renders her desires as her other acts non-reflective ; so that she cannot see them if he does not show them, or if her own words do not give her some knowledge of them, while giving it to others. It is certain, to desire for herself she must will for herself. Now all the care of God being to sink the will of the creature in his own, he absorbs also every known desire in the love of his divine will.

There is still another reason which makes God take away and put into the soul sensible desires as it pleases him : it is, that, God wishing to dispense something to this soul, he makes her desire it in order to have a ground for giving it to her, and for hearing her : for it is indubitable “he hears the desire of this soul and the preparation of her heart ;” and even, the Holy Spirit desiring for her and in her, her desires are the prayers and requests of the

Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ says in this soul, "I know that you hear me always." A vehement desire of death in such a soul would be almost a certainty of death. To desire humiliation is far below desiring the enjoyment of God. Nevertheless, when it has pleased God to greatly humiliate me by calumny, he has given me a hunger for humiliation. I call it hunger, to distinguish it from desire. At another time he inspires this soul to pray for specific things. She feels at that moment her prayer is not formed by her will, but by the will of God; for she is not even free to pray for whom she pleases, nor when she pleases; but when she prays she is always heard. She takes no credit to herself for this; but she knows that it is he, who possesses her, who hears himself in her. It seems to me I conceive this infinitely better than I explain it.

It is the same with the sensible inclination, or even the perceived, which is much less than the sensible. When a sheet of water is on a different level from another which discharges into it, this takes place with a rapid movement and a perceptible noise; but when the two waters are on a level the inclination is no longer perceived: there is one, however, but it is imperceptible; so that it is true to say, in one sense, that there is none. As long as the soul is not entirely united to her God by a union which I call permanent, to distinguish it from transitory unions, she feels her inclination for God. The impetuosity of this inclination, far from being a perfect thing, as unenlightened persons think it, is a defect and marks the distance between God and the soul. But when God has united the soul to himself, so that he has received her into him, "where he holds her, hidden with Jesus Christ," the soul finds a repose which excludes all sensible inclination, and which is such that experience alone can make it understood. It is not a repose in peace tasted, in the sweetness and mildness of a perceived presence of God;

but it is a repose in God himself which participates of his immensity, so much has it of vastness, simplicity, and purity. The light of the sun which should be limited by mirrors would have something more dazzling than the pure light of the air; yet those same mirrors which enhance its brilliance, limit it, and deprive it of its purity. When the ray is limited by anything, it fills itself with atoms, and makes itself more distinguishable than when in the air; but it is very far from having its purity and simplicity. The more things are simple and pure, the more of vastness they have. Nothing more simple than water, nothing more pure: but this water has a wonderful extent, owing to its fluidity. It has also a quality, that having no quality of its own, it takes all sorts of impressions. It has no taste; it takes all tastes. It has no colour, and it takes all colours. The intellect and the will in this state are so pure and so simple that God gives them such a colour and such a taste as pleases him; like the water which is sometimes red, sometimes blue, in short impressed with any colour, or any taste, one wishes to give it. It is certain, though one gives to the water the diverse colours one pleases in virtue of its simplicity and purity, it is not, however, correct to say that the water in itself has taste and colour, since it is in its nature without taste and without colour, and it is this absence of taste and colour that renders it susceptible of every taste and every colour. It is this I experience in my soul. She has nothing she can distinguish or know in her, or as belonging to her, and it is this which constitutes her purity: but she has everything that is given to her, and as it is given to her, without retaining anything thereof for herself. If you ask the water what is its quality, it would answer you that it is to have none. You would say to it, "But I have seen you red." "Very likely, but I am not, however, red. It is not my nature. I do not even think of what they do to me, of all the tastes and all the colours

they give me." It is the same with the form as with the colour. As the water is fluid, and without consistence, it takes all the forms of the places where it is put—of a vessel either round or square. If it had a consistence of its own it could not take all forms, all tastes, all odours, and all colours.

Souls are good for but little as long as they preserve their own consistence; all the design of God being to make them lose by the death of themselves all that they have of the "own" in order to act, to move, to change and to impress them, as it pleases him: so that it is true they have none. And this is the reason that, feeling only their simple nature, pure and without specific impression, when they speak or write of themselves, they deny all forms being in them, not speaking according to the variable dispositions in which they are put. They pay no attention to these, but to the root of that which they are, which is their state always subsisting. If one could show the soul like the face I would not, methinks, conceal any of her spots—I submit the whole. I believe, further, what causes the soul to be unable to desire anything is, that God fills her capacity. I shall be told the same is said of heaven. There is this difference, that in heaven not only the capacity of the soul is filled, but, further, that capacity is fixed, and can no longer increase. If it grew, the saints would augment in holiness and in merit. In this life, when by his goodness God has purified a soul, he fills this capacity: this it is which causes a certain satiety, but, at the same time, he enlarges and augments the capacity: while enlarging it, he purifies it; and it is this causes the suffering and the interior purification. In this suffering and purification life is painful: the body is a burden. In the plenitude nothing is wanting to the soul, she can desire nothing. A second reason why the soul can desire nothing is, that the soul is, as it were, absorbed in God, in a sea of love; so that, forgetting herself, she can only think

of her love. All care of herself is a burden to her: an Object which far exceeds her capacity absorbs her and hinders her from turning towards self. We must say of these souls what is said of the children of Wisdom: "It is a nation which is only obedience and love." The soul is incapable of other reason, other view, other thought, than love and obedience. It is not that one condemns the other states, by no means; and thereon I explained myself to the Bishop of Meaux in a manner that ought not, I think, to leave him any doubt thereon.

CHAPTER XIV.

I HAVE another defect, which is that I say things as they occur to me, without knowing whether I speak well or ill: whilst I am saying or writing them, they appear to me clear as day: after that, I see them as things I have never known, far from having written them. Nothing remains in my mind but a void, which is not troublesome. It is a simple void, which is not inconvenienced by the multitude of thoughts or by their dearth. This caused one of my greatest troubles in speaking to the Bishop of Meaux. He ordered me to justify my books. I excused myself as much as I could; because, having submitted them with my whole heart, I did not desire to justify them: but he insisted on it. I first of all protested I only did it through obedience, condemning most sincerely all that was condemned in them. I have always held this language, which was more that of my heart than of my mouth. He still wished me to render a reason for an infinity of things I had put in my writings, which were entirely new and unknown to me. I remember, among others, a passage regarding Eliud—that man who speaks so long to Job, when his friends had ceased speaking to him. I never knew what I had intended to say. The Bishop of Meaux insisted, I said, that all this Eliud says in that long discourse was by the Spirit of God. This did not appear to me so: on the contrary, one sees an astonishing fulness of

himself. I will here say, in passing, that if one will give some attention to the rapidity with which God has made me write of so many things, far above my natural grasp, it is easy to conceive that, having had so small a part in it, it is very difficult, not to say impossible, for me, to render a reason for them in dogmatic style. This it is which has always led me to say, I took no part in them, and, having written only through obedience, I was as content to see everything burned as to see it praised and esteemed. There were also faults of the copyists, which rendered the sense unintelligible, and the Bishop of Meaux wanted to make me responsible for the errors, which he insisted were there: and he overwhelmed me by the vivacity of his arguments, which always reduced themselves to belief in the dogma of the Church, that I did not pretend to dispute with him; whereas he might have discussed quietly the experiences of a person, submissive to the Church, who asked only to be set right, if they were not conformable to the rules she prescribes; which was precisely the thing contemplated when this examination was undertaken.

He spoke to me of the woman of the Apocalypse, as if I had pretended to be her myself. I answered, St. John had meant to speak of the Church and of the Holy Virgin: that our Lord was pleased to compare his servants to a thousand things, which properly fit only him; and that there is nothing in the general Church which does not take place in some degree in the particular soul. It is then an application which is made to the soul, and God fulfils that application, as St. Paul says, he filled up what was wanting to the passion of Jesus Christ: again, what is said of Wisdom is applied to the Holy Virgin, but the design of Solomon was merely to express Wisdom; and so with the rest. It is then a comparison, which God nevertheless takes pleasure in fulfilling, where it pleases him. All that has been said of the woman of the

Apocalypse, in the sense in which it has pleased God to attribute it to me, those plenitudes, for example, are not in the body, but in the soul, as many persons who will read this have experienced with me. It seems one sends out a torrent of graces. When the subject is disposed, this is received in him. When he is not so, it rebounds upon us. It is what Jesus Christ said to the disciples, "Those who are children of peace will receive the peace: as for those who will not receive it, your peace will return upon you." It is that to the letter. One explains one's self in these matters the best one can, and not as one wishes: but "the animal man will not understand" that which it is only given to the spiritual man to understand.

As to that outflow of graces which was another difficulty to the Bishop of Meaux. It has been given me to understand it in connection with those words of our Lord, when the woman had touched him: "A secret virtue is gone out of me." I have never pretended to render all this credible: I have written in order to obey; and I have related things as they were shown to me. I have always been ready to believe I was deceived, if I was told so. God is my witness, I do not cling to anything. I have always been ready to burn the writings should they be thought capable of doing harm. There is little imagination in what I write; for I often write what I have never thought. What I should have wished of the Bishop of Meaux, was that he would not judge me by his reason, but by his heart. I have never premeditated any answer before seeing him; ingenuous truth alone was my strength, and I was as content my mistakes should be known, as the graces of God. My paltriness may have mingled itself with his pure light: but can the mire tarnish the sun? I hoped the same God who had once made a she-ass speak could make a woman speak; who often knew no more what she said than Balaam's she-ass. Those were the dispositions of my heart when I had the conference

with the Bishop of Meaux, and, thanks to God, I have never had any other.

The objections he made to me sprung, I believe, only from the small knowledge he had of mystic authors, whom he confessed to have never read, and the small experience he had of the interior ways. He had been struck on some occasions by extraordinary things he had seen in certain persons, or that he had read, which made him judge God had special routes by which he made them attain to a great holiness: but this way of simple faith, small, obscure, which produces in souls, according to the designs of God, that variety of special leadings where he leads them in himself, it was a jargon that he regarded as the effect of a crazy imagination, and the terms of which were to him equally unknown and intolerable.

Another thing he reproached me with, is having written somewhere, that I had no graces for certain souls, nor for my self. When I have spoken of having no longer grace for myself, I have not meant to speak of sanctifying grace, which one always needs, but of the gratuitous, sensible, distinct, and perceived graces, which are experienced in the commencement of the spiritual life. I meant to say I did not contribute to the reign of God by anything striking, but in gaining some souls by disgrace, ignominy, and confusion. He attributed to the sensible what was purely spiritual, as what I have written in my Life of an impression I had when with a lady, one of my friends. It is certain my state has never been to have extraordinary things which react upon the body: and I believe that usually this only happens in the sensible, not in the purely spiritual love. But on that occasion where they had read a passage of Holy Scripture, on which a very profound light was given to me, the persons who were present explained it in the opposite sense. I dared not speak, and there took place in me a contrast between what I knew

was true, and what they said, which could not be borne. The inability to speak, not daring it, the necessity of hearing others speak, produced an effect upon me that I have only that time felt, which overflowed on my body and made me ill. It is true I have felt in the heart, when God gave me some souls, intolerable and inexplicable pains. It was a keen impression in the depth of my soul which I cannot better explain than by this which is given me, that Jesus Christ, in having his side opened upon the cross, had given birth to the predestinated. He caused his heart to be opened, as if to show they came forth from his heart. He suffered in the Garden of Olives the pain of the separation of the lost, who would not profit by the blood he was about to shed for them. This pain was in him excessive, and such that it needed the strength of a God to bear it. I have explained that in the Gospel of St. Matthew.

The Bishop of Meaux raised great objections to what I had said, in my Life, of the Apostolic state. What I have meant to say is, that persons, who, by their state and conditions (as, for instance, laics and women) are not called upon to aid souls, ought not to intrude into it of themselves: but when God wished to make use of them by his authority, it was necessary they should be put into the state of which I have written. What had given occasion for it is, that numbers of good souls who feel the firstfruits of the unction of grace—that unction of which St. John speaks, which teaches all truth,—when, I say, they commence to feel this unction, they are so charmed with it, that they would wish to share their grace with all the world. But as they are not yet in the source, and this unction is given them for themselves and not for others, in spreading themselves abroad they gradually lose the sacred oil, as the foolish virgins, while the wise ones preserved their oil for themselves, until they were introduced into the chamber of the Bridegroom: then

they may give of their oil, because the Lamb is the lamp who illumines them. That this state is possible, we have only to open the histories of all times to show, that God has made use of laics and women without learning to instruct, edify, conduct, and bring souls to a very high perfection. I believe one of the reasons why God has willed to make use of them in this way, is in order that the glory should not be stolen from him. “He has chosen weak things to confound the strong.” It seems that God, jealous that what is only due to him should be attributed to men, has willed to make a paradox of these persons, who are not in a state to take from him his glory. As to what regards me, I am ready to believe that my imaginations are mixed up as shadows with the divine truth, which may indeed conceal it, but cannot injure it. I pray God with all my heart to crush me by the most terrible means, rather than I should rob him of the least of his glory. I am only a mere nothing. My God is all powerful, who is pleased to exercise his power upon the nothing.

The first time I wrote my Life, it was very short. I had put there in detail my sins, and had only spoken very little of the graces of God. I was made to burn it; and I was commanded absolutely to omit nothing, and to write, regardless of myself, all that should come to me. I did it. If there is anything too much like pride, I am capable only of what is worthless; but I have thought it was more suitable to obey without self-regard than to disobey and conceal the mercies of God through a humility born of the selfhood. God may have had his designs in this. It is ill to publish the secret of one's King, but it is well done to declare the graces of the Lord our God, and to enhance his bounties by the baseness of the subject on whom he exhibits them. If I have failed, the fire will purify all. I can very well believe I may have been mistaken; but I cannot complain, nor be afflicted at it. When I gave myself to our Lord, it was without reserve and without

exception; and as I have written only through obedience, I am as content to write extravagances as good things. My consolation is, God is neither less great, nor less perfect, nor less happy for all my errors. When things are once written down, nothing remains in my head. I have no idea of them. When I am able to reflect, it appears to me I am below all creatures, and a veritable nothing.

When I have spoken of binding and loosing, the words should not be taken in the sense in which it is said of the Church. It was a certain authority, which God seemed to give me, to withdraw souls from their troubles and to replunge them therein, God permitting that it was verified in the souls: not that I have supposed that I was the better, nor that it took place in a manner reflected upon me, which God has never permitted; but, while writing simply and without self-regard, I have put things as they were shown to me.

The Bishop of Meaux insisted on saying I stifled distinct acts, as believing them imperfect. I have never done so; and when I have been interiorly placed in a powerlessness to do them, and my powers were as though bound, I defended myself with all my strength, and only through weakness did I yield to the strong and powerful God. It seems to me that even this powerlessness to do conscious acts did not deprive me of the reality of the act; on the contrary, I found my faith, my confidence, my self-surrender were never more living, nor my love more ardent. This made me understand that there was a kind of act direct and without reflection; and I knew it by a continued exercise of love and faith, which, rendering the soul submissive to all the events of providence, leads her to a veritable hatred of self and a love of only crosses, ignominy, and disgrace. It seems to me that all the Christian and Evangelic characteristics are given to her. It is true her confidence is full of repose, free from anxiety and inquietude; she can do nothing but love and repose in her love. She

is like a person drunk, who is incapable of anything but his drunkenness. The difference between these persons and the others is, that the others eat the food, masticating it carefully to nourish themselves, and these swallow the substance without reflecting on it. I am so far from wishing to stifle distinct acts, as being imperfect, that if any one will take the trouble to read my writings, he will remark in many places expressions which are very distinct acts. It would be easy to show that they then flow from the source, and the reason why one, at that time, expresses his love, his faith, his self-surrender, in a very distinct manner; that one does the same in hymns or spiritual songs, and that one cannot do it in prayer unless God impels.

I should remark that acts must be according to the state of the soul. If she is multiplex, the acts must be multiplex; if she is simple, simple: in short, either direct or from reflection. Patience is an act. He who receives, does an act, though less marked than he who gives. The flowing of the soul into God is an act. He who is moved and acted upon has acts; they are not his own acts in truth, and the souls then are not the principle of their acts. It is an act to obey the hand which pushes. The agent moves his subject; the subject moved acts by its principle of movement. All these are acts, but not acts regulated and methodic, nor of which the soul is the principle, but God. Now, the acts God causes to be done are more noble and more perfect, although more insensible. "Those who are moved by the Spirit of God are the children of God." He who is moved does an act, which is not properly an act of his, but an act of letting himself move without resistance. He who does not admit these secondary acts, destroys all the operations of grace as a first principle, and makes God only secondary, doing nothing but accompanying our action; which is opposed to the doctrine of the Church.

I can say the same thing of specific requests; for it is

on specific requests the Bishop of Meaux has tormented me most, not only in this first conference, but in those I had with him at the end of that same year, of which I shall speak hereafter. I collect together here, as well as I can remember, all that relates to this examination, not to refer to it a second time. The Bishop of Meaux would have me make requests; but what can I ask for? God gives me more blessings than I wish for; what should I ask of him? He forestalls my requests and my desires. He makes me forget myself, that I may think of him. He forgets himself for me: how should I not forget myself for him? He, to whom love leaves sufficient liberty to think of himself, hardly loves; or at least, might love more. He, who does not think of himself, can neither ask, nor pray for himself; his love is his prayer and his request. O Divine Charity, you are every prayer, every request, every thanksgiving, and yet you are none of this! You are a substantial prayer, which, in an eminent degree, includes every distinct and detailed prayer. O Love, you are that sacred fire, who render pure and innocent your victims, without their thinking of their purity. They speak of themselves outside themselves in you as of you, without distinction. I am not astonished, O David, that you spoke of yourself as Christ, of whom you were the figure. You were so become identical with him that in the same passages you speak of yourself and of him, without changing style or person. In short, it appears to me, the exercise of charity contains every request and every prayer; and as there is a love without reflection, there is a prayer without reflection: and that which has this substantial prayer is the equivalent of all prayers, since it contains them all. It does not detail them, owing to its simplicity. The heart, which ceaselessly watches on God, attracts the watchfulness of God over it. There are two kinds of souls: the one to which God leaves liberty to think of themselves, the others whom God invites to give themselves to him

by such an entire forgetfulness of themselves that he reproaches them for the least self-regards. These souls are like little children who let their mothers carry them, and have no care for what concerns them. This does not condemn those who act. They both follow their attraction according to the spirit of grace and the advice of an enlightened director. Open the book on the Love of God by St. Francis de Sales; he says the same thing in numberless places. I say, then, there are spiritual as well as corporal inabilities. I do not condemn acts or good practices. God forbid! When I have written of these things, I have not pretended to give remedies to those who walk and have a facility for those practices, but I have done it for numerous persons who are unable to perform these acts. It is said these remedies are dangerous and may be abused. It is only necessary to remove the abuse. It is what I have laboured to do with all my power.

The Bishop of Meaux maintained there are only four or five persons in the whole world who have this manner of prayer, and who are in this difficulty of performing acts. There are more than a hundred thousand in the world: therefore one has written for those, who are in this state. I have endeavoured to remove an abuse, which is, that souls who commence to feel certain inabilities (which is very common) think they are at the summit of perfection; and I have wished, while exalting this last state, to make them understand their distance. As to what regards the root of doctrine, I avow my ignorance. I believed my director would remove faulty terms, and that he would correct what he should not think good. I would rather die a thousand times than wander from the sentiments of the Church, and I have always been ready to disavow and condemn whatever I might have said, or written, which could be contrary to them.

CHAPTER XV.

WHEN this conference was finished, I thought only of retirement, following the advice of the Bishop of Meaux; I mean to say, no longer to see any one, as I had already commenced doing for a considerable time. I wrote some letters to the Bishop of Meaux, wherein I tried to explain to him the things he had not allowed me leisure to do in the conference. I addressed them to the Duke de Ch——, through whom all had passed, and he had the kindness to send me the answers. The vivacity of the Bishop of Meaux, and the harsh terms he sometimes employed, had persuaded me he regarded me as a person deceived and under illusion. From this standpoint I wrote to the Duke de Ch——, who showed him my letter, in which I thanked him also for all the trouble he had taken. The Bishop of Meaux answered him, that the difficulties, on which he had insisted and some on which he still insisted, neither touched the faith nor the doctrine of the Church. That he thought differently, in truth, from me on those articles, but that he did not believe me the less Catholic; and if, for my consolation and that of my friends, I wished an attestation of his sentiments, he was ready to give me a certificate stating that, after having examined me, he had not found in me anything but what was Catholic, and, in consequence, he had administered to me the sacraments of the Church. The Duke de Ch—— had the kindness to

communicate this to me: but I thanked him, and begged him to say that, having wished to see him only for my personal instruction, and for the sake of a small number of friends, who might have been disquieted at all the *fracas* that had been made, the testimony he had the kindness to render to them and to me also was sufficient for me; that I would do what I could to conform myself to the things he had prescribed for me; but that the sincerity I professed did not allow me to conceal from him that there were some on which I was not able to obey him, however sincerely desirous and whatever effort I made to enter upon that practice. After which I broke all communication with both parties, assuring them nevertheless that, as often as there should be a question of rendering reason for my faith, I would return at the first signal that should be given me through the person who was charged with my temporal concerns.

M. Fouquet was the only person to whom I confided the place of my retirement. He told me, at the end of several months, that the change of Madame de Maintenon towards me having become public, those who already had so much persecuted me kept no longer any measure: there was a horrible outburst, and they retailed stories in which they attacked my morals in a very unworthy manner. This made me take the step of writing to Madame de Maintenon a letter which ought, methinks, to have dissipated her prejudice, or at least, put her as well as the public in a position to know the truth. I wrote her that, as long as they had only accused me of praying, and teaching others to do so, I had contented myself with remaining concealed:—that I had believed, by neither speaking, nor writing to any one, I should satisfy everybody, and I should calm the zeal of certain upright persons; who were troubled only because of the calumny:—that I had hoped thereby to stop the calumny; but, learning I was accused of things which touched honour, and

that they spoke of crimes, I thought it due to the Church, to my family, and to myself that truth should be known :—that I requested from her a justice, which had never been refused even to the most criminal,—it was to have my case investigated; to appoint for me commissioners, half ecclesiastic, half laic, all persons of recognized probity and free from prejudice; for probity alone was not sufficient in an affair where calumny had prejudiced numberless people. I added, that, if they would grant me this favour, I would betake myself to any prison it would please her or the King to indicate; that I would go there with a maid, who was serving me for fourteen years. I further told her, if God made known the truth, she would be able to see I was not altogether unworthy of the kindnesses, with which she had formerly honoured me; that if God willed me to succumb under the force of calumny, I would adore his justice, and submit to it with all my heart, demanding even the punishment those crimes merited.

I addressed this letter expressly to the Duke de Beauvilliers, in order to be sure it reached her, begging him to give it himself into her own hand, and to say I would send for the answer at the end of seven or eight days. He had the kindness to give my letter: but Madame de Maintenon answered him, that she had never believed any of the rumours that were circulated as to my morals: that she believed them very good; but it was my doctrine which was bad;—that, in justifying my morals, it was to be feared currency might be given to my sentiments, that it might be in some way to authorize them; and it was better, once for all, to search out what related to doctrine, after which the rest would of itself drop.

M. Fouquet, who had fallen into a languishing disease, died at this time. He was a great servant of God, and a faithful friend, whose loss would have been very much felt by me in my then circumstances, if I had not had more regard to the happiness he was going to enjoy than to the

help I found myself deprived of, when so universally abandoned. I used to send every day a maid I had to learn news of him; because I did not go out at all. He sent me word that I should have horrible trials: that there would be great persecutions, such that, if they were not shortened in favour of the elect, no one could resist them; but that God would support me in the midst of affliction. As he was full of faith and love of God, he died with very great joy. It happened to me to write to him, that I believed he would die before the Corpus Christi. This was eight days before it. As he had no fever but the languor of which I have spoken, no one believed it; yet he declared it would be as I told him. One of my maids, by whom I had sent my letter, and who read it to him, returned quite startled: “Madame,” she said to me, “what have you done to have written that to M. Fouquet? He is sure to live more than two months; and so people say. Madame de —, who is there, and others will say you are a false prophetess.” I began to laugh, and asked her why she had self-love for me. “I have said what occurred to me at the moment: if God wills that I should have spoken only to receive humiliation, what matters it to me? If I have said the truth, there is only a short time to wait.” M. Fouquet gave directions for everything and for his interment, which he wished to be with the poor, and as a poor man. Two days before Corpus Christi, that same maid was sent there by me. She found him in his ordinary state. He told her he would come to say adieu to me when dying; but that he would not cause me any fear. She told him he was not likely to die so soon. He answered her with that faith which was usual to him: “I shall die as she has told me.” This maid found Madame —, and said to her, through a self-love, intolerable to me, “Madame perhaps meant to say the little Corpus Christi.” She returned, and told me these same reasons: that M. Fouquet was better, and what she had said to Madame

— I blamed her greatly and asked her, who had made her the interpreter of the will of God. As for M. Fouquet, he never hesitated. When I was in bed at midnight, two days before Corpus Christi there came a light into my room, which glistened on the little gilt nails that were in a place near my bed, with a noise as if all the panes of glass in the house had fallen. The maid who was in bed near my room, went up into that of her companion, thinking all the panes of glass had fallen into the garden : yet there was nothing at all. At the moment, I did not make any reflection on it ; and, in the morning, I sent as usual to ask news of M. Fouquet. She found he had died, and learned it was at the same hour as that at which what I have related happened. I had only joy at his death, so certain was I of his happiness : and although I lost the best friend I had in the world, who might be useful to me in the tempest with which I was menaced, joy at the happiness he possessed and at the accomplishment of the will of God, left no place with me for grief. I knew I had lost a friend who feared nothing, for he had nothing to lose, and who would have served me at the expense even of his life ; but how little my interests weighed with me, and how much more at heart I held his ! He possessed him whom he had loved and served. I should have been much more led to envy than to mourn him, if love for the will of God had not prevailed in my heart over everything. I learned the circumstances of his death, which were these. His nephew the Abbé de Ch—— used never to leave him. When it was half-past eleven at night, he told him to go and rest, and to return in an hour : that he would find him as it would please God. He had received all his Sacraments, even the Extreme Unction. The Abbé de Ch—— did as he was told, and came back three-quarters of an hour later. He found him dead. He had a face so calm, not altered ; he did not grow rigid ; and, though he had died of a diarrhœa, there was no bad smell : on the contrary,

they could not tire of looking at him. Some days afterwards, I dreamed I saw him as when he was in life. I knew, however, he was dead. I asked him how he fared in the other world. He answered me with a contented countenance : “ Those who do the will of God, cannot displease him.” I have thought this little digression would not be unwelcome to those for whom I have written this, since the majority knew him.

I was extremely touched at the refusal of Madame de Maintenon to assign me commissioners. I knew well they desired to deprive me of the last resource by which I might make known my innocence, and this new examination was only meant to impose upon the public and make the condemnation more authentic. They expected thereby to shut the mouths of those of my friends whom a more violent conduct would have wounded ; for, although these said nothing to justify me, their silence in the midst of such universal defaming, and their refusal to condemn me, as did the rest, made it clear enough that they thought differently, and that they suffered in peace what they could not prevent. I took the course of letting God order in the matter, whatever might be pleasing to him ; for how could I imagine an offer of that nature would not have put an end to prejudice ? I was not ignorant of the persons who opposed themselves to it. They feared lest my innocence should be recognized, and the machinations that had been employed to tarnish it. Some even feared being accused ; but, thanks to God, I have never had any desire to accuse any of my persecutors : my views are not fixed so low. There is a sovereign hand, which I adore and which I love, that makes use of the malice of the one, and the zeal without knowledge of the others, in order to effect his work by my destruction. I believe, also, God made use thereof to deprive my friends of certain supports, imperfect and too human, which they found in the creature ; God wishing they should base all their

dependence on him alone. They were, moreover, flattered by a certain confidence that those persons had in them, in preference to many others, from a mere natural liking. God wished them too pure to leave them all these things, and I knew they would receive much more evil from that quarter than any good they had received from it. Deviations appear little at first, but in the end they appear what they are. As that person had been imposed upon, there was little to hope from her mediation. God has no need of the intervention of any one to effect his work; he builds only upon ruins. We must carefully guard against the temptation of judging the will of God by apparent success; for as we arrange in our heads the probable means by which God desires to be glorified, when he destroys those means, we think he will not be so. God never can be glorified but by his Son, and in that which has most relation to his Son. All other glory is according to man, not according to God.

It will be said to me, "But to pass for a heretic!" What can I do? I have simply written my thoughts. I submit them with all my heart. It is said, they are capable of a good and a bad sense. I know I have written them in the good; that I am even ignorant of the bad. I submit them both; what can I do more? When I have written, I have always been ready to burn what I wrote at the least signal. Let them burn it, let them censure: I take therein no interest. It is enough for me that my heart renders testimony to me of my faith; since they do not desire the public testimony that I offer to render of it. They tried to tarnish my morals to tarnish my faith. I wished to justify the morals to justify the faith. They will not have it. What can I do more? If they condemn me, they cannot for that remove me from the bosom of the Church, my mother; since I condemn all she could condemn in my writings. I cannot admit having had thoughts I never had, nor having committed crimes I have not even

known, far from committing them; because this would be to lie to the Holy Ghost. And like as I am ready to die for the faith and the decisions of the Church, I am ready to die to maintain that I have not thought, what they insist I have thought, when writing, and that I have not committed the crimes they impute to me. It is certain, even in their regular procedure towards me (I do not speak of the passionate, which was unexampled), they absolutely violated the gospel: because according to the gospel, they were bound to summon me, to ask what was my thought in writing what I have written; to show me the abuse it might be put to; then on my condemning with all my heart the bad sense that might be put on it, declaring I had never meant it,—begging them to burn everything, even though it might be good, if a bad use might be made of it,—ought they not to do me justice, and say that, as I was mistaken in my expressions, and had only a good intention in what I had written, they condemned my books without condemning myself; that, on the contrary, they approved my good faith and submission? That which I say here is one of the ordinary rules of the Church.

However, as it was advisable to avoid all intercourse so as not to scandalize anybody,—in order to practise that other verse, "If your eye is a subject of scandal to you tear it out," I determined to withdraw entirely. Before doing so, I communicated to a small number of friends, who remained to me, the resolution I was taking, and that I was bidding them a last farewell. Whether I should die of my then illness (for I had continuous fever for more than forty days, with a severe accession twice a day,) or whether I should recover of it, I was equally dead for them: that I prayed God to finish in them the work he had commenced: that if this wretched nothing had contributed anything good through his grace, he would know how to preserve what was his: that if I had sown error through my ignorance (which I did not believe, since we

had never spoken together, except of renouncing ourselves, carrying our cross, following Jesus Christ, loving him without interest or relation to self) they could judge it was for their sake, not for mine, that I deprived myself of all intercourse with them, who had always edified me and been useful; while I might have injured them without intending it, and been the occasion of scandal. I prayed them, at the same time, to regard me as a thing forgotten.

CHAPTER XVI.

I BEGAN to perceive that others were aimed at in the persecution stirred up against me. The object was far too insignificant for so much movement, so much agitation; but, as those they had in view were beyond reach in themselves, they thought to injure them through the esteem they had for a person so decried, and whom they were endeavouring still to render more odious. I had warned the Abbé F[énélon] long before of the change of Madame de Maintenon towards him, and of that of persons who manifested the greatest confidence in him; but he would not believe me. I had known the artifices that were employed for this purpose, and I had endeavoured to put him on his guard against persons who had all his confidence; in order that he should not unnecessarily put himself in their power, and to make him perceive they were acting with less uprightness than he was willing to believe. He persisted still in the idea he entertained, that I was mistaken, and I waited in peace till God should disabuse him by other ways. The event has since justified my conjectures, and we have seen those same persons attack him without disguise, and enjoy exclusively a confidence and a favour he might have preserved had he been less devoted to God and more influenced by those kinds of advantages of which the ordinary run of men are so covetous.

I knew Madame de Maintenon would use my letter as an opportunity for speaking against me ; that she did it even from a good motive, in the false persuasion she possibly was under, that, as she had some years previously assisted to save me from oppression, she was bound to exert herself to crush me. What caused me the most trouble was that she judged others by the impression she had against me. All this knowledge and some dreams I had (for God often by this way has made me know things that were done against me) made me resolve to remain concealed while awaiting the developments of providence. If I could have been sensible to anything, it would have been to the troubles of the others, and to the ills I might cause them, if I could have regarded them otherwise than in the will of God, in which the greatest ills become blessings. But I am too insignificant to attribute to myself either ill or blessing. There is only one ill which can be justly attributed to me, it is the ill of sin ; for although through the mercies of God I have not committed the evil they attribute to me, I have sufficiently offended God in other ways by my infidelity. He is so pure that, after so many fires of tribulation, I still find myself very impure before him, when he shows me to myself. It is not that I do not clearly see that his infinite goodness every day takes away those impurities. We are impure only through our affections. The affection even to procure the glory of God renders us unworthy that he should make use of us for that purpose. I believe both parties have too much faith to impute to anything else than providence what they have since suffered, and what they may yet suffer ; yet I am willing to take the burden of it before God. I pray him with all my heart that I alone may bear the pain of all. O my Lord, exercise upon me in this life and in the other, if you will it, a justice without mercy, but show mercy to those persons in this life and in the other. Let me be the scapegoat, loaded with the

iniquity of your people ; let all fall upon me alone ; O my God, spare them all, but do not spare me, I adjure you by your blood. You know, Lord, I have not sought my glory nor my justification in what I have done and demanded ; I have sought your glory alone. I have wished to justify myself for them. That could not be ; be you, yourself, their justification and their sanctification.

Although I took the resolution to withdraw from all intercourse, I nevertheless made it known that, whenever there should be any question of answering for my faith, I would be ready to betake myself wherever it should be desired. A few days after, I learned that Madame de Maintenon, in concert with some persons of the Court, who were already embarked in this business, who had a kindness for me, and who were interesting themselves in good faith, had adopted the course of causing a fresh examination of my writings, and to employ for this purpose persons of knowledge and recognized probity. The Duke de Ch—— undertook to inform me. He wrote me that he, as well as the others in whom I had most confidence, believed it was the surest way to alter public opinion, and to put an end to the prejudice. It would have been so, in fact, if each one had proceeded therein with the same views and the same intention : but it was a condemnation they wished to make sure of, and to render it so authentic that those, who hitherto had remained persuaded of my good faith and the uprightness of my intentions, should be unable to stand out against a testimony, the less open to suspicion, as they seemed to have sought it themselves, and that everything, so to say, had passed through their hands. I did what they wished, and I sent word I was always ready to render reason for my faith ; and that I asked nothing better than to be put right, if contrary to my intention, there had escaped from me anything that was not conformable with sound doctrine.

It only remained, then, to choose the persons who should make the examination. It was necessary they should be equally acceptable to both parties; men who had learning, piety, and some acquaintance with mystic authors, because that was the matter principally under consideration—to judge my writings in relation to theirs, both as to the root of the sentiments, and as to the conformity of the terms and expressions. It seemed difficult to have this discussion at Paris, owing to the Archbishop, from whom all parties agreed that the cognizance of it must be withheld. He would not have suffered it, because naturally it concerned him alone, as it took place in his diocese; and if he had been willing to undertake it himself, none of those who engaged in this affair had sufficient confidence in him to accept his decision. I will, however, say here, that during the course of that examination, the Archbishop having received a quantity of false memoirs that had been given to him against me, sent word to a lady, one of my friends, by a relative of his own and of that lady, that I should come and see him, and that he would extricate me from all my troubles. He wished to have the glory of it, and that no one else should meddle. He would have fully justified me, according to what I have since learned on good authority. I owe this justice to the fidelity of my God, that he did not fail me on this occasion, and that he put it into my heart to go to him. I even believed myself obliged to obey the voice of my Shepherd; but my friends, who feared the Archbishop should discover my secret regarding the Bishop of Meaux, ignoring that he had not kept it himself, did not allow me to go, nor to follow the inclination I had. I did not go then, acting on this occasion against my own heart, and seeing in the general all the misfortunes this refusal entailed. The Archbishop of Paris, indignant with reason at my refusal to go and see him, censured my books, which, up to that, he had not done,

having been satisfied with the explanations I had given him six or seven years before. After this censure there were no bounds to the calumny; and the Bishop of Meaux found himself still more authorized in the condemnation he had promised to Madame de Maintenon. I return to the proposed examination.

The first person on whom they cast their eyes was the Bishop of Meaux. He had already, to the knowledge of Madame de Maintenon, made a private one, some months before. She wished to see him, to ascertain his sentiments, and the point to which she could count upon him in the design she had. It was not difficult for that Prelate to penetrate her intention and to observe the interest she took in the business, or rather her uneasiness for her friends. There is reason to believe he promised her all she wished, and it may be said the event has only too well justified this. On the other hand, those who were interested for me in this business, and I myself, were very well pleased to see him enter upon it. I had had an opportunity of explaining to him an infinity of things on which he had appeared to me satisfied, although on some others he had persisted in a contrary opinion. I did not doubt that, in a quiet discussion in presence of people of consideration and knowledge, who would be all equally conversant with the subject, I should make him at least change his opinion so far as not to condemn in me what he would not dare to condemn in so many saints canonized by the Church, together with their works. He had, moreover, administered the Sacraments to me during his first rigorous examination, and had offered to give me a certificate of it for my consolation. The things on which we did not agree, not having been decided by the Church, did not offend against the faith. All these considerations led me to ask for him I also asked for the Bishop of Chalons, who had mildness and piety. I thought he would have more knowledge of the things of the spiritual life and of the interior ways

than the Bishop of Meaux, and that my language would be to him less barbarous ; for, in fact, it was this was in question rather than the dogma of the Church. Two of my most intimate friends wished that M. Tronson should also enter upon it. He had been for a long time Superior of the House of St. Sulpice. They had both a very special confidence in him.

When these three persons had accepted the proposal that was made them, I took the liberty of writing to them, to make them acquainted with what concerned me, and had given occasion to this discussion ; at least, the two last. I will here insert that letter in its natural sequence.

Letter to Bishops of Meaux and Chalons, and to M. Tronson.

“How should I, gentlemen, be able to appear before you, if you believe me guilty of the crimes of which I am accused? How will you be able to examine without horror books emanating from a person that they would represent as execrable? But also how should I not appear, since, having taken the liberty of asking His Majesty for you to examine my faith, and having been happy enough to obtain what I desire, it would be to deprive myself of the only resource that remains to me in this life, which is to be able to make known the purity of my faith, the uprightness of my intentions, and the sincerity of my heart before persons who, although prejudiced, are for me above all suspicion, owing to their light, their uprightness and their extreme probity? I had taken the liberty of asking His Majesty to join lay judges in order they might probe what concerns my morals, because I thought it was impossible there could be a favourable judgment of the writings of a person who passes for guilty. I offered to go to prison, as you will see, my Lords, by the letter annexed, if you will kindly read it. I offer more—it is to prove that I have neither done, nor could do the things of which I am accused. I do not mean that those who

accuse me should prove what they advance, although this would be the ordinary course, but I offer myself to prove it is not so. If you will have the charity to examine what concerns the criminal before the examination of the books, I shall be infinitely obliged. It is easy to learn everything for and against my whole life. I will tell you, my Lords, with the utmost ingenuousness the things of which I am accused, and the character of the persons who accuse me. I am ready to suffer every kind of test, and I am sure it will be easy for you with the grace of God to discover an exceptional malignity. You will see the character of the persons who accuse me, and perhaps it will be a great good for the Church to examine who are the guilty ; those who accuse me, or she who is accused. Three persons of uprightness are incited against me : the Bishop of Chartres, because his zeal is deceived—it will be easy for me to show by whom and how ; the Curé of Versailles, who has not always been as rabid against me as he is, since, on my release from St. Mary, he wrote me, after having read the books which were in question, that he was quite of my sentiments. I have his letter. Since that time he did me the honour to number me as one among his friends, and came to see me more often than any one else. He has testified to all my friends the esteem he had for me ; even since the last time I had the honour of seeing him, he has said a thousand good things of me at St. Cyr, and, afterwards, much ill. He imagined I had withdrawn Madame de G—— and Madame de M—— from his direction, to put them under that of the Jesuit Father Alleaume. It is a fact Madame de G—— was under the conduct of Father Alleaume before I had the honour of knowing her. It was not I, then, who placed her there. Madame de M—— believed herself obliged, in giving herself to God, to leave the Court, which was for her a danger, in order to devote herself to the education of her children, and the care of her family, which up to that she had

neglected: leaving Versailles and residing at Paris, she needed a director at Paris. Yet the Curé, who is said at present to have the ear of Madame de Maintenon, and who has it in fact, makes two opposite complaints: the one, that I have withdrawn these ladies from the direction of their legitimate pastor to place them under the conduct of a Jesuit Father; the other, that I directed them. How have I given them a director if I directed? For if I have given them a director, I do not direct them. God has not abandoned me to such a point, that I should meddle with directing; although I believe he sometimes gave experiences to assist others with: but all the persons I have been acquainted with have had their directors.

“When those ladies were in the world, they put on patches, used rouge, and some of them ruined their families by play and extravagance in clothes; nothing was said against it, and they were let go on. Since they have abandoned all that, there has been an outcry, as if I had destroyed them. Had I made them abandon piety for self-indulgence, there would not be so much noise. I have proofs and the witness of letters, which have been written to the Curé of Versailles, which will show clearly the justification of what I advance, if I am granted the favour of being heard. The third person, of those who are incited against me, is M. Boileau, stirred up by a devotee, who assures him God has made known to her I am displeasing to him, and this accompanied by things manifestly false, which it is easy to verify.

“These are the persons who are upright and, through zeal, incite every one against me. The rest of the accusers are all persons with whom I have had no intercourse, except to give them alms, to have forbidden them my house, or to have pointed them out for what they were. I will tell you, my Lords, when you please, the facts which have led these persons to accuse me, namely La Gentil, La Gautière, the girls of P—— V——, the girls from Dijon,

Grenoble, and Fi. I do not claim, my Lords, to hide from you the smallest thing, because, thanks to God, I do not wish to deceive myself. As soon as I knew I was accused of acting as director I withdrew myself. I no longer received any one, as you will see, my Lords, from this other letter. I have always thought it was necessary before everything to be enlightened on the criminal: therefore I implore you, by the charity of our Lord Jesus Christ, to receive the memoirs which will be given you against me. If I am guilty, I ought to be punished more than another, since God has given me the grace to know him and to love him, and I am not ignorant enough to be excused; for I am certain Jesus Christ and Belial are not in the same place.

“I have taken the liberty of asking for the Bishop of Meaux since last year, because I have always had such a great respect for him, and I am persuaded of his zeal for the Church, of his lights, and of his uprightness, and I have always had a disposition to condemn what he will condemn in me. I have taken the liberty of asking for the Bishop of Chalons (although the Abbé de Noailles is the most zealous of those who decry me), as well because for a long time I know his discernment and his piety, as that because, being interested through his niece, I am very happy he should know the truth for himself. I have asked for M. Tronson, although I know all the labour expended to decry me to him, because I know his uprightness, his piety, his light, and that it is necessary he should know for himself the ground the Bishop of Chartres has to excite his zeal against me. I conjure you, my Lords, by the charity that reigns in your hearts, not to hurry this business, to allow it all the time that is necessary to get to the bottom, and to allow me the favour of being heard and explaining myself on everything. I pray you to be persuaded that I speak to you sincerely. Have the kindness, if it pleases you, to inform yourselves, not from those who do not know me, but from those who know me, if my heart is not upon my

lips. As to that which concerns the matter of my books and writings, I declare I submit them with all my heart, as I have already done, and as I have declared in the annexed paper. I declare, my Lords, I submit my books and my writings purely and simply, without any condition, for whatever you will please to do with them: that therein I do not claim anything for myself: that, after having submitted them to the Church in general, I submit them to your lights in particular. I protest to have written them through obedience, without other design than to give them to my director, for him to do with them what he pleased, indifferent whether he burned them or not. Although these books have caused me very severe crosses, and have served as a pretext for many things, yet, had I known that they must have brought me to suffer death, the same obedience which has made me write them, would still have made me do so. I have still the same disposition and the same indifference as to their success.

“I pray you, my Lords, to bear in mind I am an ignorant woman; that I have written my experiences in perfect good faith; that if I have explained myself ill, it is an effect of my ignorance; as for the experiences they are real. Moreover, I have written, as I have declared, without the aid of any book, without even knowing what I was writing, in such abstraction that I remembered nothing of what I had written. It is these writings, then, I submit purely and simply to your judgment, my Lords, to do with them whatever you please: therein is my interest; there is, moreover, the interest of truth. It is for that, my Lords, I conjure you to examine thoroughly whether what I write is not found in the mystic authors and saints approved this long time. I offer myself to show it to you, if you do me the favour to hear me. You will not refuse me this justice. It is even necessary as a foundation for your judgment. I further ask a favour, my Lords, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for you and for

me, which is—to write the questions and answers I shall make. This is necessary because the memory of things perishes, and you will be well pleased to see on what you have condemned or approved me. This is necessary for me myself, that, recognizing my mistakes, I may withdraw myself from those sentiments. I hope you will grant me all I here ask by the blood of Jesus Christ my Saviour. It is necessary, moreover, to clear up one difficulty before undertaking another, in order it may remain for ever approved or condemned.

“August, 1694.”

I sent at the same time to those persons, besides my two little printed books, my commentaries on Holy Scripture; and I undertook by their order a work to facilitate for them the examination they undertook, and to lighten for them a labour which was nevertheless troublesome enough, or which at least would have taken up much time. This was, to collect a certain number of passages from approved mystic authors, which showed the conformity of my writings and the expressions I had used, with those of these holy authors. It was an immense work. I caused the manuscripts to be transcribed as fast as I had written them, to send to these gentlemen, and, according as opportunity offered, I explained the passages that were doubtful or obscure, or which had not been sufficiently explained in my commentaries. For these I had composed at a time when, the affairs of Molinos not having yet made a stir, I had written my thoughts without precaution and without imagining they could be twisted to the sense condemned. That work has for its title “*Les Justifications.*” It was composed in fifty days, and appeared very suitable for throwing light on the matter; but the Bishop of Meaux would never either read or allow the others to see those “*Justifications.*”

CHAPTER XVII.

I soon perceived the change in the Bishop of Meaux, and how much I had been deceived in the idea I had formed of him. Although he was very reserved in disclosing his sentiments when he spoke to my friends, he was not the same with persons he believed ill disposed to me. I had confided to him, as I have already said, under the seal of confession, the history of my life, wherein were noted my most secret dispositions; yet I have learned he had shown it and turned it into ridicule. He wished to compel me to show it to these other gentlemen, and insisted so strongly thereon (although it had no connection with the examination in progress), I saw myself obliged to submit to what he wished. I caused it to be given them. I communicated to one of his friends and mine—the Duke de Ch[reveuse]—the alteration in my opinion of the Bishop of Meaux, and how I had reason to believe he was only thinking of condemning me. He had said that, without the history of my life, it could not be done, and that in it one would see the pride of the Devil. It was for this reason he wished it should be seen by those gentlemen.

I begged this friend that the subjects, as they were settled by those persons, should be written out, and, in order to have a sure witness of what would take place there, I most urgently begged him to be present at the conferences. I should have much wished they were not

decided till the end, and that, until then, they held their judgment in suspense; not doubting that, as they were all assembled after having prayed God, God would at the moment touch their hearts with his truth independently of their intelligence; for otherwise, as the grace promised to those gathered together for truth escapes and departs, the intellect takes the upper hand, and one judges then only according to the intellect. Moreover, being then no longer sustained by this grace of truth, which has only its moment,—and finding themselves carried away by the clamouring crowd who are supported by credit, authority, and favour,—in listening to them the intellect hinders the heart by the continual doubts it forms. My friend proposed it to these gentlemen. The Bishop of Chalons and M. Tronson would willingly have consented, for they were both acting with all the uprightness and good faith imaginable; but the Bishop of Meaux found means to prevent it. He had so assumed control of the business that it was absolutely necessary everything should bend to what he pleased. He was no longer the same he had been six or seven months before, at the first examination. As at that time he had entered upon it only through a spirit of charity and with a view to know the truth, notwithstanding his extreme vivacity, he altered his opinion on many subjects that his prejudice made him at first reject. He appeared even sometimes touched by certain truths, and to respect things which struck him, although he had not the experience of them. But here it was no longer the same thing, he had a fixed point from which he did not swerve, and, as he wished to produce a striking condemnation, he brought to it everything he thought capable of contributing thereto.

It was in the same spirit that he wrote a long letter to the friend of whom I just spoke, to prove to him that, according to my principles, the sacrifice of eternity was a real consenting to hatred of God, and other things of that

nature on trials. I still feel quite moved when I think of it—to consent to hate God! O good God! how could a heart who loves him so passionately mean such a thing? I believe that this view, a little strongly held, would be sufficient to cause my death. This needs explanation, and I will give it here much as I sent it to him at the time. Whether the soul be placed in such terrible trials that she has no doubt of her reprobation (which is called a holy despair): whether she carries in herself the state of hell (which is a feeling of the pain of damnation): if one were to stir her central depth by such a proposition, she would exclaim, “Rather a thousand hells without that hatred.” But what one calls “to consent to the loss of her eternity,” is when the soul in that state of trial believes it certain, and then, with no view but of her own misfortune and her own pain, makes the entire sacrifice of her eternal loss, thinking that her God will be neither less glorious nor less happy. Oh, if one could understand by what excessive love of God and hatred of self this is done, and how far one is from having these thoughts in detail! But how should I be understood and believed? Alas! how often in that state, have I asked my God, graciously, to give me hell that I might not offend him. I said to him, “O my God, hell is in others the penalty of sin: make it in me prevent sin, and make me suffer all the hells that all the sins of all men merit, provided I do not offend you.”

The sacrifices of particular and distinct things take place only in the exercise itself: as a person who falls into the water makes at first all his efforts to save himself, and does not relax his effort until his weakness renders it useless; then he sacrifices himself to a death that appears to him inevitable. There are anticipated sacrifices, such as are general sacrifices, which distinguish nothing, except that God proposes to the soul the greatest pains, troubles, desertions, confusions, scorn of creatures, discredit, loss of reputation, persecution on the part of God,

of men, and of devils, and that, without specifying anything in particular of the means he will use: for the soul never imagines them such as they are, and if he proposed them to her, and she could understand them, she would never consent. What, then, does God? He demands from the soul her freewill, which he has given her, which is the only thing the soul can sacrifice to him, as the only thing which belongs to her as her own. She makes then to him a sacrifice of all she is, in order that he may make of her, and in her, all that shall please him, for time and for eternity, without any reserve. This is done in an instant, without the intellect considering anything. Even from the commencement of the way of faith, the soul bears this radical disposition, that if her eternal loss caused an instant of glory to her God, more than her salvation, she would prefer her damnation to her salvation, and this viewed from the side of the glory of God: but the soul understands she would be unhappy without guilt, and to glorify her God.

This general sacrifice in anticipation for all sorts of sufferings, temporal, and eternal, takes place in some souls with an impetuosity of sovereign master, and with such an interior sweetness that the soul is, as it were, carried away. She experiences that the same God, who demands a general consent for the troubles, makes it be given, and it is given, as promptly as the thing is proposed: and when the sacrifice is pleasant and sweet, the exercises which follow it are infinitely cruel; for then the soul forgets absolutely the sacrifice she has made to her God, and remembers only her wretchedness. Her intellect clouded, her will hardened and rebellious, and her trouble, cause her inexplicable torments. There are others whom God causes to make this sacrifice of their entire selves with such strange pains that one might call it a mortal agony: the bones are broken, and one suffers in giving himself to God a pain that is beyond imagination. These latter suffer less

in the trials, and the pain of the consenting has been for them a good purification. But remark, this sacrifice has nothing particular in view but extreme pains, when it anticipates the trial, or the purification.

It is the same with the sacrifice which takes place in the trial, for then the soul is quite plunged, not only in the pain, but in the experience of her wretchedness; in a feeling of reprobation which is such that the soul roars, if one may say so: then, through despair, she makes the sacrifice of an eternity, which seems to escape from her in spite of her. In the first sacrifice the soul thinks only of her trouble and her pain, or the glory of her God; but in this last, it seems she has lost God and that she has lost him through her fault, and that loss is the cause of all her miseries. She suffers at the commencement painful rages and despairs. The fear of offending God makes her desire by anticipation a hell, which, as she believes, cannot fail her. This violence ceases at the end of the trials, and it is as a person who can no longer cry because he has no longer the strength: and then it is, the pain is more terrible, because her violent grief was a support to her: but when in that state there occur in addition mortal maladies, where one believes one's self at two fingers from the real Hell by death (for this appears in all its terror, without finding refuge or means of assuring her eternity, and the heaven seems of brass—I know it from actual experience,) then the soul sacrifices herself to God very really for her eternity, but with agonies worse than even hell. She sees that all her desire was to please God, and that she is going to displease him for an eternity. Nevertheless there remains to her a certain central depth, which says, without however consoling her: “I have a Saviour who lives eternally, and the more my salvation is lost in me and for me, the more it is assured in him and through him.”

What is astonishing is that in this state the soul is so

afflicted and so tormented with the experience of her miseries and the fear of offending God, that she is delighted to die; although her loss appears certain to her, in order to escape from that state and to be no longer in danger of offending God; for she thinks she offends him although there be nothing of the kind. Her folly is such and her grief so excessive that she does not consider that by living she might be converted, and in dying she is lost. Not at all; because she imagines conversion is no longer for her. The reason of it is, that as her will has never wandered by a single self-regard nor the least consent, that will remaining attached to God and not turning aside from him, she no longer finds it to perform the acts of sorrow, detestation, and the rest. It is this which causes her the most trouble.

A further surprising fact is, that there are souls in whom all these troubles are only spiritual, and it is these which are the most terrible: with such persons the body is cold, although the soul sees herself in the will of all evils, and in a powerlessness to commit them; and it is they who suffer most. If I could tell how I have experienced this strange trouble, and, in addition, the disposition of the body (while married) in no correspondence with marriage, and without betraying anything of it, one would see what this trouble is. I call it spiritual hell: for the soul believes she has the will for all evils, without being able to commit any of them and without correspondence of the body. Others suffer less in the spirit and in all ways, and experience very great weaknesses in the body. But I have written so much, there is nothing more to be said.

I will, however, further add to answer the difficulty of the Bishop of Meaux, touching the sacrifice of purity, that this proposition never can be as he by anticipation supposed it; for the trial precedes the sacrifice. God permits that virgins (and it is to those that this most ordinarily

happens) enter upon trials so much the greater as they were the more attached to their purity, seeing that God tries them either by devils in a well-known manner, or by temptations that appear to them natural; it is for them so great a grief, that hell without those troubles would be a relief. Then they make to God a sacrifice of that same purity which, to please him, they had preserved, though with a taint of selfhood; but they do it with the agonies of death: not that they consent to any sin—they are further removed from it than ever,—but they bear with resignation and sacrifice of their whole selves what they cannot prevent. I beg that attention may be paid to the fact that these souls, thus tried by God, suffer inexplicable torments; that they do not allow themselves a single satisfaction; that it would be even impossible for them to find it: while those other wretches who addict themselves to all kinds of sins, suffer no trouble, granting their senses what they wish, and living in an unbridled licentiousness. It is through persons of this latter character that the persecution against me has commenced. I have said elsewhere, they went from confessor to confessor accusing themselves as converted from all the horrors of Quietism, and, as they supposed I was of the same sentiments with them, they caused all the indignation to fall upon me, while giving themselves the merit of a genuine conversion. For this reason they have been left, not only in peace, while I have been torn in pieces and persecuted in the strangest manner, but they have been canonized, so to say, and left at liberty to spread the poison of their evil principles, based solely on a frightful and unbounded licentiousness. O my God, you see it and suffer it. I have done all that was possible to rescue some from that unhappy state, when providence has placed me in a position to do so. I would still do it, if to rescue a single one it should cost me the same persecution.

I perceived every day that the Bishop of Meaux was

going further and further away, and, what was worst for the cause in question, that he was confirming himself in his thoughts; for this confirmation places an almost insurmountable obstacle to the light of truth. What elucidations had I not given at the time of the first conference on the subject of specific requests, desires, and other acts? But nothing found an entrance, because he wanted to condemn. I learned from the Duke de Ch—— that he still repeated over again those same difficulties. How not understand that the perceived desire, being an act and an operation of the self, must die with the other acts or, rather, must pass into God, in order no longer to have other desires than those God gives; and as one no more takes back his own will, so one no more takes back his desires? This does not hinder God from making him desire and will as it pleases him, and he who moves the soul can move her to desire, although she no longer has *own* desires; for if she had them as *own*, it would be a continued subsistence of the selfhood: but the author of the “Essential Will” says on that all that can be said, as well as St. Francis de Sales “On the Will;” for the same reasoning will apply to both. It is, that it is not a death or loss of desires, or of will, but a flowing of those same desires and of that will into God, because the soul transports with her all she possesses. While she is in herself she desires and wills in her manner; when she is passed into God, she wills and desires in the manner of God. If one does not admit the flowing of the desires into God, one must admit loss neither of *own* operation nor of *own* act, nor of will. The one is so attached to the other that they are indivisible. In the same way as one does not resume at any time his operations, after having given them up; as one does not return into the womb of his mother, after having left it: in the same way, one does not resume any more his own desires. But in the same way as one does not give up his *own*

operations in order to become useless, but in order to let God operate, and to operate one's self by his movement, so one lets his desires flow into God only in order to desire according to his movement, and to will through his will. We cannot condemn the one without condemning the other, for they are necessarily linked. After all, I am not the only person who speaks of the annihilation of the selfhood. If they condemn it in me, the channel is nothing by itself. God will write it in the spirit and in the heart of whom he pleases. That fixation of the Bishop of Meaux caused me infinite trouble, because, whatever I might do to enlighten him from outside, it is God's part to stir the interior; but how can he do it if one remains shut up, though it should be only by a hair?

I further learned that one of the great complaints of the Bishop of Meaux was, that I praised myself and had frightful presumption. I would willingly ask, who is the more humble, he who uses of himself words of humility and says nothing to his advantage (though ordinarily such persons, being praised by others in this matter, would find it hard to bear that people should take them at their word), or he, who simply says of himself the good and the ill, quite unconcerned that all the world may think ill of us and decry us in reality? He who humbles himself, or he who is quite content to be humiliated? As for me, I tell what I know of good in me, because it belongs to my Master; but I am not troubled that nothing of it should be believed, that I should be decried at the sermon, that I should be defamed in the gazette. This does not affect me more than when I praise myself; and, as I do not correct my apparent pride because I have no shame of it, so I do not trouble myself at the public decry, because I think more ill of myself than all the others can do.

The Bishop of Chalons, who had returned, after having taken a holiday, to examine as well the books as the

commentaries on scripture, consented to the proposal that was made him, that they should meet at the country house of M. Tronson; because he, being weak and much ailing, could not go to the houses of those gentlemen. I had asked as a favour the Duke de Ch—— should be present as a special friend of those two prelates, through whom everything had passed, very well instructed in the matter in hand, as well as in that which had given rise to this examination. I also asked that, after having examined a difficulty, the decision on it should be written, in order to put the facts beyond question. This appeared to me absolutely necessary, not only for the elucidation of the truth, but in order to have a subsisting proof of what I, as well as the others, had to lay down for myself upon the root of things, and on that which had furnished the matter of the examination. But the Bishop of Meaux, who had promised Madame de Maintenon a condemnation, and who wished to make himself master of the business, raised so many difficulties, sometimes under one pretext, sometimes under another, that he found means of evading all I had asked, and letting nothing appear but what seemed good to him. He said then, I might see M. Tronson separately, after I had seen the Bishop of Chalons with him. The meeting was at the house of the Bishop of Meaux, and the Duke de Ch—— was there, expecting to be present at the conference, as I had asked for him. The Bishop of Chalons arrived early. I spoke to him with much ingenuousness, and as he was not yet filled with the impressions which have since been given to him, I had every ground for being satisfied. I had the consolation of seeing him enter with kindness into what I said.

The Bishop of Meaux, after keeping us a long time waiting, arrived towards evening, and, after a moment of general conversation, he opened a portfolio he had brought, and said to the Duke de Ch——, that, the question being about doctrine and a matter purely ecclesiastical, the

discussion of which only concerned the Bishops, he did not think it suitable that he should remain present, and it might be a constraint on them. It was a pure evasion, in order to avoid a witness of that character, on whom, clever as he was, it would not have been possible for him to impose: for he knew him far too well instructed to allow himself to be surprised, and too upright not to testify the truth as to facts which should have taken place under his eyes. The business was not a decision on faith, the judgment of which belongs to the Bishops, but a quiet discussion of my sentiments, which it was desirable to elucidate in order to see wherein I went too far, and whether my expressions on the matters of the interior life were conformable, or not, to those of the approved mystic authors, as I believed I had not departed from them: for I had protested hundreds of times my submission in what these gentlemen should tell me to be of faith and of the dogma of the Church; on which I noways pretended to dispute with them. But the Bishop of Meaux pursued his course, and would not for anything deviate from it. I felt in the depth of my heart the refusal of that prelate. I at once knew its consequences, and I no longer doubted the engagements he had undertaken for a condemnation. What more natural than the presence of a person of the character of the Duke de Ch——, who had the merit, the probity, and the depth of knowledge that every one knows, through whom everything had passed, and who was so much interested in the elucidation on hand, in order to undeceive himself and the others, supposing me mistaken, and that I had, contrary to my intentions, inspired sentiments opposed to the purity of the faith? What, I say, more natural than to have a witness of this character, who would have only served to confound me, if I had spoken differently from what he had heard me say at all times; or who might have disabused himself and disabused the others, in a quiet conference where I might have been shown my

errors? It was even the end they had in view when they had commenced to speak of this business: but God did not permit it, and the Duke de Ch—— did not deem it proper to insist, seeing the Bishop of Chalons answered nothing: besides this, he only acted through kindness and yielding to my great desire. I remained, then, alone with these two gentlemen. The Bishop of Meaux spoke a long time to prove all ordinary Christians had the same grace. I endeavoured to prove the contrary; but as the business properly was only to justify my expressions on things of more consequence, I did not insist thereon, and only thought of making him see the conformity of my sentiments with those of the approved authors who have written on the interior life. He still reiterated that one gave to that life too perfect a state, and endeavoured to obscure and make nonsense of all I said; particularly when he saw the Bishop of Chalons touched, penetrated, and entering into what I was saying to him. There was no use in disputing, but to submit, and to be ready to believe and act conformably to what they should say. It has always been the true disposition of my heart, and I have no trouble in giving up my own judgment.

I had previously written a letter to the Bishop of Meaux with my ordinary simplicity, in which I told him that I would be noway distressed to believe I had been mistaken. He produced it with a malignant turn, as an avowal I had made of having been mistaken in matter of faith; and that, recognizing my errors after he had made me know them, I had declared, as if in scorn, I was noway concerned at it: and it was in the same spirit I had said, in the same letter or in another, that I was as content at writing absurdities as good things; not at all taking into account the obedience in which I wrote, and how I expected my director, who had to judge it, would correct all, and thus my mistakes would serve to make known the unworthiness of the channel which God had

pleased to make use of. The Bishop of Meaux made a crime out of a letter so full of littleness and written with so much simplicity. He reproached me numbers of times with my ignorance, that I did not know anything: and, after having made nonsense out of all my words, he kept incessantly crying out, he was astonished at my ignorance. I answered nothing to these reproaches: and the ignorance, of which he accused me, ought to make him see at least that I speak the truth, when I assert it is by an actual light I write, nothing otherwise remaining in my mind. He made another crime of what I have said—that to adhere to God is a commencement of union; and he continually reverted to his attempt to prove to me, that all Christians with ordinary faith, without spiritual life, can arrive at deification. But it is impossible to answer a man who knocks you down, who does not listen to you, and who incessantly crushes you. As for me, I lose then the thread of what I wish to say, and remember nothing.

That conference was of no use for the root of the matters. It only put the Bishop of Meaux in a position to tell Madame de Maintenon that he had made the proposed examination, and that, having convinced me of my errors, he hoped with time to make me alter my opinion, by engaging me to go and spend some time in a convent of Meaux, where he would be able to finish more tranquilly what he had, as it were, sketched out. As for me, when they spoke to me of being examined by these gentlemen, I rejoiced at it, because I believed, according to all ordinary usage, they would all three together see me: and, as a consequence, Jesus Christ would preside there. I hoped thereby to win my cause: because I did not doubt the Lord would make them know the truth, my innocence, and the malice of my accusers. But God, who apparently willed I should suffer all that has since happened to me, did not permit it to be thus. He gave power to the Devil to act, to hinder the union of those three gentlemen, and to introduce disorder in everything.

As the Bishop of Meaux had come only at night, I had had previously full opportunity of conversing for a long time with the Bishop of Chalons, in presence of the Duke de Ch——. That prelate appeared very well satisfied with me, and even said to me I had only to continue my manner of prayer, and he prayed God to augment more and more his graces to me. In the outbursts of the Bishop of Meaux he softened the blows as much as he could, and made me see, on this occasion, that, when he acted of himself, he did it with all the kindness and equity possible. All he could do was to write down some answers I made, addressing myself to him, because the Bishop of Meaux, in the heat of his prejudice, abused me without being willing to listen to me.

I wished to see this prelate once again. I saw him alone, and although he had been already prejudiced, he appeared satisfied with the conference, and repeated to me, that he saw nothing to change either in my manner of prayer or the rest: that I should continue: that he would pray God to augment his mercies upon me, and that I should remain concealed in my solitude, as I had been doing for two years. I promised him. It was deemed proper I should go and see M. Tronson. I went to Issi. The Duke de Ch—— had the kindness to be present. M. Tronson examined me with more exactness than the others. The Duke de Ch—— had the kindness himself to write the questions and the answers. I spoke to him with all the freedom possible. The Duke de Ch—— said to him, “You see she is straightforward.” He answered, “I feel it indeed.” That word was worthy of so great a servant of God as he was, who judged not only by the intellect but by the taste of the heart. I withdrew then, and M. Tronson appeared satisfied, although a false letter against me had been sent to him, which purported to come from a person who denied it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Who would not have thought, after all these examinations, apparently satisfactory, that I should have been left in peace? Quite the contrary happened; because, the more my innocence appeared, the more those who had undertaken to make me criminal, set in motion springs to reach their end. Things were on this footing when the Bishop of Meaux, to whom I had offered to go and spend some time in a Community of his diocese, that he might know me of himself, proposed to me "The Daughters of St. Mary," of Meaux. This offer had pleased him immensely; for he expected, as I have since learned, to draw from it great temporal advantages. He believed them even still greater; and he said to Mother Picard, Superior of the convent where I entered, that it would be worth the Archbishopric of Paris or a Cardinal's hat to him. I answered the Mother, when she told it to me, that God would not permit him to have either the one or the other. I set out as soon as he told me. It was the month of January, 1695, in the most frightful winter there has been for a long time, either before or since. I was near perishing in the snow, where I remained four hours; the carriage having got into it, and being almost covered in a hollow way. I and my maid were drawn out through the window. We sat upon the snow, awaiting the mercy of God, expecting only death. I have never had more tranquillity, although benumbed and

wetted with the snow we melted. These are the occasions that show if one is perfectly abandoned to God. That poor girl and I were without inquietude, in perfect resignation, certain of dying if we passed the night, and seeing no prospect of help. We were there when some carters passed, and they extricated us with difficulty. It was ten at night when we arrived. We were not expected; and when the Bishop of Meaux first learned it, he was astonished, and very pleased that I had thus risked my life to obey him punctually. I had an illness of six weeks, a continued fever.

But that which had at first appeared so good to the Bishop of Meaux, afterwards only seemed "artifice" and "hypocrisy." It is thus they described, and still describe, the little good God makes me do; and far from believing the gospel, which assures us that a tree cannot be bad whose fruits are good, as they will have it that the tree is bad, they attribute the good to a malicious and hypocritical artifice. It is a strange hypocrisy that lasts a whole life, and which, far from bringing us any advantage, causes only crosses, calumnies, troubles and confusions, poverty, discomfort, and all sorts of ills. I think one has never seen the like; for ordinarily one is only a hypocrite to attract the esteem of men, or to make one's fortune. I am assuredly a bad hypocrite, and I have badly learned the trade, since I have so ill succeeded. I take my God to witness, who knows that I do not lie, that if to be Empress of all the earth and to be canonized during my life, which is the ambition of hypocrites, I had to suffer what I have suffered for wishing to be my God's without reserve, I would have rather chosen to beg my bread and die as a criminal. These are my sentiments without disguise. Therefore I bear this testimony to myself in the presence of my God: that I have desired to please but him alone; that I have sought only him for himself; that I abhor my own interest more than death; that this long series of

persecutions which is not finished, and which to all appearance will last as long as my life, has never made me change my sentiments, nor repent of having given myself to God and having abandoned all for him. I have found myself at times when nature was fearfully overburdened; but the love of God and his grace have rendered sweet for me, without sweetness, the most bitter bitterness: not that I had within any sensible support—by no means; for my dear Master struck me still more rudely than men. Thus was I, on the part of God and men, without support, or perceived consolation: but his invisible and unfelt hand supported me; without that, I had succumbed to so many troubles. “All your waves,” I sometimes say, “have fallen upon me;” “you have drawn against me all the arrows from your quiver.” But a hand one adores and loves cannot give rough blows. I was not afflicted with the sort of afflictions which one pities and which are honourable. I appeared severely chastised for my crimes. It is that which made every one think he had a right to ill treat me and believe he rendered a great service to God. Methinks I then understood that it was the manner in which Jesus Christ had suffered. The sufferings and the death of St. John were glorious for him, but those of Jesus Christ were full of confusion. “He has been numbered among the malefactors,” and it will be always true to say he was condemned by the sovereign Pontiff, by the chief priests, the doctors of the Law: even judges that did not belong to their nation, deputed by the Romans, who prided themselves on doing justice. Happy those who suffer with all these circumstances, so closely related to the sufferings of Jesus Christ; who was further struck by God, his Father. But how bitter are sufferings of this kind, the most bitter of all to him who has not the same taste as Jesus Christ! The condemnation of the impious is nothing; but the condemnation of persons esteemed just in everything, appears a condemnation arrived at with

knowledge of the case, by judges, equitable and full of light, after complete examination.

To return to my subject. I entered the convent in the state I was in. I waited more than an hour in the porter's lodge, benumbed and without fire, because it was necessary to inform the Bishop of Meaux, and to rouse up the nuns. There was in their lodge a good-natured man, who, as I have since learned, was a man of prayer: he said quite aloud, “That lady must indeed belong to God, and be spiritual, to wait in the state she is in with so much tranquillity.” By this remark he impressed some sort of esteem for me upon persons who had been strongly set against me. The Bishop of Meaux wished me to change my name, that, as he said, it should not be known I was in his diocese, and that people should not torment him on my account. The project was the finest in the world, if he could have kept a secret; but he told every one he saw, I was in such a convent, under such a name. Immediately, from all sides, anonymous libels against me were sent to the Mother Superior and the nuns. This did not prevent Mother Picard and the nuns from esteeming and loving me. I had come to Meaux in order that the Bishop should examine me, as he told everybody; and yet he set off for Paris the day after my arrival, and did not return till Easter. He ordered I should communicate as often as the nuns, and even oftener if I wished it; but I did not care to do so, conforming as much as possible to the Community.

It happened, meantime, that those who persecuted me circulated a letter that they said was from the Bishop of Grenoble, in which it was stated, he had driven me from his diocese; that I had been convicted, in the presence of Father Richebrac, then Prior of the Benedictines of St. Robert of Grenoble, of horrible things, although I had letters from the Bishop of Grenoble since my return, which proved quite the contrary, and which showed the esteem he

had for me. I wrote to Father Richebrac. Here is the answer I received :—

“MADAME,

“Is it possible that it should be necessary to seek me in my solitude in order to fabricate a calumny against you, and that they made me the instrument of it? I never thought what they put in my mouth, nor of making the complaints of which they pretend I am the author. I declare, on the contrary, and I have already many times declared, that I have never heard of you anything but what is very Christian and very honourable. I should have taken good care not to see you, Madame, if I had believed you capable of saying what I would not dare to write, and what the Apostle forbids us to name. If it is, however, necessary in your justification I should name it, I will do it on the first notice, and I will distinctly say: there is absolutely nothing of the kind; that is to say, I have never heard you say anything similar nor anything which has the least resemblance to it; and, for my part, I have said nothing which could lead any one to believe I had heard it of you. They have already written to me on the subject, and I have already given the same answer. I would do it a thousand times more if I was asked a thousand times. Two stories are mixed up, which should not be confounded. I know that of the girl who retracted; and you, for your part, know, Madame, the part I took in the business with the Prelate—simply through zeal for the truth, and not to wound my conscience by a cowardly silence. I then spoke freely, and I am ready to do the same, if God at present requires it of me, as then he did. I shall believe he requires it if I am asked. But what shall I say more precise than what I say here? Nevertheless, if anything more is necessary, take the trouble to inform me. I will render testimony to the truth. It is in this disposition

I am, sincerely in our Lord, while asking your prayers to him,

“F. RICHEBRAC.

“Blois, April 14, 1695.”

The Bishop of Grenoble wrote, at the same time, to the person who had set going that pretended letter [it was the Curé of St. James of Haut-pas] in a manner to make him feel how indignant he was that he should be put forth as the author of such calumnies. In fact, how would it be possible to reconcile the horrors it imputed to me at the time of my sojourn at Grenoble, with the letters he had written in my favour to his brothers at Paris, to recommend my interests to them, more than a year after I had left his diocese. Here is the copy of that which was for the Civil Lieutenant, that he sent in the letter he did me the honour to write me :—

“I could not refuse to the virtue and the piety of Madame de la Mothe Guyon the recommendation she asks to you, Sir, in favour of her family, in a business which is before you. I should have some scruples if I did not know the uprightness of her intentions and your integrity: therefore permit me to solicit you to do her all the justice which is due to her. I ask it with all the cordiality with which I am yours,

“CARDINAL CAMUS.

“Grenoble, Jan. 25, 1688.”

Here is the letter he wrote me :—

“MADAME,

“I should wish to have, more often than I have, opportunities of letting you know how dear to me are your interests, temporal and spiritual. I bless God that you have approved the counsels I have given you for these latter. I omit nothing to engage the Civil Lieutenant to render you the justice which is due to you for the former.

Praying you to believe you will always find me disposed to prove to you by everything that I am truly, Madame,

“Your affectionate servant,

“CARDINAL CAMUS.”

“Grenoble, January 28, 1688.”

Yet nothing contributed more to the general defaming than that other pretended letter of the Bishop of Grenoble. For how contradict a testimony such as that of the Curé of St. James, so well known at that time by his connection with a great number of persons of merit, to whom he had given a copy of that letter, so that in fifteen days' time all Paris was full of it! The Bishop of Meaux, who had a copy like the rest, was strangely surprised at the answer of Father de Richebrac, as well as at the letters of the Bishop of Grenoble, which I let him see. He protested against the blackness of the calumny. He had good moments, which were afterwards destroyed by the persons who urged him against me, and by his self-interest. A Curé of Paris made out another very terrible and very ridiculous story. He went to the house of a person of the highest rank, and, speaking of me, he said I had taken away a woman from her husband, a person of position, and had made her marry her Curé. He was strongly pressed to say how that could be done. He persisted still, that nothing was more true. That gentleman and his wife no longer doubted, and immediately told one of their friends, who went to see them, and who knew me. The thing at first appeared to him incredible; but they maintained so strongly the Curé had assured them of it, that he had the curiosity to clear up the matter, firmly determined never to see me again if the thing was so. He went to see that Curé. He questioned him about me, and pressed him closely. At last the Curé said to him, I was capable of that, and even worse. This gentleman said to him, “But, Sir, I do not ask you what she is capable of. You

do not know her. But I ask you if it is true she has done that?” He said no, but I was capable of doing worse. The Curé had never seen me, so this judgment was astonishing. At last it turned out that it was in Auvergne the thing had happened. I believe he even said it was forty years ago. This strangely astonished those to whom he had related the fable, when they had learned its falsehood. I wonder how they could have credited it.

Yet another stratagem was practised; this was, to send to confession to all the Curés and confessors of Paris a wicked woman, who assumed the name of one of my maids. This woman was La Gautière. She confessed to several in a single day, in order to let none escape. She told them she had served me sixteen or seventeen years, but she had left me, being unable in conscience to live with such a wicked woman; that she had left me owing to my abominations. In less than eight days I was decried through all Paris, and I passed, without contradiction, for the most wicked person in the world. Those who so spoke believed themselves well informed, and that they knew it from a very reliable source. It happened that the maid who served me was at confession to a canon of Notre Dame. She spoke to him of the troubles that were caused to her mistress, who was, she said, very innocent. The Canon begged her to tell him her name. She told it to him. He replied, “You astonish me, for a person who does not in the least resemble you, has come here saying she is you, and has told me horrible things.” She disabused him, and showed him the blackness of that procedure. The same thing happened to four or five others. But could she disabuse all the confessors? And I never would suffer her to use confession to make known the truth, leaving everything to God, and not wishing to lose any of the crosses or humiliations he has himself chosen for me. In the midst of so many contradictions, I have not been without illness and very acute pain.

I was, then, all the time from my arrival at Meaux to Easter without seeing the Bishop, who returned from Paris only for that festival. I was still very ill. He came into my room, and the first thing he said to me was, that I had many enemies, and that everything was let loose against me. He brought me the articles composed at Issi. I asked him the explanation of some passages, and I signed them. I was much more ill afterwards. He came back the day of the Annunciation, which had been put back after Easter. I have a very great devotion to the Incarnate Word, and while the nuns were finishing the burning of a triangular candle before an image I had of the Child Jesus, as they were singing a musical motet, the Bishop of Meaux entered. He asked what was the meaning of the music in my closet. They answered, that, as I had a very great devotion to the Incarnate Word, I had given them a treat that day, and they were come to thank me, and sing the motet in honour of the Incarnate Word. They were hardly out of my chamber, when he came to my bed, and said to me that he wished me to sign immediately that I did not believe in the Incarnate Word. Several nuns who were in the antechamber near my door heard him. I was greatly astonished at such a proposition. I told him I could not sign falsehoods. He answered, he would make me do it. I answered him, that I knew how to suffer by the grace of God; I knew how to die; I did not know how to sign falsehoods. He answered, that he begged me, and if I did that, he would re-establish my reputation, which they were endeavouring to tear to pieces; that he would say of me all the good in the world. I replied, that it was for God to take care of my reputation if he approved of it, and for me to sustain my faith at the peril of my life. Seeing he gained nothing, he withdrew.

I am under this obligation to Mother Picard and the Community, that they gave him the most favourable testimony about me. Here is one they gave me in writing:—

“ We the undersigned, Superior and nuns of the Visitation of St. Mary of Meaux, certify, that Madame Guyon having lived in our House by the order and permission of the Bishop of Meaux, our illustrious Prelate and Superior, for the space of six months, she has not given us any cause for trouble or annoyance, but much of edification; having never spoken to a person within or without except with special permission; having, besides, neither received nor written anything except as the Bishop has permitted her; having observed in all her conduct and all her words a great regularity, simplicity, sincerity, humility, mortification, sweetness, and Christian patience, and a true devotion and esteem of all that is of the faith, especially in the mystery of the Incarnation and Holy Childhood of our Lord Jesus Christ. That if the said lady wished to choose our House to live there the rest of her days in retirement, our Community would deem it a favour and gratification. This protest is simple and sincere, without other view or thought than to bear witness to the truth.

“(Signed) SISTER FRANÇOIS ELIZABETH LE PICARD, Superior.

“ SISTER MAGDALEN AMY GUETON.

“ SISTER CLAUDE MARIE AMOURI.

“ July 7, 1695.”

When they spoke to the Bishop of Meaux of me, he answered, “ Just as you, I see in her nothing but good; but her enemies torment me, and want to find evil in her.” He wrote one day to Mother Picard, that he had examined my writings with great care; that he had not found in them anything except some terms which were not in all the strictness of theology; but that a woman was not bound to be a theologian. Mother Picard showed me that letter to console me, and I swear before God I write nothing but what is perfectly true.

CHAPTER XIX.

SOME days afterwards the Bishop of Meaux returned. He brought me a paper written by himself, which was only a profession of faith, that I had always been Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman, and a submission of my books to the Church,—a thing I would have done of myself, had it not been asked of me. And then he read me another, which he said he must give me. It was a certificate such as he gave me long afterwards, and even more favourable. As I was too ill to transcribe that submission in his writing, he told me to have it transcribed by a nun, and to sign it. He took away his certificate to have it copied clean, as he said; and he assured me that, when I gave him the one, he would give me the other; that he wished to treat me as his sister; and that he would be a knave if he did not do so. This straightforward procedure charmed me. I told him I had placed myself in his hands, not only as in the hands of the Bishop, but as in those of a man of honour. Who would not have thought he would have carried it all out?

I was so ill after his departure, from having spoken a little when I was extremely weak, that I had to be brought back with cordial waters. The Prioress, fearing that if he returned the next day it would kill me, begged him by writing to leave me that day quiet; but he would not. On the contrary, he came that very day, and asked me if

I had signed the writing he had left me; and, opening a blue portfolio which had a lock, he said to me, "Here is my certificate; where is your submission?" While saying this, he held in his hand a paper. I showed him my submission, which was on my bed, and that I had not the strength to give it to him. He took it. I did not doubt he was about to give me his writing; but nothing of the kind. He shut up the whole in his portfolio, and said he would give me nothing; that I was not at the end; that he was about to torment me more, and that he wanted other signatures—among others this, that I did not believe in the Incarnate Word. I remained without strength and without speech. He ran away. The nuns were shocked at such a trick; for nothing obliged him to promise me a certificate. I had not asked him. It was then I made the protestations, which are initialled by a notary of Meaux; I asked for him, under pretext of making my will.

Some time after, the Prelate again came to see me. He required me to sign his pastoral letter, and to acknowledge I had held the errors therein condemned. I endeavoured to make him see, that what I had given him comprehended every kind of submission, and although in that letter he had placed me in the rank of evil-doers, I was endeavouring to honour that state of Jesus Christ without complaining. He said to me, "But you have promised to submit yourself to my condemnation." "I do it with all my heart, Monseigneur," I answered him; "and I take no more interest in those little books than if I had not written them. I will never depart, if it pleases God, from the submission and respect I owe you, however things turn. But Monseigneur, you have promised me a discharge." "I will give it to you when you do what I wish," he said to me. "Monseigneur, you did me the honour to tell me that when I gave you signed that act of submission you had dictated to me, you would give me my discharge." "Those are,"

said he, "words which escaped before having maturely considered what one can and ought to do." "It is not to make complaint that I say this to you, Monseigneur, but to bring to your memory that you promised it to me; and, to show you my submission, I am willing to write at the foot of your pastoral whatever I can put there." After I had done this, and he had read it, he said that he liked it well enough. Then, after having put it in his pocket, he said to me, "That is not the question. You do not say you are formally a heretic, and I wish you to declare it, and also that the letter is very just, and that you acknowledge to have been in all the errors it condemns." I answered him, "I believe, Monseigneur, it is to try me you say this; for I shall never persuade myself that a Prelate so full of piety and honour would use the good faith with which I have come and placed myself in his diocese, to make me do things I cannot do in conscience. I have thought to find in you a Father. I conjure you that I may not be deceived in my expectation." "I am Father of the Church," he said to me, "but, in short, it is not a question of words. If you do not sign what I wish, I will come with witnesses, and, after having admonished you before them, I will accuse you to the Church, and we will cut you off, as it is said in the gospel." "Monseigneur," I answered, "I have only my God for a witness. I am prepared to suffer everything, and I hope God will give me the grace to do nothing contrary to my conscience, without departing ever from the respect I owe you." He further wished, in the same conversation, to oblige me to declare that I recognized there are errors in the Latin book of Father La Combe, and to declare, at the same time, I had not read it.

The worthy nuns who saw part of the violence and outburst of the Bishop of Meaux could not get over it, and Mother Picard said to me that my too great gentleness emboldened him to ill treat me; because his character was such, that he ordinarily behaved thus to quiet people, and

bent to haughty persons. However, I never changed my conduct, and I preferred to accept the rôle of suffering, than to deviate in anything from the respect I owed his character. I am confident that all the persons who have known that I had been to Meaux have believed two things equally false: the one, that I was there by the King's order, while it was of my own accord; the other, that during the six months I was there the Bishop of Meaux had interrogated me at different times, to learn my thought upon the inner life, what was my manner of prayer, or on the love of God. Nothing of the kind. He has never spoken to me on these things. When he came, it was, he said, my enemies who told him to torment me; that he was satisfied with me. At other times he came full of fury, to demand that signature he well knew I would not give him. He threatened me with all that has since been done. He did not intend, he said, to lose his fortune for me; and a thousand other things. After these explosions he returned to Paris, and was some time without again coming.

At last, having been about six months at Meaux, he gave me of himself a certificate, and no longer demanded from me any other signature. What is astonishing is, that, at the time he was most excited against me, he said that if I wished to come and live in his diocese he would be pleased; that he wished to write upon the inner life, and that God had given me upon this very certain lights. He had seen that life of which he has so much spoken. He never told me he found anything to object to therein. All this has happened only since I ceased to see him; or he has seen in that life which he no longer had, what he had not seen when he was reading it. Shortly before I left Meaux, he told the Bishop of Paris and the Archbishop of Sens how satisfied he was, and edified by me. He preached to us on the day of the Visitation of the Virgin, which is one of the principal festivals of this convent. He

there said the Mass, and wished me to communicate from his hand. In the middle of the Mass he gave an astonishing sermon on the inner life. He advanced things much stronger than those I have advanced. He said he was not master of himself in the midst of these awful mysteries; he was obliged to speak the truth, and not to dissimulate; that it must be that this avowal of the truth was necessary, since God compelled him to make it in spite of himself. The Prioress went to salute him after his sermon, and asked him how he could torment me, thinking as he did. He answered her it was not he, it was my enemies. A little after, I left Meaux; but my departure has been related with so much malignity, that I must explain all the circumstances.

As I had been six months at Meaux, where I had promised to remain only three, and, besides, my health was very bad, I asked the Bishop of Meaux if he was satisfied, and if he desired anything more of me. He answered, "No." I told him I would go away then, because I had need of visiting Bourbon. I asked him if he would be pleased that I should come to end my days among those good nuns; for they loved me much, and I loved them, although the air was very bad for me. He was very well pleased at it, and told me he would always receive me gladly; that the nuns were very satisfied and edified by me; that he was returning to Paris. I told him my daughter, or some ladies of my friends, would come to fetch me. He turned to the Prioress, and said to her, "My Mother, I pray you to receive those who come to fetch madame, whether it be her daughter or her friends; to let them sleep and lodge in your house, and keep them there as long as they wish." It is well known how submissive are those nuns of St. Mary to their Bishop, and their exactitude to follow to the letter whatever he orders them, without the least variation. Two ladies then came to fetch me. They arrived for dinner. They dined,

supped, and slept, and dined again the next day at the convent; then, about three o'clock, we set out.

Hardly had I arrived when the Bishop of Meaux repented having let me go out of his diocese. What made him change, as we have since known, is that, when he gave an account to Madame de Maintenon of the terms in which this affair was concluded, she let him know she was dissatisfied with the attestation he had given me: that it concluded nothing, and would even have a contrary effect to what was proposed, which was to undeceive the persons who were favourably disposed to me. He believed then, in losing me, he was losing all the hopes with which he had flattered himself. He wrote to me to return to his diocese, and I received at the same time a letter from the Prioress, that he was more resolved than ever to torment me; that, whatever desire she had to have me again, she was obliged to let me know the sentiments of the Bishop of Meaux conformable to what I knew. What I knew is, that he was building a lofty fortune upon persecuting me, and, as he aimed at a person far above me, he thought that, in my escaping him, everything escaped him. Mother Picard, in sending me the letter of which I have just spoken, sent me a new attestation of the Bishop of Meaux, so different from the former which he wished me to return, that I judged henceforth I had no justice to expect from the Prelate. He had written to her to take back the first attestation, and to give me the latter; and, if I had set out from Meaux, she should at once send it to me, in order he might have back the former which he had given me. The Mother, who clearly saw by past treatment what I should be exposed to, if I again fell into the hands of the Bishop of Meaux, let me sufficiently understand it by her letter, to decide me to avoid for the future all discussion with him. However, to observe with him all the rules of politeness from which I have never departed (without complaining of a procedure so peculiar and so

full of injustice), I answered the Mother Superior, that I had made over to my family what the Bishop of Meaux asked back; that, after all that had passed, they had such an interest in a document of that nature, which constituted my justification, it was unlikely they would part with it; the more so, as that which she sent me from the Prelate not only served nothing for my justification, but seemed to countenance all that had been said against me, while saying nothing to the contrary.

Here is the copy of the said first attestation:—

“We, Bishop of Meaux, certify to all whom it may concern, that, by means of the declarations and submission of Madame Guyon which we have before us subscribed with her hand, and the prohibitions accepted by her with submission, of writing, teaching, dogmatizing in the Church, or of spreading her books printed or manuscript, or of conducting souls in the ways of prayer, or otherwise: together with the good testimony that has been furnished us during six months that she is in our diocese and in the convent of St. Mary, we are satisfied with her conduct, and have continued to her the participation of the Holy Sacraments in which we have found her: we declare, besides, we have not found her implicated in any way in the abominations of Molinos or others elsewhere condemned, and we have not intended to comprehend her in the mention which has been made by us of them in our Ordinance of April 6, 1695: given at Meaux, July 1, 1695.

“F. BENIGNE, Bishop of Meaux.”

Here is the copy of the second:—

“We, Bishop of Meaux, have received the present submissions and declarations of the said Dame Guyon, as well that of the 16th of April, 1695, as that of the 1st of July of the same year, and we have delivered her a certificate of it to avail her what is proper, declaring we have always

received her and receive her without objection in the participation of the Holy Sacraments in which we have found her, as the submission and sincere obedience, both before and since the time she is in our diocese and in the Convent of St. Mary, together with the authentic declaration of her faith and the testimony which has been furnished us and is furnished us of her good conduct for the six months she has been at the said convent, required it. We have enjoined her to make at suitable times the requests and other acts we have marked in the said articles by her subscribed as essential to piety and expressly commanded by God, without any believer being able to dispense with them under pretext of other acts pretended more perfect or eminent, or other pretexts whatever they be, and we have given her repeated prohibitions, both as Diocesan Bishop and in virtue of the obedience she has promised us voluntarily as above, of writing, teaching, or dogmatizing in the Church, or of spreading abroad her books printed or manuscript, or conducting souls in the ways of prayer, or otherwise, to which she has submitted anew, declaring she executed the said deeds. Given at Meaux, at the said convent, the day and year as above.

“F. BENIGNE, Bishop of Meaux.”

One can judge, from the vivacity of the Bishop of Meaux and the hopes he had conceived, of the effect which such a refusal produced on him. He gave out, I had climbed over the walls of the convent to fly. Besides that I climb very badly, all the nuns were witnesses of the contrary: yet this has had such a currency many people still believe it. A procedure of that kind no longer allowed me to abandon myself to the discretion of the Bishop of Meaux, and, as I was informed they were about to push things to the utmost violence, I believed I should leave to God all that might happen and yet take all prudent steps to avoid the effect of the menaces that reached me from all sides. I had

many places of retreat ; but I would not accept any, in order not to embarrass any one and not to involve my friends and my family, to whom my escape might be ascribed. I took the resolution of not leaving Paris, of remaining there in some retired place with my women, and withdrawing myself from the sight of all the world. I remained in this way about five or six months. I passed the days alone, in reading, praying God, and working : but, towards the end of the year 1695, I was arrested, ill as I was, and conducted to Vincennes. I was three days in seclusion in the house of M. des Grez, who had arrested me, because the King, full of justice and kindness, would not consent to put me in prison, saying many times, a convent was sufficient. They deceived his justice by the most violent calumnies, and painted me to his eyes with colours so black as even to make him ashamed of his goodness and of his equity. He consented then I should be taken to Vincennes.

CHAPTER XX.

I WILL not speak here of that long persecution, which has made so much noise, through a succession of ten years of prisons of all kinds, and of an exile almost as long, which is not yet finished, by trials, calumnies, and all imaginable kinds of sufferings. There are facts too odious on the part of divers persons, which charity makes me cover (and it is in this sense charity covers a multitude of sins), and others on the part of those who, having been seduced by ill-intentioned persons, are for me respectable through their piety and other reasons, although they have showed too bitter a zeal for things of which they had no true knowledge. I am silent as to the one, through respect ; as to the other, through charity. What I may say is that through so long a series of crosses, with which my life has been filled, it may be conceived the greatest were reserved for the end, and that God, who has not cast me off through his kindness, took care not to leave the end of my life without a greater conformity with Jesus Christ. He was dragged before all sorts of tribunals : he has done me the favour to be the same. He suffered the utmost outrages without complaining : he has shown me the mercy of behaving similarly. How could I have done otherwise in the view he gave me of his love and of his goodness ? In this resemblance to Jesus Christ I regarded as favours what the world regarded as strange persecutions. The inward

peace and joy prevented me from seeing the most violent persecutors other than as instruments of the justice of my God, who has always been to me so adorable and so amiable. I was then in prison as in a place of delight and refreshment; that general privation of all creatures giving me more opportunity of being alone with God, and the want of things which appear most necessary making me taste an exterior poverty I could not have otherwise tasted. Thus I have regarded all those great apparent ills, and that universal defamation, as the greatest of all blessings. It seemed to me it was the work of God's hand, who wished to cover his tabernacle with the skins of beasts to conceal it from the eyes of those to whom he was not willing to manifest it.

I have borne mortal debility, overwhelming, crushing, and painful illnesses without treatment. God, not content with that, abandoned me spiritually to the greatest desolations for some months, so that I could only say these single words: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It was at that time I was led to take the part of God against myself, and to practise all the austerities I could think of: seeing God and all creatures against me, I was delighted to be on their side against myself. How could I complain of what I have suffered with a love so detached from all *own* interest. Should I now be interested for myself, after having made such an entire sacrifice of that "*me*," and all that concerns it? I prefer, then, to consecrate all those sufferings by silence. If God permitted, for his glory, one day something of them to be known, I would adore his judgments; but as for me, my part is taken in that which regards me personally.

With regard to prayer, I must always protest of the truth of its ways. I have defended my innocence with sufficient firmness and truth to leave no doubt in the public mind that the calumnies which are circulated

against persons whose prayer is genuine and love sincere, are false, and the talk of their calumniators rash, and contrary to all kinds of truth and justice. The more violent the calumny, the more the heart which loves God and whose conscience reproaches it with nothing, is happy and content. It seems that the persecution and the calumny is a weight which sinks the soul still deeper in God, and makes her taste an inestimable happiness. What matters to her that all creatures are let loose against her, when she is perfectly alone with her God, and she gives him a solid testimony of her love? For when God heaps benefits upon us, it is he who gives us marks of his own. But when we suffer what is a thousand times more terrible than death, we give him testimonies of the fidelity of ours. So, as there is no other means of testifying to God we love him but in bearing for his love the most terrible troubles, we are infinitely indebted to him when he gives us the means.

But, perhaps there will be surprise that, not being willing to write any detail of the most severe crosses of my life, I have written of those which are far less. I have had certain reasons for doing so. I have believed myself bound to touch on some of the crosses of my youth, to make known the course of crucifixion that God has always led me by. As to those other passages which relate to a more advanced state of my life: since the calumnies did not concern me alone, I have felt obliged in conscience to give details of certain facts to expose not only their falsity, but also the conduct of those through whom they have originated, and who are the true authors of those persecutions, of which I have only been the accidental object; particularly in these latter times, since in reality I have been persecuted in this way only to involve therein persons of great merit, who were out of reach by themselves, and could be attacked personally only by mixing up their affairs with mine. I have thought, then, I should

enlarge a little more in detail on what had relation to that class of facts: and the more so, that the question being of my faith, which they wished for that purpose to render suspected, it appeared to me of consequence to make known, at the same time, how far I have always been from the sentiments they wish to impute to me. I have thought it due to religion, to piety, to my friends, to my family, and to myself: but as to personal ill treatments, I have felt bound to sacrifice them, to sanctify them by a profound silence, as I have already said.

I shall only cursorily say something of the dispositions in which I have been at the different times of my imprisonment. During the time I was at Vincennes and M. de la Reinie interrogated me, I continued in great peace, very content to pass my life there, if such was the will of God. I used to compose hymns, which the maid who served me learned by heart as fast as I composed them; and we used to sing your praise, O my God! I regarded myself as a little bird you were keeping in a cage for your pleasure, and who ought to sing to fulfil her condition of life. The stones of my tower seemed to me rubies: that is to say, I esteemed them more than all worldly magnificence. My joy was based on your love, O my God, and on the pleasure of being your captive; although I made these reflections only when composing hymns. The central depth of my heart was full of that joy which you give to those who love you, in the midst of the greatest crosses.

This peace was spoiled for some moments by an infidelity I committed. It was considering beforehand, one day, the answers that I should make to an interrogation that I was to be subjected to the next day. I answered to it all astray; and God, so faithful, who had made me answer difficult and perplexed matters with much facility and presence of mind, knew how to punish me for my forethought. He permitted that I could with difficulty answer the most simple things, and that I

remained almost without knowing what to say. This infidelity, I say, spoiled my peace for some days; but it soon returned, and I believe, my Lord, that you permitted this fault only to make me see the uselessness of our arrangements on such occasions, and the security in trusting ourselves to you. Those who still depend upon human reasoning will say, we must look beforehand and arrange; and that it is to tempt God and to expect miracles, to act otherwise. I let others think what they please; for me, I find security only in abandoning myself to the Lord. All scripture is full of testimonies which demand this abandonment. "Make over your trouble to the hand of the Lord: he will act himself. Abandon yourself to his conduct: and he will himself conduct your steps." God has not meant to set snares for us in telling us this, and in teaching us not to premeditate our answers. When things were carried to the greatest extremity (I was then in the Bastille), and I learned the defaming and horrible outcry against me, I said to you, O my God, "If you desire to render me a new spectacle to men and angels, your holy will be done. All that I ask of you is, that you save those who are yours, and do not permit them to separate themselves. Let not the powers, principalities, sword, etc., ever separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ. For my own case, what matters it to me what men think of me? What matters it what they make me suffer, since they cannot separate me from Jesus Christ, who is implanted in the depth of my heart. If I displease Jesus Christ, though I should please all men, it would be less to me than the dirt." Let all men, therefore, despise and hate me, provided I am agreeable to him. Their blows will polish what is defective in me, in order that I may be presented to him for whom I die every day until he comes to consume that death. And I prayed you, O my God, to make me an offering pure and clean in your blood, to be soon offered to you.

Sometimes it seemed God placed himself on the side of men to make me the more suffer. I was then more exercised within than from outside. Everything was against me. I saw all men united to torment me and surprise me—every artifice and every subtlety of the intellect of men who have much of it, and who studied to that end; and I alone without help, feeling upon me the heavy hand of God, who seemed to abandon me to myself and my own obscurity; an entire abandonment within, without being able to help myself with my natural intellect, whose entire vivacity was deadened this long time since I had ceased to make use of it, in order to allow myself to be led by a superior intellect; having laboured all my life to submit my mind to Jesus Christ and my reason to his guidance. During this time I could not help myself, either with my reason, or any interior support; for I was like those who have never experienced that admirable guidance from the goodness of God, and who have not natural intellect. When I prayed I had only answers of death. At this time that passage of David occurred to me: “When they persecuted me, I afflicted my soul by fasting.” I practised then, as long as my health allowed it, very rigorous fasts and austere penances, but all this seemed to me like burned straw. One moment of God’s conducting is a thousand times more helpful.

CHAPTER XXI.

As my life has always been consecrated to the cross, no sooner had I left prison, and my mind began to breathe again, after so many trials, than the body was overwhelmed with all sorts of infirmities, and I have had almost continual illnesses, which brought me to death’s door.

In these latter times I am able to say little or nothing of my dispositions, because my state has become simple and invariable. The root of that state is a profound annihilation, so that I find nothing in me that can be named. All that I know is, that God is infinitely holy, just, good, happy: that he includes in himself all good, and I, all wretchedness. I see nothing lower than me, nor anything more unworthy than me. I recognize that God has given me graces capable of saving a world, and that perhaps I have paid all with ingratitude. I say, “perhaps,” because nothing subsists in me, good or ill. The good is in God. I have for my share only the nothing. What can I say of a state always the same, without forethought or variation; for the dryness, if I have it, is the same to me as a state the most satisfying. All is lost in the immensity, and I can neither will nor think. It is like a little drop of water sunk in the sea; not only is it surrounded by it, but absorbed. In that divine

immensity the soul no longer sees herself, but in God she discovers the objects, without discerning them, otherwise than by the taste of the heart. All is darkness and obscurity as regards her; all is light on the part of God, who does not allow her to be ignorant of anything; while she knows not what she knows, nor how she knows it. There is there neither clamour, nor pain, nor trouble, nor pleasure, nor uncertainty; but a perfect peace: not in herself, but in God; no interest for herself, no recollection of or occupation with herself. This is what God is in that creature: as to her, abjectness, weakness, poverty, without her thinking either of her abjectness or her dignity. If one believes any good in me, he is mistaken, and does wrong to God. All good is in him, and for him. If I could have a satisfaction, it is from this, that **HE IS WHAT HE IS**, and that **HE WILL BE IT ALWAYS**. If he saves me, it will be gratuitously; for I have neither merit nor dignity.

I am astonished that any confidence can be felt in this "nothing." I have said it; yet I answer what is asked me without troubling myself whether I answer well or ill. If I say ill, I am not at all surprised; if I say well, I do not think of attributing it to myself. I go without going, without forethought, without knowing where I go. I wish neither to go, nor to stop myself. The will and instincts have disappeared; poverty and nakedness is my portion. I have neither confidence nor distrust, nor in short anything, anything, anything. If obliged to think in myself, I should probably mislead everybody, and I know neither how I mislead them, nor what I do to mislead them. There are times I would, at the peril of a thousand lives, that God should be known and loved. I love the Church. All that wounds her, wounds me. I fear everything which is contrary to her; but I cannot give a name to that fear. It is like an infant at the breast, who, without distinguishing monsters, turns away from them. I do not seek anything;

but there are given me at the instant expressions and words very forcible. If I wished to have them they would escape me, and if I wished to recall them, the same. When I have anything to say and I am interrupted, everything is lost. I am then like a child, from whom an apple is taken away without his perceiving it. He seeks it, and no longer finds it. I am vexed for a moment at its being taken from me; but I immediately forget it. God keeps me in an extreme simplicity, uprightness of heart, and largeness; so that I do not perceive these things except in the occasions: for without an occasion stirring it I do not see anything. If one said anything to my advantage, I should be surprised, not finding anything in myself. If one blames me the only thing I know is, I am the same abjectness, but I do not see what they blame there. I believe it without seeing it, and everything disappears. If I am made to reflect upon myself, I do not recognize there any good. I see all good in God. I know he is the principle of all, and, without him, I am only a fool.

He gives me a free air, and makes me converse with persons, not according to my dispositions, but according to what they are, giving me even natural cleverness with those who have it; and that, with an air so free, they go away pleased. There are certain devotees whose language is for me a stammering. I do not fear the snares they spread for me. I am not on my guard for anything, and everything goes well. I am sometimes told, "Take care what you will say to So-and-so." I forget it immediately, and I cannot take care. Sometimes I am told, "You have said such-and-such a thing: those persons may put an ill interpretation on it. You are too simple." I believe it, but I cannot do otherwise than be simple. O carnal prudence, how opposed I find thee to the simplicity of Jesus Christ! I leave thee to thy partisans: as for me, my prudence, my wisdom, is Jesus, simple and little; and though I should be Queen by changing my conduct, I

could not do it. Though my simplicity should cause me all the troubles in the world, I could not leave it.

Nothing greater than God: nothing more little than I. He is rich: I am very poor. I do not want for anything. I do not feel need of anything. Death, life, all is alike. Eternity, time: all is eternity, all is God. God is Love, and Love is God, and all in God, and for God. You would as soon extract light from darkness, as anything from this "nothing." It is a chaos without confusion. All species are outside of the "nothing," and the "nothing" does not admit them: thoughts only pass, nothing stops. I cannot say anything to order. What I have written, or said, is gone: I remember it no more. It is for me as if from another person. I cannot wish either justification or esteem. If God wills either one or the other, he will do what he shall please. It does not concern me. That he may glorify himself by my destruction, or by re-establishing my reputation, the one and the other is alike in the balance.

My children, I do not wish to mislead you, or not to mislead you. It is for God to enlighten you, and to give you distaste or inclination for this "nothing," who does not leave her place. It is an empty beacon: one may in it light a torch. It is perhaps a false light, which may lead to the precipice. I know nothing of it. God knows it. It is not my business. It is for you to discern that. There is nothing but to extinguish the false light. The torch will never light itself if God does not light it. I pray God to enlighten you always to do only his will. As for me, if you should trample me underfoot, you would only do me justice. This is what I can say of a "nothing" that I would wish, if I was able to wish, should be eternally forgotten. If the "Life" was not written, it would run a great chance of never being so; and yet I would rewrite it at the least signal, without knowing why, nor what I wished to say.

Oh, my children, open your eyes to the light of truth! Holy Father, sanctify them in your truth. I have told them your truth, since I have not spoken of myself. Your Divine Word has spoken to them by my mouth. He alone is the truth. He has said to his Apostles, "I sanctify myself for them." Say the same thing to my children. Sanctify yourself in them and for them. But how reconcile your words, O my Divine Word? You say on the one hand, "Sanctify them in your truth. Your word is truth." On the other, "I sanctify myself for them." Oh, how well these two things agree! It is to be sanctified in the truth of all sanctity, to have no other sanctity but that of Jesus Christ. May he alone be holy in us and for us. He will be holy in us when we shall be sanctified in his truth by that experimental knowledge that to him alone belongs all sanctity, all justice, all strength, all greatness, all power, all glory: and to us all poverty, weakness, etc. Let us remain in our "nothing" through homage to the sanctity of God, and we shall be sanctified and instructed by the truth. Jesus Christ will be holy for us, and will be to us everything. We shall find in him all that is deficient in us. If we seek anything for ourselves out of him, if we seek anything in us as *ours*, however holy it may appear to us, we are liars, and the truth is not in us. We seduce ourselves, and we shall never be the saints of the Lord, who, having no other sanctity but his, have renounced all usurpations, and at last their entire **SELFHOOD**. Holy Father, I have replaced in your hands those whom you have given me. Guard them in your truth, that falsehood may not approach them. It is to be in falsehood to attribute to one's self the least thing. It is to be in falsehood to believe we are able to do anything: to hope anything from one's self or for one's self: to believe we possess anything. Make them know, O my God, that herein is the truth of which you are very jealous. All language which departs from this principle is falsity:

he who approaches it, approaches the truth, but he who speaks only the **ALL OF GOD** and the **NOTHING OF THE CREATURE** is in the truth, and the truth dwells with him : because, usurpation and the selfhood being banished from him, it is of necessity the truth dwells there. My children, receive this instruction from your mother, and it will procure life for you. Receive it through her, not as from her or hers, but as from God and God's. Amen, Jesus.

CONCLUSION.

I pray those who shall read this not to be angry against the persons who, through a zeal perhaps too bitter, have pushed things so far against a woman, and a woman so submissive ; because, as Tauler says, " When God wishes to purify a soul by suffering, he would for a time cast into darkness and blindness an infinite number of holy persons, in order they might prepare that vessel of election by rash and disparaging judgments, that they would form against her in that state of ignorance. But at last, after having purified that vessel, he would sooner or later lift the bandage from their eyes, not treating with rigour a fault they would have committed through a secret leading of his admirable providence. I say, further, that God would sooner send an angel from heaven to dispose by tribulations that chosen vessel than to leave her without suffering."

December, 1709.

THE END.