

THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD.

CATHOLIC ANECDOTES

CHAPTER III.

FIRST ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

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

II. - THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD.

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43. *What is God?* -

One of the first questions of your Catechism, children, is this: "What is God?"

The question is easy enough to put, but it is not so easily answered. The learned, and even the philosophers themselves are forced to confess their ignorance on that point. I have read a fine example of this in ancient history. Hieron, king of Syracuse, who lived nearly five hundred years before Christ, had admitted to his friendship a celebrated Greek philosopher

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named Simonides. One day it came into his head to say to him: "Simonides, you who are so learned, answer me this question: "*What is God?*" The philosopher, after a moment's reflection, said "Prince, I will answer you in a day." On the morrow, instead of giving Hieron his answer, he told him "Prince, I will answer you in two days." At the end of two days, he said again: "Prince, I will, answer you in four days." At last, the king, believing that he did but mock him, began to feel annoyed, and would have the explanation of his conduct. "Ah! prince," replied Simonides, at length, "you ask me what is God, - well! I confess to you, that the more I reflect on that sublime subject, the less I understand it; it is a mystery that cannot be explained." -

G. S. G., *Inventaire des Decouvertes*, 179

44. *The Terrors of Nero.* -

God is just, my young friends, and history is full of terrific facts which daily remind us of that truth. There are few as terrible as the history of Nero. That Roman emperor was a monster of cruelty, impiety, and luxury. After having reigned some years, he completed the measure of his iniquities by persecuting the Christians. It was then that the justice of God was manifested in him. One night Nero is suddenly awoke; he learned that his soldiers, and even his guards, have revolted. He springs from his bed, half dresses himself, and calls for his friends; no one appears. Terrified, he goes forth from his palace and runs through the streets, but can find no one to receive him. Then,

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frightened himself at this utter abandonment, he wishes to kill himself; he asks for a gladiator to dispatch him, but none will come; he rushes to the Tiber to drown himself, but his courage fails him; he takes out a little golden box in which he kept poison, but it is snatched from his hands. At length a freedman offered him an asylum in his country-house; Nero mounted a wretched horse, and disguised in filthy, tattered garments, set out. All the way, he trembled like a leaf; the crowing of a cock, the sound of a footstep, the rustling of the wind, anything and everything sufficed to throw him into a cold sweat. Arrived at the house, he dared not enter, he contented himself with skulking around the out-houses, slaked his thirst with muddy and unwholesome water, and hid himself in the dwelling of a slave. His retreat was soon discovered; he was pursued, and the monster had no other means of escaping his enemies than to run himself through with his own sword. Thus it was that God punished, even in this life, the crimes he had committed. - SÜETONIUS, *Life of Nero*.

45. *Death of the Emperor Valerian* -

The history of Nero presents a frightful example of the effects of God's justice in this life; that of Valerian, another Roman emperor, is not less capable of making us reflect. That unhappy prince, who lived in the third century, had persecuted the Christians, and put a great number of them to death. God permitted that, after losing a battle against the Persians, he fell into hands of Sapor, their king, who exercised unheard-of

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cruelties upon him. He cast him into a gloomy dungeon, but without divesting him of his imperial robes, in order to humble him the more. Sometimes he had him brought forth in chains, made him kneel down, and forced him to bend his back, till he made use of him as a step to mount his horse. Finally having overwhelmed him with insult and outrage of every kind, he caused him to be flayed alive, had his body salted, so as to keep it the longer, and his skin dyed red, he hung up in a Persian temple, to perpetuate the remembrance of the humiliation of a Roman emperor. In acting thus, Sapor gave still another lesson to the world: he manifested the justice of God who had permitted all these calamities to come upon the impious Valerian. - BERAULT-BERCASTEL, *Historie de l'Eglise*, I., 295.

46. *What Gods the Pagans Worship*. -

Not only are there found in remote countries, my young friends, children who learn their Catechism, but many who are well instructed in it, as the following anecdote, will prove. An Indian child, who was only eight years old, but had been carefully instructed by his pious parents, was once present in a public hall, where the chief men of the town were assembled. Knowing that he was a Christian, some of them began to rally him on his religion. The boy answered in the same tone, and with much spirit. After some disputing, on both sides, they at last said to him "You have a great deal to say about your God - would it not be better for you to show Him to us?" "My

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God," the child replied, "is the Creator of all the universe; He is a pure spirit, and I cannot show Him to you, but I can easily show you yours." At the same time he took up a stone, on which with a little ink he drew a sort of likeness of a human face, then laying it on the ground with an air of mock ceremony, he made a show of praying, but afterwards kicked it away from him, crying: "There are the gods that you adore!" Every one applauded this sally of the child, and the sorry joker who had provoked it retired covered with shame and confusion. - REYRE *Anecdotes Chretiennes*, 223.

47. *God is the Best of Fathers.* -

We take pleasure in considering God in the point of view of His goodness rather than any other; hence it is, that when we speak of Him, we so often call Him *the good God*. He has more tenderness for us than even our parents themselves, although our fathers and mothers love us with all their heart; this is proved by the following example: A certain pious man had left nothing undone in order to give his son a good Christian education but the bad disposition and stormy passions of the unhappy youth, rendered all the father's care useless.

Going on from one excess to another, he came at last to stifle every feeling of nature. The spirit of cupidity, of libertinism, and of independence, made him form the project of putting an end to the life of him whose happiness he ought to constitute! The moment is fixed for the execution of this frightful parricide. The unfortunate father is made aware of it

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and he dissimulates, appears even more gay than usual, and, desirous of making a last effort, proposes to his son a walk in the country. The proposition is accepted. The barbarian is delighted to have such an opportunity of committing the crime which he meditates. The father leads him insensibly to a lovely place some way in a forest. Then, stopping suddenly: "My son," said he, "I love you, I know your design, and I am about to give you a new proof of my affection. We are alone, unseen by any one, your crime will be, therefore, unknown; here is my bosom, my son, and there is a dagger - strike! By dying here, I shall, at least, save you from the hands of justice; I shall save the life of my son." At these words, the young man, astonished, softened, throws himself at the feet of this good father, waters them with his tears and swears so to change his conduct henceforth, that he will never again be a cause of grief to him. There, my young friends, is a faint image of the goodness of God to men, even the greatest sinners! -
DEBUSSI, *New Month of Mary*, 272.

48. *The Clock and the Clockmaker* -

A simple view of the universe and the admirable order which reigns therein, suffices, children, to convince us that there is a God infinitely powerful, infinitely wise, and infinitely good. In proof of this, you may have probably heard the following little anecdote. A man of genius whose name I forget (I rather think it was Voltaire himself) happened to be present once in a large company where Religion was being blasphemed;

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he himself had joined in to a certain extent. But, at last, seeing that they were carrying the matter too far, pretending even to say that there is no God, and that the world made itself, he kept silence for some time. Some one turned to him at last, as if to say "What do *you* think?" At the same moment, the clock struck eleven. Our astute philosopher contented himself with pointing towards it, and at the same time improvising the following lines, which he slowly recited:

"Pour ma part, plus j'y pence, et mois je puis songer
Que cette horloge existe, et n'ait point d'horloger!"

which may be substantially interpreted -

"For my part, the more I think of it,
I can the less imagine that yonder clock exists without a maker."

His friends looked at each other sheepishly enough, and muttering something about the lateness of the hour, retired foolish and ashamed, like people who felt they had got the worst of it. -
Daily Rewards, No. 1, p. 7.

49. *Does the Good God Die?* -

As regards the eternity of God, I have just remembered a rather amusing little story, which may interest you, my young friends. The father of a family, who had experienced all sorts of reverses, had conceived much sorrow and bitterness on that account. His wife shared his grief, but she suffered more from seeing her husband so prostrated, than from all the misfortunes they had met; she, therefore, did every thing she could to restore his happiness and contentment. For a long time her efforts

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were all in vain; her words of comfort thrown, away. It was then that she tried by an odd stratagem to lead his mind back to better thoughts. One day she pretended to be very sorrowful and dejected. To meet her when you would, she was still, sad, and silent. The husband, knowing his wife's natural gaiety and cheerfulness, was much surprised. He feared that some new misfortune had taken place in the house, and that she concealed it from him in order to spare him the pain of knowing it. He urged her to tell him the cause of a sadness which she could no longer conceal. "Oh! it is nothing; it will not last long; pray don't trouble yourself about it, for I assure you it is of no consequence whatever!" So she put him off with short, vague answers. For a long time she refused positively to tell the reason, which still more increased the alarm and excited the curiosity of her husband. Overcome at length by his repeated solicitations, she explained herself a little. "Ah, my dear, if you only knew what a sorrowful dream I had the other night. I dreamed that the good God was dead, and that all the angels, great and small, followed his coffin, weeping; I was very much troubled myself, and thought I should never get over the shock of it." "How ridiculous!" cried the man, laughing for the first time in a long period, "how could you dwell on such foolish fancies, especially now that you are wide awake? How could God die? Is He not eternal?" At that moment the smile that had so long vanished from the woman's face, suddenly re-appeared, and

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she immediately asked : "But are you quite sure of what you say? is it true that the good God is living still?" "Why, of course, He is living still," replied the husband, who began to fear for his wife's senses, "how can you talk so foolishly?" All at once the woman resumed her natural manner: "So much the better," she continued, " if our good God us has watched over us for more than fifty years, how can you be so discouraged as you have been of late?" At these words, the worthy man understood the lesson which his wife meant to give him; he confessed that he deserved such a reproach, and ever after he, as well as his wife, put all their trust in God, who is so good to us, even when He pleases to afflict us. -
SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 71.

50. *Where is God?* -

If I asked you, my good little friends, "where is God?" you would, doubtless, tell me immediately, and without hesitation: "God is in heaven, on earth, and in all places." Well! I knew a little boy, - very intelligent and well-instructed he was too, - who answered better than that. One day, returning from Catechism, he related at home all he had heard; his elder brother, already wearing a beard, and, perhaps, jealous of seeing him knowing so much at such an age, undertook to puzzle him. "Now, see here, George," said he, "I will give you an apple if you tell me where God is!" - "And I will give you two," said the little fellow, "if you tell me where He is *not*." At these words, every one clapped their hands, and it was generally agreed that George had

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answered the question as well as the priest himself could have done. There is what it is, my little friends, to know one's Catechism well. -
NOEL, *Catechisme de Rodez*, I., 111,

III - ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

51. *The Three Children in the Furnace.* -

God is faithful in protecting those who have been faithful in serving Him. Amongst a host of examples which I might give you, my young friends, I will select that of the children who were cast into the furnace. They were three youths of the Jewish nation, companions of the prophet Daniel, and imitators of his virtue; they were called Sidrach (Shadrach), Misach (Meshach), and Abdenago (Abednego). Some wretched courtiers of Nabuchodonosor I. (Nebuchadnezzar), King of Babylon, denounced them to that prince as obstinate fanatics, who practised a religion different from that of the empire. They suggested to him, at the same time, in order to convince himself of it, to have his statue set up, and to command all the people to adore it.

Nabuchodonosor adopted the suggestion; he caused an enormous golden statue to be cast, representing himself, and by a public edict he commanded all the inhabitants of Babylonia to assemble on a certain day, on a vast plain near the city, in order to pay divine honours to the statue. The three youths went thither with the rest, because they belonged to the king's household; but, at the given signal, instead of prostrating themselves like every

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one else, they remained standing, and raised their hearts to God, groaning over the idolatry of those poor people. Nabuchodonosor, being very angry condemned them to be thrown alive into a fiery furnace; he even ordered more wood than usual to be put in, so that the flames rose several cubits above the furnace. They took Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago and they bound them with cords, in order that might not escape. But God watched over them; the fire consumed only their bonds; the flames fell back on the right and on the left, and a refreshing dew fell on our young Hebrews, so that they walked in the midst of that fiery furnace without suffering any pain. They sang then an admirable canticle, in which they invited heaven, the stars, the earth; the trees, the fire, the sea, in a word, all creatures, to praise the the name of the Lord. I need not tell you, my young friends, that the king was ashamed of having treated in such a manner these faithful servants of God; he had them taken from the furnace, and their accusers thrown in; the latter were consumed in an instant. -

DANIEL, Chapter III.

52. *St. Patrick's Swine.* -

The resources of Providence are infinite, and it watches over its children with a solicitude for which we can never be sufficiently thankful. Here is one of a thousand instances: St. Patrick, whilst still young, was carried off, and brought to Ireland as a slave, by a band of Irish pirates who had pillaged his father's house. He fell into the hands of a fierce barbarian, who placed him

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in charge of his cattle, with which he was often obliged to spend the night in the fields. Once in his sleep, he was warned to go to the sea-shore, and that there he should find his deliverance. He went accordingly, and found a ship about to sail, on board of which he was received after much and earnest supplication. The vessel was forced to put in at a barren and uninhabited part of the Scottish (or Frankish) coast. The provisions were soon exhausted; several of those on board made excursions in all directions but without finding any traces of human habitation. Pressed by hunger, the companions of St. Patrick, who were pagans, besought him to address his God, adding that, if the God of the Christians was so powerful as they had heard, he would not fail to save them from perishing with hunger. Animated with a lively confidence, Patrick assured them that if they would only be sincerely converted to the true God their deliverance was near at hand. He himself began to pray in silence, and scarce an hour had passed, when they met a herd of swine. They went immediately to work to capture some, which furnished them with an abundant provision of food. They continued wandering about for twenty-four hours, but they suffered no more from hunger; they subsequently reached an inhabited district and were converted. -

GODESCARD, *Lives of the Saints*, 17th March.

53. *The Bark of St. Ignatius.* -

Nothing is so admirable, children, as the confidence wherewith the Saints abandoned themselves to the guidance of

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Providence. You shall soon see that they act more rationally than the people of the world who at every step invoke prudence, foresight, and so forth. St. Ignatius Loyola had been on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. On his return, the vessel in which he had sailed landed him at the Island of Cyprus, where he awaited an opportunity to return to Italy. There were three different vessels in port; the first belonged to the Turks, who were little likely to admit a Christian on board. The second, a Venetian vessel, was spacious, comfortable, and well appointed. Finally, the third was small, old, and rickety. Several passengers interceded with the captain of the fine vessel that he might receive St. Ignatius on board, as he was a very holy man, and a worker of miracles. "I receive no one gratis," replied the captain, very shortly, "and besides, if he is a Saint, he has no need of my vessel, he can Walk on the sea, like St. Peter." St. Ignatius was, consequently, obliged to content himself with the little rickety bark, that being the only chance left him. But what was the result? The three vessels set sail on the same day and in the same weather. All at once a frightful storm arose; the Turkish vessel was buried in the sea; the handsome Venetian vessel went to pieces on a sandbank, and every soul on board perished, and it was only the little bark that reached the port in safety, a few days after. Providence watched over its servant - SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 365.

54 *The Child Buried Under Ruins.* -

Divine Providence

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never abandons us when we throw ourselves with confidence into its arms. Listen, my young friends, to what happened, in 1698, to a child, who related it himself: He was called young Ciaborri, and lived in Italy, near the famous volcano of Vesuvius: "About five o'clock in the morning, I was with some of my companions, not far from the house of my parents, where we felt a violent earthquake, accompanied by a terrible shock. We immediately took flight; but, at the same moment, all the surrounding houses fell with a frightful crash, and we were buried under the ruins. All my friends lost their lives, with the exception of one who was stretched beside me, and who, though grievously wounded, was still not killed; as for me I was perfectly unhurt. As long as my friend lived we mutually consoled each other and prayed together. But when he was dead his body emitted a horrible stench. Squeezed up as I was in a narrow space, my face rested against the decaying corpse; yet I never for one moment lost my presence of mind; I resigned myself entirely to the will of God, and ceased not to ask him every day for my deliverance. My greatest torment was thirst; that I endeavoured to assuage by licking a stone, which gave me, in fact, great relief. My position would have been still more deplorable, if the Lord had not sent me a sleep so profound that the thirteen days of my captivity appeared to me scarce more than three. The thirteenth day was the worst of all; I was at the last extremity. Collecting all my strength I

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cried out for help, calling my parents by their name All at once I heard a noise, and observed a sort of motion overhead; I shouted still louder, and was heard. Ten persons, digging and working with all their might, at length drew me out; I had been buried some ten feet deep. I returned thanks to the Lord who had saved me from death in so miraculous a manner; I confessed that I owed my safety to Divine Providence alone." - SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 110.

55. *The Missionary Astray on the Lebanon Mountains.* -

A missionary who had terminated his apostolical labours in the neighbourhood of Mount Lebanon, received orders from his superiors to go elsewhere. "I set out with my companions," said he, "intending to repair to Bescomta, a village situated in the vicinity of the Druses. During my journey, I preached, heard confessions, and had the consolation of bringing many lost sheep back to the way of salvation. One day, I met, on my way, a father of a family, who was a Christian. On learning that I was the missionary of the district, he

approached me, and besought me, with tears in his eyes, to go and hear the confession of his numerous family, because he and they had been long and ardently desiring to see a missionary. I asked him if he lived far away. He hesitated not to tell me that he lived in a very distant mountain, where he and his family were in a manner deprived of all intercourse with their fellow-creatures. I was constrained to tell him, to my great regret, that I could

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not comply with his request, seeing that I was under strict orders to repair to Bescomta. I did all I could to console him, but he kissed my hands and urged me, saying: 'Father, you will come; yes, you will certainly come to my house, and even sooner than you imagine, for we will pray so fervently, that the good God will be sure to hear us.' I continued my journey, without reflecting on these last words; I visited several villages, and then hastened to reach my destination. But, as we had no guide, we got lost in the mountains, which caused us much fatigue. After passing the whole night protecting ourselves from bushes and briars, we suddenly found ourselves near a farm-house, situated alone in the midst of a dismal waste. We entered immediately. What was my surprise, when I recognized in the master of the house the man who had, a few days before, so earnestly besought me to visit him! The words he had pronounced on leaving us were accomplished. We were welcomed as the messengers of heaven, and the work of my mission was crowned with the most consoling success. The harvest was ripe, for, on the assurance of the master of the house that a missionary would certainly come, all the inmates had duly prepared themselves; they received the Sacraments with "a devotion and a recollection truly touching. As to me, I inscribed on the tablets of my heart: "Thanks to the wisdom and the mercy of God, who has shed the dew of His grace on this lonely dwelling!" -

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56. *The Despondent Joiner.* -

Father Beauregard had just preached his famous sermon on *Providence*, when he saw a man enter his house who said to him: "Father, I have heard your sermon; you have spoken well, but I am come to tell you that I am a living proof of the contrary of what you said. There is no Providence for me". "How, sir, what words are these for you to speak?" "Well, father, you may judge for yourself; I am a joiner by trade; I have a wife and three children, we all work hard, and we have never done harm to any one; for twenty years have I been trying to serve the Lord and live as a good Christian; I have always put my trust in God, hoping that He would come to my assistance; but all in vain; and I confess to you I am ready to throw myself in the river, for I have bills coming due the 30th of this month, which I am entirely unable to meet: I am lost - dishonoured - and I would rather die than live". "Well, my dear friend, you shall yourself become a sensible monument of Divine Providence. How much money do you want?" "Ah, father, how good you are! With less than 3,000 francs, I am saved". "My friend, there is 2,500; I could not have been so happy as to give it to you myself, but some days ago, the Princess de Conti, after hearing my sermon on *Alms*, sent me that money, authorizing me to use it in whatever way I thought proper, for the relief of the unfortunate. Go, then, meet your engagements, and never forget that there is a Providence," -

NOEL *Cat de Rodez*, I., 113.

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57. *Vision of a Christian who Doubted Providence* -

We often meet with people who are willing to admit that God created the world, but are yet of opinion: that He gives Himself no more trouble about it, and lets it go entirely by chance. This thought is a blasphemy and an absurdity. I once read of a worthy man, and a good Christian, moreover, who was tormented by this doubt; it seemed to him, seeing the good sometimes afflicted and the wicked prosperous and happy, that God takes no heed of us or our affairs. He had a dream, which he related as follows: "I dreamed that I was on a journey, and had somehow lost my way. I knew not how to get out of my difficulty, when I saw a traveller coming along, who kindly offered to show me the way. I followed him with joy. He soon brought me to the house of a man who received us with open arms, and treated us very well. But on setting out, my guide, instead of thanking him, stole from him a silver goblet, which he put in his wallet. Next evening, we lodged at the

house of a wretch who did nothing but eat, drink and blaspheme, and who could scarcely be persuaded to let us pass the night in his garret. My companion on going away, made him a present of the goblet he had stolen. The third night we slept at the house of a gentleman who appeared very rich, but at the same time very good and charitable; and yet, instead of being grateful to him for his kind reception, my strange conductor made me rise before day, set fire to his house, and decamped as fast as possible.

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Finally, we were entertained that night by another gentleman equally kind and hospitable. Next day my guide, pretending that he did not know his way, asked our host to send his eldest son with us for a short distance. We had scarcely journeyed half an hour when my wretched companion laid hold of our youthful guide and threw him from a bridge we were crossing into the river. This foul deed so excited my horror and indignation that I said to him; 'Monster, I will go no farther with you; I would rather take my chance anywhere alone, than keep company with such a wretch -.' I was going to continue my reproaches, but all at once the man appeared brilliant as an angel, and said to me in a tone of mingled sweetness and majesty: 'You are wrong, my friend, in finding fault with what I have done. First, I took the goblet because it was poisonous; secondly, I gave it to the wicked man, to punish him; thirdly, under the ruins of the house I burned, the owner will find a treasure that will make him much richer than he ever was before; fourthly and finally, the youth I drowned would have murdered his father, had he been spared, and caused his mother to die of grief. Cease, then, to blame the way in which Providence governs the world, because all in it is wisely foreseen and carried out.' After these words the angel disappeared, and I awoke, resolved not to question, for the future, the way in which God rules the world." -

SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 125.

58. *A Leg Broken for My Good.* -

Whatever happens

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to us, my little friends, let us accustom ourselves to submit with resignation to the will of God; we shall never repent of doing so. That reminds me of a story curious enough to be related to you. A worthy man, who lived, I think, either in Picardy or Normandy, had the pious habit of saying every moment "All that is for my greater good." One day he was on the point of embarking for England, the vessel was about to sail, and our man was a little late. He runs at full speed, but in the midst of his hurry he falls with his bundle under his arm, and, breaks his leg. "Well! it is all for the best!" said he aloud before all the people who had gathered round to assist him. Much astonished at this, several persons asked how an accident that prevented him from setting out as he intended could be for the best "I don't know," said he, "but Divine Providence knows, and that is sufficient for me." Some days after the news arrived that the vessel in which he was to have sailed had gone down, with all her passengers and crew. Every one saw then that the broken leg had been really a fortunate accident for this worthy man, seeing that it had saved his life. -

SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 121.

59. *The Soldier Without Legs or Arms.* -

God is just, my young friends, and sooner or later He permits that the sinner shall expiate his crime.

Sometimes He waits till death, because He has eternity before him; but, often too, He strikes the guilty even in this life, in order that their chastisement may tend to

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their sanctification. Father Debussi cites a terrible example of this in his *Month of Mary*. Towards the close of the great French Revolution, a venerable priest was doing all that zeal and charity could dictate in an hospital where there was a very large number of sick and wounded. Some one told him of a poor soldier who had been horribly mutilated; he felt curious to see him. He approaches and sees a man whose face announces calmness and resignation. "I was told, my friend, that you have been badly wounded." - "Sir," replied the soldier, "if you raise the clothes a little, you will see." He raises the bed-clothes accordingly, and starts with horror on perceiving that the unfortunate man has lost both his arms. "What! you are shocked at so small a

thing? Raise the covering off my feet!" He does so, and discovers that the poor soldier has also lost his legs. "Ah my poor child! how I pity you!" - "Do not pity me, father, I only got what I deserved. I was going to join the army with my comrades; we met on the way a cross, which the Republicans had spared; nothing would serve us but we must pull it down. I was one of the most active; I climbed up, and with my sabre broke the arms and legs off the Crucifix, which fell to the ground. After this sacrilege we continued our journey. A few days after there was a battle, and at the first discharge I was reduced to the state in which you see me. I well deserved it, praises be to God, who spared me to repent and do penance before I die. He is just; if He punishes me

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in this world He will spare me in the next " -
DEBUSSI *New Month of Mary*, 63.

60. *The Tailor Without Work and Without Bread.* -

In a village of Germany lived an honest tailor, whose name was Herman. He had managed for twenty years to provide for his own wants and those of his family, as well by constant labour as by his regular and irreproachable conduct. He had never known, therefore, what it was to suffer from hunger. Yet the famine which broke out in 1770 reduced him to the greatest misery; he was often three or four days without work. It became necessary to dispose of everything, even the most indispensable articles of furniture. One morning Herman rose without knowing how to procure food for the day; his children gathered around him, crying for bread which he had not to give them. It was heartrending to him to hear them, but the only answer he could give them was point to heaven, then hastily turn away his head to hide the tears that filled his eyes. He retired then to an adjoining room, where he knelt down and addressed the Lord in this prayer: "My God, how miserable we are, I and my children: Shall I have to endure the bitter pain of seeing them die of hunger? O You who gives food to the little birds, will You let my children die? No, You will not; Your mercy is greater than our wants; ah! come to our assistance in our sore need!" Just as he finished his prayer one of his children came running to say that a countrywoman desired to speak with him; she came to

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ask him if he could manage to have suits of clothes made in the space of three days for her three sons, who were going to take part in some festival for which they required them. By way of inducing him to hurry the more with the work, she presented him with a basket full of bread, flour, butter, meat, and various other eatables. At this sight the children, wild with joy, clapped their hands, and began to jump about the room by way of testifying their delight. As to the father, he said nothing; he could only raise his eyes to heaven, and thank God in the depth of his soul. He related, then, to the generous countrywoman his sad situation, and how he had promised food to his children without knowing in what way he was to procure it. The good woman was moved by this sad story. She promised that for the time to come she would let him want for nothing, and would assist him from her abundance until it should please Heaven to send them better times. The poor family were beside themselves with joy; as soon as their benefactress was gone, they prepared dinner, and thus was verified once again the consoling words of Our Divine Lord: "Come to me all you that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." -
SCHMID et BELET *Cat. Hist.*, I., p. 108.

61. *Two Little Girls Shot Without Being Killed.* -

During the war which the partisans of Queen Christina of Spain maintained against the friends of Don Carlos, a circumstance occurred which evidently proves that the more we are in need, the more willing

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God is to lend us His aid. One of the Carlist generals was attacked by a band of the Christinos, who drove him from his post and obliged him to fight as he retreated. Besides the loss of a great number of soldiers, the General had also to deplore that of his two daughters, who, having accompanied their father, had fallen into the hands of the enemy. It was not long, however, before he received reinforcements, with orders to recover the post that had been captured by the Christinos. He was the more anxious to do this, as the safety of his

dear children was at stake. Whilst he was preparing next day to lead his troops to the field of battle, the enemy was seen advancing to meet him. But how great was the dismay of this unhappy father when he perceived that his two daughters were placed in the van of the hostile army, in order that they might serve as bucklers for its protection. How could he order his men to fire? Would not the first balls that were fired pierce the hearts of his children?

Such were the thoughts that rushed on his mind and threw him into despair. Duty compels him to fight bravely against the foe, but his paternal love will not permit him to make his own children the first victims of his too great ardour. His soldiers themselves shared his feelings; but what was to be done? there was no time for deliberation, so controlling his emotion as he best could the Spanish General commended his children to the protection of God, and gave the word to fire. After a discharge so murderous, he fully expected to see his two daughters lying

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dead on the ground. O prodigy of prodigies! he beholds them standing unhurt in the midst of the dead, whose corpses strewed the plain. Assured, then, of the protection of Heaven, so wonderfully manifested on his behalf, the General ordered his men to charge home with the bayonet. The enemy is put to flight, and the post is recovered.

But what most rejoiced every one was the truly providential preservation of the two young daughters of the Spanish General. -

SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, I., 112.