

DEVOTIONS.

CATHOLIC ANECDOTES

CHAPTER V.

DIVERS PRACTICES OF DEVOTION.

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I. - CONGREGATIONS AND CONFRATERNITIES.

521. *The Two Visions of St. Anselm.* -

People of the world little think, children, the happiness there is in belonging entirely to God, whether in a religious order, or a pious congregation. This instance will give you some faint idea of it.

It is related that St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, in England, was one day ravished into an ecstasy. He seemed to see a great river, into which was thrown all the filth and ordure of the world. The waters were so foul and so putrid that nothing like it could be imagined, and its course was so rapid and so impetuous, that it carried off all it met, men and women, rich and poor, young and old, continually casting them down to the bottom, and throwing them up again, then casting them down again, without leaving them a moment's relaxation. The Saint, astonished at this sight and surprised to see that those who were in the river were all the time alive, asked how they could live, and on what. He was told that they lived only on the filth and the muddy water in which they

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were plunged, and that they seemed to be fully satisfied with that. This vision was afterwards explained to him, and he was told that this rapid river was the world, in which men, plunged in vice and carried away by their passions, live in such a strange blindness that, although the continual agitation in which they are, never allows them to find rest or peace, they fail not to think themselves happy. After that St. Anselm was ravished in spirit into a most spacious park, the walls of which were covered with plates of silver that shone refulgent from afar. In the middle there was a meadow, the grass of which was all of gold, but so soft and so fresh that it easily bent when any one wished to sit down upon it, and, without ever appearing withered, it returned to its former state as soon as they arose. The air one breathed there was ever pure and mild; all, in short, was so smiling and so agreeable that it seemed to be a terrestrial paradise, with nothing wanting to supreme felicity.

The Saint having again asked the meaning of this vision, he was told that it was a simple representation of the religious life, and the tranquillity enjoyed by those who have left the world, to attach themselves solely to the service of God.

- RODRIGUEZ, *Christian Perfection*, I., 196.

522. *The Visions of a Dominican Friar-Monk.* -

It is not enough, my friends, to belong to a confraternity, a congregation, or even a religious order. One must fulfil the duties thereof with fervour and fidelity.

The Venerable Humbert, an illustrious personage and General of the Order of Dominicans, relates that

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one of his religious appeared to one of his brethren some days after he was dead. He was radiant with glory, and appeared to be already in possession of celestial happiness. Having taken this friar-monk from his cell he showed him in the country a great number of men clothed in white and surrounded with light; they all appeared to carry beautiful crosses on their shoulders, and were walking to heaven in procession. He afterwards showed him others, who were walking in the same way, but were much more dazzling with light than the first, and had, each, in his hand, a cross much richer and finer. After that there passed a third procession, incomparably more radiant and more wonderful than the two others, all the crosses were, moreover, of amazing beauty, and whereas the men of the two other troops carried theirs themselves, either on their shoulders, or in their hand, the latter had each an angel who carried their cross before them, so that they might walk with more ease, and follow more joyfully the way to heaven. The monk, astonished by this vision, asked his blessed companion what it meant. "The first," said he, "those whom you have seen carrying the cross on their shoulders, are those who have entered into religion when already advanced in life; the second, that is to say, those who hold it in their hand, are religious who quitted the world whilst still young; finally, the last, whom you have seen walk so steadily, are those who, in early youth, embraced the religious life, renouncing for it all the vanities of

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the world."

After this interesting explanation, the blessed soul disappeared. Let that serve for us, my friends! - it is, moreover, a new application of what the Scripture says:

"Blessed are they who have borne the yoke of the Lord from their youth!"

- RODRIGUEZ, *Christian Perfection*, I., 189.

523. *A Man Who Cannot be Hung.* -

However long my story may be, it is so interesting, dear children, that I have a great mind to tell it to you. In it you will see a new proof of the protection of the Blessed Virgin for those who are hers with all their heart.

The blessed Peter d'Armangaud, a religious of the Order of Mercy, for the redemption of captives, had come to Bougie, a celebrated town of Algeria, to redeem a certain number of slaves. Like a truly charitable man, he voluntarily engaged to remain as a hostage for the deliverance of some of those poor captives, till his companion, the venerable William of Florence, who conducted them to Spain, should return with their ransom.

During those days his zeal was not only employed with the other captives, he even preached the Gospel to the Mussulmans or Moslems. This was an unpardonable crime to the rulers of that city. Condemned to be hung, they took him from his dungeon, brought him outside the city, and there, in sight of all the people, he was hung, and left swinging so long on the gallows that the executioner thought him dead when he quitted him.

He was left hanging to serve as a public example, and to glut the rage of those who had compassed his death, who would have his body left as a prey for crows and

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other birds of prey. Six days after the execution the venerable William of Florence, his companion, who had conducted the slaves to Spain and brought back their ransom, landed at the port of Bougie, with the thousand ducats (about ten thousand francs) which he had received. On his arrival the Turks so ordered matters at the port that he knew nothing of what had befallen his companion. Not till they had received his money was it before William had learned of Peter's death. Thus he walked into the city, his heart full of joy, in the hope of going to embrace him; but, alas! it was soon changed to tears and sighs, when, inquiring of some persons as to the state of his health, they told him in a whisper that he had been hung.

It was no use for him to reproach the ruling Turks with their cruelty and avarice; they told him, to justify themselves, that his companion having spoken ill of Mohammed, their great prophet, (saying that he could not have really been sent from God if he contradicted Jesus to whom all the earlier prophets had pointed), and of his Koran, (saying only that the Gospels account of the life of Jesus was clearly to be preferred to that of the Koran, as the gospel was the divinely assisted accounts of careful eye-witnesses), and having even

converted some Moors, he had drawn this punishment upon himself. William, sensibly afflicted by their precipitation, besought them to permit him, at least, to remove his body from the gibbet to bury it, which they did.

He went to the place where he had been executed, accompanied by several Turks and some sailors from the bark which had brought him to Bougie. When he saw afar off the body of his companion still hanging on the gibbet, he abandoned himself to the most bitter sorrow. Arrived before the instrument of torture, he could not help expressing aloud to the saint the grievous sorrow his death had caused him. But what was his surprise

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to hear St. Peter d'Armangaud, that is to say, the monk who had been hung, say to him:

"My dear Father, be not afflicted; I am living, by the grace of God, and the all-powerful protection of the Blessed Virgin. The Turks, with all their efforts, could not put me to death, because that Mother of Goodness defended me from their violence, and prevented the rope that encircled my neck from strangling me. In fact, she had the goodness to support me invisibly so that the weight of my body might not suffocate me. Ah! how profitable it is to suffer in this world for the love and cause of our God, who protects by such splendid miracles those who hope in Him! Not only have I suffered no pain, but I have felt ineffable joys in the depth of my soul during the six days that I have been fastened to this gibbet." At these words the venerable William changed his tears of sadness into tears of joy, and his lamentations into thanksgivings; assisted by those who had accompanied him, he took down St. Peter d'Armangaud from the gallows, to embrace him and manifest all the pleasure he felt in seeing him alive. This astounding prodigy, (a prodigy seldom ever seen in the myriad persecutions which loyal sons of the Church have suffered,) so struck many of the Moors and Turks that they were converted and asked for baptism. The report of this miracle having spread throughout all the city of Bougie, the people all went to see the holy martyr, every one wishing to be an eye-witness of such an unprecedented wonder, as extraordinary as the resurrection of one from the dead.

Meanwhile Father William of Florence went to reclaim

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his thousand ducats, since the slave-owners who had received them had no right to them, having broken their contract and harmed the voluntary hostage for the money, because of the injustice they had done in putting the Saint to death. The affair was brought before the divan or council, who, wishing to make some reparation to St. Peter d'Armangaud, restored twenty-six other slaves to liberty in return for that money.

The resuscitated Saint brought them immediately to Barcelona, where he was received as a living martyr, with extraordinary ceremonies, and the acclamations of all the people who could not sufficiently adore the power and the goodness of God in so miraculous a preservation. To prove, in some sort, the truth of this prodigy, God permitted it so that his neck remained slightly twisted all the rest of his life, and his face retained such a paleness that he was more like a skeleton than a living man.

- PAVY, *Hist. du Culte de la Ste. Vierge en Afrique.*

524. *The Blind Capuchin of Messina.* -

My story will be a little long to-day, my very dear friends, but it is so interesting that you will find it still too short. Besides it is about the Blessed Virgin, a subject that is always pleasing to pious hearts like yours.

In 1848, Sicily having revolted against its sovereign, the King of Naples, the latter was obliged, as it were, to make a conquest of it. Messina was invested.

That large and beautiful city was soon carried by assault by the Neapolitan troops, who besieged it for five days, and entered, victorious and exasperated, by the southern suburb. It was Thursday, the 7th September,

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the eve of the great Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin. The Sicilian sick had been transported to the northern part of the city, to a convent of Capuchins, situated not far from the sea-shore. The enemy's approach was no sooner known than all the wounded rise up, crowd together, and fly as fast as they can, hoping to gain the open country, and thus escape more surely a vengeance which they dreaded, perhaps with good reason. The monks or friars themselves, following the impulse and the terror of the moment, had placed themselves, by flight, beyond the reach of danger. The shots of the combatants were heard in the distance; the

roar of artillery echoed around; the shouts of the multitude mingled with this horrible tumult, increasing it by their thousand discords. Death seemed to hover over that rich and large city, peopled with nearly a hundred thousand inhabitants.

An invalid remained standing in the long gallery of the convent, hardly able to drag himself after the others, who were already far away. This man, who was a Frenchman, had had his arm and shoulder carried off by a ball, some days before; he had lost much blood, and, consequently, almost all his strength. He was alone, and despair gradually took possession of him, all the more poignant as the wretched man heard more distinctly the threatening shouts of the approaching soldiers.

Incapable at last of going farther he falls and stretches himself on the ground to undergo the fate which appeared inevitable. But, the moment his head came against the wall, it touches a door,

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which opens and gives him a view into a monk's cell.

He struggles inside. He looks around. A poor white-haired monk was kneeling at the foot of a crucifix, absorbed in prayer and, doubtless, offering up to God the sacrifice of his life. "Save me, Father!" cried the wounded man; "I can no longer support myself; my blood is beginning to flow; I have no strength; I am going to die here.

"Save me, in pity, save me!"

- "Alas! my child," answers the old man, "what can I do? I am blind; they have abandoned me as they have you; I do not regret life; but you, my son, by your voice it seems to me that you are young; you must fly. Do you hear how death is approaching us? Fly! Fly!"

- "Father, I am falling! I am dying! I cannot possibly move another step! --"

And again he actually fell to the ground. The venerable monk, clasping his hands and raising his sightless eyes to heaven prayed aloud. "Well!" cried he, as if inspired, "in the name of that Holy Virgin," pointing to and touching a small statue of the Blessed Virgin, "I command you to walk! You shall be saved by Mary!"

On the instant, the wounded man feels his weakness no more; he raises himself as if supported by an invisible hand; he goes out, traverses the long avenues, arrives at the sea-shore, still under the impression of the miraculous word. There he meets a little child of eight years, who undertakes to find him a boat, makes him go on board, and rows him himself to a vessel that is lying not far from Messina.

It was with tears of grateful affection that the man told me himself this touching story, many years later. He shared it with his now ancient former teacher. I had once taught him as a Brother of the Christian Schools, in an obscure French township, in the years before he had set off on his career as a soldier of fortune. I promised him that it

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should not be forgotten. In turn, I recounted the details of this story to Father Postel as editor of his highly regarded magazine. As for the old friar-monk, I never knew what became of him.

If he perished in the massacre, and I am fain to think he did not, he crowned by martyrdom a life wholly devoted to virtue and to God. What fate could be more enviable?

- Abbe V. POSTEL, *Recomp. Hebdom.*, No. LXXXVI., 5.

525. *The Vow of Two Little Savoyards.* -

One of the titles under which the Blessed Virgin is the oftenest invoked, dear friends, is that of Our Lady of Help, or of Good Aid. (She is often addressed as Our Lady of Perpetual Help.) I have read the following charming story on that subject:

About the end of the month of November, 1848, in the province of Savoy, at that time governed quite separately from France, Jean and Marin, two little Savoyard brothers, scarcely twelve years old, after having been blessed by their mother, and having received from her hands a medal of the Blessed Virgin, which they wore round their neck left their mountains, already covered with snow, to go to the rich plains of France, to the south-west of their Alpine cottage in search of wages. Journeying along by steep and perilous paths, the poor children said to each other, as if to console and reassure each other:

"We are very young to go so far all alone and without money. But we shall keep together, and pray to God and His Blessed Mother; God will watch over us and Mary will guide our steps; she will provide for all our

wants, and preserve us from all evil; she is so good, so powerful! And why should we not do something to assist our poor mother who, ever since she has been a widow, has no bread to give our sister and our two little brothers?

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"Ah! how they cried when we bade them farewell!"

Thus it was that these charming children strove to encourage each other against the terror they began to feel, amid the immense forests and deep precipices by which they were surrounded, when they perceived at the foot of the mountain the Chapel of Our Lady of Help which their mother had recommended to them to visit.

Full of joy and confidence, they ran thither, and both kneeling on the same stone, animated by the same sentiment of love, of lively faith and pious confidence, they repeat together this simple and touching prayer to Her who has never been invoked in vain:

"Good Virgin, take under your care two little Savoyards, who are going into the plains of France, all alone by themselves without any support, seeking bread for their poor mother. We promise you, good Mary, if we get there without any accident, to have a Mass said in your honour, out of the first money we earn, for the relief of the suffering souls in purgatory."

And the poor children, reassured by the vow they had just made to Mary, resume their way with new courage, and with the help of Her who is called the traveller's guide, arrive in safety at the end of their journey. No sooner are they arrived in France than they go to work, and as soon as they have earned twenty sous, they hasten to offer them to the first priest they meet, requesting him to say for them the Mass they had promised Mary, for having so wonderfully conducted them. Now Jean and Marin, by means of the gifts bestowed on them, have become little merchants.

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Perhaps, as I speak to you today, some twenty odd years later, they are in the way of making their fortune, and that fortune will be founded on twenty sous, but twenty sous consecrated to God and blessed by the Holy Virgin.

- *Recomp Hebdom.*, No. XXVII., 8.

526. *A Pupil of the Brothers Miraculously Cured.* -

Here, my dear children, is an example very fit to inspire you with a great confidence in the Blessed Virgin; it is the extraordinary cure of the young Martin Cres, which may be regarded as quite miraculous. On the 27th of January, 1853, Martin Cres, a pupil of the Christian Brothers of Morieres, near Avignon, in the department of Vaucluse, France, was attacked by a violent pain in the side. The disease increased with alarming rapidity, so that his parents feared for his life. The 28th and 29th the malady had become so serious that they lost all hope of saving him.

On Sunday, the 30th January, having expressed a wish to see his teacher-master before he died, the Brother Director and the Brother of his class went to see him. They found him in a pitiable state, scarcely able to articulate a word. His teacher was grieved to lose a child who was a great comfort to him on account of his amiable qualities; but he did not despair and resolved to pray, in concert with all his pupils, for the boy's recovery. The prayers began, then, on the 2nd of February; but, far from feeling any relief, Martin was, in a few days, reduced to the last extremity. He did not deceive himself with regard to the critical state in which he was; he, therefore, testified a desire

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to receive the sacraments. On Friday, the ninth day of the disease, they sent for his confessor, who, having heard his confession, administered to him the sacrament of penance. This pious child, seeing that the priest did not speak to him of communion, addressed him in these beautiful words:

"Will you, then, allow me to die without having the happiness of making my first communion?" And these same words he repeated to his weeping parents, who never left him day or night; "Tell our reverend father," he added, "that I want to make my first communion, that I cannot die without having that inestimable happiness."

Aware of his happy dispositions, that same evening, his confessor paid him a second visit, and, edified by

his good sentiments, he promised him that the next day but one, Saturday, a day consecrated to the Blessed Virgin, he would bring him the holy viaticum. Behold this charming child about to die; but are the prayers which his parents, his teachers, and his school-mates have been for six days addressing to Mary to be all in vain? The case seemed hopeless; Saturday evening he lay stretched on his bed as though he were no longer of this world. But what was the surprise of all the family when, on the following morning, they perceived that a sudden change had been wrought in him! He is no longer sick, his cure is perfect, and if the father's prudence had not prevented it, his son would have assisted at Mass and Vespers. So Mary heard the prayers addressed to her for the patient's cure. Some days

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after he resumed the usual exercises of the class, and gave, as before, the example of all the virtues of a pious scholar, till the day when it pleased the Lord to try his patience anew.

A month after this first illness was cured, Martin Cres was put to a new proof: his limbs became quite ulcerated by a species of cancer, which, in a few days, covered them entirely, from the feet to the knees. His pains were excessive, and, without the protection of Mary, he would certainly have died of it, or at least remained lame all the rest of his life. The remedy which had before been found so effective was immediately employed: the prayers were repeated with great fervour. But this time the Blessed Virgin, doubtless, wished to show in a more special manner the favour she was to bestow, for the malady seemed to increase according as the prayers became more numerous and more fervent; so that he remained nearly four months with his legs ulcerated in such a pitiable manner that the sight of them brought tears to the eyes. When asked if he suffered, he answered only by words of submission to the will of God. How many times has he not been heard to say:

"It is better to suffer something in this world and enjoy eternal happiness in heaven!"

At length it was resolved to make a last novena for the little sufferer. It was to end on the 14th of June by a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Rochefort. Meanwhile the disease grew every day more serious, and the patient's sufferings still greater. How many times did his teacher surprise him shedding tears, which his intolerable

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pain forced from him! Then the teacher told him to place all his confidence in Mary, and Martin Cres answered: "Ah! how I long for Monday, the day of the pilgrimage!"

-- "You think you will be cured, then?"

- As though his confidence had been called in question, he hastily answered: "Yes, I shall be cured, I shall suffer no more, I shall be entirely freed from my disease." The two last days of the novena the children of the classes said the beads with great fervour for his intention. The patient was present, and his sufferings were so intense that they forced the tears from his eyes, notwithstanding all he could do to repress them. His teacher seeing him in that state of suffering, told him, to console him, that he should soon be cured, and then he answered with a sweet smile: "Oh! how I wish it was tomorrow, the day of the pilgrimage!" He longed so ardently for the day that the night before he would not go to bed, for fear of forgetting himself. He set out on his pious journey at one o'clock in the morning; he had prepared himself for it by a good confession, as also all his comrades who had had, like himself, the happiness of making their first communion that year.

Arrived at Roquefort, pious as an angel, he heard Mass, and received Holy Communion with the fervour of a seraph. Amazing to relate! the child who, for the three months since March, could not kneel to say his prayers, because of his sores, was seen during the whole time of Mass, and also during the quarter of an hour of thanksgiving, prostrate on the ground, without suffering the least inconvenience

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and some hours after, he was running over the mountains and through the steep rocks in the vicinity of Our Lady's shrine: he was cured! From that day forth remedies which had earlier been suggested by the doctors to ease the pain were now laid aside: the disease had entirely disappeared, and the child never felt any symptom of it again.

- *Recomp. Hebdom.*, No. CLXIV., p. 5.

527. *A Shark in Presence of the Scapular.* -

How happy you are, dear friends, to wear on your bosom a medal, a scapular, or some other livery which proves your piety towards the Blessed Virgin. It is a powerful weapon. Here is a new proof of it, which I have read in the *Catholic Magazine* and in the journal *Daily Rewards*. A few years ago a young sailor left the port of St. Malo, in the department of Ile-et-Vilaine, in Normandy, and set out for America. This young man, who belonged to a family that had for many years followed a seafaring life, was devout to Mary, and wore the scapular; he wore it trustingly and lovingly. Arrived at the end of his voyage, he went, after a few hours' rest, to bathe in the sea; they tried to dissuade him from his purpose, telling him that that coast was dangerous.

He persisted, and gaily swam out from the shore, thinking of no danger. All at once he perceived, at a short distance, the frightful head of a shark ready to seize him. The young man shuddered; but, in one of those moments which contain a whole life, he raised his heart to heaven, seized his scapular, which he had not left off, brandished it in his left hand, and, showing it to the shark, endeavoured to swim with his right hand. The monster had stopped,

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as though struck with blindness or paralysis, and the client of the Blessed Virgin continued to swim, protected by his celestial weapon; the shark made some attempts to follow him, but a secret force impeded his motions, and the young man happily reached the shore, where he fell prostrate, saying: *Hail Mary!* From that day forward, as often as he went on shipboard, he took scapulars with him not only for himself but for all the sailors. "We know the hero of this story," says the editor of the *Catholic Magazine*, "and we can vouch for the truth of the fact, which it is sweet to relate for the glory of Our Lady of Mount Carmel."

- *Recomp. Hebdom.*, (*Daily Rewards*) No. CXXI., p. 3.

528. *The Shepherd Struck by Lightning.* -

Large volumes might be written, my dear friends, and have already been written, to relate all the miracles of protection that are due to the scapular. Here is one that took place in 1855, if my memory does not deceive me. It was related in a journal of Aosta, in Piedmont, in Italy. A shepherd having gone to graze his flock on the hill that separates the village of Chanforcier from that of Issogue, a furious storm came on. The shepherd took refuge with his flock under an overarching rock. He had only been a few moments there when the thunder crashed overhead and lightning struck the rock. Ten goats were killed, one of them quite close to the shepherd; as for him, he had only his clothes a little damaged. When asked how it happened that the lightning did not touch him, he replied:

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"If I was not struck dead, I owe it to the protection of the Blessed Virgin, whom I invoked, hardly knowing what I said; moreover, I had my scapular on, so I had nothing to fear." Accordingly he went early next day to the church, prostrated himself at the feet of the altar of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary, and thanked her for having preserved his life in such a miraculous manner.

- *Recomp. Hebdom.*, No. CXXI., p. 5.

II. - ON THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL.

529. *A Rare Soldier.* -

Listen, dear friends, to one of the miracles of the *miraculous medal*. On the 14th of April, 1833, there arrived at the hospital in Alençon, in the department of the Orne, in France, a sick soldier who came from the hospital of Vitre, in Ile-et-Vilaine. He soon showed what he was: impious, irreligious, and rough even to brutality. The chaplain hastened to go and see him, compassionating his state of suffering; the opening of the jubilee in remembrance of the 1800th year since our Saviour won our salvation, was even a very natural occasion for him to speak some words to him on that extraordinary grace, and to exhort him gently to imitate the example of the other soldiers who were beginning to prepare for it. But this unhappy man answered him only by abuse.

The chaplain did not insist, and contented himself, for some days, with kind inquiries after his health; the sick man hardly answered him, and appeared much annoyed by his visits and his words. The Sisters of Charity, known as the Daughters of Charity, who

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had the care of the hospital, were no better received, notwithstanding all the kind attention they bestowed on him. His malady became more serious, and seeing that the consolations of religion became more necessary to him, the chaplain again urged him to have recourse to the good God, but he answered him only with blasphemies: "Ah! yes, your good God, he is making fine game of me!" And the chaplain putting in some charitable words on the bad things he was saying, the soldier added:

"He does not like the French, your good God; you say that He is good and that He loves me; if He loved me would He make me suffer like this? how have I deserved it?" This impiety excited more and more the charitable zeal of the minister of a God who died to redeem sinners, and he spoke to him in forcible terms of the mercy and justice of the Lord. The sick man soon interrupted him with fresh insults, "You tire me to death, let me alone, I don't want you or your sermons."

And he turned away so as not to see him. In the same way he acted towards the Sisters, and he knew only enough to utter the most horrible blasphemies against religion, and all those persons who reminded him of it. For some days no one spoke to him of religion, but every one redoubled their care and attention, leaving nothing undone that could give him pleasure. There was scarcely any hope left that he would return to God, for his disease was becoming more virulent, and so, too, were his sentiments; all that could then be done was to pray, and have him prayed for. The Sister of that ward

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who had great confidence in the medal of the Blessed Virgin, felt herself inspired to fasten one to the foot of his bed, and did so. Meanwhile the patient continued in his bad dispositions, and was even indignant with some soldiers whom he saw preparing for confession to gain the jubilee indulgence. The medal had been six days fastened to the foot of his bed, and prayers were redoubled for this unhappy man, of whom they began to despair.

One day, all the convalescents being at the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the Sister approaches the patient's bed, takes off the medal, and presents it to him, saying:

"Look at this medal, my friend, it is miraculous; I hung it at your bed some days since, and I have placed you under the protection of the Blessed Virgin." He did not raise his eyes, but grace was already working within him, for he did not get angry, as he usually did when any one spoke to him of religion. The Sister availed herself of this calm to speak to him of the Lord's mercies, and exhorted him again to look at the medal which she had fastened at the foot of the bed inside. After several entreaties he opened his eyes and looked at it: "I don't see your medal," said he; "it is a candle you have lit there, - yes, it is a light." -- "You are mistaken, my friend," said the Sister; "look well!"

-- "I am looking, and I see it well enough; it is certainly a candle." Astonished and surprised, but fearing that the patient's sight might be failing, the good Sister showed him other objects much farther off, which he distinguished perfectly

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whilst continuing to see that light for more than a quarter of an hour. Then the Sister spoke to him of the good God. Suddenly he felt himself penetrated with fear and love: "I will not die in the state in which I am!" he cried; "ask the chaplain if he will come and hear my confession!" At that moment, one of the other patients having blasphemed aloud: "Oh! make that unhappy man stop cursing," said he to the Sister; "I beg of you make him stop."

From that moment he was no more the same man. Inasmuch as he had hitherto been cranky, brutal, and scandalous, he now became gentle, patient, mild, edifying in his words and all. He earnestly desired and asked for the last sacraments; he was prepared for them, and received them with a most lively faith. He suffered terribly, and yet was never seen to manifest for a single moment any impatience or ill humour. So he continued, constantly giving the most unequivocal proofs of a true conversion; happiness and peace were imprinted on his brow. The miraculous medal, which had been hung around his neck, had worked yet another miracle. This soldier died on the 26th of June, 1833.

- *Account of the Miraculous Medal*, 68,

530. *I Forbid You to Send for a Priest.* -

In the city of Strasbourg, one of the first in France, there lived a man who affected that unbelief unhappily too common now-a-days in certain classes of society. It is unnecessary to say, therefore, that he did not practise religion. After a long career, during which he had shown only some very natural virtues, he fell

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ill; it was in the month of June, 1835; he was soon reduced to the last extremity. At this cruel juncture, his family became exceedingly anxious. They were told of the imminent danger, of the necessity of calling in a confessor; but that was not so easily done, dear friends, and for this reason: A long time before, this unhappy man had said to a female friend of the family: "It is more than probable that you will be in my house at the time of my last illness; well! I forbid you to send for a priest; mind, I absolutely forbid it!" This unhappy remembrance disturbed even the most zealous of his relations, so that no one dared to put the important question. Yet it so happened that some one had been lately reading the *Account of the Miraculous Medal*, and had seen therein hundreds of facts of this kind; he felt himself full of confidence, and proposed to place one about the sick man whilst he slept. This happy thought was warmly welcomed by all and immediately acted upon. Mary's triumph was not long delayed, and one cannot think of it without a lively feeling of gratitude; in one moment, even, our unbeliever was entirely changed. They call in a worthy clergyman, and he receives him with unusual emotion; he makes a general confession, gives every mark of the most sincere repentance, and having received the sacraments of the Church, he dies in the best dispositions. There is what may be called a prodigy, dear friends! May it increase, or, at least, strengthen our confidence in the Blessed Virgin!

- *Account of the Miraculous Medal*, 285.

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531. *A Leper Cured by the Blessed Virgin.* -

It is not only the soul, dear friends, that the Blessed Virgin is pleased to cure; she also relieves the body. Mademoiselle Adeline Gervais, of La Roche-Chalais, in the department of the Gironde, France, scarce twenty-two years of age, was afflicted some twenty months before with a fearful leprosy, which had already eaten away portions of her face and arms. Treated in vain by all the physicians of the city and its vicinity, and without experiencing any relief, she had been given up by them all. In this state she went to Libourne, to one of her sisters, who was settled there, hoping that the change of climate might be of some service to her. She had already passed two months there without finding herself any better. Her horrible state obliged her to remain shut up in a room without seeing any one or receiving any consolation. Meanwhile her mother, hearing of her sad and lonely condition, undertook the journey alone to go and see her. It was about the middle of November. She found this poor young lady in the same state in which she had so long seen her, suffering, moreover, from an ardent and continual fever.

Her motherly heart was torn with anguish, and in her desolation she sought some relief for her trouble, when a person asked her to go see Sister Elizabeth, a Daughter of Charity, who dwelt in the hospital, assuring her that she would give her a remedy to cure her daughter. On the 19th of November, 1836, she accordingly took

her dear child there. Although accustomed to see and treat all

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sorts of diseases, Sister Elizabeth owns that she was shocked on seeing this young person, the very sight of whom excited pity. *Yes, I will cure you*, she immediately said; and she gave her a medal, charging her to say every day the *Memorare*, or prayer of St. Bernard, and to add thereto the invocation which you know so well, my good little friends: *O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you*. From the first day that she wore the medal, the leprosy began to dry up and fall away, till the eighth day, when it was perfectly cured. She remained three months longer at her sister's to see if the disease would return, but nothing appeared. Then she returned home. All the people of the neighbourhood were struck with wonder on seeing her, but none were more surprised than the doctors, who could scarce believe their eyes.

Mademoiselle Adeline, fully convinced that she owed her cure to the Blessed Virgin, delighted to wear always the precious medal, whereby she had been cured.

- *Account of the Miraculous Medal*, 74.

532. *A Brother Cured by the Miraculous Medal*. -

People often go afar off, my friends, to seek examples which prove the power and goodness of the Blessed Virgin; here is one that happened to one of our Brothers in 1837.

This good religious had been long suffering from a bad foot which no remedy could cure and it grew worse from day to day, nothing being able to arrest its progress. At length, the surgeon judged that amputation had become indispensable.

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Justly frightened at the prospect of this operation, the patient had recourse to prayer, but felt none the more relief in his sad state. One night, when he was suffering more than usual, he thought of having recourse to the *miraculous medal*, which he wore around his neck. He immediately took it, slipped it between the bandages that wrapped his foot, so as to make it touch the diseased part, and said at the same time the little prayer:

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you. Immediately he felt the pain subside, so that he fell into a deep sleep, in which he continued till five o'clock in the morning. On awaking, he was surprised to find himself free from pain. He touches his foot, moves it, stretches it out, and all without suffering; the disease has totally disappeared. He immediately runs himself to apprise the Brother Director and the whole community, requesting them to unite with him in returning thanks for a favour so precious to him, and so glorious to the Blessed Virgin, who had obtained it for him. Our Superior General himself attested this fact, which was known to all our Communities in Paris.

- *Account of the Miraculous Medal*, 363.

533. *General Canrobert's Medal*. -

Amongst the edifying examples I have read concerning the medal of the Immaculate Conception, justly called the *miraculous medal*, there are few, my friends, that have struck me so much as this:

General Canrobert, since Marshal of France, having come to take leave of the Empress before setting out for the Crimean war,

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her Majesty gave him a gold medal, attached to a silk cord, saying:

"General, wear this medal with faith, and I am sure it will protect you."

The brave General thanked the Empress, took the medal, and went away. Some months after, the following was seen in all the papers:

"General Canrobert was struck by a piece of a shell; happily the projectile did him no harm, for it was stopped by the plate of a blessed medal." What some journals 'philosophically' and inaccurately called *a plate*, children, the *Messenger de la Charite* remarks was the medal of the Empress' gift. This was established in the most authentic manner by a letter which Canrobert himself addressed to the Empress to thank her whilst relating this fact, so evidently miraculous.

- *Recomp. Hebdom.*, No. LXXXV., 6.