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LACORDAIRE

EDINBURGH: PRINTED BY THOMAS CONSTABLE,

FOR

EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS.

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LACORDAIRE.

'Many minds did gird their orbs with beams,
Though one did fling the fire ;
Heaven flowed upon the soul in many dreams
Of high desire.'

ACORD MIRE

DORA C. M. GILL

PLANTING

W. W. WILSON AND F. G. GLAS

1917

Daniel

LACORDAIRE

BY

DORA GREENWELL.



EDINBURGH:
EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS.

1867.

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Lucy Asgood fund

TO MY BROTHER,
THE REV. ALAN GREENWELL,
THIS PORTRAIT OF A FAITHFUL PRIEST,
THE FRIEND OF YOUTH,
THE FRIEND OF PROGRESS, AND
THE FRIEND OF CHRIST,
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

DURHAM, *October* 17. 1867.

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CHAPTER I.

LACORDAIRE'S YOUTH—HIS CONVERSION— DEDICATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

LACORDAIRE was born in 1802, in the little town of Recey-sur-Ource, in Burgundy. His father, a country doctor, was a man of cultivated intellect and of high and generous character. In sympathy with the ideas of the Revolution, and consequently liberal in principle, he was also so large and liberal of heart that when the curé of the parish, who had been driven forth by the storms of 1793 to hide and wander in the neighbouring forests, ventured, after several years spent in compulsory exile at Rome, to return to Recey in the disguise of a soldier, it was at M. Lacordaire's door he first knocked, and asked for shelter and maintenance. He knew that

M. Lacordaire's opinions were not in accordance with his own, but he knew his warm and generous heart, and he was not deceived in the instinct which led him to trust himself to it. He was warmly received by the Lacordaires, and carefully hidden in their house for three months ; during which time, at a little secret altar raised there, he administered baptism and the other rites of religion, and preached the sacred word to such among his former flock as still adhered to their faith. Three years after this time, in 1802, the year which saw the churches re-opened and freedom of worship restored to France, this same curé was called upon to baptize Jean-Henri-Baptiste Lacordaire, the second-born of a family of four sons. M. Lacordaire's seems to have been a character of no common order, ardently charitable to the poor, fond of the country, simple and unambitious, he was also blest with a cultivated mind and with a taste for social enjoyment, which made his company prized and sought for in circles far beyond his own in station. His conversational gifts are described as having been very remarkable, and his son seems to have derived much of his original turn of mind and bold and

happy force of expression from him. This excellent man died while his family were all in their earliest childhood, and Henri but four years old, leaving his little family to the care of their mother, whose nature seems to have been cast in a somewhat more austere mould. Lacordaire describes her as 'a strong and courageous Christian,' indomitable of will, and somewhat Spartan in discipline, who trained up her sons in her own lofty principles. In reverting to the old church of St. Michel at Dijon, where, at seven years of age, Lacordaire made his first confession, and whose very stones this early association had invested with a peculiar sanctity, he says, 'My mother, St. Michel, and the first dawnings of religion *are built up in my soul together*—the first the most intimate, the most durable impression of all!'

Among the few recollections preserved of Lacordaire's childish years, the Père Chocarne gives us one which is very touching. On going to school as a very little boy he seems to have met with more than the usual degree of rough usage, or perhaps his might be one of those sensitive natures upon whom it falls the most keenly. But at any rate

he speaks of having been robbed of his food, and teased and jeered by the other boys till his life became an actual burden to him, and he experienced that sense of utter unprotected isolation, the full bitterness of which no heart knows so well as that of the child, unable to look beyond the little horizon of its present hour,—a horizon over which a harsh word or a cruel hand has power to spread the very blackness of darkness and despair. He tells us he would often, when the other boys were at play, seek the deserted schoolroom, and creeping beneath one of the benches, lift up his heart to God, and offer up his unknown sufferings to Him as a sacrifice, uniting himself to His Son in tender love, and looking to His cross—the cross which was through life to be ‘his refuge, his remedy, his life, his passion ;’ the cross which he upheld, and was of it upholden, until it became part of his very frame and structure, even as the hero in the old Saga felt his sword and arm grow together in the combat, welded into one through blood, and then knew that every thrust he dealt told sure.

But this cross, so early revealed, was for a time hidden from him. He received his

first communion at the age of twelve, and speaks of it as being his last religious joy,—‘the last gleam shed from my mother’s soul on mine. Soon the darkness and coldness of night settled down upon it, and God no longer gave any sign of life within.’ His faith does not seem to have yielded to any vehement outward assault, but to have died out from inanition. Speaking of his college life, he says, ‘*There was nothing around us to sustain our faith.* I am the last person to depreciate the study of the classic authors: I know too well our deep obligations to them in all that concerns the pure sentiment of beauty; I confess how much we owe them as regards priceless natural virtues, lofty recollections, and the noble union of heroic characters and memorable epochs. But I feel that while the ancient world was presented to us under its most sublime and attractive aspect, the new world—the world created by the Gospel—was to us an unknown and undiscovered realm. Its great men, its saints, its civilisation, its moral and social superiority, the progress of humanity under the banner of the Cross—all this remained a blank.’

While he thus imbibed the Deistical

opinions which were at that time all but universal in France, he drank in along with them what Montalembert calls 'an ardent but not excessive liberalism of political sentiment.' Even in these boyish years he seems to have risen to the high and pure conception of freedom which guided his after life, for we find him haranguing his comrades on liberty. The lecture was cast in the form of the Platonic dialogue, the youthful orator assuming no less dignified a part than that of the philosopher himself, discoursing with his disciples at Cape Sunium on the text, '*La liberté c'est la justice.*' Years came and went, life itself passed, and found Lacordaire's spirit faithful to this lofty motto. It was in the evening of his day that he thus wrote:—

'Exclusive liberty is but a privilege; and a liberty forgetful of others' rights is nothing better than treason. Whoever in his cry for right excepts a single man, be he white or black,—were it only to extend to the unlawful binding of a hair of his head,—that man is not sincere, and does not deserve to fight in the sacred cause of humanity.'

A college friend, M. Lorain, has preserved some recollections of Lacordaire

which are very interesting, as showing at how early an age some of his most marked mental characteristics became apparent. He was even then, in the ardour of frequent debate and discussion, the future orator of Notre Dame, 'even to the clear vibrant voice,' trembling under its own weight of thought; the eager speech that would sometimes pause *as if listening to itself, content with what it heard*, and then press onward, pouring forth its inexhaustible riches. He was even then the indefatigable student; *esprit soudain*, yet capable of the long-continued and daily application that belongs to the rare union of ardour with patience. His nature was one which held within it many conflicting elements; he was a bold yet cautious thinker, gaining many things at a bound, and yet returning to measure his distance with the foot and eye. All with Lacordaire was exact and ordered; he could always stop at will in the middle of a sentence, and pause in the composition of a hemistich. His love for method amounted to a passion, and the picture drawn of the minute arrangements of his little study in student days, would serve word for word for the description

given of his cell thirty years later ; where everything was 'ordered and symmetrical,' even to the way in which books, pens, ink and paper were laid out upon the little black table ; nothing out of place, and even a certain art to be traced in the disposition of the penknife ; so that all tended to a general harmony of effect and outline. Regularity was to be observed in all that he did, even in all that he touched, as if this outward propriety was a sort of *material symbol* of the fitness and perfection to which his inward heart aspired,—the pattern of things showed him in the Mount.¹

Not many details of his college life have been preserved. It was morally pure and irreproachable ; and when he left Dijon to pursue his legal studies in Paris, it was no less strict, exact, and industrious ;—a noble and rare life for youth, surrounded by all that can most strongly allure and attract it ;—a life, as his biographer expresses it, directed by reason,

¹ Lacordaire's love for arrangement and precision reminds us of our own Hooker's strange and touching words in dying, when he said,—' I am thinking of the blessed angels, their numbers, order, and harmony ;' and added, '*I rejoice that I am entering upon a world of order.*'

ordered by duty, and lit up from within by a generous flame of devotion to all that was morally and intellectually great. His days were ~~passed~~ in severe and patient study. When at the age of twenty-two, a sudden and secret stroke of Divine grace opened his eyes to the nothingness of irreligion, there was little in his outward life to alter. This wondrous spiritual change appears, from his own account of it, to have come to him as a strong mental illumination, enabling him to see that Christianity was a living fact; and his words in speaking of it seem to recal the literal, almost matter of fact simplicity of the statement of the blind man in Scripture,—‘This one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.’ Again and again has he himself repeated this, that no man, no book, no sudden or striking appeal or event was the chosen agent for his conversion. It does not seem to have been attended with any overwhelming conviction of sin, or of the need of a personal deliverance which that conviction works; nor yet does it appear to have arisen from that intimate thirst and longing after moral perfection that draws so many of earth’s purer and more ardent natures to

follow after Him 'who is chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely.' He himself says, 'Nine years of doubt had passed over me, when I heard the voice of God which called me to Himself. If I ransack my memory to find the logical antecedents of my conversion, I can discover no other than the *social and historical evidences of Christianity*,—evidences which grew upon me as I outgrew the doubts which I had breathed in with the very air of the university.' Often would he recur to the memory of that supreme moment, of which he is not afraid to say that 'he who has not known such a one¹ has not known man's true life.' The day, when perchance in turning the corner of a street, perchance in some solitary foot-path, we stop, we listen, and a voice speaks within the heart, '*Behold Jesus Christ.*' 'It is now,' he writes to a young friend, 'thirty years since the day when, young as you are, and cast adrift in the thick of a great worldly city, I ventured for the first time to lift a timid look to the goodness of God. *Since then I have never ceased to believe and to love.* Years, faithful to their mission,

¹ Note A.

have each day brought with them clearer convictions and more heavenly joys; man has been ever lessening in my eyes, while Christ became greater.'

Speaking at another time on the same subject, he says,—'I was unbelieving in the evening, on the morrow a Christian, *certain with an invincible certainty.*' And he who in one single day became a Christian, on the succeeding day took steps for becoming a priest. He abandoned all his views of worldly distinction at the bar, entered the seminary of St. Sulpice, and in due time was ordained, as he himself expresses it, '*Sacerdos in æternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech*'—'a priest for ever.' Such was Lacordaire, and to gain any true understanding of his character we must consider him as a Christian priest, and enter into his conception of all that was involved in being one; we must look upon the Christian priesthood in its inalienable connexion with that divine mystery of sacrifice, from which all its strength is drawn. Lacordaire's conception of the priestly office was that of an absolute and perpetual sacrifice. He does not shrink from considering it under its most awful aspect, *the 'immolation of man*

joined to that of God,'¹ yet his heart delights to dwell upon the tender and benignant side of the priestly character. Again and again he loves to paint its beauty, to trace its genealogy even to Adam, the priestly father of our race, 'offering to his Creator a then uncomprehended sacrifice.' He sees in the power and plenitude of the priestly spirit 'the first power in the world—the spiritual power,' the power that lives by chastity, by self-abnegation, by self-severity; that knows how to weep, to pray, to love; that knows how to be poor, unknown, despised; 'harder than a diamond against pride and corruption, more tender than a mother to all that suffers and that seeks.'

Almost immediately after his ordination

¹ Jesus Christ upon the cross dying for the salvation of men was for him the divine ideal of the priest, as it was the constant, dominant, almost exclusive object of his devotion, the daily bread of his own soul offered by him to all who came to him in quest of spiritual nourishment.

'He,' says Lacordaire, 'who is called to the priestly office, is he who feels in his heart the value and the beauty of souls. Priests are bad or mediocre, simply because they enter upon the office with some other thought than that of self-sacrifice to the mystery of redemption; all other deficiencies may be remedied, nothing will avail if this is wanting.'—*Lettres à des jeunes Gens*, p. 32.

he received a tempting and brilliant offer—that of being Auditor de Rota at the Court of Rome, a position which was considered to lead directly to the Episcopate, and for which an eminently gifted man was needed to represent France honourably. A magnificent career, rich in legitimate ambitions, thus opened to him, but he declined the offer, saying,—‘Had I wished for honours I would have remained in the world. When I made up my mind to enter the priesthood, I had but one object in view—that of serving the Church through preaching (*servir l’église par la parole*). Do not bestow any thought on me. I shall be always a priest, and probably some day a monk.’

He now took upon him the office of almoner and catechist to the Convent of the Visitation, the light and simple duties of which left him ample leisure for arduous studies connected with the task which had already begun to dawn upon him as the object of his life. To become the apologist of Christianity, to reconcile the Church with society, this was his aim, his end, his mission, the centre to which all his efforts converged. Already his mind was busy with trenches and lines of boundary; even now he saw

the ramparts and battlements arise of the edifice he designed to build. His researches were those of an austere yet passionate student, vast and varied in scope and extent, worthy of the greatness of their aim. Holy Scripture, the Fathers, philosophy and history, were all laid under contribution,—‘*the strength of our cause is at the fountain-head,*¹ and I will go *there* to seek it.’ He saw in Christianity the fact, the life, the hope of the world (a fact, a life, a hope to him incarnate in the Catholic Church), and outside of this, no other hope, but all things tending to their own inevitable decay. At this time France seethed like a caldron with sects and systems; all of these aimed at social regeneration, the air teemed with a mania for organization, and echoed with such pass-words as St. Simonianism, Fourierism, Communism, Equality, and Phalansterian. But where amid this complicated network of system was the Church? She was looked for in vain; no longer, as in the days of the Reformation, attacked in her dogmas or assailed through her corruptions, she was now simply laid on one side, forgotten, passed

¹ *La force est aux sources.*

by, as one whose day was over; 'weeds were wrapped about her head.' Yet even then it was given to Lacordaire to see in this stone set at nought, rejected of the builders, the sure foundation of all that they most ardently desired to raise. Even then he arrived at the idea in which M. de Chateaubriand, in the closing page of his memoirs sums up his religious and political belief, '*The Christian idea is the future of the world*'; of all my prospects, my studies, my experiences as regards this world, little remains to me but a complete disenchantment. My religious conviction, in gaining strength, has devoured my other convictions, *and there lives not upon earth a more believing Christian, or a more incredulous man than myself.* Far from yet touching its appointed term, the religion of the Liberator has scarcely as yet entered into its third period, the Political one. The Gospel, the warrant of acquittal, has not yet been read to all. . . . Christianity, fixed in its dogmas, is variable in the degree of life it sheds; *its transformation involves a universal one.* When its light has reached its highest point, the darkness will pass away for ever, and Liberty, crucified on Calvary with the Messiah, will

descend with Him, and give back to the nations this New Testament, written originally in their favour, but until now never freely extended to them.' 'Great things,' wrote Lacordaire, 'are yet to be done—*there are glories yet below the world's horizon which will rise on it through Catholicism*; civil society is now incapable of bringing forth; a great man would be too strong for its womb. Worn out with vice, society has looked to liberty to quicken and reanimate her, and coming forth from her palaces she has turned to the people and said, "Behold me." But their meeting has been like that of Sin and Death in Milton. *Youth once perished can only revive through immortality*; virtue and genius, once sunk to their ashes, can only be rekindled through faith.'

His spirit drank continually at deep and sacred springs. In one of his letters he says he is busy with St. Augustine, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, the works of Lamennais, and ecclesiastical history, and adds,—'You see what I am now doing; I think, I read, I pray to the good God. I laugh once or twice in the week, and weep now and then. Add to this a little occasional chafing against the university, and some instructions given to

the pupils of the third and fourth form, and you have my life.' At this time his mind seems to have turned strongly towards a missionary life,—a life in which he always recognised the highest and most visible proof of devotion to the gospel. A missionary was to him one who bore about with him, in a special and tangible manner, 'the marks of the Lord Jesus,'—in poverty, labour, voluntary expatriation, and the forsaking of all that is most naturally dear to man's heart. The whole history of the Church, he was wont to say, was one testimony to the missionary spirit; a witness to the power which God puts forth to meet and crown the efforts of those who, in defiance of every human obstacle, cast themselves wholly on His aid. But while the idea of a life-apostolate thus grew upon his spirit, it joined itself there with what his biographer (the Père Chocarne) calls the constant problem of his mind, its double and continual pre-occupation. If the Church was dear to him, so too was humanity, that great original society which he does not fear to call 'the first church founded by Jesus Christ.' He himself tells us that it was through his deep social convictions he had been led, as regarded Catholicism, to the

point he now occupied ; the steps he had ascended by were few and simple. 'No society is possible without religion ; no religion is possible except Christianity ; no Christianity is possible without the Catholic Church.' But society and the Church were now at variance ; fain would he see their discord closed, and behold them united in fact as they were united in his love. The endeavour to effect this union brought him face to face with many stern practical problems, and drew him, as we shall shortly see, into the thick of political agitation. How were society and the Church, at present so profoundly alienated, to become one ; or, in other words, how was society, unable to exist without the Church, to be enabled to live with her peaceably without mutual constraint ? At present these two great forces seemed like the lovers in the ancient epigram, unable to live either with or without the other ! There was much in the actual condition of the Church in France that was humiliating and depressing,—all that concerned preaching and the instruction of youth was under a strong State check ; the formation of the religious orders interdicted. Yet who could hope, or even wish, to see the

time restored when, as in the Middle Ages, society should be subordinated to the Church *de jure et de facto*? or should these two allied yet opposing powers be allowed, as in the United States of America, to hold each on its way together, yet apart, each developing its own resources, in amicable independence of each other? These, and similar questions, agitated Lacordaire's spirit strongly; for we must remember he was one who, in becoming a Christian, had not ceased to be a man; but one who,¹ in becoming a sharer in the unsearchable riches of Christ, had learnt

¹ Writing of his conversion, Lacordaire says, 'I did not feel that I had forsworn my reason, or allowed it to fall under some incomprehensible servitude—far otherwise; what I experienced was the dilation of its whole vision, so that I beheld all things under a wider horizon and through a clearer light. Nor was this change worked through the sudden subjection of the character to a strict and rigid law, *it was rather the development of all its energy through an action which came from a higher than any natural source.* Nor did it consist in the abnegation of the joys of the heart, but rather in their plenitude and exaltation. *The whole man was left; that which was added was the God who made him.*

'At such a time, a time which is the sensible accomplishment of our Saviour's words, recorded by St. John, 'If any man love Me, he will keep My words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him,' the two greatest capabili-

man's true measure. Every human interest grew more dear to him, every human cause more sacred; his new-found religious convictions did not damp but inflame his ardour for liberty,—the first loved, first chosen of his youthful heart. From first to last Lacordaire was a liberal; liberal, obstinately liberal as a priest, even as he had been as a student and an advocate. Not very long before his death, he said, 'I shall die a penitent Catholic, and an impenitent Liberal.' He was one who, in accepting a higher standard of life and duty, knew how to reverence those great original graces of humanity which the religious world has so often treated with cruel indifference and scorn. 'The Christian,' he says, 'even the saint, ought to look upon an honest man with reverence. I can never hear that expression, "an honest man," but with a softened heart; it brings before me the image of one whose mind has never framed injustice, or whose hand executed wrong,—one who has been true to his word, faithful

ties of our nature, those for truth and for bliss, *overflow together into the centre of our being*, mutually engendering, mutually sustaining the other.

'Once a Christian, the world did not vanish from my eyes; *it grew larger as I myself did.*'

to his affections, sincere and firm to his convictions.' Even at St. Sulpice we are told that he sometimes created uneasiness by his ardour for discussion, *and the large share which he was accustomed to claim for Reason.*

It is easy to believe that, when at such times he would raise his voice in the class — to offer an objection, his words would be daring and original, his conclusions unexpected, and often embarrassing. In later years we find him writing to Madame Swetchine with great vivacity,—‘You, my dear friend, have proved yourself deficient not in holy hatred, which is an impossibility, but in holy anger—a sacred, adorable — glow,—or else you would not have been able to tolerate M—, or to have any patience with that narrow, pharisaical spirit which allows him to say of a man—a sincere man, a man, to the best of his convictions, working for the glory of God,—“What consequence is a man; does God want the help of people of intellect?” He who can hold human thought and feeling thus cheap is nothing better than a Pharisee, *the only race of men on whom Christ has pronounced a doom*; and they who speak thus take away the key of knowledge, not going

in themselves, and forbidding others to enter.'

It could not be easy for a spirit so large and liberal, a spirit so firmly held by a double allegiance, to find itself room and space to breathe and work in. Lacordaire felt within himself the need of a liberty which the actual state of the Church in France did not afford, more especially as regarded freedom of speech; 'the word of the priest, divine, inalienable, eternally free,' which he felt, was held captive within him. He naturally looked towards America, and had even gone so far as to make every arrangement for his voyage. But just at this moment, after he had obtained the consent of his mother and of his archbishop, and had gone to Burgundy to take leave of his family and friends, he received a summons from the Abbé Gerbet, announcing the publication of the *Avenir*, and demanding his co-operation in a work at once catholic and national. The ideas which had so long held possession of his spirit, and which he had thought to work out in a distant land, had found an unlooked for and illustrious defender at home; a French O'Connell, able to set them forth in full relief and splendour.

The disputed relations between Church and State were to be freely discussed upon his native soil—an arena swept by so many storms,—and Lacordaire, ‘born to combat,’ as well as to love, felt no desire to withdraw from such a strife ; his motto being that of our own noble-minded Chillingworth,—‘ *Not — peace, but truth.*’

CHAPTER II.

LACORDAIRE'S CONNEXION WITH LAMENNAIS
AND MONTALEMBERT—CAREER OF THE
AVENIR—STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM OF RE-
LIGIOUS EDUCATION—JOURNEY TO ROME,
AND FINAL RUPTURE WITH LAMENNAIS.

AS we enter upon the story of Lacordaire's connexion with the *Avenir*, and stand upon the threshold of his new political life, a mighty shadow falls across us, and we are challenged by a name that is still a word to conjure with, a name fraught with spells of love, and pity, and sorrowful admiration. We are met by Lamennais, once the vowed and chosen defender of Papal infallibility, who lived to renounce Rome utterly, and who seemed, in breaking loose from her, to forsake Christianity itself; by Lamennais, once Christ's devoted champion, who spoke

of Him as few tongues, whether of men or angels, have ever spoken,—yet above whose grave no cross was raised, no word of hope spoken. The old age of Lamennais was desolate; his heart, on the testimony of its own deepest revelations, saddened and solitary to the last degree. He had drifted far from all that he once held precious, and followers and friends had fallen away from him, as from one upon whom the judgment of Heaven had fallen. Yet Lamennais never abandoned the sacred cause of human progress, or ceased to hope and to labour for it; and though his life was shattered to its very foundations, it still, even as a ruin, stands up with a proud, appealing significance that seems to ask—

‘Have I lost,
 Who flung my soul within the crucible,
 And saw it shrink, nor counted up the cost?
 ‘So that Truth’s bright elixir clearer fell
 In sparkling drops? *Of all I ventured then
 Is nothing found?* Have I loved Truth so well
 To lose my Christ? lost God through loving men?’¹

Lamennais was one of those who, falling upon that stone which is at once the world’s strong foundation and its rock of offence and

¹ Note B.

stumbling, was broken ; but did it fall upon him so as to crush him to powder ? Did he, who in his youth had so dearly questioned, so deeply ventured, in the solving of the mystery which life's mute, impassive lips shut down, hear, in his closing hours, the voice of awful welcome and consolation which called out of the darkness to the blind and wandering king—

‘Come, come thou *Œdipus*, why stay we yet ?
Long have thy footsteps lingered on the way.’

Who is competent to answer these questions, or sufficiently strong and daring to enter upon the path they would lead to ?—an intricate and thorny path, leading to unknown and doubtful issues. The secret of his mental history, however, is not so hard to read. His character is of that type out of which it is scarcely possible, life being such as it is, that a tragedy should not evolve. All in such natures is extreme and absolute : they admit of no shading or compromise ; they frame for themselves an ideal, and demanding that fact should conform to it at any cost, will so knit and rivet their whole strength into a system or theory that it can only be detached with the sacrifice of life itself. Such natures are but perilous

guides, uneasy work-fellows ; they seem deficient in all that adaptation and pliability which the course of human things imperatively asks for, unable to conform themselves to circumstance, 'this world's unspiritual God.' Yet they are ever interesting, ever admirable, even in error, failure and defeat. They are of the stuff that heroes and martyrs are made of ; greater than the crowd which is so ready to call them fools and fanatics ; strong enough when they 'see God stand upon the weaker side,' to make that side their own and be content.

'Lamennais,' says M. Renan, 'was a Breton, and along with the faith, the sincerity, the impetuous integrity of his people, shared in that which makes the Breton character strong, yet narrow and unprogressive even through its strength. The tendency of such minds is thoroughly Celtic, full of poetic devotion to the past, and inclined to fling a veil over its errors, while those of present days are brought out in full un pitying relief.' In 1830, the time of which we are now writing, Lamennais was at once the most celebrated and the most revered of French priests. Raised by the publication of his famous 'Essay on Religious

Indifference' to the position of restorer and defender of the Catholic faith, his picture had been for many years—a crucifix only excepted—the sole adornment of the Pope's private sitting-room. Yet lofty as were the claims he made for the Church, he did not, even then, make them in the name of privilege. The Church herself free, even as is that Jerusalem which is above, was to be the giver of freedom to the world. In his conception, as in Lacordaire's, she was the nursing mother of humanity, who, bringing forth and bringing up her children in bondage and under oppression, even in teaching them to speak, had taught them that they were free,—

' Created free, although born in chains ;'
free in the palace of a Nero ; free in the bloody amphitheatre ; in the dark ergastulum. The Lord's Prayer, taught to His disciples by the Father's beloved Son, is the enfranchisement of humanity ; the slave becomes free as he repeats those words—' *Our* Father, our Father which art in heaven,' or the words themselves become a mockery and a lie. Lamennais saw also that God's commandment is exceeding broad, and that it is the duty of every sincere thinker, under

whatever practical difficulties the task may impose, to bring the home-born home-grown truths of Christianity from the hearth and the altar,¹ to which they cleave, to tell upon the wide arena of political life and duty. Few have been so faithful to this task as Mazzini, and the ideas which it has been the lofty mission of his life to develop, are latent in the doctrines of Lamennais. Lamennais saw that the one is only to be restored through the many; that the individual can only be perfected through the progress of the species; and along with this truth he saw its great co-related one, that as no man liveth, so no man *dieth* unto himself; and that God, even in calling us to freedom, has ordained that it should be obtained by us, even as it has been obtained

¹ Lacordaire writes at a later period,—‘When one has to visit galley-slaves, prisoners, the poor and sick, Christianity seems to work of itself. Everybody understands what it means, but the instant you apply it to politics all is changed! And here lies the true difficulty of our work, in bringing the spirit of charity and peace to bear on the very thing which naturally tends to produce the strongest hatreds and most terrible divisions; *here* impartiality is set down as weakness, mercy becomes a treason, and mildness is but the wish to please everybody! *There is nothing so easy as to go along with your party, and no harder work than that of justice towards opponents.*’

for us, through sacrifice and self-abnegation. He saw that all redeemed, all regenerated life must follow in the track of that life which began in a manger to end upon the Cross. Christ must suffer and the Church with Him, but the world shall rejoice in what their elected suffering wins; '*the waves which dash upon the shore are one by one broken, but the ocean as a whole advances and conquers.*'

'Except a corn of wheat die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' Not long before his death, Lamennais thus wrote:¹ '*There is nothing fruitful except sacrifice.* Some will say, this is a hard saying; who can bear it? Yet the fact remains that, for the eighteen hundred years during which Christians have professed to believe in the Cross, nothing really elevated, beautiful, or good has been done upon the earth, except at the cost of suffering and of self-abnegation.' In a letter written

¹ Lamennais seems to have seen in self-sacrifice a solemn testimony to that principle of unity which is one with Holiness itself,—'the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit,' he says, 'is a principle of love, of union, *of life which consummates itself through union*; the sign of possessing this spirit, is the tendency to accomplish this unity by sacrifice, *or the gift of self.*'—See Note C.

apparently about the same time, he connects the agitating history of the human race with what he calls 'the divine Drama of the passion of Christ, to which no suffering or ignominy was wanting, yet from which the salvation of the world was wrought out;' and he adds, 'it appears to me that there is a whole world of truths remaining to be developed, truths not new, but wrapt up in the human mind itself, and endeavouring to blossom with its unfolding, even as do the flowers in spring-time. Social science, in particular, is far as yet from having even a perfect theory; yet, whatever some may say to the contrary, *we are evidently advancing towards a magnificent unity.*'

We already know enough of the track Lacordaire's thoughts had followed to see that he and Lamennais were mentally prepared for each other, and that whenever they met it must be upon a broad common standing-ground; yet their many points of intellectual agreement do not seem to have led to a union of hearts. From whichever side the constraint arose, there appears to have been a want of affection and expansion in all their personal intercourse; and when that intercourse was abruptly broken, their

paths in life struck separate, 'wide as the issues that they led to.' Lacordaire's tone, in speaking of the lost leader, is generous, with something in it of a strangely blended awe and pity; yet betraying nothing of that clinging devotion which, where warm personal regard has once taken root in a deep nature, will still cleave ivy-like to a ruin, and clothe the wreck it cleaves to with somewhat of tender unwithering charm. Far otherwise was it in another meeting which was connected with the publication of the *Avenir*; far otherwise with another friendship which dated from the first hour of that meeting, and lasted through life and beyond it, that of Lacordaire and Montalembert.

Montalembert, himself young, had hurried from Ireland at the sound of the same war-note which, in the proposed publication of the *Avenir*, had recalled Lacordaire from his contemplated exile. They met in Paris in the house of Lamennais. 'Why cannot I,' writes M. de Montalembert, 'describe Lacordaire as he then, at the age of twenty-eight, appeared to me, bright with all the splendour and the charm of youth? All about him spoke of distinction, the turn of his

head, his lofty yet modest bearing, his voice at once penetrating and tender; above all, his piercing glance, which seemed at once to seek out enemies to conquer, and hearts to subdue.' His friend depicts him as an Ithuriel, all armed and eager for a noble quarrel, one who made the heart feel

'How awful goodness is, and see
Virtue in his shape how lovely.'

'Born to combat and to love, he was already invested with the print and stamp of a double royalty. And I saw in him an elected knight, predestined to genius and glory, to all that youth most ardently adores and desires.'

Lacordaire's expressions with regard to his illustrious *confrère* are more simple, yet he too speaks of loving him 'as much as if he were a plebeian,' and it is easy to see in what direction the touching passage which refers to the love, passing the love of women, of David for Jonathan, leads and points, and to whose love it was that Lacordaire's clave 'even as it were his own.' And there was everything in the time and hour of their meeting to draw, even to drive, two such spirits closer to each other, than years of

ordinary intercourse can bring ordinary men.

‘Twas a time

Of universal ferment, . . .
When single spirits catch the flame from heaven,
And multitudes of eager men will feed
And fan each other.’

‘It is difficult,’ says Montalembert, ‘for the present generation even to form an idea of the strong and generous passions which then inflamed all hearts. It is true that we had then, compared with present days, few newspapers; that communication was much more difficult,—the railroad and the electric telegraph were unknown—and it took us three days and three nights to travel from Paris to Lyons in an execrable diligence. But what life was there among souls! what ardour of intelligence! what disinterested devotion to a cause, a standard! what deep and fruitful traces were then drawn in young hearts by an idea, a heroism, a great example, an act of faith or of courage!’ Lacordaire writing long afterwards of these days, and of the first publication of the *Avenir*, speaks of them ‘as days that were at once happy and sorrowful, days divided, I may say *devoured*, between work and

enthusiasm, days such as one can live but once in a lifetime.'

The object of the *Avenir* was to reconquer freedom for the Church of France, without shrinking, on the Church's side, from the responsibilities which freedom entails. The present position of the Church was, as we have seen, harassed and insecure; the *Avenir* sought to place its liberties on the firm foundation of respect for established and constitutional law, and independence of arbitrary power. Its watchwords consequently were,—Liberty of opinion through the press—war to arbitration and privilege; liberty of teaching—war to the governmental monopoly of instruction; liberty of association—war to the old anti-monastic regulations, relics of the worst times; liberty and moral independence of the clergy—war to the budget of worship. What were to be the precise limits to this liberty the *Avenir* does not seem ever to have stated clearly. Full of the vehement exaggeration of youth—of youth ardently bent upon a desired end, impatient of the steps by which only it can be fitly attained—its energy was apt to pass into declamation and invective. Its chosen motto, '*La liberté ne*

se donne pas, elle se prend, was abundantly significant of its attitude, which seems from the very first to have been aggressive in the highest degree. It addressed the clergy as an army drawn up in line of battle; every morning the muster-roll was sounded; each day some new passage-at-arms was registered, some loiterers urged forward, some deserter pilloried. One of its earliest onslaughts was upon a *sous-préfet*, who in some country church had forcibly obtained entrance for the corpse of a man who, having died out of the pale of catholic communion, had been refused the rites of Christian burial by the parish priest. 'The priest who has so acted,' cries Lacordaire, 'has done well; he has acted as became a free man, a priest of the Most High God, resolved to keep his lips pure from servile benedictions. Woe to the priest who murmurs falsehoods above the coffin! who lets a soul pass to the judgment of God under an untruth extorted by the dread of the living. Are we, the Christian priesthood, to be the mere gravediggers of the human race, or have we entered into some compact to soothe and flatter its remains with our prayers and our adieus? This priest has done well; but so much

independence, it seems, does not become a citizen so humble and despised as is a Catholic priest! *He* must submit to see God's house invaded, and the decrees of His religion set at nought by armed force; he must see this done in the very face of the law which proclaims absolute freedom of worship, as if any worship can be free where neither its temple nor its altar is kept sacred from armed intrusion!' He concludes by saying, that under such an outrage as the one in question, 'it would be well that we should take up our dishonoured God, and bear Him to the shelter of some rude log-hut, swearing not to expose Him a second time to the insults of the State temples.'

'These words,' remarks Montalembert, 'indicate the extreme, unjust, and dangerous consequences to which the *Avenir* was disposed to push things. Such words told the clergy that they ought to be prepared to renounce the *budget du culte*, sole remnant of their ancient and legitimate patrimony, sole guardian of their material existence, prepared to give up even the churches of which the State assumed the ownership, and to fling themselves on the invincible powers

and inexhaustible resources of modern liberty.' The *Avenir*, it seems, did not ask how far such a course at such a time was practicable, or even desirable; it concerned itself, as we have seen, far more with rights than with possibilities, and yet its errors and exaggeration must not make us lose sight of the good service which, after its own knight-errant fashion, it rendered to true religion. 'In those days,' says the Père Chocarne, 'it was no small boon to have a tribune raised in the name of God and of liberty, and to hear an eloquent voice uplifted from it day after day in defence of those most sacred names and causes, even though its accents should too often take the tone of attack and invective.' For the Church, depressed and harassed by the civil power, and liable to see its rights invaded by Government at pleasure, was also an object of dislike and suspicion to the great mass of the people. Religion in France had not only the spirit of the Revolution to contend with; respect for it had been greatly weakened by the fashionable and formal devotion which had set in with the return of the Bourbons, a devotion which showed itself chiefly in a strained and

affected pietism, absorbed in minute observances of outward rites and forms, and had not in it enough of life to stir or move the public mind, which was at this time altogether alienated from the clergy—an alienation largely mingled with contempt. There was, therefore, something gained for the priesthood as a body when Lacordaire replied to an advocate who had spoken of priests as being the ministers of a foreign power: 'We are the ministers of One who is in no place a foreigner—the ministers of God!' General applause followed this bold and happy answer, and a voice from among the crowd cried out heartily, 'Well done, my good priest, or curé, or whatever you may please to call yourself. You are a brave man!'

The revolution of 1830 had left the relation between the Church and the State on an ill-defined and unsatisfactory footing. In 1831, Louis Philippe made use of the prerogative granted him by the Concordat to nominate three bishops, a step which led to such warm and intemperate expressions of disapproval on the part of the *Avenir*, that an open rupture ensued between it and the Government. Its editors were cited before

the Court of Assize for contempt of the law and disaffection to the existing order of things. The Abbé Lamennais was defended on this occasion by a legal friend; Lacordaire undertook his own cause, which he pleaded with all that fiery, yet modest and persuasive eloquence which afterwards found its true field in the pulpit.

‘I know,’ he said in rising, ‘that my title of Priest will not plead in my favour, and I am resigned to bear this. The people lost that love which they once bore the priest when the priest himself lost the most august part of his character, when the man of God ceased to be the man of freedom.’ . . . ‘And yet,’ he goes on to say, ‘I never knew better what freedom really meant, than on the day when, along with the sacred consecration to the priesthood, I received the right to speak of God. The universe widened before me, and I understood that there is in man something inalienable, divine, eternally free,—the gift of speech! The message of the priest was confided to me, and I was told to bear it to the very ends of the world, without any one having the right to seal my lips even for a single day. I went forth from the temple, bearing

these lofty destinies, and was met upon its very threshold by law and by servitude.

‘If I have disobeyed the laws, I have transgressed gravely, for the laws are sacred. They are, after God, the salvation of nations ; and no one is more bound to honour them than is the priest. Yet I admit that I do not feel that love and enthusiasm for the laws of my country which the ancients experienced in such ardour. When Leonidas died, these words were graven on his tomb : “Go, traveller, and tell at Sparta that we died here in obedience to her laws.” Yet I, gentlemen, in dying, would not desire a similar inscription. I have no wish to die for the sacred laws of *my* country. For the time is past when law was the venerated expression of the tradition, the customs, and the gods of a people. All is changed. A thousand crises, a thousand opinions, a thousand tyrannies, the axe and the sword have clashed against each other in our confused legislation, and to die for such laws would be to adore a mingled glory and infamy. . . .

‘I have spoken of the civil power as exercised in the affairs of the Church as oppressive. I pause upon this word. You

have called me to account for it. You have looked at my hands to see if they bore the mark of the fetter. My hands are free ; but my hands ! are they *me*, myself ? If you do not bind my hands, you bind my thoughts ; you seal my lips ; you forbid me to teach ; me, to whom that word has been committed—*Docete*. Yes, Monsieur l'Avocat Général, I again repeat that I am oppressed, oppressed in my own person, and in my country, as regards this divine me, this me of the whole man ; this gift of thought, of speech, this true myself.

‘The freedom of the Church and of the world has appeared to us the end and aim of the secret designs of God, and it is from this point of view that we claim to judge of the events which have changed the face of France. If these events contribute to the enfranchisement of the human conscience, we will accord them a place in our love ; but if they prove false to their true destinies, they cannot exact from us those eternal oaths which are due only to country, freedom, and to God ; *three things which do not die.*’

He closed this noble speech by an impassioned demand ‘that Catholics should no

longer in France be shut out from the justice claimed by all citizens, that they should no longer be sacrificed to the old prejudices and out-worn hatreds of a bypast generation.' Lacordaire was acquitted. The verdict was not given till midnight, and Montalembert has told us how, passing through the midst of an applauding crowd, he and his friend walked together through the darkness, along the silent and deserted quays of Paris, and how he left Lacordaire at his own door, hailing in him the Orator of the Future.

The editors of the *Avenir* now determined to concentrate their strength on the cardinal point of liberty of public instruction, a point which had been raised at the time of the restoration of the Bourbons, and actually conceded in the charter of 1830, though Government showed itself in no haste to redeem the promise it had then made, and augmented the impatient irritation of the Catholic party by the harsh rigour with which it pressed its own system into a virtual monopoly of instruction. The Rector of Lyons, as the agent of the university, had gone so far as to order the curés of that town to break up a school which they had

set on foot for the gratuitous instruction of the children of the choir. At the hearing of this, the editors of the *Avenir*, as a self-constituted agency for the defence of religious freedom, announced that they were about to open a free school in Paris. The school was opened, the children gathered together arranged into classes, and addressed by Lacordaire. The next morning a Commissary arrived, and ordered the children to disperse in the name of the law. 'And I,' Lacordaire immediately replied, 'command you to remain, in the name of your parents who have given you into my charge.' 'We will stay,' unanimously exclaimed the children. Upon which the police turned out both the children and masters, Lacordaire only excepted, on the plea that the school-room, having been rented by him, was his house, and that upon this ground he would at least spend the night there, 'alone with his right and with the law.' For this act of contumacy, he, along with Montalembert, was tried before the Court of Peers, and fined 100 francs; a cheap payment, his friend remarks, for the glory of having engaged public attention to occupy itself with a vital question, one that lies central

to every great cause that the Church can ever hope to win.

But the troubled and brilliant career of the *Avenir* drew quickly to a close. Its position was one but little understood, one which, while it brought it into frequent collision with the State and its free-thinking supporters, was scarcely less distasteful to the great bulk of the old *routinière* Catholic clergy, who were at once alarmed by the freedom of M. Lamennais' philosophical opinions, and unprepared to give in their adhesion to the thorough-going Ultramontanism of his views as regarded the Papacy. The *Avenir* could number but few zealous partisans, and these were among the younger clergy; its subscribers were necessarily limited, and its funds, a good deal drained by the legal expenses consequent upon so many contests, soon fell so low as to compel it to at least a temporary silence. Grave suspicions too had been awakened as to its orthodoxy; it was strongly distrusted by the bishops; and, seeing clouds gather round it from so many quarters, its three editors, Lamennais, Lacordaire, and Montalembert, decided upon setting off to Rome in person to lay the cause before the Sovereign

Pontiff, and commit it to his decision—a bold and weighty resolution, proving at least their own ardent sincerity of devotion to the Church—a proof of attachment for which it is probable Rome felt little grateful. For Rome, it is evident, had no wish but to keep clear of the disturbing element these ardent thinkers had brought within the Church. Cardinal Pacca put them off from week to week, and from month to month, with fair speeches and the promise of future examination into their opinions. The Pope received them kindly and paternally, without reproach of any kind, but also without the slightest allusion to the business which had brought them to Rome.

This was in 1832, just four hundred years from the time (in 1432) that the Carmelite Conecta had gone to Rome from Rennes with the intention of reforming the Pope and Cardinals, and had been burnt there as a heretic. These three friends, all men of faith and of another age, were called to undergo an ordeal less severe, yet one that must have been sufficiently trying to temperaments so ardent, and convictions so steadfast as theirs. We know how it told upon the proud and sincere soul of Lamén-

nais: iron itself could not have entered within it more keenly than did this cold impassiveness, and the ice-wind of this serene silence 'burnt froze' upon his quick and sensitive spirit, scathing it as utterly as the very breath of fire. Most of all he seems to have been stung by the sense of a bitter contradiction in Rome itself; he felt that he had come to the centre of a Divine society, to councils claiming the guidance of pure, infallible light from on high, only to be met by prudence, temporizing, tergiversation, by all that in mere worldly policy is most worldly. Writing of this period, he says, with subdued yet bitter scorn, 'I looked not for perfection, which it would be simplicity, not to say madness, to expect in the existing world, *but for a certain analogy between the outward fact and the ideal type, founded upon maxims admitted speculatively.*'

Altogether missing the support he sought for, the purpose of his life broke, and that darkness and confusion seems to have gathered round it which follows on the withdrawal of any of those great Time marks of existence to which its whole course has been set. Few lives, perhaps, but have known something of moments when the

clock of the world stops, when it ceases to warn and guide, and shows nothing but the finger fixed upon the plate, pointing to a figure no longer in correspondence with the hour of heaven. But in few lives has such a break been so sudden, so awfully final, as in that of Lamennais. After a period passed in profound irritation and discontent, he broke off all relations with the Church of Rome, and though he never altogether renounced Christianity, his hold upon its great central doctrines so far slackened that the true gravitation of his soul was lost, and its orbit was henceforth no longer one with the wide star-sown path of light round which the Church revolves, held firm as is the planet to its sphere and system, by the attraction of the steadfast Cross. From this time he disappears from the record of Lacordaire's life; but it is impossible, after whatever harsh dislocation, to separate the thought of these two men, each so sincere, so ardent, so steadfastly devoted to every high and ennobling cause. Each name inevitably recalls the other; and when we think of Lacordaire the shade of Lamennais arises, as surely as the thought of Samuel, the faithful priest of God, is linked with

that of the noble and erring King for whom, though they met no more on earth, 'he did not cease to mourn.'

Montalembert seems to have long hesitated, and to have yielded his adhesion even at the last with difficulty, urged on one side to resistance by Lamennais, overcome to submission by the pressing instances of Lacordaire, to whom alone of the three friends obedience seems to have been easy and natural, and, as it were, the only thing to be thought of. His letters and diaries of this period reveal little of conflict or hesitation. His submission at this trying moment was prompt, unconditional, and entire. And this facility will seem less strange to us if we remember that Lacordaire was not called upon to abandon any principle—only to give up a certain line of action disapproved of by his ecclesiastical superiors. Lamennais' conduct in announcing, under this acknowledged disapproval, that he intended to resume the publication of the *Avenir*, must have been looked upon in any existing church or communion as an act of defiance virtually equivalent to self-exclusion. His attitude became rapidly one of utter antagonism to the Church; and we must re-

member that Lacordaire, in separating himself from his former leader, gave up no truth, resigned no opinion ; he still remained what he had ever been, a Catholic and a liberal. His submission, therefore, is not to be numbered among those intellectual *tours de force* in which the Church of Rome glories,—such as the vaunted instance of Fénélon's *humility*, where the cherished convictions of years had to be disavowed from the very pulpit they had been preached from, at the moment when the voice of authority so decreed. And yet, when all is said, it is hard for a Protestant to understand the unconditional self-surrender which Rome demands ; hard to enter into the mental attitude which, from a spirit like Lacordaire's, could prompt a letter written at this time to Montalembert, taken, we are told, from among a hundred others breathing the same language,—

‘ The Church does not say to you, *Behold* this power is not committed to her ; she says to you, *Believe*. She says to you at your present age (twenty-three), and attached as you are to certain ideas, just what it said at your first communion : Receive the hidden and incomprehensible God ; abase your

reason before that of God, and before the Church, which is His organ. Ah! to what end has the Church been given to us, "if not for that of leading us back to truth when we have taken error in its place?" You are startled by what the Church demands of M. de Lamennais, and it is undoubtedly more hard to give up when one has once spoken out before men than when all has been transacted simply between the heart and God. This is an especial trial reserved for great talents. The Church's greatest men have had to break their lives in two, *and in an inferior degree this is but the history of all conversion.*

'It is not I,' writes Lacordaire of the difficulties of this period, 'who have delivered myself; it is the Church who has delivered me. When I arrived at Rome, I went to the tomb of the holy apostles Peter and Paul. I knelt down; I said to God, "Lord, I begin to feel my own weakness. Sight abandons me; error and truth seem both vanishing from me. Have pity on Thy servant, who comes to Thee with a sincere heart. Listen to the prayer of the poor." I knew neither the day nor the hour, but I saw what I had not yet seen,

and I left Rome victorious and free. I learnt from my own experience that the Church is the liberating power of the human mind (*la libératrice de l'esprit humain*), and as all other liberty flows necessarily from that of thought, the questions which divide the world appeared to me in their true light.'

Protestantism so educates the soul to think nobly of Opinion, to look upon it as the marriage of the individual soul to truth, which it has loved, wedded, and made a part of its very self, that it is difficult for us to understand how authority *can* change belief, which under our view is the ultimate expression of the whole rational and moral being. It seems as impossible to us to believe a thing simply because we are *told* to do so, as it would be for an elm to produce an acorn, or for a rose-bush to star itself with jessamine. Yet we must remember that it is far otherwise with minds which have once accepted authority itself as a great spiritual fact. When authority is received as terminal, irreversible, and final, opinion falls into place before it, all things appear in a new light, and, as Lacordaire would have himself expressed it, the universal and

infallible judgment corrects that which is individual and fallible. When we are able to enter more fully into Lacordaire's view of the Church, we shall see that he connected *all* light and truth and perfection with the Papacy as its radiating centre, and that the words of the dying Pascal could never have fallen from *his* lips: 'If they condemn my book against the Jesuits at Rome, *nevertheless I know that what I have condemned in it is already condemned in heaven.*' The Ultramontane can never appeal from the Capitol to Heaven, because he considers their judgments identical. He believes in

'Gregory and John, and men divine,
Who rose like shadows between man and God,
Till that eclipse, still hanging over heaven,
Was worshipped by the world, o'er which they strode,
For the true sun it quenched.'

CHAPTER III.

LACORDAIRE'S RETURN TO FRANCE—FRIENDSHIP WITH MADAME SWETCHINE—CONFERENCES DE NOTRE DAME—LACORDAIRE RETURNS TO ROME.

THIS stormy part of his career having become 'a parcel and portion of the troubled past,' Lacordaire returned to Paris, took a small house in an out-of-the-way street in the Pays Latin, and for three years lived there a life of prayer, of work, of solitude,—a life which Montalembert describes as being 'grave, simple, and obscure; a life truly hid in God.' This was in 1832, a time when the cholera was raging in Paris, and Lacordaire passed whole days in the hospital in close attendance on the sick, dressed as a layman, the prejudices against the priesthood being even then as

strong as ever. 'Each day,' he writes, 'I contrive to gather in a little harvest for eternity. Sometimes I receive a confession. Many die silent and without seeming to listen, but I lay my hand upon their foreheads, and confiding myself to the Divine goodness, repeat the words of absolution. Yesterday, a soldier, standing by the bedside of his dying wife, and under the idea that I was a layman, asked me in a low voice where he could meet with a priest. I told him I was one; and I felt happy,' he adds, with a simplicity which certainly strikes a Protestant as being strangely naïve, 'in being there just at the right moment to save a soul, and to oblige a fellow-creature.'

His mother came to join him here, and during the remainder of her life, which only lasted a few years, enjoyed with him days to which his letters revert fondly as long days of 'peace and work and silence,'—a calm and fruitful season which suited well with the temper and habit of his soul, and which was probably needed to prepare him for his life-long apostolate. His mind seems to have belonged to that class which requires a large measure of repose and self-concentration in order to bring its best powers into

action. 'A man is made from within,' he would often say, 'not from without. Solitude is my element; it is my life; there is nothing great to be accomplished without it.'

There is, however, something morbid in the tone of Lacordaire's letters of this period, and in his wish, so often at this time repeated, to 'live obscure and good, as the curé of some remote country district, with no thought beyond my little flock of men, finding all my joy in God and in the fields.' A deep unrest betrays itself in these very aspirations after a peaceful and uniform life, which would in reality have been little suited to a spirit so strong and ardent as his; and it is evident that his mind at this time was perturbed and unsettled, and that he was often weighed down by inward sadness and harassed by outward perplexity. His position was undoubtedly a trying one; he felt himself both a marked and an isolated man. The whole purpose of his life had been dislocated and forced out of its accustomed order, yet the past still walked in his present, the shadow of the *Avenir* fell darkly across his path, and his steps were followed by an uneasy murmur of doubt and sus-

picion. Although he had closed all mental and spiritual relations with Lamennais, it is evident that in the general mind he was still in some degree linked and associated with 'the Prometheus upon whom the stroke of heaven had fallen.' And any mediocre spirit jealous of Lacordaire's oratorical success, and eager to spy out heresies, could be at no loss where to sharpen the arrow, or where to plant the thorn. Alluding to this period, in a letter written some few years later in a little town on the road to Munich, he says,—'Three years ago I passed through this place agitated, tortured, not knowing where to turn myself; feeling on my head the weight of another man's destiny, and this a man whom I could not control, and who might wreck me, do what I would.'

Just at this time, when his life seemed fraught with discordant elements, he met in Madame Swetchine with the harmonizing influence which can reconcile many disturbing ones—a wise and sympathizing friend. The influence of this remarkable woman over his whole career seems to have been all the more happy in that it was indirect, meeting his life at many points, and blessing it at them all. She was fifty at the time of

their becoming acquainted, much older than Lacordaire, and infinitely more advanced in knowledge of life and of the great world, to which her exalted birth and station gave her the key of access. She was also better versed in the secret turns and windings of feeling. Her subtle and tender spirit, as it is revealed to us in her letters to her friend, seems to move across the heart, to woo and to caress it to peace and goodness, to call out its deepest concords, as the hand of the skilled musician moves across his instrument,

‘ Knowing well each fret
And chord of the sweet viol he doth love.’

Madame Swetchine belonged to a distinguished Russian family, by name Soymonoff, and was born at Moscow in 1782, in the reign of Catharine. Her youth had been familiar with the court, where she had been maid of honour to the Empress Marie, wife of Paul I. Educated in the deism of that age, her heart was early called to God. ‘The experience of His love,’ she says, ‘for five minutes was enough to consecrate my whole life.’ The character of this interesting woman, as it reveals itself in her letters and diaries collected by her biographer,

M. de Falloux, is full of charm, sweetness, and purity; of devoted personal affections; of warm and consistently-sustained interest in the highest Christian causes. In addition to the extraordinary energy and tenderness of her character, her intellectual abilities were of a high order. All she writes bears the print and stamp of distinction. Her letters, like the best French ones, are full of point and discrimination, yet full also of an intimate sweetness that has something in it piercing even to pain, like the scent of the sweetbriar; breathing out the fragrance of a soul that has loved and has suffered, and through suffering and love has overcome. Her thoughts, scattered through her letters and devotional fragments, often lie as deep as those of La Bruyère and Pascal, and are expressed with their incisive clearness—

‘Graven deep as with a pointed gem;’

and sparkling like the gem that has engraved them. Speaking in one of her letters of general benevolence, she says,—‘*That has been the romance of the second part of my life. When we no longer hope to live without interruption in one soul, all are not too many to fill that vacant place.*’ This note

seems struck out of her own life, and may possibly refer to a romance of her earlier years, when she had been ardently beloved by a member of the Strogonoff family, a young, amiable, and brilliantly-gifted man. He was also rich and high-born, with a distinguished career opening before him; and we are not told why the choice of her father fell in preference upon General Swetchine, then forty-two years of age, a man of upright character, but of limited intellect, and a nature utterly out of harmony with her own. General Swetchine lived to extreme old age. He was an indulgent husband, she a faithful and tender wife; but they had no children, and we can see that to a heart and intellect so richly endowed as hers, her life, however calm and peaceful, was one to which much must have been wanting. Writing to her friend, Mdle. Roxandre Stourdza, a beautiful Greek lady, of whose tender and persuasive loveliness she gives us an idea by saying,—‘There is not one of your looks which is not a thought,’ she thus expresses herself,—‘One who has much to lose ought to bless Providence; so also ought one to whom, as to you, it has given a thousand redeeming possibilities’

(*mille chances réparatrices*). 'I have the instinct and presage of the happiness that is in store for you, and I desire happiness for you with all the strength of your heart and of my own. Your destiny is already outlined; you will be a wife and a mother, and in the centre of these blissful affections your days will flow so brightly that their reflection will gladden the existence of your friend.'

Elsewhere, speaking of herself, she says that she desired 'only to be remembered as one who believed, who loved, and who prayed.'

The story of her conversion from the Greek to the Roman communion, and of the mental process which led to that change, is singular, we may almost say unique. Her intimacy with the French emigrants at St. Petersburg, especially with Count Joseph de Maistre, had at a very early time of life awakened her attention to the characteristic points of difference between the two Churches.

'I gave myself up,' she says, 'to studies opposed to all that was most attractive to a mind like mine; to studies destitute of all imaginative charm, to dry researches, to facts destitute of interest, *whose only allure-ment was that of the syllogism.*' When, after

a course of study so patient and extensive, that even to read of it is not very easy reading, she decided upon joining the Church of Rome, it was not, as has been the case with so many women, on the ground of sentimental preference, nor yet through the strong dogmatic convictions which have approved themselves to a severer order of thinkers. In dogma, probably, she found little that differed from the Church of her fathers, and the change she made seems to have been founded entirely on historic data, which led her to consider the Church of Rome as being the Church to which our Saviour's great promise is made, and led her to look upon the Pope as that 'central unity,'—the living voice which a living Church requires.

It appeared to Madame Swetchine that her native Church, 'the Orthodox,' as its children fondly call it, and in which she ever continued to take a warm interest, had never flourished, never truly lived, since the time of its separation. It had *kept the faith*, she thinks, as a hand in sleep or death might guard a treasure—a treasure unappreciated and unenjoyed. Although she was not drawn to Rome from the sensuous and poetic side of her nature, she describes

in strong and beautiful language the mysterious attraction it exerts, and the force of that penetrating, subtle charm through which, while her choice was yet undetermined, she said, 'It wins a consent from my heart to which my mind does not fully yield.' She compares its colour, its vigour, its strong and bold relief, to vegetation on an African soil, where, travellers tell us, 'all things have a determinate character, a scent, a flavour, betraying a hidden virtue or malignity. All is either delicious, life-giving, or *deadly*, overflowing with a superabundance of sap (*sève*) unknown elsewhere.'

Such was the heart upon which Lacordaire, in his own words, was 'cast almost like a wreck on a friendly shore,' from which no after wave or storm detached him. There was everything to draw, and as much to keep, two such spirits together; they were kindred, it is evident, in many points of character, and absolutely one in the great leading passion of their lives, devotion to the Catholic Church.¹ So many of Lacordaire's letters to this beloved friend are connected with the ecclesiastical

¹ Note D.

questions of the time, many of them of that mere temporary and local interest, the records of which so quickly become dry and technical, that the first impression of the correspondence as a whole is disappointing. It is in these letters, however, that we find most fully the breath and fragrance of Lacordaire's soul. Every here and there we come across some intimate self-revelation, some subtle, half-playful self-analysis, that redeems many pages of somewhat arid discussion.

Towards the close of the year 1833, Lacordaire was asked to give a series of lectures on religious subjects to the pupils of the College Stanislas; these conferences seem to have been an anticipation of his future triumph on the wider arena of Notre Dame; their success was immense, a success no doubt owing to Lacordaire's brilliant and varied command of oratory, but also, says the Père Chocarne, to be traced to the deep-laid foundation of the serious and patient studies he had so long pursued in his self-chosen line of Christian apology. These studies had been all directed to one end, that of proving the divinity of Catholicity by its effects on society; and on mounting the tribune, to proclaim on the housetop the

truths at which he had so long laboured in the closet, he doubtless felt that sudden self-realization which assures a man that his hour is come, his ground sure, and his victory certain. He freed himself at a bound from the somewhat cold and restrained formulas of the great pulpit orators of the seventeenth century, and discarding the traditionary sacred rhetoric of the last two hundred years, went back to those freer, fuller inspirations which had moved the Hebrew prophets and the Christian fathers of old. His was no set discourse, no sermon, but a word from God like that through which Florence, at the lips of her great preacher, had been swayed and shaken. It was a sort of inspired and sublimated conversation, lifted far above life's ordinary level by eloquent faith and burning love; it was Thought borne aloft, like the cherubim of Ezekiel's vision, on fourfold wings. His words were those of a man of the present speaking to men of the present of a faith which they numbered with the dead, but which he earnestly affirmed to be alive, seeming by the warmth and passion of his accents to *prove* that which he affirmed. Young hearts were quickly chained—how could it well be other-

E

wise?—by a speaker who, like the great Apostle of the Gentiles, identified himself with those whom he addressed, so that he might the more easily persuade them; who said to them—‘Are you Frenchmen? so am I; philosophers? so am I; lovers of freedom and of truth? *I am more.*’ ‘And how,’ asks the Père Chocarne, ‘should youth not love one who spoke to them of all that youth loves, evil only excepted; of poetry, devotion, heroism, national liberty and glory; who took from youth’s lips its own word and its own song to speak and to sing it even better? Each ray of truth and beauty that had ever fallen from the heart of God into the heart of man, or had been shed over His visible universe, was gathered and given back to heaven in a hymn of praise and of triumph.’ The speaker seemed to stand upon the summit of conquered truth, a young apostle, the ransomed and redeemed of Christ, still fresh with the dew of his conversion; a guide familiar with danger, alive to difficulty, concealing, dissimulating nothing, yet, like Columbus, promising kingdoms. That, however, which thus held youth captive, was his condemnation with some of those who sat in the seat of judgment;

he had to endure the reproach of being too human, too free in many of his remarks on dogmatic verities, too unguarded in the tone of his allusion to contemporary history and politics. Had he not dared, for instance, to say, and to say it to the men of July, *that the first tree of liberty had been long ago planted in Paradise, and by the hand of God Himself?*

He was denounced by the civil authorities as a fanatical agitator, dangerous to the mind of youth, and was at the same time represented to the Archbishop as a setter forth of novelties, an unsafe man to follow. Even at Rome his line of teaching seems to have been looked upon with distrust; and the result of so much suspicion setting in from so many quarters was the suspension of the conferences of the Collège Stanislas.

Lacordaire seems to have met this blow very calmly, quietly resuming his unbroken life of study and of active charity among the poor. His hour, however—the hour so long prepared for—had come; the ‘banquets of eloquence,’ as his biographer affectionately calls these stirring addresses, were not destined to be broken off without reaching their fitting close. At this critical juncture Lacordaire found a friend and

advocate in an unlooked-for quarter. Monsieur Affré, himself cold, calm, and collected, a lover of the old classic forms of rhetoric, was little likely to be carried away by the charm of Lacordaire's eloquence, and still less likely, from the horror in which he was known to hold the philosophy of Lamennais, to be prepossessed in favour of his principles. 'Yet he,' says the Père Chocarne, 'through the force of that lofty simplicity of character, which made itself so apparent both in his life and his lamented death, at once recognised the elevated temper of the young preacher's soul. Himself an upright, inflexible man, detesting all intrigue, and ardently devoted to all that might promote the true interests of the Church, he was deeply grieved to see Lacordaire sacrificed to unjust prejudices, and undertook his cause with the Archbishop M. de Quelen, to such good effect that Lacordaire was invited to resume his conferences, and upon the far more brilliant stage of Notre Dame.'

A series of lectures, for the higher religious instruction of youth, had been begun there during the last year by the celebrated Ozanam,¹ the beloved and venerated apostle

¹ Note E.

of the youth of France, and founder of the confraternities of St. Vincent de Paul, of whose too short life Lacordaire has left us a touching record. These lectures had so far met with only a moderate measure of success, but early on the day on which the pulpit was to be taken by Lacordaire, the immense nave of the cathedral was thronged by an expectant multitude of men of every age, creed, and profession. 'It was not Paris,' says our biographer, 'it was France itself which had thus come forth to see—a prophet! Yes, truly, and one gifted with an especial message to the age which he understood and loved so well. The spectacle was a strangely moving one; here were the disciples of Voltaire hanging upon the accents of a Catholic priest; the children of the men who had in 1789 driven forth Christ from this very temple, listening with eager, rapt attention to the voice of one who spoke of Him, and of Him only, as the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.'

Lacordaire on mounting the pulpit looked pale and agitated, and his voice was at first feeble; he quickly, however, regained his self-possession, and his tones gradually grew sustained and ample. He has himself told

us in simple and moving language, how in beginning his sermon he fixed his eyes on the Archbishop, 'who was for me, after God, and far before the public, the most important person there ; he sat before me, motionless and impassive, with bent head and the air of one who is conscious of some personal risk in the result of a solemn experiment. When I once felt that I had taken firm hold both of my subject and of my audience, my chest heaved and dilated under the necessity of seizing this vast assembly of men, and a cry burst from it, that cry which, when it is sincere, never fails to reach the heart. The Archbishop trembled, turned pale, cast on me a look of astonishment, and I knew that both with him and with my audience I had won the battle.'

Lacordaire on this great occasion began in his usual manner, which was that of a general survey of the ground he intended to occupy, with a clear and rapid summary of the principal questions under debate. Then he took his free bold flight. His success was immediate, and during the two years over which the conferences of Notre Dame extended, the spell of Lacordaire's influence grew only more strong and assured. 'Men

loved,' says the Père Chocarne, 'to listen to a voice which, in pleading the cause of eternity, had also hope and consolation for the present time. They hailed this large and liberal Christianity, where man and God, the Church and human society, were allowed to meet and love each other after the divorce of half a century, as old friends, that some malevolent influence has had power to separate, meeting even for a moment, in that moment recognise each other, and return to their heart's true allegiance. They rejoiced to see faith and reason met together in the embrace of two long-parted sisters, to find room made for progress, for freedom, for all things fair and noble. Life was everywhere; youth felt itself beloved; the watchword was Onwards, and the victory was assured to the future, to goodness and to God.'

The most marked characteristic of his preaching was its social tendency, its setting forth of Christianity as the one universal *perfect* society, on union upon which all earthly society depends, and by which it lives, as the body depends upon the soul, and as man depends upon God, and lives by Him.

These conferences are all framed upon one design, that of bringing society face to face with the Gospel and the Church, and showing how, without the regenerating influence they alone can impart, family ties dissolve, liberty becomes license, and authority despotism. It was Lacordaire's task to prove that, were supernatural aids withdrawn, our natural life tends inevitably to decay and corruption; and that 'nature itself,' to use his own striking words, 'can only be justified from the point of view which grace assumes.' 'What,' he asks, 'is a nation but a community of suffering, weakness, and woe; and where, but for Christianity, would be the remedy for so many sorrows? But God has willed that the wounds of humanity should be curable wounds.' Redemption, reparation, restoration¹—these were the watchwords of the new prophet, as the Archbishop now fondly called him. The teaching of Lacordaire is full of healing and of hope. Its effect on individual souls was doubtless very great, but Lacordaire's mission in preaching, ac-

¹ *Le Christianisme, Réparation Surnaturelle; Christ, Réparateur Surnaturel; l'Eglise Chrétienne, Action Réparatrice.*

According to his own view of it, was less concerned with direct and personal appeals to conscience, than with the presentation of absolute objective truth to the general mind. He felt that the great need of an unbelieving age was to be taken by the hand, to be led up to the summit of the Mount of Vision, and to be *shown* the Land of Promise it had ceased to aspire after. His aim was to stir the masses to a higher spiritual intelligence, to remove stumbling-blocks of indifference and prejudice, and so to be faith's pioneer. Yet, beneath the severe intellectual labour such a task demanded, the fire of love kindled, secret sparks fell from the ardent soul of the great orator into the souls that listened to him, and links were forged in that white heat of eloquence, binding heart to heart in the chain that is not quickly broken—the bond of spiritual affinity, of which Lacordaire writes,—‘When the soul has once tasted of its enjoyments, *which bear upon them the aroma of another life*, all other charms fade and vanish. My life until this time had been divided between study and polemics. The conferences introduced me to the mysteries of the apostolic office, in revealing to me something of that

communion of souls which is the true felicity of every priest who is worthy of his calling, and which is enough of itself to make up to him for every tie and friendship and hope that he has given up for the sake of Christ. It was at Notre Dame, at the foot of my pulpit, that I felt the awakening of those affections which do not spring from any natural source, and which bind the man to the apostle by ties as sweet as they are strong and enduring. Among those who were thus attached to me, were some that remained unknown both by sight and name; I only knew them by the testimonies of regard and gratitude which each day brought me,—tokens as cheering to my spirit as a cup of water given to a thirsty traveller by a strange yet friendly hand.'

Yet just when he was beginning to taste the sweetness of this new-found spring of spiritual interest, just when his outward success was at its highest, Lacordaire, without any apparent reason, resigned the pulpit of Notre Dame at the close of his second Lent, in 1836, and in spite of the pressing entreaty of the Archbishop to continue his conferences, he suddenly wound up his affairs in Paris, and left it for Rome.

No outward reason constrained him to this unlooked-for step. Speaking of it long afterwards, he says that he felt within himself that he was not yet ripe enough for the great work he had undertaken; that inward recollection, study, silence, and above all, solitude, were still necessary to him; and that, in his own words, he had need to find himself 'some little time alone with his weakness and with God.' There can be no doubt that the great object of his after life, the revival of the religious orders in France, was, even at this time, working in his spirit; and that he longed to find a quiet space and breathing time in his life for thought, for prayer, and for calm attention to the deep spiritual intuitions¹ to which he was always wont to look for guidance. 'I knew well,' he writes, long after this time, '*why* I

¹ Lacordaire writes to Madame Swetchine,—'It has been impossible to me at all times of my life to resolve or to act otherwise than in conformity with my deeply felt convictions. But I have remarked, in the formation of these convictions, a slow and laborious progress, which has brought them to the very needed point in time to meet some necessary or important act. This coincidence has greatly astonished me, and revealed to me something of the way in which God acts upon the human spirit, in relation to the destiny for which He has been pleased to prepare it.'

undertook this journey, though I little expected that it would have been so largely blessed and favoured by Heaven. Always, at every solemn epoch of my life, I have heard the voice of Providence urging me from within, and telling me how to act. I have always followed this secret and timely admonition, and always found it guide me for the best.'

In this sudden withdrawal of Lacordaire, we also see a proof of the need which so many elected spirits have felt, in the words of the great Triumvir, 'to put a space' between their own souls and the souls which they most largely benefit. Personal influence, in Christ's great kingdom, is a blessed and a needed power; without it there can be little of growth or extension, for it is certain that many seeds of good are not self-developing, and that many lives lie torpid until they are met by a quickening impulse from another life, stronger, richer, or more fully established than their own. Yet strong influences, from the very constitution of our nature, are ever dangerous; dangerous alike to receiver and to giver, and this the wise and single-hearted Christian knows. He who would not become a

merchantman, trafficking with Heaven's richest gift in a fatal, soul-ensnaring usury, will often withdraw from the crowd, as did our blessed Master; will often, like Paul, the teacher of all love's deepest lessons, retire from the souls he ministers to for a season, so that he may abide with them for ever. In this life there are so few richly endowed spirits, so few hearts sufficiently strong and tender to take on themselves the burdens of humanity, that around such, when they do appear, a parasitical undergrowth of love and homage is apt to fasten, sometimes even threatening to absorb their independent vitality. Incessantly ministering to, and feeding others, their own life seems escaping, gliding forth at every pore. At such times a dread of self-exhaustion and unreality comes across the soul; it longs to fall back upon its secret reserved forces; it needs to retire to its deep root, to live there, like flowers in winter, a warm unseen life,

' And there repair
Such losses as befell it in this air.'

And besides this, many passages in Lacordaire's letters make us aware that his spirit was one which peculiarly needed withdrawal

and self-concentration; his nature seems to have been reserved to a degree which made occasional solitude necessary to his well-being. 'I have always,' he says, '*required* solitude, if it were only to say how much I love;' and whenever his heart expands most freely, it is always to confess to a natural reticence, which not even warmly-felt regard could overcome, and which gave to his manner a surface-coldness which seems to have been trying to his best friends, and the more so from its contrasting so strongly with all that in the pulpit was electrically warm and communicative. Things that he felt most keenly he seems to have expressed with difficulty, and as it were with regret. With women, we are told, his manners were generally marked by *un imperturbable laconisme*,—an expression which seems to defy translation, and remains amply significant of all that makes intercourse constraining, and companionship an impossibility. His mother and Madame Swetchine understood and made allowance for him. Yet one might infer from expressions which occur here and there in correspondence with the latter, that she too sometimes felt a chill, and was glad when her friend set the

doors of his heart a little wider open to her,—as he does in the following strangely interesting letter, which seems marked with something of an apologetic character :—‘ If there is anything I am certain of, it is that I love, and love deeply ; at the same time, I am well aware that there is something about me to which I can give no name, and which causes pain to those I love. It is not harshness, for I am naturally gentle ; still less is it coldness. It is something belonging to my whole nature, which is either too much or too little (*trop oui ou trop non*) ; a certain want of that expansion which the heart of a friend has a right to ask for ; a settled habit of silence which has grown upon me until I am scarcely aware of it. What an effort it costs me to talk ! When I lived with my mother, who was accustomed to my ways, and needed nothing from me but kindness to make her happy, I was often altogether silent. Only yesterday, I did my best to amuse a young ecclesiastic who is very unwell, and who asked me to tell him something to pass the time : I found it hard work. Women are to be envied in this respect, that they can talk just when and as they please, and give their

thoughts free expression. Their heart is a spring that flows of its own accord, while the heart of man, my own especially, is like one of those volcanoes which sends forth lava only at intervals, and even then requires a shock to set it free. Much ought to be forgiven to men on the score of temperament. My mother, in dying, told me that I had made her life happy. I always pleased her more than any of my brothers did; and yet I was never tender in my ways with her. Something of this was perhaps due to our bringing up. My mother loved us with a daily devotion that spoke more through action than through words. You must then bear a little with my shy nature.'

CHAPTER IV.

LACORDAIRE RETURNS TO ROME—BECOMES
A DOMINICAN MONK—OCCUPIES HIMSELF
WITH THE RESTORATION OF THE ORDER
IN FRANCE—CHARACTERS OF THE FIRST
FRENCH DOMINICANS, REQUEDAT, PIEL,
BESSON, AND DE BEAUSSANT.

LACORDAIRE had now cleared himself a space for mental freedom. He had broken with some ties that had been long felt as inly constraining, and before entering upon the new path to which the secret impulse of his spirit continually drew him, he returned for a while to that life of solitude and study in which his spirit had always placed its deepest joy. His letters of this period are full of a pensive charm, and affect the mind with a sense of melancholy breadth and grandeur, reminding one of some of the landscapes by Claude and Poussin, marked by width and serenity, challenging the eye

by few features—only in the foreground a tomb or ruined temple, with the figure of a solitary traveller pausing for a moment on his way to some far-distant bourne. ‘My days,’ he writes from Rome to Madame Swetchine, ‘pass with great uniformity, a uniformity but rarely broken in upon by some chance visitor. I read theology assiduously, and am now deeply engaged with the Fathers of the Church. I find them full of precious things, and begin to hope that I have really been blessed by God with some degree of theological insight; I come across so many points with which instinct seems to have made me already familiar, though I should not have been able to state them with the scientific accuracy I have now acquired. I have hardly had to modify one of my already formed opinions in consequence of this course of reading, but I have gained much new light upon points where I felt myself deficient, especially in regard to the mystery of the Holy Trinity, which now occupies me. I am also reading a work on ecclesiastical antiquity, where I can trace the order and changes of discipline,—a subject on which we bestow little attention in France, and which is very important to one

who would understand the Spirit of the Church. As I read I reflect. I take notes, according to your advice. I find both my judgment and my imagination strengthen, while the quiet of solitude seems to subdue and modify my whole inner being. These five or six months have been very profitable to me. . . . I am now thirty-four, yet I can truly say that my education, considered from whatever point, is not yet finished. I am conscious of a crowd of confused thoughts, like the ruins of some building broken off ere it reached completion ; these wait for further light to rise on them. I sometimes feel that there is in me enough of that which is false, chaotic, singular ; enough of evil and even of good to shipwreck ten thousand men ; yet divine goodness saves me. Born in an age that had been pierced to its very foundations by error, I had received from God an abundant measure of His grace, witnessed of, even from my earliest childhood, by unspeakable manifestations ; but the spirit of the age prevailed for a time against this gift from on high, and I became a personal sharer in the illusions of the day I lived in. When now, at the distance of twelve years, grace

conquered, and I began my priestly education at St. Sulpice, I had no time to become disabused of a thousand notions and sentiments out of all true relation with Christianity, and I found myself at one and the same time living by my own day, and living by faith (*vivant du siècle, et vivant de la foi*)—a man of two worlds, as full of enthusiasm for one as for the other,—a strange amalgam, where nature was as strong as grace, and grace as strong as nature. No wise and pious hand was held out to guide mine; some blamed while others pitied me; but He whose gifts are without repentance was not discouraged, and he still goes on painfully finishing his work.'

About this time Lacordaire wrote his *Lettre sur la Saint Siège*, in answer to *Affaires de Rome*, M. de Lamennais' famous attack upon the Papacy. The manuscript met with full approval in the highest quarters at Rome, but gave less satisfaction at Paris, where its thorough-going Ultramontanism found little favour with the Archbishop, M. de Quelen, who advised the author to defer its publication. It is evident, from the tone of the letters which passed between Lacordaire and Madame Swetchine

on this subject, that the Archbishop, with a true and admiring esteem for Lacordaire, had little sympathy with his views either ecclesiastical or political, and that this want of sympathy had been felt by Lacordaire as so repressive as to make him shrink from resuming his Paris life and the ecclesiastical relations connected with it. Madame Swetchine was anxious that he should return to Paris and take up a permanent position there. On the subject of one of the many openings which she had suggested to him as desirable, he writes to her with some vivacity,—

‘Now that all this is disposed of and set at rest for ever, I feel a deep inward satisfaction. The perspective of Paris was so fraught to me with uncertainty and bitterness, that I scarcely know how to feel happy enough in the peaceful, secure, and busy life I am now leading here. I am rid of my enemies, *rid of my own success*; free to work in my own way, slowly and patiently, for the Church’s glory, without the daily, continual apprehension of a possible fall and neckbreak; the points of difference between me and the Archbishop being too real not to come at last to open issue, as indeed they

have just done. M. de Quelen represents the ancient Church of France, and has no aspiration beyond that of re-establishing its ancient traditions. This is the settled basis of his life and of his hopes. How then should he be expected to accept me, a man believing in so many novelties? You seem to think that with time, and the changes it brings to bear, I might succeed in winning his confidence, and perhaps with a character differently constituted from my own this might be possible enough. To effect this I might have but two words to say, *but I will never say them*. Rather will I from this moment renounce my friends, my country, my remembrances—yes, my vocation itself; and wherefore? so that I may save my conscience, and not surrender myself to ideas which I look upon as fatal.'

Something in the tone of his letters of this date seems to have been wounding to this wise and tender friend,—‘I do not feel it necessary,’ she writes, ‘that I should always acquiesce completely in your decisions, any more than I desire to see you relying implicitly on any judgment I may form. You and I meet and hold each other at so many living points, that we can admit

of a little mutual *branching off*, while our lives still continue to be nourished by the one and self-same sap, united by one living link. My dear child, my dear friend, respect this link; never break it. In youth one does not easily enter into all the sadness, all the wreck, caused by a broken friendship. Even when the fault may not be wholly due to ourselves, the weight is still a painful one, *and the conscience is placed so close to the heart that whatever afflicts one must trouble the other.*' Madame Swetchine ceases to urge his return to Paris; but as if she divined that there was much of irritated pride and wounded feeling in his present love of seclusion, she quietly seeks to wean him from the absolute self-withdrawal he seemed at this time so bent upon. 'I can well believe,' she writes, 'that solitude may be good, useful, perhaps even necessary for you,—solitude with its attendant calm and possession of the soul in quietness and freedom—but not isolation, *which even in breaking down barriers removes every friendly stay and prop*; which deprives you of the priceless advantage of contact with your fellow-men, priceless to all who are destined to live with and for them, and which robs

the imagination at once of the checks it requires, and of the sympathy it needs. In every situation and circumstance of life the Divine word holds true: "It is not good for man to be alone." When age and experience have been added to your other gifts, even then, my dear friend, you must never live in isolation. Whatever happens, you must have disciples living under your immediate influence, confided to you by supreme authority; a family of brothers, with, at their head, a father common to all. Have I rightly understood this word you once let fall,—"*I hope in time to need even less than I do now?*" I can truly say that my ardent desire for your perfection does not link itself with the wish to see it take any particular form. Serve God and do what you will. The world, solitude, preaching, writing, dignity in the Church, absolute self-renunciation, all seem alike to offer happy openings, save only and except this absolute retirement in which, in separation from all things, I foresee the greatest of all dangers,—the impossibility of getting free from yourself!'

Madame Swetchine was not long in learning what her friend had intended by the

words, 'I hope soon to need even less than I do now.' Shakespeare tells us that

'the poorest man
Is in the poorest thing superfluous ;
Demands for nature more than nature claims.'

Lacordaire, however, who had been always practically vowed to high thinking and plain living,¹ always content with the things that go into small room, was about, still more strictly, to retrench his plan of life expenditure ; he was about to become a monk. It is easy to see his was one of the hearts to which the hardest duty will ever

¹ Later on in life he writes,—'The rock of our present day is, that no one knows how to live upon little ; the great men of antiquity were generally poor. It is true that, having been accustomed to limited means all my life, it may be easier for me to dispense with superfluities than it is to others who have been reared in different habits ; but it always seems to me that the retrenchment of useless expenditure, the laying aside of what one may call *the relatively necessary*, is the high road to Christian disentanglement of heart, just as it was to that of ancient vigour. The mind that has learnt to appreciate the moral beauty of life, both as regards God and men, can scarcely be greatly moved by any outward reverse of fortune ; and what our age wants the most, is the sight of a man who might possess everything, being yet willingly contented with little. For my own part, humanly speaking, I wish for nothing. *A great soul in a small house is the idea which has always touched me more than any other.* Such might have been the Abbé Lamennais, dying poor and faithful at La Chesnaie.'

appear the highest. Christianity had from the first presented itself to him under its most stern, though most tender aspect, *as the immolation of man joined to that of God*; and it is easy to see that a life of austerity and absolute self-renunciation would lure him onwards with that strong inevitable spell before which softer attractions weaken, as surely as the charm of wood and mead and winding river will fade from the spirit which has once drunk in the wild desolate grandeur of mountain and sea and moor, and shared even for a moment in the awful rejoicing of Nature's lonely heart.

Many years before this he had said,—‘I shall be a priest; and probably some day a monk.’ Yet, now that his hour was come, the sacrifice, to use his own words, ‘was even unto blood.’ While it had seemed to cost him nothing to give up the world for the priesthood, it seemed to cost him everything to add to the priesthood the burden of the religious life. ‘I shrank from the very idea of having to bring my will into subjection to a superior and to a rule. The true child of a century which finds obedience a difficult virtue, independence had ever been my stay and my guide. How was I

all at once to transform my heart into the humble and teachable one which only seeks for light through submission? Yet solicited and overcome by grace that was yet stronger than myself, I took my decision, and when it was once made, I no longer experienced either regret or weakness, but was able to go courageously forth to meet every trial as it came.'

Lacordaire's spirit returned to this period of his life not long before its departure from earth. When on his deathbed, and assailed by those mortal agonies of separation between soul and body which in his case were so unusually severe, he dictated a paper containing a short sketch of the motives which led him to become a monk, and induced him to select the order of preaching friars in preference to any other.

'My long stay at Rome,' he writes, 'gave me time for much reflection. I had time both to look deeply into my own spirit and into the general needs of the Church, which seemed to me to have lost half its strength through the decline of the Religious Orders. At Rome, I was, as it were, surrounded by the magnificent remains of institutions founded by them, and saw even at that

very time a monk seated on the Pontifical Throne. But history showed me a sight more impressive than anything that even Rome itself could offer, in the vista it opened before me of cells, of monasteries, of abbeys, of houses of study and of prayer, thick sown through the length and breadth of Christendom. It brought before me the recollection of Antony, of Basil, of Augustine, of Martin, of Benedict, of Columban, of Bernard, of Francis, of Dominic, of Ignatius, the patriarchs of an innumerable family, who had peopled deserts, forests, towns, camps, St. Peter's chair itself, with their heroic virtues. In considering this luminous track,—the milky way of the Church,—I discovered its creative principle in the threefold vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience ; the keystone of the Arch of the Gospel, and of the perfect imitation of Jesus Christ. I felt persuaded, as I wandered through Rome and prayed to God in its basilicas, that the greatest service that in the present day could be rendered to Christianity would be to do something towards the revival of the Religious Orders. But this persuasion, which came before me with all the clearness of the Gospel, left me undecided and trembling as to the means at

my command for so great a work. My faith, thanks to God, was profound. I loved Jesus Christ and his Church far above all created things; but when I thought of all that was required in the founder of an order, and looked into myself, I found little that seemed to fit me for so weighty an office. I was also without fortune: how was I to house and provide for flocks of brethren as necessitous as myself? And there were yet other and more serious exterior obstacles in my way. Had I a right to expect even toleration at the hands of the French Government? I should certainly find nothing more. The Revolution had declared that the State no longer recognised religious vows, and had deprived religious communities of their inherited patrimony; and although the Jesuits had now gained a precarious footing in France, public opinion still followed in the track of the eighteenth century, and went strongly against the principle of associations,—so much so, that, even for simply literary or artistic ends, it was only possible to enter into them in face of the strongest obstacles and discouragements.'

Lacordaire, it is evident, began his work

with a clear view of the difficulties it involved, but he knew how to abide his time. 'There is always,' to quote his own emphatic words, 'in the heart of man, in the state of minds, in the course of opinion, in laws, in things, and in times, a place for God to take His hold (*un point d'appui pour Dieu*). I encouraged myself by this thought, and it seemed to me that my whole anterior life, even to its very errors, had been so ordered as to give me the freer access to the heart of my country and of my age.' With this hope he both worked and waited, and after difficulties which it would be tedious to recapitulate,—after more than one journey between Rome and Paris, and after a year's residence in France, where he met with but a limited encouragement for his project, and yet on the whole was able to promote it in leading quarters, he finally returned to Rome, and, on the 9th April 1839, received the Dominican frock from the hands of the Father General of the order. It is difficult, even with the light of Lacordaire's own explanations, to see why he made choice of this particular order, against which, from its connexion with the Inquisition, so strong a prejudice has always existed. He seems

to have been attracted to it by the circumstance of its being pre-eminently a teaching and a preaching order, freer in its constitution (however austere in its rule) than that of the Jesuits, less absolute in its interior mental discipline, and affording more scope to individuality. Lacordaire began his noviciate at La Quercia, an old Dominican monastery grandly situated among the wooded hills in the neighbourhood of Viterbo. Writing from thence to Madame Swetchine, he says,—‘It is now eight days since I became a monk, and it would be indeed difficult for me to describe to you the joy, the tenderness that filled my heart on the evening of that 9th of April. The remembrance of my ordination to the priesthood is yet living to me in all its felicity, yet what was absent from that first festival, I found here in all its plenitude, the warmth and effusion of fraternity.¹ Never have I received such tender embraces and greetings. I have now been four days at La Quercia ;

¹ Madame Swetchine in reply to this letter says,—‘What you tell me of the Christian brotherhood in your new-found family delights me so much that I appear to witness it. The Italian, when he is really sincere and good, carries *bonhomie*, simplicity, and true cordiality to their highest pitch. There is some-

the Provincial brought us here in the evening, initiating us into the beginning of our noviciate by a little speech to the assembled community; after this each withdrew to his cell. It was very cold, the wind had veered to the north; we were yet in our summer dress, and our cells without fires; we knew no one; all the prestige, all the *empressement* that had so lately surrounded us had vanished; we were alone with God, in presence of a life as yet unknown to us. In the evening we went to vespers, then to the refectory, then to bed. Next day the cold was still more intense, and we only partially understood the course of our exercises. I had a moment of weakness; I looked back upon all that I had left behind,—a settled life, many certain advantages, many tenderly beloved friends; days filled up with useful conversations by warm firesides,—the thousand joys of a life which God had blessed with outward and with inward peace. *To lose all this for ever was*

thing in their heart which corresponds to that mental faculty of exquisite common sense which leads them to hit the right point even to the very breadth of a hair—and I would define it as the Christian accent, the Christian countenance and expression, which lends itself easily to their most spontaneous acts.'

certainly paying dearly for the pride of doing a bold thing! I humbled myself before God, and asked of Him the strength I needed; towards the close of the first day I felt that my prayer had been heard, and since then consolations have been increasing in my soul, with the gentleness of a sea which caresses the shore it covers.'

We learn from the tenor of this letter that Lacordaire had already companions with him on the path whereon he was to make and to find so many. Nothing can be more touching than the account the Père Chocarne gives of the little group he drew around him—his first-born children,—none of them, except the Père Jandel, who still survives as head of the Dominican order, destined to a long earthly career. These first Dominicans have all the tender and heroic charm of youth and self-devotion, but no figure among them stands forth more clearly than that of Réquedat,¹ Lacordaire's

¹ The character of Réquedat recalls that of the Frenchman of the days preceding the great Revolution, commemorated so affectionately by Wordsworth:—

'Among that band of officers was one
Already hinted at, of other mould,
A Patriot. . . .

By birth he ranked

G

first convert. In his character there is a tinge of exaltation which is essentially French,—yet French in that which is most honourable to the national character, both as regards its high and romantic generosity, and its capacity for devotion to abstract causes. Réquedat's passion was for his country; for himself, even in early youth, he seems to have desired nothing. His sole wish was to see France great, free, and happy,—first in all things. This patriotic ardour amounted to a sort of fanaticism, which filled his heart so as to leave no room within it either for love or for any ambition of a personal nature. When, after the con-

With the most noble, but unto the poor
Among mankind he was in service bound
As by some tie invisible, oaths professed
To a religious order. Man he loved
As man; and to the mean and the obscure,
And all the homely in their homely work,
Transferred a courtesy which had no air
Of condescension, but did rather seem
A passion and a gallantry like that
Which he, a soldier in his idler day,
Had paid to woman; oft in solitude
With him did I discourse about the end
Of civil government, and its wisest forms,
Of ancient loyalty, and chartered rights,
Custom and habit, novelty and change.'

The Prelude, p. 205.

version of his heart to God, he went into a church in Paris, and for the first time since his first communion knelt down at the confessional, the priest, on hearing a young man of his age answer every question put to him with a simple negative, and accuse himself only of having wished much evil to the enemies of France, could scarcely believe in his sincerity, and refused to give him absolution. With a highly cultivated mind, and every advantage that wealth and position in life can bestow, he found it difficult to decide upon a profession. Meanwhile he gave himself to the study of social questions,—especially of all such as bore upon the amelioration of the suffering classes, practically working out life's tangled problem by reducing his own expenditure within the narrowest limits—living like a Spartan, and wearing clothes bought at second-hand, while the liberal allowance made him by his father went to the poor. 'Generosity,' says the Père Chocarne, 'pervaded his whole nature as completely as egotism rules in so many others; to give, to give himself, and to the greatest number of people possible, this was his dream, his disease, his martyrdom;' his ardent passion for his country had no

other mainspring than his desire to banish evil and trouble at whatever personal cost, and to make of it a family of brothers—an illusion doubtless, but the illusion of a generous heart, and one which was rewarded by the gift of a yet more generous devotion, the desire to win and to save souls. This heart already so fraternal was to enlarge under the influence of Divine grace, his patriotism to glow with a yet purer flame. 'My God,' he writes at a later period, 'grant that the French nation may freely realize Thy word, and that I may have a share in this realization. Make me to this end humble, charitable, chaste, active, and patient.' He prayed to the Virgin to obtain for him the grace to walk worthy of his vocation, and to point out to him the way in which he might do the most good possible, and win back the greatest number of souls to the Church.

Réquedat's birthplace was Nantz ; he belonged to a rich commercial family. When but eighteen years of age he formed one of a debating society of earnest and enthusiastic young men who met twice a week to discuss the deepest problems of philosophy and religion. St. Thomas of Aquinas was their

oracle—one sometimes attacked, but always sure of ultimate triumph. *What view would St. Thomas have taken of progress? what are his ideas and principles as regarding the natural rights of man—as regarding slavery, property, sovereignty?* Such were the theses discussed in the youthful circle, and it was in this debating society that Réquedat became acquainted with Piel, the first to follow him in joining the Dominican Order—the first also to rejoin him in heaven.

Piel was many years older than Réquedat, and his life had probably been less rigidly pure and restrained. His heart, however, was no less generous than that of his friend, if we may trust the evidence of a letter, written to his father under some family reverse of fortune. 'We shall never be rich; so much the better for us, as our responsibilities will be the less heavy; the most will be asked from those who have received most. But we have still a treasure left *which even prodigality cannot exhaust*. When I say this, I am thinking of charity,—not only the charity which feeds and clothes, but also the charity which teaches, which redresses, and which consoles; the Christian charity which enlarges and ennobles the

heart, which gives a value to the most simple actions, *and which redeems our mental faculties themselves from barrenness, and reclaims them from idle wanderings.* Would that we may be ever and at all times rich in this treasure! All the rest will be added to us. May God grant you all health, and bless you according to the measure of your love to Him. May He grant you the gentleness of patience and steadfastness of will. If the tears of repentance, after the joys of innocence have any value in His eyes, if He will incline favourably to one who when most faulty was never wicked, I trust that my prayer is heard, for it comes from a contrite and a humbled heart.'

All Piel's tendencies were artistic, and he rapidly attained distinction as an architect, a profession which he had taken up from choice, and invested with all the ardent poetry of his own nature. Gothic architecture was at that time held in little esteem; Piel's mind was attracted to the deep spirituality of its symbolism; he was bent, as he expresses it, upon unveiling the mysteries yet hidden in the synthesis of the Gothic cathedral, and continued to write and labour in the interests of Christian art. Though

the two friends had chosen different paths, their aspirations and their end were one. They went to Paris together, and lived there in Christian fellowship of work and study—an exalted life—and yet one to which in the secret consciousness of each something was yet wanting. There remained a further step to take. Much had been attained, accomplished, foregone—and yet there was a solemn appeal that might still remain unanswered: ‘*My son, give Me thine heart.*’ Their minds were in this state when Lacordaire arrived in Paris to set forth the claims of the revived order. His burning words fell upon their hearts as on a prepared soil. When Lacordaire spoke of the Church, of France, of a preaching apostolate, a possible martyrdom, Réquedat’s soul kindled, and he entreated Lacordaire to receive him as his first-found child. They returned to Rome together, and in less than a year Piel followed them.

Piel seems to have hesitated some little time. His character was more complex than that of Réquedat, and he was held to the world both by his passion for Christian art, and the flattering hope of distinction in his profession. When, however, his decision

was once taken, he moved on with firm, unflinching step. Writing to a friend on the subject of a church at Nantz, which he had been engaged to build, he says,— ‘Whether my plans are accepted or rejected, now matters little to me; *I am dead*. I believe in the truth of my vocation, and I follow it. You are not surely one of those who imagine that I am joining the children of St. Dominic in the hope of placing my knowledge of my own art at their disposal? I have nothing to offer them but my obedience, which they have accepted. God is my witness that in attaching myself to Him more closely, I have done so with no reservation. I would gladly have had more to give up to Him, but if I have no more it is He who has so ordered it, and I adore His holy will. I hope you will not persist in setting before me either my own interest or glory, or the so-called service I can render to Christian art by remaining in the world. I recognise now no interest but that of my soul, which tells me to follow a vocation which I believe to be a true one, no glory but that of God, which, along with my own salvation, I go to seek in poverty, in chastity, and in obedience. As to Christian art, our

Lord will see to that. His servant feels no especial call to direct as to how its interests are to be ordered in the world which he is about to leave. He goes to Rome to obey his Master, and if it falls within God's plan to employ him worthily in the re-establishment of religion through art, His servant is ready to obey Him in that as in all beside.'

From Lacordaire's first coming to Rome he had been surrounded by young French artists of Catholic principles, and the idea now occurred to him of building them up in high convictions of art through association, and to this end Réquedat and Piel were employed in organizing, both at Rome and Paris, confraternities of St. John the Evangelist, for the sanctification of art and of artists through the Catholic faith, and for the propagation of the Catholic faith through art and through artists. One of the first fruits of this work was Besson, one of those rare and altogether exceptional natures of whom we may say as Virgil of Marcellus,—

'O nate, ingentem luctum ne quære tuorum;
Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata, neque ultra
Esse sinent.'

They seem to be only shown to the world from time to time, and then withdrawn

quickly ; but even in the showing we have learned something which without it we should never have guessed. Like the seer of Patmos, we have 'looked, and a door has been opened in heaven.' Some noble characters reveal themselves with difficulty, and, as it were, under continual check and protest ; the bar of unfriendly circumstance, or the blight of some inward warp or canker, contradicts the clear expression of that which is best and truest within them ; their life interprets their will but feebly, and they have often to say before their Maker, in deep humility of spirit—

' All that I could not be
What men ignored in me,

This I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher
shaped.'

But in lives like that which we are now considering there is no struggle or effort ; what others win with toil and pain comes to them unsought, and the rich unfolding of their lives seems to have power to bring less favoured ones into blossom through its mere contact. The most desolate existence can never again be so poor as it was *before* it met the voice and look and smile of one whose kindness seems, as compared with that of other men, to have in it the quality

of benediction. Such men, 'greatly beloved' of God and men, are placed by the heart with its Elect, for whom it feels that 'it would not even fear to die.' In all times of its wealth, in all times of its tribulation, it will turn instinctively to these sons of sympathy and of consolation. Even in the hour of death they are not far off nor forgotten. When Lacordaire was very near his end, some one, to cheer him, repeated the names of the friends and brethren to whom he would be soon reunited—Réquedat, Piel, HERNSHEIM. 'And Besson!' he exclaimed, 'Father Besson,' with a sudden kindling into animation and tenderness, as he paused on that beloved name.

When Besson preached in Italy in his own language, the Italians used to go to listen to him, saying that they did not need to understand French, for the sight of him was as good as a sermon; so ardent was the sensibility of his countenance, so evident the sincerity which breathed from his whole aspect. A Lorraine peasant who listened to him said, 'He has no need to speak; his look is enough to convert one.' A soldier, too far off to catch his words, turned to his comrade and said, 'Look at that man there;

he is a speaking crucifix' (*cet homme-la, c'est un crucifix qui parle*).

Besson's earliest days were spent in the house of his maternal grandfather, a wealthy yeoman in the neighbourhood of Besançon, whose household life was regulated upon traditions of primitive simplicity and goodness. The whole family assembled every evening for united prayer. The men were seated on one side and the women on the other, as in the ancient basilicas, each side headed by the master and mistress. This was the chosen opportunity for advice, and occasionally for public reprimand. The children were sometimes obliged to ask pardon on their knees of the old servants to whom they might have been rude or disobedient. In separating for the night, each received the blessing of the head of the house. At table the poor man was a frequent guest, loved and honoured as the representative of the Lord. The choicest portion was often set by for the benefit of a sick neighbour. The mistress of the house was like the virtuous woman of the Proverbs, whose domestic toils did not interfere with her active labours of charity among her neighbours. She would herself undertake the charge of the most

repulsive sores, and all that had to do with laying out of the dead was wont to be intrusted to her good offices.

This happy household was broken up by an unlooked-for loss of property, and Madame Besson was at one time so poor as to be obliged to act as a servant, both in a hotel and in private families. She was a woman of uncommon personal beauty, and of great sweetness and elevation of character, and under every vicissitude seems to have been able to command valuable friends both for herself and for her little son, through whose aid he obtained an education which he could not otherwise have hoped for. His extraordinary artistic talents were early recognised. He studied under De la Roche, and made more than one journey to Rome for improvement in an art to which he gave himself with passionate devotion, though not to the exclusion of social questions, to which his mind was early and strongly drawn. He became a disciple of M. Buchez, afterwards, in 1848, President of the National Assembly, whose lofty integrity of purpose and sincere devotion to truth gave him, at this time, a strong hold over the minds of the more serious and ardent youth.

His school was one of courageous reaction against materialism and revolutionary atheism. Besson, after his conversion to Christ, looked back to M. Buchez with profound respect, as having been one of the means that led him to his Saviour, and there is no doubt that, among the many socialistic schools of this era, this one was the most Christian in its tendencies, because it held duty as its foundation,—the duty of a universal fraternity as revealed to humanity by Jesus through word and act. It preached the fulfilling of this law as the accomplishing of all that God requires from man ; but the weak spot in this theory, as of many others equally generous, was its manifest incompetency to carry out its own behests, sin and discord having made fraternal love impossible to our fallen nature, unless that nature is supernaturally renewed and strengthened by a love which is itself the gift of God, and the pledge of union with Him. There was also a germ of tyranny latent in the doctrines of Buchez, a disposition to compel associated work and united profits. France was to be the centre of an armed propaganda, and its people were to be the soldier-apostles of Fraternity, en-

forcing upon other nations the doctrines which had made of it a nation of brothers. In this millennium all evil chances—poverty, illness, and over-competition—were theoretically provided against, and an end made to the old antagonism between capital and labour. Besson's generous nature entered deeply into these illusions. Nothing, even in these early days, made him so happy as to share whatever he possessed, be it his time, his colours, his money. His liberality to the poor was without bounds. About this time the reading of the Gospels opened his heart to a deeper teaching. A divine voice called to him by name from those blessed pages, and his whole soul went back to them for answer in the words, *Rabboni, Master.*

Returning to Rome for the further study of his art, he came in contact with Piel, whom he had already known at the school of M. Buchez, and also with Lacordaire. His life at this time, as it is described by M. Cartier, his brother in faith and art and in affection, is full of a quiet poetry. Besson's mother was then living with him, and also a young artist friend, Louis Cabat, afterwards celebrated as a landscape painter.

The two friends spent their time in severe work, varied by days of wandering, pencil in hand, through Rome and its environs; passing from the contemplation of antique art to that of living nature, and finding each illustrate and interpret the other. Besson, like his countryman Poussin, had a peculiar appreciation for the wide horizons of the Roman Campagna; he loved the melancholy splendour of their broad and equal light, and studied them, says M. Cartier, under every line and aspect, as a musician does his chords. No form of passing cloud, no glory of flitting sunbeam escaped him; no hint of grace or dignity of human gesture and aspect, even to the picturesque flutter of a beggar's rags. His love for painting was so enthralling, that he used to say that he felt persuaded it must form one of the felicities of the life to come, and that, as regarded present time, he could be contented to spend his life, with his pencil, in a desert, with none to witness or delight in his work, and no reward beyond the pure pleasure it gave. Yet his spirit had even now entered upon the path which admits of no reservations. He became a Dominican; and although Lacordaire left him free to continue

the exercise of his art, he laid it aside for ever, giving away or burning his drawings, 'in the dread of a divided heart.'

His views on this point appear to have received modification, as he seems from time to time to have resumed his pencil for the service and delight of the Church, and long after this painted the frescoes in the chapel of St. Sextus at Rome; but art was henceforth to him, like all other things, subordinated to the leading passion of his life. His love for it became only one among the many separated streams of human beauty, feeling, and intelligence which met and mingled

'Confederate with the current of his soul,'

in the broad flow of his charity, surrounding all things as the ocean encompasses the world. His heart was the subject of God's most great and glorious miracle; like the bush that Moses saw, it was burning, yet unconsumed; on fire with love, warming, enlightening, purifying all that came within the sphere of its influence. When the cholera, in 1849, ravaged the neighbourhood of Nancy, Besson went to the aid of the overtaken parochial clergy. The progress of the disease had spread such a general

panic that it was sometimes difficult to find any one to bury the dead. Besson was ready for every task, from administering the sacraments, to the humblest duties that the care of the sick required. It was his hands that laid out the dead with careful tenderness, and even nailed up the hastily constructed coffins. Peace followed wherever he went, even into the very midst of poverty, squalor, and spiritual abandonment. Desolate hearts were opened to him, and despair loosened its hold wherever the 'white priest' came with his words of heavenly consolation. Forlorn and forsaken hearts found it easier to depart in that benignant presence, bringing its *vaticum* of love, to strengthen them against the dark, cold journey. For the soul, and its deep wants and needs, Besson was, as one of his penitents expresses it, '*all charity*;' patient and discreet, he never hurried anything, never in his eagerness after perfection *anticipated* Divine grace, but led the mind gently onwards, so as to avoid relapses and discouragements. His letters¹ on spiritual subjects are models of the truest wisdom; it is scarcely possible to open

¹ See Note F.

them even at random without meeting the touch of the loving, guiding 'Hand, holding forth a leaf from the tree of life,'¹ and skilled to apply its healing virtues to the soul's deepest hurts. Besson was not only eminent in tenderness and humility; his life in at least two very difficult contingencies brought him into circumstances which called for the assertion of no ordinary firmness, constancy, and judgment, and evidenced the highest degree of each. He seems to have been one, in whom qualities usually opposed and balanced met in harmony, giving a result of the rarest excellence, 'like perfect music set to noble words.' To trace even the outlines of his bright career would fill a space that cannot be here afforded,² or I might be tempted to linger over the account of his

¹ John Bunyan.

² Besson's mission to Mossoul, to any other than a devoted member of the Church of Rome, must appear an unnecessary and even vexatious one. The Church of Rome, even from the times of the early Dominicans and Jesuits, has always had a missionary work in this part of the East, a work which has been lately interfered with by the successful exertions of the American Protestant missionaries, and at all times greatly held in check by the devoted attachment of the eastern Christians to their own time-endearing rites and liturgies, and their strong spirit of resistance to the exclusive pretensions of the See of Rome. As M. Cartier, the biographer

two missions to the East, rich in idyllic pictures of a land which is supposed to have been the home of our first parents, and which still presents the most lovely pastoral landscape the world has to show. This was the olden Mesopotamia, the land lying between the two ancient rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates. Here Besson's apostolic soul found a field for its energy in ardent desire and effort for evangelizing the various tribes and orders of men that

of Besson, remarks with some simplicity,—‘There is among Orientals an unfortunate *pride of nationality*, which tends to keep them at a distance from that admirable unity in Jesus Christ, where there is neither Jew nor Greek. *Even those who have submitted to the Church* seem more attached to their ritual than to their creed; and, *in spite of all the benefits they have received from the Holy See*, they always betray their wish to oppose a rival hierarchy to it, by drawing themselves into union with all who use the same liturgy.’

At the time of Besson's mission to Mossoul, the Chaldean Christians had shown a strong desire to free themselves altogether from the authority of Rome, and his second journey to the East was caused by violent agitation originating in a desire expressed by the Malabar Christians (converted to the faith by the apostle Thomas), to have their bishops consecrated by the Chaldean Nestorian Patriarch, under whose jurisdiction they had been until 1599, when they were brought into apparently unwilling unity with Rome by the efforts of the then Archbishop of Goa.—(See on this subject Buchanan's *Christian Researches in India*.) The Latin usages had never won their full adhesion,

surrounded him, Chaldean Christians, Nestorians, Kurds, Mussulmans; while his every moment was spent in succouring the sick, who came to him in bands, sometimes by hundreds at a time, one group succeeding another so rapidly as to give him scarcely a moment's time for sleep or food. His medical abilities were naturally great, and his reputation for sanctity invested his skill with the prestige of miracle. His health

and they now claimed union with the Chaldean Nestorians, on the ground of the same rites, the same liturgy, and the same historical Church tradition, dating from times anterior to the Romish 'unity,' to which their fathers had been forcibly compelled.

Besson was sent out to heal this schism. His situation was a very difficult one. The Church of Rome was very anxious to conciliate the Eastern Christians, even to the extent of tolerating the idea of 'a great secondary unity, under the Chaldean Patriarch, with rites and liturgies of its own.' In reading Besson's life one feels that he was in some degree thrown over and sacrificed to the exigencies of his position. His letters to Rome were scarcely answered, and he was warned not to compromise the interests of the Church, through want of gentleness and moderation!

The Pope wrote a paternal letter to the Patriarch, inviting him to a personal explanation, and the Propaganda showed no energy in supporting the energetic efforts of Besson and his brother missionaries. 'The rebellious children,' says M. Cartier, 'were to be won back by favours and indulgences, not extended to those who were faithful and obedient.'

sank under these extraordinary labours, joined to cares and vexations of the most intricate and harassing kind, which grew out of the nature of his mission ; and he died at the convent of Mar Jacob, near Mossoul, in comparatively early life.

‘ He being made perfect in a short time fulfilled a long time :

For his soul pleased the Lord, therefore hastened He to take him away.’

To these names we must add that of Hershheim, whom Piel brought with him from France,—a young man of Jewish origin, deeply read in philosophy, both human and divine. ‘ His,’ says Lacordaire, ‘ was a firm and deep and subtle spirit, at once profound and eloquent ; we hoped we had found in him a true preacher able to set forth the deep things of God, when illness snatched him from us. He died, esteeming himself a stone sunken in the foundation of our spiritual building, unseen by men, but happy in being so hidden.’

The strictest unity reigned in this little spiritual family. ‘ We have among us,’ writes Lacordaire, ‘ but one heart—we are too happy ;’—but sacrifice was soon to set its mark upon them. They were to be baptized into their Lord’s death. Lacordaire

seems to have been peculiarly attached to Réquedat. Writing of him to Madame Swetchine, he says,—‘ My young companion is a saint, and, at the same time, a tender, devoted friend. I have already known and loved many young men, who made holiness amiable ; but in him there is something which exceeds all that one imagines.’ He was attacked with pulmonary consumption ; Lacordaire nursed him during a long decline, under which he finally sank, meeting death with simple and humble resignation. His death was a sharp pang to the hearts that loved him, and one keenly felt by Lacordaire, who writes,—‘ I have lost my first friend, and the one of whom I have the most need. No one had ever so warmly attached himself to me ; no one joined such high natural qualities to such eminent Christian graces. I have seen none so quickly attain an altogether supernatural degree of perfection. In prayer, in penitence, in abnegation, in charity that knew no bounds,—what in all these points am I myself when compared with him ! And yet, God has seen fit to take him from us. After four months of deep inward felicity, he was suddenly and doubly cast down,—struck in his

body by illness, and in his soul by a desolating aridity—(*une sécheresse désespérante*) unremoveable by his most ardent prayers. During the fourteen months of his illness, not one ray of consolation ever gladdened his soul, and of his continual approaches to God, there remained nothing with him but their merit. In seeing him pray, you would have imagined him in an ecstasy of bliss, so entirely did he seem absorbed in God, and yet all his advances were repelled. God, who knew how short his time was to be, heaped on him the rigour of centuries of penitence. How the dealings of God vary! To me all has been made open; all made smooth! God's hand has never been heavy upon me longer than for a single day. His rigours have been but passing ones, like storm clouds passing over a serene sky,—*all things have succeeded with me, even to my very faults.* Yet Réquedat in four months surpassed what I have attained to, after a conversion of sixteen years. I possess every secret of his spiritual life; yet dare scarcely speak of what I well know, it so far exceeds credibility.'

The stroke of separation fell not less severely on Piel; when his friend's body

was placed in the coffin he threw himself upon it, and exclaimed with a cry of terrible emotion, before all the astonished brethren, 'Our God is a jealous God; we are paying Him now the tithes and first-fruits. Could a better Frenchman die for the re-establishment of our order in France? Who ever loved his country as he did, and who would so willingly have died for her? He *has* done so, and has won a benediction for our labours.'

Eight months after this Piel died; his friend, by whom he had been drawn to faith and to a religious life, seemed now to bid him follow him to heaven. In the May of 1841, the brethren were together for a short time in Rome, spending some days in visiting sacred spots, in silence and in united prayer. As they ascended the Santa Scala together on their knees, Piel, staying behind the others, felt himself inspired to offer up his life for his brethren. A few days after this he felt the first beginnings of illness, and went out to meet death with tranquil serenity. Lacordaire, on returning to the convent after a temporary absence, writes,— 'Piel's disorder has made fearful progress during the last four months; I found little

of him left but his soul, and that is full of life, calm, serene, resigned, and even gay to a degree that is inconceivable. Réquedat was also resigned; he had also offered up his life in sacrifice to God, but in his peace there was something austere, while Piel seemed to play with death, and to be as free from regret as he was from temptations. It seemed as if he had been waiting all his life to die just at this very moment.'

Piel confessed every day, and often with abundant tears. He said to a friend who came from Paris to see him, 'I may die any day, and what a favour has been shown me! I am dying in the order which prays more than any other for the dead—listen! Even now you may hear the fathers chanting the *De Profundis*; it is their duty to repeat it every time they pass through the cloisters.' Long after Piel's death, and when the Dominican order was firmly established in France, Lacordaire paid a tribute, before the assembled brethren, to the memory of this young man—recalling his varied gifts, his eloquence, the sharp decision and energy of his character, his heroic uncompromising spirit, and the ardour of his ascetic aspirations. 'There was in Piel wherewithal to

form both the orator and the saint; his words often reminded one of the style of Pascal.'

To these bright names must be added that of De Beaussant, who connected himself with the first establishment of the order in France, by the gift of a house at Nancy, only large enough to accommodate five or six monks, of which Lacordaire took possession in the Easter of 1843. 'Everything there,' he says, 'was small, modest, and on the most limited scale imaginable, but considering that we had not possessed a nail's breadth of land in France for fifty years, nor the tile of a single roof over our heads, I am inexpressibly delighted with all I find.' M. de Beaussant added a chapel, a refectory, and some additional cells to his gift, and, some years later, brought a still more generous donation to the Order in joining himself to it. Lacordaire describes him as 'young, with a fortune which enabled him to carry out all his liberal and elevated tastes. He was an artist, had travelled much, was endowed with uncommon social talents (*doué d'un esprit de salon remarquable*) and with an amenity that all delighted in. He had lived until now absorbed in the blameless

but unsatisfying pleasures of the society in which he was so much beloved, a stranger to any serious thoughts of religion. Yet he was marked by the invisible sign of election. Some months before I met him he had strayed, on his way back from Italy, accidentally into a church at Marseilles, and heard there his first call to God. Since then the arrow had been within his heart, though he yet wandered upon those burning confines where the world and the gospel meet for their last struggle. The light had risen on him, but it reigned yet imperfectly over the territory it had conquered. . . . He was among the young Lorrainers to whose hearts my preaching went home. All the other disciples who had so far sought me, coming out of the ranks of laic society, had seemed to do so under the pressure of an overmastering enthusiasm, but M. de Beaussant controlled himself without effort. Circumspect under the very fire of a quick imagination, he charmed me by the union of ardour and solidity. After he joined us, and tried, although his health required every indulgence, to live as we did, and to accustom himself to our austerities, this great change in his way of living took nothing from the

charm of his intercourse. He kept all the graces of his brilliant nature, and was still gay, simple, attaching, making us love God along with him (*faisant aimer Dieu avec lui*). We lost him in 1852, and I look upon him and Réquedat, in their different order, as the first-fruits of our resurrection in France. Réquedat gave the first soul to our building, and De Beaussant gave us the first stone.'

'As Time one day by me did passe
Through a large dusky glasse
He held, I chanced to look,
And spyed his curious book
Of past days, where sad Heaven did shed
A mourning light upon the dead.

Many disordered lives I saw,
And foul records which thaw
My kinde eyes stell, *but in*
A fair white page of thin
And ev'n, smooth lines like the Sun's rays,
These names were writ, and all their days.

'O bright and happy Kalendar !
Where youth shines like a star
All pearl'd with tears, and may
Teach age the Holy Way
Where through thick pangs, high agonies
Faith into life breaks, and death dies.'

CHAPTER V.

CONTEST FOR FREEDOM OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION—LACORDAIRE'S MONASTIC LIFE—HIS AUSTERITIES—DOCTRINE OF EXPIATION.

DURING the Advent of 1843, Lacordaire resumed his conferences at Notre Dame, preaching with all his wonted eloquence on a high and congenial theme, the vocation of France; and after thus, in M. Montalembert's words, 'inaugurating in France the monastic frock which she had not seen for fifty years,' he retired, dividing his time between the Italian cloister and visits to the southern provinces of France, until 1843 called him to a new and worthy struggle—a fight for his two cherished objects, the kindred causes of liberty of teaching, and freedom to form religious associations. The war was hotly waged. 'On one

side,' says M. de Montalembert, 'the bishops and Catholic publicists claimed the practical carrying out of the liberty promised in the charter of 1830; the university party defended its monopoly of instruction, availing itself to good purpose of the inherited unpopularity of the Jesuits; while both statesmen and the general public took alarm at the prospect of so much power passing into the hands of the Church, and foreboded from the invasion of a new race of monks that an insidious hold might be laid upon popular education. "*We owe them nothing but expulsion!*"' was the cry.' But on the other side was equal, even superior ardour. Lacordaire calls this 'the most dangerous, yet the most decisive of all his many campaigns.' It was the heroic age of the great combat for religious freedom, the re-conquest of the civic rights of Catholicism. The van was led by two illustrious men, a Dominican and a Jesuit—two great Christian orators, the devoted advocates of freedom and of education, men morally raised above even the shadow of a jealous rivalry of each other. 'We fought together,' says Lacordaire, writing of the Père Ravignan, 'for Christian liberty under the flag of public liberty.'

The Père Ravignan claimed for himself as a citizen, in the name of the charter and of the liberty of conscience granted to all, the right of being and of calling himself a Jesuit. Lacordaire followed a different course. He did not enter into either controversy or argument. In all his discourses of this time there is not one allusion to politics or to the public law. But his very appearance in his white Dominican robe¹

¹ There is characteristic sincerity in the stress which Lacordaire lays upon his appearance in his Dominican frock in the pulpit of Notre Dame. The Archbishop of Paris seems to have been particularly anxious that he should have, on this occasion, exchanged it for the ordinary *soutane* of the priest, and most of his friends thought it would be well that he should consent to make this concession at once to public feeling, and to the still existing laws against monasticism. Madame Swetchine writes him a long letter on the subject, reminding him that there is nothing so little Catholic as inflexibility; that exception and dispensation are among the Church's most majestic attributes, and that we should remember it is only that which concerns the conscience which is imprescriptible. But Lacordaire felt that, in giving up his dress even for a single day, he was giving up a principle. 'I have worn it,' he writes, 'in the pulpits of Paris, of Bordeaux, of Nancy. I have been six times in it across the length of France, and everywhere I have won for it respect. To what shall I now give it up? To the clamours of an irreligious press?—to the fear of Government? Shall I give Notre Dame the spectacle of a monk who, after a certain show of courage, draws back and disguises him-

was, as he expresses it, a kind of liberty ; it was a protest against the worn-out yet still existing prohibition of religious association. He was himself, too, a lofty argument in favour of the principles he advocated. He was a monk, a descendant of the Inquisitors, and as such he was under the ban of Government, and unbefriended by general opinion ; yet he was a man of pure and

self to cry mercy and pardon ? You tell me that it is a great occasion, that Catholics look anxiously to me for support and consolation ; the less reason, then, that I should prepare them a sorrowful surprise. What we now need is to prove to France that our hearts are not weakened and that our speech is free ; and I had a hundred times better be silent than betray such a hope. Religion does not need triumphs ; she can do without my sermon at Notre Dame. God is ever there to sustain and honour her even in humiliation. What she does need is that her children should not lessen either her or themselves. Whatever comes to her from her enemies can never hurt her. She is only discouraged when her children bring her to shame. . . . And also, after many other considerations, I will come to one which is altogether personal. Character is that which must be preserved at all costs, for it is character which makes the moral force of man ; and do you not, my dear friend, see how much mine would be lowered were I to make the sacrifice you are recommending ? Duty and dignity must come before all. If there is only one man in France who looks to me for moral support, I have no right to sadden the heart of that man by falling short just where he has a right to expect me to stand firm.'

pious life, of matchless eloquence, the tried champion of popular liberty ; a man full of ardour in the service of his fellow-men, known to have hazarded his life for them in times of pestilence. Was such a man, with the order he belonged to, to be banished ? Lacordaire went preaching throughout the length and breadth of France, retrieving for the French pulpit the old glories and renowns of its sacred oratory ; familiarizing men's eyes and hearts with the sight of his monastic garb ; silently bearing down opposition ; conquering, as truth conquers, and as beauty conquers, by simply showing themselves to be what they are. Every here and there he founded a religious house, and left behind him a little nucleus of monks. Once again he took his place in the great metropolitan pulpit, to win there a yet purer success, a yet wider empire than of old. While he confirmed the Catholic party in strenuous endeavour for the present, in lofty hope for future days, he had no bitter accent, no envenomed word for those upon the opposite side. He knew, says the Père Chocarne, how to remain true to the region of principles, without ever lowering himself to those wounding per-

sonalities which degrade even the noblest cause.

His life was now for many years divided between the pulpit and the cloister. It was a life of strangely blended elements. He was on one side an orator, swaying the hearts and intellects of thousands, and feeling on his own part the full force of that mysterious counter-spell of attraction through which the warm, living heart of humanity reacts upon the hearts that have power to move it deeply. He breathed an atmosphere charged with the quick electrical currents of feeling,—laden, as with some heavy perfume, with intoxicating mental triumph. It was a life made sweet with endearing personal intercourse, and rich with the warm glow that contact and communion give ; and yet this life, around which so many other lives grew and clustered, was spent in a solitude that was awful, in a neighbourhood that was more awful still. He was alone with himself and with God.

For we must remember that Lacordaire was a monk, and learn to enter a little into the secrets of an order of life in some degree foreign to the spirit of the age we live in,

though it can never be foreign to the genius of Christianity, and must, under one form or other, reproduce itself whenever the cross has pierced deep enough to transform life into its own likeness. The ideal of Christianity which we now most love to contemplate is that which is attained by the full and pure development of natural life, with all its rich capabilities of beauty and excellence. Yet in nature itself there still remains waste and barren ground that offer no hope of harvest; there are jungles never to be cleared; wells of Marah unsweetened by any healing leaf; places given over to perpetual desolation, haunted only by the bittern's cry. In Nature itself, according to one of Lacordaire's deepest sayings, there is something *which can only be justified from the point of view which grace assumes*—a manifest loss and failure—many unfulfilled prophecies, many broken promises. In nature there is decay and death, a deep confession of inadequacy, a solemn appealing litany of anguish, a great continual cry to which there is no answer found, save in the cry which went up from God himself upon the cross. '*Like cures like.*' The hurts of the soul are only to be healed through a deepened wound;

its truest life is to be won through voluntary death. Even Paganism has not altogether missed this truth. Witness 'its tragic, even convulsive, efforts to die to self and live to God.'¹ In the monastic life the principle of self-abnegation, essential to the very nature of Christianity, is raised to the degree of self-immolation, and yet we shall find that this life has a twofold aspect.

When looked at, says the Père Chocarne, from without, it is the life of men living in a fellowship of prayer and labour, devoted to a common aim, who to attain it with more simplicity and directness have freed themselves from every outward impediment. It is the life of fraternity, of rule and order, the detached, disembarrassed life, ready for any service that may present itself,—a life, in the spiritual order of things, much resembling that of the soldier, the colonist, the pioneer in the natural. It is a life of freedom from the desires, the cares, the haunting importunities of this present world, 'troublesome and yet beloved' by the restless insatiable heart of man. Yet the conception of monasticism which goes no deeper than

¹ Möhler's *Symbolik*, speaking of the Hindu Yogees.

this, stops very far short of the ideal to which we find it raised in the lives of men like Lacordaire and Besson. The whole of such lives, with their aspirations and affections, are lived upon a higher plane than that of nature; they are lives lived upon a supernatural level, fraught with supernatural energy, and filled with a solemn peace,—peace obtained at a great cost, *even that of a complete break with nature.* It is evident that such a life must have dangers of its own,—dread possibilities of collapse and of reaction, and no less evident that such dangers must press far more keenly on the quick sensibilities of the man of our present day than they did upon the monk of an age when feeling was less intense, and thought less complicated. The cloister, which was then a haven against rude outward temptation, may become itself a snare. Yet there will be ever spirits to whom the more perfect way will appear the only possible one—spirits who must win or lose all. It is difficult for a Protestant to enter into the awful yet tender sense of familiarity of God which many of the expressions used by such men convey; hard, without a due appreciation of the great theological ideas upon which

the words they employ are founded, not to feel a shock at the sacred boldness of the terminology they are not afraid to use. These are the 'men of desire,' upon whom a holy and a jealous God has laid a divine constraint,¹ awakening them to transports, to sorrows, such as the natural man cannot conceive of,—'creating in their hearts the torment of an eternal love,' and with that love the thirst for union with God, only to be attained through self-immolation. 'All religious discipline,' says the Père Chocarne, 'is based upon the great law of *a bond re-established between God and man through sacrifice*. A monk is the voluntary victim of love. He is one who does not wait till the touch of death frees and purifies the soul, but who does each day the work of death in his own body; who fulfils in himself God's justice through the scourge of penance. The passion of the true monk is for self-immolation, the more generous half of love.'

¹ Besson, writing to his mother immediately after his ordination, says,—'Oh, my dear mother, how unfathomable are the joys of God! I am happy, happy in a bliss for which I can find no words; grace inundates, overflows, *overwhelms* my heart. Thy child no longer knows himself. He loves, and he would love yet more; our poor human heart is too limited for such felicities.'

‘Come, my brethren,’ says Besson in one of his earlier addresses, ‘let us arm our hearts with invincible confidence. Jesus our Saviour has overcome the world, and he has overcome it even as we to-day must triumph over it. *He conquered it through giving Himself for it.* Immolation is the voice of a great cry going up between earth and heaven; it is a celestial bread, which once divinely offered, consecrated, broken on the cross, has for six thousand years sustained, healed, and vivified the children of men. Immolation is the food of the strong in Christ; it is the incorruptible bread on which Jesus was each day nourished, and which He gives abundantly to His chosen ones.’

‘God only knows,’ says the Père Chocarne, ‘to what extremes Lacordaire, during his whole life, carried the heroic imitation of the Saviour’s Passion. Even before his conversion the idea of the crucified Son of God had risen on him with a strange and solemn attraction, and he has himself told us how, in the early days of his calling to God, he was possessed by the thought of the Saviour submitting, through love to man, to infamy and death; how this thought

gave him no rest, and made him wish that he, like his Master, might be exposed to suffering and to shame before the eyes of all. A God and a cross, this of all the mysteries of Christianity was the one which most deeply moved every susceptibility of his ardent and susceptible nature,—a combination, say even a contradiction, which, while it overwhelmed his intellect, touched his heart to its very depths. Through the wounds of Him “who was found guilty of excess of love” he learnt to know Love’s mystery and Love’s strength; he saw that the remedy for all mortal misery lies in suffering and in humiliation, in anguish of body and of mind. He became a monk that he might the more closely follow Jesus in the path of abnegation, and in doing so made choice of the order in which bodily austerities are held in most esteem, so that he might carry out his theory of suffering,—of suffering for the sake of expiation, of suffering for the sake of love, into vigorous and continual action. To suffer with Christ the Divine victim, for the good of souls, was his source of inward strength and rejoicing; and the thought of spending himself, and being spent towards this high end, seemed

to lift his mind above itself, and to throw it into a kind of ravishment. "To suffer with Christ," he would exclaim, "for his glory, and to save souls for Him; do you understand all that there is in this—the joy, the bliss, the ecstasy?" Death, actual death, did not appear at such times to suffice to his desire for immolation; it was suffering which he ardently desired to offer up to God; it was suffering that in the deep secret and shadow of his penitences went up continually on behalf of his spiritual children; for such of his friends as he thought in circumstances of danger, for his light-hearted young pupils, who little thought that some word carelessly spoken in a confidential moment, or some deeper utterance of the confessional, had brought this true priest to his knees before God, and provoked in his soul "the heroic generosity of expiation."

So strange, and to us so terrible, seems Lacordaire's secret history, that we do not wonder that the Père Chocarne himself, in relating it, blends with his admiring awe an evident shrinking and apology. I have but to give these facts as he relates them, without adding any comment of my own, or striving to

throw any other light upon the record than such as will naturally fall when we come to consider the questions of salvation in which our own views of divine things differ radically and essentially from those of the communion of Rome. The facts with which we are now concerned were, during Lacordaire's lifetime, entirely hidden from all except his brethren, the sharers and ministrants of his deeds of penance. Even his religious friends are supposed to have known nothing of what his death has now given to light. Immediately after mass, and while his face was yet lighted up with ineffable joy, he would seek the cell of one of his brethren, kneel humbly down, lay bare his shoulders, and beg for the full severities of discipline. Rising from it all bleeding, he would press his lips upon the feet of him who had chastised him, and overwhelm him with expressions of gratitude. Sometimes he would place himself under the monk's feet, and remain there a quarter of an hour in silence; sometimes he would not be content without the bestowal of still ruder chastisements, he must be boxed on the ears, be spit upon—be ordered about like a slave. 'Go, wretch; brush my shoes; bring me

this thing or that ;' he must even be spurned like a dog. The Père Chocarne remarks with some *naïveté* that these exercises, which were constantly renewed, were very trying to those who assisted at them, and adds that the executioner would often have willingly changed places with the victim !

We are told that while his horror of ostentation indisposed him to public penitences, yet his ardent desire for humiliations sometimes led him to break through this reserve. Once in the convent at Chalais, after having delivered an affecting sermon on humility, he felt irresistibly impelled to follow up precept by example. He came down from the pulpit, begged the assembled brethren to treat him with the severity he deserved, and uncovering his shoulders, received from each of them twenty-five strokes. The community was a large one ; the ordeal lasted a long time. Brethren, novices, and fathers stood by in deep emotion until all was over, and Lacordaire rose up pale and exhausted.

All this, however, was little to what his biographer tells us of ' the incredible inventions, the industries of his love for the Cross.' The chapter-room of the convent

at Flavigny was supported by a wooden pillar; he made of it a column of flagellation. Immediately on arriving at the convent, he would confess, and after confession, repairing to the chapter-room, he would cause himself to be bound to this pillar, his hands tied behind his back, his shoulders bared, and be soundly flogged by two novices. In the ancient church of the Carmelites at Paris, there is a certain crypt or subterranean chapel, which seemed to him admirably adapted for the mysteries of suffering. Through a long corridor stretched two rows of vaults filled with bones and with death's-heads, while the corridor itself opened into a yet vaster hall, adorned with funereal mottoes, and the insignia of death. It was used as a chapel, where mass was said for the departed. To these vaults, in earlier times reserved for the most illustrious entombments, had been more lately gathered the dust of many of the victims of the revolution: the walls of some chambers in the convent were still marked with the traces of the massacres of 1793. No spot could be more fitted for a place of penitence. Lacordaire often wished to transform this crypt into a Calvary, and to raise there the

cross, and the emblems of the Saviour's Passion; but not being able to carry out this project, he contented himself with descending there from time to time, and alone, or with one other monk, giving himself up to the full austerities of discipline. One Good Friday, he made himself a cross, raised it in this subterranean chapel, and, bound to it with cords, remained upon it three hours.

'How little,' says the Père Chocarne, 'was it imagined by the crowd who hung upon Lacordaire's accents; how little was it guessed by the many, who were perhaps ready to accuse the brilliant orator of vanity and self-occupation, that the day of one of his famous *conférences* was invariably ended by a severe flagellation, never omitted, however great his physical and mental weariness might be. His constant study of the Passion of Jesus Christ had inspired him with so ardent a desire to imitate the two great manifestations of a Saviour's love, humiliation and suffering, that he could never have enough of correction or of confession. Not only would he confess to priests and fathers, but would frequently beg the youngest novice to tell him openly

of his faults ;¹ would frequently insist upon some humbler lay brother giving him the discipline. Whatever form of expiation might be most wounding at once to sensibility and to pride, was sure to attract him most strongly. Hence his love for general confessions ; his weekly ones did not seem to satisfy him, he must pour out his soul in more plenary, more deeply humbling, acknowledgments. And he never failed to celebrate every important anniversary, such as that of his birth, ordination, and religious profession, by a general confession. At these times he would divest himself of part of his clothing, put a leather strap round

¹ We are told that Lacordaire had sometimes to be prevented confessing his sins to the inexperienced novices by the elder brethren, who would enlarge to him upon the manifest inexpediency of doing so. To those who know something of the humiliation involved in a true confession, who have felt how difficult it is to be simple and sincere, and who know how naturally the soul shrinks from laying bare its true hurts, so that there is ever something, most deep and rankling of all, which it would fain keep back altogether, the exercise of this great Christian privilege seems to demand a wise and experienced auditor ; one recognised as a spiritual superior, or at any rate an equal. To confess to one admitted to be far below us in experience and character gives a shock to something within us that is far deeper and truer than mere pride ; and it is difficult to imagine anything more artificial and constraining than the feel-

his neck, and after each fault of which he accused himself, his confessor had to drag him along the ground, to trample him under foot, and to give him a number of lashes with a horsewhip. This confession lasted more than an hour. When it was over, he would beg his director to spit in his face, to load him with humiliating epithets, to treat him like some vile and unclean animal, unworthy of being touched.' . . .

These penitences were almost always ended by spiritual conversation; and we are told that when Lacordaire rose up, his body lacerated, his face bathed with tears, his soul went forth to God in transports of

ing which, when Lacordaire confessed to a novice, could scarcely fail to be created on either side, or anything less in harmony with the relation in which each originally stood to the other. One feels too, that there could be little of real humiliation in being flogged by an admiring, adoring disciple, shedding tears over the strokes he is compelled to inflict. How much more trying to pride and natural self-esteem are the ordinary slights and checks they are doomed to encounter in the routine of everyday life! Lacordaire himself, writing to one of his youthful converts, says,—‘Your want of health is a great trial to you, and the natural cause of much that you spiritually deplore. You must take it in the light of being your greatest penitence, and offer it frequently to God. *Our most painful mortifications are those which are not taken up by us at will, and which neither begin nor finish at our pleasure.*’

love which no language is strong enough to find words for. His biographer tells us his love for penitence, for suffering, even for opprobrium, was the foundation of his whole inner life; the invisible key through which the purity and peace, so visible to all, had won the citadel of his soul, and through which they kept it unalterably their own. From the day immediately following that of his conversion to God—when, as he has told us, he was pursued by the strange desire to hire a little Savoyard boy to flog him through the streets of Paris—to that of his death, voluntary suffering, under every varied form, seemed to have become to him the very bread of life. Its exercises were kept as secret as possible from the world; but it could not be concealed from his brethren that Lacordaire flogged himself daily, and many times in the day, and that during Lent, and on Good Friday, his whole body was literally broken and mangled. In 1861, when drawing very near his end, and no longer able to take food, his first words to a friend who came to visit him were to ask him to give him once more the discipline ‘for the love of Jesus Christ.’ And on the friend’s absolute refusal to do

his back, and after each fault of which he accused himself, his confessor had to drag him along the ground, to trample him under foot, and to give him a number of lashes with a horse-whip. This confession lasted more than an hour. When it was over, he would let his director to spit in his face, to beat him with humiliating epithets, to treat him like some vile and unclean animal, unworthy of being touched. . . .

These penitences were almost always ended by spiritual conversation: and we are told that when Lacordaire rose up, his body lacerated, his face bathed with tears, his soul went forth to God in transports of

ing virtue, when Lacordaire confessed to a novice, could scarcely be so created in either side, if anything less a harmony with the relation in which each originally stood to the other. One feels too, that there could be little of that humiliation in being dogged by an admiring, adoring disciple, shedding tears over the strokes he is compelled to inflict. How much more trying to prove the natural self-esteem are the ordinary slights and sneers they are doomed to encounter in the routine of everyday life. Lacordaire himself, writing to one of his youthful converts, says,—‘Your want of health is a great evil, and the natural cause of much that you suffer. You must take it in the light of a penitence, and offer it frequently to God. *Fortifications are those which do not begin with us, and which neither begin*

love which no language is strong enough to find words for. His biographer tells us his love for penitence, for suffering, even for opprobrium, was the foundation of his whole inner life; the invisible key through which the purity and peace, so visible to all, had won the citadel of his soul, and through which they kept it unalterably their own. From the day immediately following that of his conversion to God—when, as he has told us, he was pursued by the strange desire to hire a little Savoyard boy to flog him through the streets of Paris—to that of his death, voluntary suffering, under every varied form, seemed to have become to him the very bread of life. Its exercises were kept as secret as possible from the world; but it could not be concealed from his brethren that Lacordaire flogged himself daily, and many times in the day, and that during Lent, and on Good Friday, his whole body was literally broken and mangled. In 1861, when drawing very near his end, and no longer able to take food, his first words to a friend who came to visit him were to ask him to give him once more the discipline ‘for the love of Jesus Christ.’ And on the friend’s absolute refusal to do

so, he said, 'at least allow me to kiss your feet; it will be an exercise of penitence well pleasing to God.'

To understand this side of Lacordaire's character—its Godward side, as the Père Chocarne calls it,—we must remember that voluntary suffering, to the degree of self-immolation, was, under his view of the Divine counsels, the actual personal approach to the cross of Christ, and the solemn act of union with Him who made Himself there an offering and a ransom. Strange, fantastic, and mistaken as seem to us many of the forms his deep convictions prompted, we must not attribute them to a Manichean contempt of the body; but rather refer them to his desire to be a sharer in that death which his Saviour and God tasted once for every man, and to his longing to fill up for the Church's sake that which in His Lord's unexampled suffering was left behind. The Cross for him had no terror, but rather a solemn and deep attraction;¹ he had learnt something of the

¹ He inquired one day of some young monks what was their especial devotion; one said, his was the Holy Eucharist; another, the Blessed Virgin; a third, the desire of saving souls; 'and mine,' said Lacordaire, 'the one which I never quit, is Jesus Christ upon the Cross.'

love which is not only as strong as death, but which leads to death itself; he desired to bear in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus, to wear the print of those victorious tokens of His love, 'the stripes through which we were healed.' Lacordaire, we must remember, was not only a Christian, believing in the sacred mystery of redemption—that common treasure of the universal Christian Church,—but a Catholic, a Roman Catholic, holding firmly by the great doctrines which in his Church are deduced from that cardinal decree of man's salvation. To him, as for his whole Church, the great verity of redemption had expanded and blossomed into that belief in expiation, through the might of which the Church of Rome achieves such miracles of labour and of love. That the innocent should suffer for the guilty was to him no high unapproachable dogma, but a fact constantly realized, an act continually imitated, one of the 'common things' of Christian faith and life. The power of voluntary suffering to

Absit mihi gloriari nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi. The Cross is the pathway to heaven, the pathway of love. Jesus Christ chose the way of Calvary, and I have no other choice but to live and to die in it.'

atone for guilt is one of those innate, eternal verities to which all history and all experience testify. Not only Greek and Roman antiquity, with its world-famous devotions, is full of the idea that guilt and punishment and doom are capable of imputation and of transference—but the same idea,¹ clothed often in the most affecting forms, meets us in the East and in the West, in the North and in the South; we find it on the banks of the Ganges and on the wild stormy seas swept by Sigurd's

¹ It is related of the great Baber, that when upon a certain time Humaioon his eldest son fell dangerously ill, and all hope of his recovery was given up, it was remarked to him by one of his sages, that in such a case the Almighty had sometimes deigned to receive a man's most valuable possession as a ransom for the life of his friend. Baber thereupon exclaimed that next to the life of Humaioon, his own life was what he most valued, and that he would devote it as a sacrifice for his son. His counsellors entreated him to revoke the vow, and give the great diamond obtained at Agra,—reported to be the most valuable in the world,—but he persisted in declaring no jewel to be so dear as Life; and walking three times round the body of the dying prince, a ceremony solemnly observed in sacrifices and heave-offerings, retired and prayed earnestly to God, and after some time was heard to say,—*'I have borne it away, I have borne it away.'* The Moslem historians affirm that Humaioon immediately began to recover, and Baber proportionally to decline.—Caldecott's *Life of Baber*.

battle-flag, 'that bore victory wherever it appeared, but brought death to the bearer.' Whenever the veil which is over all nations has been so far lifted for a moment as to let a ray of light from heaven break through, it has revealed to us some spectacle of self-devotion; and if the idea of the unoffending making atonement for the erring, of the one being offered up for the many, seems now to come before the general mind less prominently than it did in the age of Iphigenia, of Decius, and of Ion, it is not because humanity feels less need of atoners and of intercessors, but because God has taken up the work that man darkly yet nobly felt after. He has made of Himself an offering for sin, and in doing so He has drawn all hearts that feel their own inherent imperfectibility to fasten on that one great and all-sufficient sacrifice. *He has shown mankind that when God would save the world, even He could only die for it.*

Everlasting proof of the deep necessity of sacrifice! Eternal testimony to the inadequacy of all systems that would exclude its intervention between God and man! The Cross of Christ brings consolation even to the groaning and travail of creation; it

gives a value even to the obscure suffering of mere animal life. In Lacordaire's own emphatic language, it '*justifies nature*,' and interprets her inarticulate appeals, her dumb agonies. Man suffers, and nature with him. His God, too, suffers. It is our brother's blood which crieth to us from the ground—the ground once cursed for our sakes—now ransomed and redeemed, and to be everlastingly blessed, for His. The cross of Christ bids us discern, if it be as yet through a glass darkly, that the martyr is but the voluntary victim of the same law to which the moth submits when it shrivels in 'no ineffectual fire.' The terminology which Roman Catholic writers employ in speaking of the redeeming death of Christ are foreign to Protestant intelligences, but not so the ideas on which the expressions they use are founded, for these form part of man's common heritage, not only in Christianity, but in humanity itself. There is many a loving, believing heart who never heard or read of *solidarity*, *reversibility*, or *expiation*, who yet lives and works and prays in the strength of thoughts to which it would not be able to give clear dogmatic expression. The gospel tells us that we are 'every one

members one of another, and that no man, either in Christ or Adam, liveth or dieth to himself,'—truths which bring into every action the sense of possibly infinite loss and gain we know not to how many. Catholicity gives this sense of mutual accountability a firm theological basis in that unalterable sense of the presence of Christ within His Church and the union of all its members in Him, which makes all within it linked and interdependent, even to the other after world and the souls it has received from this. But Protestantism also holds to these truths by their heart; and when our National Church had fallen on evil and degenerate days, it was not a Romanist who said, 'It is because we have so few high saints among us that we have so many low sinners.'

CHAPTER VI.

LACORDAIRE'S LIFE-LONG DEVOTION TO PUBLIC INTERESTS — DIFFICULTIES OF HIS RELATIONS WITH THE PAPACY—HIS RETURN TO POLITICAL LIFE, AND FINAL RETIREMENT.

LACORDAIRE'S time was now divided for some years between the pulpit, in which he won one long triumph, and the work which he considered *par excellence* the work of his life,—the restoration of the Dominican order in France. I have not been able to learn whether this monument of his love and labour has been an enduring one, and in the absence of statistics as to the increase and prosperity of the seven Dominican convents he founded, am at a loss to know how far the system has taken real root in France; or whether the vigour it displayed for a while was but galvanic,

drawn from the shock of contact with Lacordaire's own energy, to languish when that powerful impetus was withdrawn. There is always within the Church of Christ a vast reserved force of zeal and self-devotion, waiting for a voice to call it forth; there is always, in the Egypt of this world, an Israel of waiting and expectant souls, ready to leave the house of bondage, to seek a fuller and freer spiritual life in the wilderness, if but a Moses can be found to lead the way. The Church hides ever within her bosom the germ from which the life of fraternity springs; and we may believe that Renan is a true prophet in anticipating a time yet to come, when this principle, with all the free and generous devotions it calls forth, will once again be fully manifested among us, and prevail against that narrower conception of duty, now so apt to concentrate itself within the limits of family life, which he describes as *égoïsme à plusieurs* taking the place of *égoïsme à soi*. But when this powerful sentiment revives among us in strength and glory, may we not expect it will take fresh and living forms in harmony with the genius of all that then surrounds it? We shall

not surely need to call up the old monasticism from its tomb, knowing that it must arise like Lazarus, wrapped about the head and feet with grave-clothes. Lacordaire, in devoting his life to its restoration, seems to have contradicted a principle which, as regards political regeneration, he lays down very strongly. Here, he seems to have been well aware of the importance of putting new wine into new bottles, so that both may be preserved. 'Always,' he said, 'look before you, never behind. Never will mankind revert to the past; never will it return to old institutions and corporations, or seek aid from old aristocratic combinations, be the ills it suffers from never so great.'

The vehement political agitations of 1848 called Lacordaire from his peaceful labours in the Order, to share actively in the wide interests of that public life from which he had never been separated in heart. For we are considering his life in too narrow a spirit when we look upon it merely under its religious aspect. When we dwell upon his eminent austerities, as they lie before us in the pages of the Père Chocarne, or lend ourselves to the warm, intimate breath and

perfume of his letters to devout friends, all that does not belong directly to the religious life seems to disappear. The mind is apt to detach such a life from all that surrounds it, and to contemplate it in isolation from them, much as we would curiously scan some tropical tree or plant in a botanic garden,—a thing rare, beautiful, yet a thing apart. Yet how much would the stately palm or the broad banyan gain, could we see it flourishing under its own clear and wide horizon, *in harmony with all that surrounds it*, and testifying by its very presence to the principle of a solemn unity in nature! And we shall find that Lacordaire's true nobility grows the more upon us, the more deeply we are able to enter into that secret and double pre-occupation of his spirit, to which his whole life was framed. It is so hard in the strain and pressure of circumstance to be strictly true to any one ideal, so difficult to be found at all times faithful to even one firm outline of duty, that there is something truly great in Lacordaire's ability to be constant to two powerful and almost antagonistic principles; and we cannot doubt that much of the charm and hold

he exercised over other minds was owing to the extraordinary vigour and constancy of nature, which gave his whole life strength to expand into a heavy double-weighted fruitage, cleft like the pomegranate to its very core, yet undivided. His love for liberty was as real a passion as his love for the Church, and to each of these devotions life found him true, and death faithful, according to his memorable expression,—‘*I die a penitent Catholic, and an impenitent liberal.*’ He is a man at once mingled with all things and withdrawn from all. A monk always, and always a publicist, he is interested in the questions and affected by the aspirations of the day he lives in, yet he is a man who lives through all this his own life,—one of deep interior solitude, of prayer, of conflict, of utter self-abnegation. To follow his life’s current faithfully, is like tracking the course of some bright, abounding river, and seeing it from time to time sink down suddenly into darkness and silence, as if to run through subterranean depths,

‘ And caverns, measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.’

Yet after a while it will re-appear in the

sunshine and flow as before on its calm and fertilizing way. 'Lacordaire,' says the Abbé Perreyve, 'had learnt *the secret of a durable enthusiasm*. He always,' in the words of that eloquent panegyrist, 'remained the citizen of that immense world of hope, of desire, and endeavour, the world of great abstract questions, of high, unselfish aims, in which all true hearts find their home.' And yet this world is one in which the ideal and the actual are as much at war as they are in our outward circumstantial life; it is a world beset with all the vexed problems concerning property, labour, the relation of poor to rich, of employer to employed, from which selfish spirits would gladly detach their thoughts, 'giving it up altogether' as willingly as children do a conundrum which they find too difficult.

Few spirits seem ever to have been more imbued than Lacordaire's, with what he calls the genius of public life. He loves to contrast the spirit of true enlightened citizenship, such as Greece and Rome knew in the best days of each, with the spirit of narrow domesticity which has too much taken its place. Many of his words on this great subject are but too appropriate

to our present England, and to days like these we live in,

‘When good men
On every side fall off, we know not how,
To selfishness, *disguised in gentle names*
Of peace and quiet, and domestic love.’

‘Private life,’ he says, ‘when limited to itself, borders closely upon selfishness. Even its very virtues, if they do not seek to extend themselves over a wider area, are apt to succumb to the narrow fascination it exerts.’ Even in the religious order of thought he seems very jealous of the spurious meekness which would check and limit the free play of the ‘social conscience.’¹ ‘For

¹ De Tocqueville’s words on this subject are very valuable: ‘In politics, as in all else that relates to human affairs, we must be careful to inculcate certain principles, to instil certain feelings. I do not ask the clergy, for instance, to make the persons they influence either Republicans or Royalists, but I wish they would more frequently let them hear of the ties which attach them to the great human society in which God has placed them. I wish the clergy to instil into their very souls *that every one belongs much more to this collective Being than he does to himself*; they should teach them that no one should be indifferent to this collective Being, and that every one is bound to work out and watch over its prosperity. They should be careful not to enervate many of our noblest instincts by treating indifference to the public weal as a sort of languid virtue. Christianity can doubtless extract the occasion

my own part,' he writes to a very intimate friend, 'I am naturally placable, and it costs me very little to love even the greatest sinners; but there are trains and tissues of public disorder at the sight of which I feel my whole soul rise up in indignation. Like you, I believe that meekness, gentleness, and patience are the inseparable fruits of the Spirit; but would you have me remain calm

for many admirable virtues out of the calamities inflicted by bad governments, but it does not render us insensible to these calamities, or obviate the need of boldly striving to abate them.

'This is what I wish to have taught to men, *and still more to women.*

'During my experience, now long, of public life, nothing has struck me more than the influence of women in this matter, an influence all the greater because it is indirect. I do not hesitate to say that they give to every nation a moral temperament which shows itself in its politics. A hundred times I have seen weak men show real political value, because they had by their side women who supported them, *not by advice as to particulars*, but by fortifying their feelings and directing their ambition. More frequently, I must confess, I have seen the domestic influence gradually transforming a man naturally generous, noble, and unselfish, into a cowardly, commonplace, place-hunting self-seeker, thinking of public business only as a means of making himself comfortable, and this simply by daily contact with a well-conducted woman, a faithful wife, an excellent mother, from whose mind the grand notion of public duty was entirely absent.'—(De Tocqueville's *Letters*, vol. ii. p. 344.)

in the presence of social crimes such as the massacres of Galicia, the savage oppression of Poland, and many similar ones that we are called upon to witness? Men's ordinary wickedness can only move a Christian heart to charity and to compassion; not so with the deep-laid and deliberate wickedness of governments, which corrupts men through the very authority which ought to have been their safeguard. Who can remain unmoved when he sees rights invaded and oaths broken, and considers the results to which such conduct inevitably leads?'

In political things Lacordaire seems to have been comparatively indifferent to outward forms of government; little devoted to either monarchical or republican institutions in themselves, anxious only that power should be always based on principles of constitutional right and firm reciprocal relations of duty between the governing and the governed. He was consistent in his horror of all that is arbitrary, whether this might take the form of an absolutism or of anarchy. 'I believe,' he writes, 'that social order contains two equally necessary principles; that of authority and that of liberty—the order of duty and the order of right.' Few even

of Lacordaire's words are more noble than those which conclude his eulogy on O'Connell, and place authority itself in the light of a liberty. Alluding to O'Connell's deference for established law, he says: 'He felt for authority, and for the law which is its highest expression, a sincere and religious respect. For *authority is also a liberty*, and whoever would defend one by attacking the other, knows neither what he says nor what he does. *Authority is an integral part of liberty, linked to it by a manifest correlation, even as duty is to right, and as the right of one man necessarily connects itself with the duty of another.* It is for this reason that all civil governments, as well as the great evangelic one, have consecrated the kindred ideas of duty and right, of liberty and of authority. The hand that separates these two annihilates them, and never will the people in which they are not equally venerated become a free people.'

When we pass from the sphere of politics into that of religious thought, Lacordaire's openness of mind and readiness to give conflicting views of truth the value which duly belongs to each, is no less remarkable than it is rare. His orthodoxy was not of the kind which needs to maintain itself by the

proscription of free and generous inquiry. He writes to Madame Swetchine, in answer to some letter in which she appears to have said (as regards doctrine) that she could consent to see the ocean filtered to a thread of water, 'so long as it were but pure : ' 'I find you somewhat too generous in that statement. My dear friend, the ocean *is* the ocean just through receiving all the waters that flow into it. If chemists could have their own way with it, it would be empty before a hundred years, all over ! No one can value purity of doctrine more highly than I do, and I can safely aver that, as regards myself, I become more tenacious of it every day I live. *But charity in the appreciation of opinions is the absolutely needed counterpoise to theological inflexibility.* The true Christian's tendency is to look out for truth and not for error in every doctrine, and to make use of all his efforts to lay hold of it as one may gather a rose from amid thorns. Is there a single Father of the Church who had not his own opinions and even his own errors ? Shall we throw these overboard so that the ocean of truth may become more pure ? The man who fights for God is a consecrated being, and until the

day of his manifest condemnation we must bear the thought of him in friendly bosoms.'

Such words as these, at least to a Protestant reader, naturally give rise to a question concerning the consistency of Lacordaire's position. Was it indeed possible to be in youth the fiery tribune of liberty in thought and speech and action, and to remain through his whole life freedom's more solid, yet no less eloquent, advocate and apostle, yet at the same time to break no pledge of fealty with a Church which has placed human progress under its ban, and made a crime of mental freedom? Lacordaire's standing-ground in these respects seems to us about as difficult as if planted

'Upon the unsteadfast footing of a spear ;'

and that the post he occupied was really a deeply trying one, and this through the whole of his life, cannot be doubted. Personally he seems to have triumphed over many of its admitted difficulties through the force of that absolute integrity of nature which enables some minds, through a noble eclecticism, to approve *all* the things that are more excellent. They can thus afford to entertain manifest contradictions, and let

them live together side by side in peace. Yet while their sincerity cleaves their own path, it cannot clear it from the thorns it leads amongst, nor make a safe way for others to follow. Lacordaire's horror of autocracy in political government, his deep sense of the evils which absolute, irresponsible power has entailed upon the world, seems very inconsistent with his adhesion, as regards the spiritual order, to an absolutism far more crushing and tremendous than any of those which he deprecated, inasmuch as its sway is extended over a region as wide as is infinity itself, its claim of rule asserted over that inner world of conscience to which man's strongest instinct of liberty inalienably cleaves. It is not perhaps very easy for us to realize Lacordaire's exact relations with the Papacy, or to understand how far he was Ultramontane according to our present acceptance of the term. He was such, undoubtedly, as regarded strong and consistent opposition to the old, outworn Gallicanism, which left the Church in France at the mercy of the civil government, and the rights of conscience subject to continual State interference. 'But he was not,' says M. de Mazade, 'Ultramontane in the spirit

of those who would give absolutism an ecclesiastical centre in exchange for a civil one, and destroy citizenship itself by making all things depend on the omnipotence of Rome.'¹ A breath of true spiritual freedom seems to stir in the words of a letter to M. de Montalembert, where he speaks of the old-fashioned Gallicanism as all but lifeless, but adds, 'There is yet another Gallicanism, which consists in *the dread of a power without limits, and extending over two hundred millions scattered through the breadth of the universe. This is a living and redoubtable Gallicanism, because it is founded upon a natural and Christian instinct. Papal omnipotence* is without doubt an expression in conformity with the doctrine of the Council of Florence, but the use of which we should carefully avoid, because the word *omnipotence* is apt with the multitude to translate itself into the sense of arbitrary and absolute power, while nothing is *less* arbitrary or absolute than the power of the Pontiff.'

Many of Lacordaire's letters betray a certain uneasiness in his relations with Rome. He expresses sometimes an even bitter sense

¹ *Revue des Deux Mondes* for 1864.

of his consciousness of being a man whose every movement is watched with distrust and suspicion. 'I am weary,' he sometimes writes, 'of being at all times a problem and an enigma;' and the events of his life give sufficient evidence that, however valued by the Church as a strong champion, he scarcely held the place of a son, the house's child, beloved and trusted in all his doings and ways. Very early in Lacordaire's career as a monk, when he was busily engaged in the formation of his order, the little colony assembled at St. Clement's in so much peace and brotherly amity received the shock of a sudden command, enjoining the dispersion of the brethren, half of whom were to betake themselves to Bosco, and the other half to La Quercia, while Lacordaire was told to remain by himself in Rome. This act of the Pope's, at the time overwhelming all Lacordaire's hopes, seems to have been called forth by the appearance of some pamphlet, awakening vexatious reminiscences of the *Avenir*, and accusing Lacordaire of a still unbroken connexion with Lamennais. Though he was restored to some degree of confidence through prompt and entire submission, it is impossible to

trace the history of the revived Dominican order in France, without seeing in its founder a stone, if not rejected, yet far indeed from being made, as would have seemed natural, the head of the corner for grace and dignity. Father Jandel, in 1850, was named vicar-general of the order, by Pius IX., at a time when it would have seemed at least equally likely that the choice should have fallen on Lacordaire; and on some difference of view as regards discipline occurring between these two eminent men, we find Besson sent to France by the Pope, to inquire into and decide upon points under debate, in a way which makes him, a man comparatively young and undistinguished, the judge and arbiter of the conduct of him who was his early master and guide. Besson's unexampled delicacy and tact, combined with his deep reverence for Lacordaire, softened the position as much as was possible; but surely could not make it otherwise than deeply painful to both. Lacordaire appears often to have been set aside, ignored and mistrusted; his path seems, in a greater or less degree, to have been tracked by suspicion, and it is easy to see that this could scarcely be otherwise.

Serving as he did in two opposed camps, what heart less noble than his own could believe that he could be found so true to both ? Besides, such men as he must always in some degree disappoint their friends ; they are not to be reckoned upon when names are called over and numbers taken. They are altogether wanting in what makes the soul and strength of the thorough-going uncompromising partisan ; incapable of the narrow hostility to all influences, however generous and admirable, which do not lie within a given circle. How many among the so-called friends of truth and liberty are obviously unable to allow others the freedom they claim for themselves so largely ; uneasy in fellowship with those who hold different views from their own, and leaving no common ground for free opinion to move upon unchallenged, scarcely a space of common kindly air for it to breathe. Lacordaire's spirit was of another order. We have already alluded to his noble words on political freedom ; but they will repay quotation at full length. They occur at the close of his panegyric on O'Connell.

'To his persevering demand for Right, he added a condition which always ap-

peared to him to be of sovereign importance. According to his view of liberty, every one who seeks to promote it should seek and desire it equally for all ; not only for his own party, but for the party opposed to his ; not only for his own religion, but for all others ; not only for his own country, but for the whole world. *Humanity is one, and its rights are the same in all places, though their mode of exercise may vary according to the existing state of manners and of minds.* Whoever in his claim for right excepts a single man ; whoever consents to the enslaving of a single man, be that man white or black, were it only to extend to the unlawful binding of a hair of his head, that man is not sincere, and he does not deserve to fight the battle of the sacred cause of humanity.

‘The general conscience will always reject the man who asks for a liberty that either excludes or neglects the rights of others, *for exclusive liberty is nothing but a privilege ;* and a liberty forgetful of the rights of others is nothing short of treason. One occasionally sees a people who have reached a certain point of social development, suddenly stop short and even retrograde. You

need not ask the reason. You may at once be certain that this people has made some tacit compromise of right, and that the apparent advocates of freedom, incapable of desiring it for others as for themselves, have lost the prestige which at once conquers and serves it, which at once preserves and extends it. . . . It was never thus with O'Connell; *his* word, in fifty years, never lost the invincible charm of sincerity; it was as powerful for the right of his enemy as for his own. It was the scourge of oppression, let it come whence it would, and fall wherever it listed; thus he drew to his cause, to the cause of Ireland, spirits alienated from his own by the most vital differences of opinion, and brotherly hands were held out to meet his, from even the most distant quarters. In the heart of the truly honest man there is something which speaks for all, *something which, in speaking for all, will seem sometimes to speak against himself*; there is in such a heart a sovereign power of moral and logical superiority which must infallibly win recognition and sympathy.

‘Yes, Catholics, understand me well; if you would obtain liberty for yourselves, you

must desire it for all other men, under all other heavens. If you only ask it for yourselves, it will never be granted you. *Give it where you are masters, so that it may be given you where you are slaves.*'

Lacordaire seems to have long foreseen the fall of Louis Philippe, and to have witnessed it without regret. Immediately after the shock of the revolution he writes thus : 'I see around me at the present too much generosity and enlightenment, too much of faith and of charity, not to have good hopes for the future of France ; far stronger ones, in fact, than I have ever been able to cherish during the reign that is now over. *Then* one might have believed in the success of narrow selfishness and corruption ; but now this doleful faith has been annihilated ! We are certain that France will not bear the yoke of a simply materialistic government or caste, and this certainly is for me a well-spring of joy and hope. *It is better to suffer than to decay.* And there is nothing in the world which does not seem to me to be preferred to the triumph of days and doctrines like those we have known between 1830 and 1848.'

He accepted the Republic without having

wished for it, his life-long prepossessions having always been in favour of a limited monarchy; yet, without having any very solid confidence in the stability of the government that was then formed, he did not feel called upon to refuse to give it his sincere adhesion, in the hope of obtaining through its agency a larger measure of freedom both for France and for the Church, than either had yet been able to conquer. Between constitutional monarchy and republicanism, the difference, as has been truly remarked, is only that of form; while between a constitutional monarchy and an absolute one the difference is radical. Lacordaire could therefore, without inconsistency, join his hopes with those of many other fervent Catholics who believed that 1848 was to inaugurate *a new Era*. This was the title given to a liberal paper, of which Lacordaire for a short time undertook the direction. He was also, without solicitation on his part, elected to the National Constituency, and took his place in the Assembly. His parliamentary campaign, however, was not a long one; it lasted but ten days, during which time he spoke twice, but without any signal effect. His words were

as if fettered, his heart seemed in some degree to convict him of being in a false position; the storm-laden atmosphere of political life, thick with excitement and collision, seemed now ill-suited to him who in earlier days had rejoiced in the strife and struggle of opinion. His letters describe the shock he felt when, on the 15th May, only a few days after the solemn inauguration of the Assembly, the hall where it was gathered together was thronged by an excited and clamorous multitude, 'the people—yes, the people—who had come there apparently with no other object but to make its representatives understand that they were at its mercy. We remained three hours without any defence from their continued insults; three long hours, during which one thought never quitted my mind for a moment. *I felt that the Republic was lost*, and that the same people who thrust the red cap on the anointed head of Louis XVI., had robbed their own Parliament of its crown of dignity.'

The next day he tendered his resignation. 'I know,' he writes, 'that in doing so I have laid myself open to the charges of inconsistency, want of political capacity, and even

of cowardice ; but I found my position in the Assembly had begun to be intolerably oppressive to me, as I found that outside of the democracy I could gain no foothold, while I could not conscientiously accept democracy such as I saw it visibly before me. And what, after all, in any political assembly does a man count for who has no party, no strictly-drawn line of action ? I soon learnt that impartiality conducts only to isolation and to impotence, and that it is necessary to choose one's ground, and keep to it at whatever cost and risk. My retreat became inevitable, and I have accomplished it, feeling that I am in no sense a Richelieu, but only a poor monk given over to retirement and to peace.'

Lacordaire repeats frequently that his vocation was never, even in the days of the *Avenir*, that of a politician. His mind seems to have been too firmly fixed on the great principles which underlie the ever-shifting ebb and flow of popular feeling, to make him very solicitous as to the warm personal questions and vehement party interests that make up public life. Its changes interested him in so far as they connected themselves with the one great cause to which his heart

with all its energies was devoted, *the reconciliation of religion with society, and their future alliance on the basis of reciprocal respect of right*. Hence his devotion to freedom of worship, liberty in religious education; hence his horror of despotism, and of all that makes 'a free Church in a free State' an impossible thing. He writes, in answer to some one who would fain have persuaded him that as religion¹ is a universal thing, it can flourish under any form of government, 'Yes, no doubt it can live under any *régime*, but there is one which is its natural climate. Look into history, and you will see that wherever despotism prevails vital Christianity soon becomes extinct. You say that liberty of belief may exist without civil and

¹ Lacordaire appears to have sympathized very strongly with the general objects of the Italian war of liberation in 1859, and though he was ardently desirous that the Pope should not be deprived of his temporal sovereignty, he did not dissemble his anxiety to see the Pope himself, as a secular sovereign, entering upon the path of wise and needed reform. He had shared in the enthusiasm called forth by Pius IX.'s earlier years, and remained faithful to the hopes that were then called forth; consequently, says Montalembert, he believed neither in the wisdom nor yet in the stability of that eternal *status quo* to which so many disasters are attributable.

religious liberty, but *has* it ever done so? Civil and political slavery eats into the very soul, and weakens it in religion as in all besides; it gave the vertigo of idolatry even to the great Bossuet himself. A servile episcopacy, the mere worshipper of power, grows up under a despotic government, which in its turn transmits to a timid and ambitious clergy a double poison, which first tends to littleness, and by degrees to apostasy. The present movement of the world seems to me to have no other end but that of the enfranchisement of the Church through the general fall of despotisms. If God is not working towards that point, I no longer see nor understand anything. Great God, where are we going, if not to this!

All that Lacordaire asked for the Church was independence, and a free, pure air to breathe in. He did not wish the clergy to mix themselves practically in politics. 'The clergy of France,' he writes in 1848, 'will never expose themselves without danger to political agitations. Let them be as eloquent as they will, as devoted and as courageous, they will never appear so great in the tribune as they do in the pulpit, to which the humblest curé brings the glory

of old age or the simplicity of goodness. Under whatever real sacrifice, they will be always suspected of ambition, and of the desire for popular distinction. France has formed from her old traditions so lofty an idea of the priesthood, that it costs her something to see them come down, even for a little time, from the heights of Horeb and of Calvary.'

The Père Chocarne tells us that it was a great trial to Lacordaire's latter days to see the true interests of the Christian priesthood compromised by the clergy themselves. There can be no doubt that Absolutism and Ultramontanism have gained ground in France of late years, and entered into possession of the labours of the school of thinkers of whom Lacordaire may be regarded as a type—men who remain at once faithful to Catholic authority and to a generous liberalism. 'Absolutism,' says a modern writer, 'has taken advantage of the brilliant triumphs won for the Church by men like Lacordaire and Montalembert. Ultramontane doctrines now rule visibly; they have become aggressive, no longer dreading to provoke inquiry and raise controversy. And to the men upon whom they have thus

turned, the true Catholic liberals, a singular alternative remains: they must be either inconsistent Catholics or inconsistent liberals; they must either break faith with their conscience or with the authority of Rome.'

Much of gloom and sadness seems to have fallen upon Lacordaire's spirit in the spectacle of a double idolatry, 'the idolatry of the temporal and the idolatry of the spiritual power in one.' The grief and indignation felt by him at the sight of this 'great moral debasement' never abated even in his dying moments. He saw the very men who had fought with him side by side, and 'boldly declared with him the natural alliance between Catholicism and liberty,' casting aside these principles and the memories with which they were connected. And under the pretence of adherence to so-called Christian monarchy, they were now to be heard exculpating both the Roman Empire and the first French Empire, crying down all the rights of political liberty, *calling in force to the assistance of the faith*, lauding and regretting the Inquisition, declaring the ideal principle of liberty to be anti-Christian, and even civil tolerance to be a crime. Lacordaire, who writes of the Edict of Nantz as being far

more glorious to Henry IV. than all his victories, and who speaks of its revocation as the dark dishonour of the reign of Louis XIV., which paved the way for future ruin and desolation, must have felt a shock at finding his former colleagues in thought proclaim in the *Univers* of 1854, 'that liberty of conscience ought to be restricted in proportion as truth prevailed,' and at hearing them call the principle of liberty by the name of 'Pagan and naturalistic prejudice.'

The power of Louis Napoleon seems to have acted upon Lacordaire like some spectral influence, — one of those, the most strangely awful of all, which are represented as coming at noonday, gliding in with the broad sunshine among a pleasant company, and laying on all the spell of icy bondage. After his accession, he ceased to speak in public; he was not exactly forbidden to do so, but the 'power and desire seemed to have forsaken him together; the time seemed no longer propitious to freedom, even in speaking for God.' He was bitterly wounded by seeing Catholicism self-disarmed and self-discredited in France; grief and indignation filled his heart at finding the clergy so ready to make common cause with

political absolutism, to which the Church, according to the view he so deeply cherished, was the needed counterpoise—the everlasting witness and protest for spiritual freedom. Like that heavenly Jerusalem which is free, and the mother of us all, the Church was, in his conception, *templum in modo arcis*, the asylum of humanity against the cruel inroads and encroachments of temporal might.

But here we must pause to ask if Lacordaire's disappointment was not one to be foreseen in the everlasting nature of things; if it was not foretold by the past, which, as regards the Church of Rome, shows little to correspond with the lofty ideal place he gave her. How many of the darkest pages in modern history testify to the natural alliance between spiritual and temporal despotism, and show the readiness with which these two, like Herod and Pilate, will 'make friends together;' yes, will even lay aside some private animosities when there is some free voice to stifle, some generous cause to crush. Shall we not find, in looking through the long past, that the Pope has been always the friend of Cæsar, ready to endorse his superscription, and to

receive it in countersign? And, without passing from the domain of pure thought, we shall always discover in the writings of the most liberal upholders of the Papal authority, a germ fatal to civil freedom. There is Absolutism hidden in the early teaching of Lamennais,—Absolutism even to the degree of war upon all civil society. In the writings of De Maistre, the same doctrines are maintained with an audacity peculiar to himself, and assume the form of a despotism, which takes humanity in its hold as a tender flower might be within a gauntleted hand—a hand which caresses it, but may at any moment crush it out of all form and likelihood.

‘The Romish difficulty,’ says a modern writer,¹ ‘lies in the profound alienation which

¹The same writer, in a paper entitled ‘Crise religieuse de 19^{me} Siècle,’ *Revue des Deux Mondes* for February 1863, says,—‘If we look with an impartial eye from Catholic to Protestant countries, we shall find that in each faith is now passing through a severe yet very dissimilar trial. Among the latter it takes in no degree the shape of resistance on the part of the laity to clerical power and influence; *its work is altogether an interior one, which slowly, continually, without noise or passion, tends through the progress of erudition and criticism to modify existing beliefs and traditions, and as its last crowning result eliminates the supernatural.* In Romish

has grown up between the Church and that living whole of facts, principles, and aspirations which make up modern civilisation. All those liberties of which the nations who possess them are proud, and which those who are deprived of them ardently aspire to, have been condemned from the Vatican, —reprobated as a source of crime and of disorder, of plague and scourge. Rome has declared war upon the very principles of social order and well-being (witness the Encyclical and the Concordat), and among the clergy the number of those who take

countries, on the other hand, religion does not appear to be menaced by dogmatic criticism, for never, whether this may arise from indifference to theological questions, or pure ignorance of them, has the spiritual authority of the accredited interpreters of the faith been less disputed by the faithful. The difficulty is one arising from exterior circumstances, and the antagonism between the principles of modern civilisation and those of the Church, which places itself more and more in opposition to the modern spirit, as if to aggravate the existing antagonism.

'The Protestant difficulty *appears* the more serious one, as holding by a deeper root, and attacking the principles of faith itself. It may, however, be looked upon as the natural result of the great principle of the Reformation—private judgment, which took from the human mind the stronghold of infallible authority, and left it open to much of doubt and anguish, "heirloom of noble pain." Yet the Romish difficulty is a sufficiently serious one.'

the word of command from Rome goes on increasing every day. So that whenever society would develop, reconstitute itself, and move forward, it is condemned beforehand to an opposition which strives to bring it back to a *régime* from which all true prestige has departed for ever. Religion must decline if thus placed in opposition with justice, liberty, knowledge—with all that man's heart and conscience tell him is clearly best; and in an age like ours, when the material interests of life exert such a strengthening hold, religion cannot be weakened without the proportionate decline of morality; passion, interest, and sensuality wanting their strongest check and curb.

'The schism between religion and progress may be clearly traced in every Romish country of the present day; in Spain, in Italy, in Austria, even in France, where an excessive spiritual pretension, an ardent proselytism on the part of the Church, has taken a thousand sorrowful manifestations, witnessing to the presence of "a retrograde spirit," through which the gulf between the Court of Rome and all that is most dear to laic society is continually widening.'

The whole of Lacordaire's teaching was a

protest against the spirit these words denounce ; and if circumstance was too strong for him, and his ideal, like all noble ones, but imperfectly realized in actual life, his heart never declined from the lofty standard it had raised and gloried in from youth. To quote his own memorable words, he saw that if religion ever conquered, it must conquer not through making war upon society, but by taking, like Themistocles at the court of Persia, a seat at its very hearthstone, and thence radiating over the whole of life.

CHAPTER VII.

LACORDAIRE DEVOTES HIMSELF TO THE
EDUCATION OF YOUTH — HIS LIFE AT
SOREZE—LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

FROM this time, till that of Lacordaire's death, the interest of his life concentrates itself in a narrower channel. In 1851, moved by some impulse, which seems to have partaken of the nature of a presentiment, he took a tender and solemn farewell of the pulpit of Notre Dame. Two years later he gave six *Conférences* at Toulouse on themes as lofty as had ever engaged his eloquence,—on life, the life of the passions, the supernatural life, and the influence this exerts upon both private and public life. At the close of the last *conférence* he announced his intention of preaching on

the Sacraments as the mode employed by God to communicate and maintain the principle of supernatural life ; but certain expressions contained in one of the foregoing discourses, on the moral poverty of nations, shut up into the mere routine of private life by the want of public outlets and openings, had in them, M. de Montalembert says, an accent of truth, of sadness, and of indignation, that was now no longer in place. Modern France, the country of his love and pride, which, at one time, in his own words, 'scarcely knew how to obey,' had become eager to accept, even to implore, a master ; names which had appeared beside his own in memorable manifestos, claiming Christian liberty and civil freedom, were now to be seen affixed to documents 'which borrowed the forms of Byzantine adulation to salute orthodox absolutism !' Voices once raised in lofty hosannas to God, were now to be heard crying, We have no king but Cæsar. Lacordaire spoke no more in public. We are not told that his silence was the result of any explicit prohibition on the part of Government, but he felt that he was no longer in his place.

‘I understood that in my thoughts, my language, in my whole past, and in whatever might remain to me of the future, *I also was a kind of liberty*, and that it was time for me to disappear along with the rest.’ Surely the silence which fell on him was eloquent of changed and troubled days, even like that of some of his great forerunners, the Hebrew prophets, when, in times of heavy national apostasy and defection, they were wont to cover their heads in their mantles and sit on the ground, ‘silent and astonished, many days.’ Lacordaire, however, was one who never despaired for either his age or his country; his generous efforts for liberty and progress were to last as long as his life did, only he now carried them into another field of action.

There was, as we have seen, at all times a peculiarity in Lacordaire’s temperament which made occasional retirement absolutely necessary to him.

He seems at times to have fled from his own renown. In a letter to Madame Swetchine, he speaks with great *naïveté* of the difficulties it drew around him,—‘Paris

is to me nothing short of *deadly*; the very air is thick with political animosities, and it is the centre of power, of intrigue, of all the hidden sources which go to make up, and yet to endanger, a great religious success. Then only consider what a position has mine been at Notre Dame; eight or nine discourses preached there in the year seem to exhaust the spirit; the voice is doubtless lifted high enough, but one does not know whether it is moved from within by the spirit, *or from without by renown*, and its fatal claims almost make it necessary to repeat one's-self, *a thing impossible at such a height*. I should do far better at my old Collège Stanislas.'

Lacordaire was now but about fifty years of age, in the plenitude of life and vigour; yet, says the Père Chocarne, the solemn refrain of the canticle of death had already begun to steal across his spirit. He had learnt to say, 'My life is removed far from me, even as the tents of the shepherds.' The battle of his life was in a great degree over, but not its labour; ten years lay yet before him, ten calm yet fruitful years, as silent and as rich as becomes the autumn. From this time he devoted himself to the

work of education, and undertook the direction of the school of Sorèze, an ancient national foundation, dating as far back as the age of Pepin le Bref, and which, towards the close of the seventeenth century, had risen into great and deserved celebrity under the direction of the Benedictines. It seems to have been one of the first places of public education where the modern impulse towards natural science, and even towards the culture of the fine arts, was allowed to break in upon the dry established order of classical and scholastic routine, and where the individual preferences and aptitudes of the pupil were allowed to have some weight in the direction given to his line of study. At the time of the great revolution, Sorèze had attained extraordinary eminence in many ways, especially as a royal military school. Since then it had undergone many vicissitudes, and declined from much of its traditionary glory; without, however, ever altogether losing its prestige of renown.

Lacordaire was able to devote himself to this new task, without in any way abandoning the care of his Dominican family; in fact, this new interest naturally allied

itself with the older one, and gave a further outlet for the working of 'the third or Teaching Order,' which he had already brought into play at the College of Oullins. The religious education of youth had long lain very close to Lacordaire's heart; the recollections of his own school and college days were such as to make him feel the deep value of that sentiment of 'moral paternity and disinterested love of souls,' which is too often absent at the very time when it is most needed. He remembered how his own childish faith had died out within his soul, as a light sinks within a lamp that finds no hand to feed and trim it. How many of youth's noblest instincts die thus a natural death, unmarked and easy, and no man knoweth of their grave; how many of its generous impulses and ardent aspirations perish, which a word, perhaps even a look, from some friend beloved and revered, might have quickened into enduring life. In youth, it is true, there are strong checks against the development of man's higher nature,—it is the season of fierce and sudden assaults, of ardent insidious solicitations,—but we should ever remember that powerful as are the anta-

gonists which Divine grace has at this time to encounter in the heart of youth, 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,' it finds also a strong counterbalancing force, in the ardour of the soul's yet undimmed eye, the energies of its yet unbroken wing, and meets with auxiliaries that will be looked for in vain at a later period. The days of man's youth are, in spiritual as well as in natural things, 'the days of his glory,' and the days of his strength, rich in energy, in hope, in warm attraction to all that is morally exalted. 'Youth,' says Lacordaire, '*is life's beautiful moment.* Childhood wants depth, it has not yet attained to either sensibility or knowledge. In mature life we know too much, and we please less readily; the heart less fondly wooed grows more circumspect, *and neither gives nor receives so freely as it used to do.* But in opening life what fullness is there, what outgoing, we love so quickly and are so quickly beloved.'

We are told that Lacordaire began his labours at Sorèze without any very fixed ideas on the subject of education; but he brought far more than a system to his work, in being able to be himself its soul.

He seems to have been, at all periods of his life, deeply imbued with the sense of the reciprocal relationship between mind and mind, and has stated in express words¹ that no man, as regards intelligence, is sufficient to be his own beginning, or able to dispense with a spiritual ancestry. 'Without the spark of this transmitted fire, the light of intelligence is scarcely able to kindle, or at best it can give forth but a feeble and intermittent flash. *God was the first teacher of humanity*, and it will always till the end of time need masters to carry on and add to its tradition of knowledge, and lift the individual soul to the heights the race has already attained.' 'Every true genius,' he adds, 'has been a disciple before being a creator.' And passing from the region of intellectual to that of spiritual life, 'Lacordaire knew,' says the Père Chocarne, 'perhaps better than any one, how much the word of the priest, the convincing, persuasive, penetrating word, is needed for the establishment of faith in the soul. Not in vain has it been written that 'Faith cometh by hearing.' In his own case, at the Lyceum of Dijon,

¹ *Discours sur St. Thomas Aquinas.*

this word had been wanting, or had given but an uncertain sound, speaking nothing to the heart ; while the imagination was fed and kindled by the bright records of Pagan antiquity. Lacordaire, so largely endowed with evangelic eloquence, felt as regarded it, not only the gifts but the calling of an apostle. Speech was with him a sacred and sublime ministry, and he brought its full powers to bear upon the young minds with which he had now to deal, both in preaching, in spiritual direction, and in easy and intimate conversation on general subjects, to which he seems to have attached great importance, as a means of quickening intelligence and bringing out all that is best within the mind. We are told that Lacordaire was naturally silent, and, in this case, few among his many self-denials could have been more onerous than the conversations to which he lent himself for an hour or longer every evening with the elder pupils of Sorèze ; for the schoolboy, as the Père Chocarne says truly, does not know how to talk,—his stock of original thought is but slender—he knows nothing of the world or of life, and vibrates, in general, between two well-worn and not very interesting subjects,

his sports and his studies. Yet Lacordaire seems to have been able to people this mental blank with rich interests; his aim was not to take the talk himself, but to put the youthful world around him at their ease, and to draw out their latent powers, knowing well that 'of all the recreations that have ever been invented by man, there is none at once so full of pleasure and of profit, as simple, animated, and natural conversation.' He did his best to banish stiffness and restraint, encouraging lively discussion on whatever subjects arose most readily, sometimes proposing a word to define, a classic phrase to render; sometimes reading aloud or reciting, both of which he did admirably.

The plan of study at Sorèze was modelled upon the general university system, modified by some traces of the old Benedictine methods, to which, however, Lacordaire was not greatly attached, as considering them too elaborate and complicated. He seems, like all men of true genius, to have been content to work with such machinery as he found ready-made to his hands, while he breathed into it the breath of life through the influence of his own high informing

spirit. A generous emulation was kept alive in the college through the working of a graduated scale of honours, lowest among which ranked 'the Athenæum,' to become a member of which required exemplary general conduct, and a certain amount of distinction in the Class the pupil belonged to. It met once a week for literary debate, under Lacordaire's immediate superintendence, had its own annual procession and other privileges, the most valued of all of which was, however, its being the necessary opening and gateway to the Institute, the members of which had their own separate reading and sleeping rooms, took their meals with the professors, and were allowed the free range of the park in their hours of recreation. They were but twelve in number, and were recruited from the ranks of the Athenæum by public election. Coveted and prized as was the honour of being a member of the Institute, there was a yet more envied distinction attainable, that of *student of honour*. There was but one chosen annually, and this on a public festival, in the presence of parents and families, the ceremony being graced by an address from Lacordaire himself.

The 'student of honour' had a right to spend a fortnight every year at the college, and to be officially informed of all important events that occurred there. At his death his funeral eulogy was to be pronounced in the school chapel, and an annual mass celebrated for the rest of his soul.

Lacordaire's private room, placed in the very middle of the immense buildings of the college, was the centre to which all drew. Scholar and professor alike went there for counsel and instruction : it was to the school like the heart from which all life proceeds, and to which life goes to renew itself. Not even the festivals and holidays could be organized without his advice, or enjoyed without his presence. And it is easy to see that as time wore on the level of all things around him was raised to one in some degree approaching his own, and all at Sorèze was marked by a certain print of distinction. A love of serious and accurate study, a profound admiration for all that was exalted and beautiful in literature, a certain simplicity and severity of taste, more especially as regarded the repression of luxury and of all costly and superfluous indulgences, against which Lacordaire waged

unremitting warfare, as being opposed to all that makes life really dignified and happy. He loved to recur to his own earlier recollections, and the old-fashioned simplicity which then marked the habits of a family in the middle class of life; he would speak of his mother's house, and the infinite charm and comfort of its modest arrangements, where 'there was not a single superfluity, but simplicity that was almost severe, economy that knew exactly where to stop, and a fragrance which even then belonged in some degree to a former age.' He administered a public rebuke to some unhappy students whose beds he had found provided with eider-down coverlets. 'Eider-down!' he exclaimed, 'let such things be left for women and for invalids. When I felt cold in my college days at Dijon, I used to put my portmanteau on the bed!'

Perhaps there is no place more fitting than the present to draw attention to the high value which Lacordaire, at all times of his life, placed upon eminent literary culture; that love of letters for the sake of their innate worth and excellence which he seems to think is now on the decline, and which he looked to as a needed counterpoise

to the overweening devotion to the so-called practical interests of life; in other words, the mania for making and for spending of money, which seems of late years to have fallen like a deadly blight upon both France and England. In a little memoir of his youthful life he reverts with grateful affection to the friend who awoke within his boyish mind its first literary instinct. 'This was an elder and more advanced student, the good genius of my intellect, who, during the space of three years, gave me gratuitous help in every branch of study, and who above all strove to inspire me with his own ardent love for literature, making me, when almost a child, read and learn by heart the tragedies of Racine and Voltaire. He was a stranger to religious faith, but a man of true integrity—a guide, a second father, who laboured to make me gentle and chaste, sincere and generous, and who drew my aspirations towards the lofty summits of honour and of literature to which he had himself risen. I gained no distinction in my elementary studies at Dijon, and promised to remain a very ordinary student, until my attention was called to rhetoric, when all the seeds which this indefatigable

friend had planted in my mind seemed to come into sudden vigour, and innumerable honours poured in. I associate all that has been most fortunate in my life with his memory.'

In his eulogy on Drouot, one of Napoleon's distinguished generals, a man admirable for charity and simplicity of life, he says :—'This veteran of the *grande armée* was now old and solitary, but he felt no oppressive weight from either time or years. For to the love of men and to the love of God he joined a third devotion, once the distinctive passion of every nobly-gifted nature, but which seems fading from our present day—the love of letters (*amour antique des lettres humaines*). A *chef-d'œuvre* was to him a living being,—a friend, a cherished and familiar companion who comes for an evening talk. To take up a true book, to lay it on the table, to drink in its inner perfume, was to him a pure and intimate enjoyment. While others were limited to the present day, he was living in all ages and centuries; *while others were confined to the region of worldly interest, his mind was dwelling in the sphere of the beautiful.*

‘Rare and excellent life! one to which we cannot rise through taste alone, but which requires character and goodness. Literature demands, according to the expression of the ancients, a *cultus*, and as we speak of the religion of honour, we may also speak of the religion of letters.’

Even in the kingdom of grace Lacordaire is careful to reclaim a place for eminent mental endowments; neither the spiritual nor the natural society can dispense with

‘the Few

Elect of God, to whom He gives the Word
 No agonies can silence, no neglect
 Can stife, whether it be stranded, tossed
 On alien shores unheeding, *never lost*
That gift, although our earth be deaf and old,
Nor fully come the Spirit's Pentecost.’

Speaking of the Church of Christ, he says, ‘Are its apostles, its martyrs, its pastors enough for its establishment in the world? No, certainly; *for its work is the work of universal instruction*, and to these it needs to add yet another order of men, its Doctors, vowed and consecrated to the building up of dogmatic truth, without whose labours its diffusion among the less enlightened would be impossible, and the reign of light on earth would remain the

mere dream of an unsanctioned and powerless goodwill.'

In his numerous letters to his young friends he is never weary of enlarging upon the value of deep and sustained theological study in the earlier part of life. 'Do all you can,' he writes to one of these, 'to lay in a store for the rest of your life. I have always, in my own case, regretted that I had not had at least ten years of strong theological reading before my entrance into the active world. The overwhelming life we now lead gives us no time to repair any original weakness in the foundation of our mental building, it so enchains us by its pressing daily exigencies and claims, that it is much if we can find time to keep up with the newspapers, or to read some more than usually interesting book. Take advantage, then, of the happy interval which is just at this time placed between you and the world of active life; drink, drink deeply at the well of spiritual science—its waters may now seem cold and bitter to you, but a day will come when you will find in them all that is sweetest and most salutary.'

Even in the case of very young children

it did not content him that they should be trained in the simple rules and practice of devotion. '*Such a religion,*' he writes, '*is but a shadow that flies before the first awakening of the passions. Solid instruction in sacred history, doctrine and morals,* the gradual infusion of the love of Jesus Christ through the knowledge of His life and of His death, is the foundation of all true religious training.'

The education at Sorèze¹ was directly religious; the students were accustomed to regular attendance at sacrament and confession,—these, with prayer, were made familiar things to them, as part of the natural Christian life; but nothing seems to have been further from Lacordaire's aim than to encourage any spirit of exaltation on religious subjects, so easy to call forth in youth, and at no other period so fatal to

¹ It is difficult from the Père Chocarne's Memoir, which I have followed, to see how far the third order of Dominicans were practically employed under Lacordaire at Sorèze. Lacordaire, in one of his letters to Madame Swetchine, speaks of the presence of monks among the pupils, and of the unimaginable effect produced by contact with men so far above themselves in the supernatural order, who were able to win their regard and confidence, but does not say that the work of instruction was placed altogether under their hands, as it seems to have been at Oullins.

true healthy spiritual life. He would check the ardour of students who would gladly have come to confession every day. Be careful, he would say, in cultivating the supernatural, never to lose nature itself. He would often repeat to them that the true Christian must be the complete man; careful of the natural virtues—integrity, honour, manliness of conviction, without which piety is but a mask too often concealing the direst defeaurement of soul. During the seven years in which he preached to them every fortnight, he entered on all subjects belonging to the deep foundations of Christian dogma—‘prayer, penitence, and the final ends of man,’ and would join with these a connected series of discourses on all that has to do with moral life. The last of these, undertaken when he was so ill as to be obliged to withdraw from his ordinary avocations in the school, was duty—his favourite and chosen theme. He bestowed on his sermons at Sorèze all the care and preparation which he had given to his famous *Conférences* at Notre Dame, and was repaid by the enthusiastic devotion of his youthful auditory, whose souls he drew more near his own than can ever be done

by preaching through the sacred intimacy of the confessional, where his heart was ever open to theirs as a priest, a father, and a friend. This office seems of all his many spiritual duties to have been that which connected itself with his warmest, closest interests. The heart must be indeed inaccessible to tenderness, he once said, which is not affected by the sight of a youthful soul struggling between evil and good. He once left Paris, where M. de Montalembert had sought to detain him over the decision of some important question, and travelled back to Sorèze, a distance of two hundred miles, rather than miss the usual monthly communion. 'Some of my children,' he said, 'are preparing for it, and it is impossible to calculate how much may be lost to a Christian life by missing even one communion.'

Lacordaire seems at first to have felt that he was making a sacrifice in consecrating his life to education, which, however great in its final object, involves in its practical carrying out much of drudgery and repetition. The work of a schoolmaster was but a limited sphere for one who had through life commanded such a wide apostolate of souls as he had, who had won in eloquence

such unrivalled triumphs, who in theology and metaphysics had ranged in such spacious fields, and who had been moved by such broad political interests. Yet it seems hard to see how Lacordaire's brilliant and agitating life could have closed more fitly than in his peaceful labours at Sorèze, among the young whom he had always loved and hoped for. To read of it affects the mind with a sense of solemn repose and fulfilment, such as is apt to steal across the spirit at the close of one of those lovely autumn afternoons that are soft with all the tenderness of spring, yet warm with the sunshine of the long golden day that has gone before; a solitary bird sends from the thickets a plaintive yet cheering note, that seems to recall the thousand vanished songs of summer, and to promise yet more than it recalls; the gossamer floats lightly on the air, the leaf reddens, the apple loosens its hold upon the stalk,—all is peace, unspeakable peace, but the end is not far off.

That 'the evening and the morning make our day' is a word which may be spoken of many lives; weariness and strife, unrest and labour, will too often mar the gentler purpose of the day, and forbid it to fulfil

the clear promise its earliest hours gave, yet sometimes before the sun of life sinks, there will be a return of peace and serenity, and the spirit in drawing near its everlasting home will hear the whisper that often seems to rise from the woods and the meadows where we played in our earliest infancy, 'Come back to us, and be once more a child among children.'

Lacordaire seems to have wished and intended to consecrate some of the stillness of this mental Indian summer of his life to sustained literary labours for the cause of truth. At the present time he felt that neither the school nor his beloved Order could dispense with his presence and active labours; but he still hoped to bring each to a point where he could safely leave it, and give himself up to realize 'the dream of his whole life, that of writing for God and for souls.' This desire he was only able to realize very partially; the light and life of an animating, inspiring presence are too rare in this world not to be claimed so long as a vital spark remains to burn and shine. '*We have not many Fathers.*' In 1858 Lacordaire was chosen Provincial of his Order, to the deep joy of his Dominican children

and brethren. This brought much added work. In 1859 he had the joy of re-establishing the *Frères Prêcheurs* at St. Maximin in Provence, one of their most ancient foundations, a site particularly interesting to Lacordaire, from a local tradition which affirms that St. Mary Magdalene ended her days in a cavern in the rocks a little above the convent. In the winter of 1860 he went to Paris to take his seat in the Academy, the highest literary distinction his nation has to give, and, in a literary sense, the brightest of the many crowns he had won. The hand of death was now upon him. As he took possession of the chair in which he was never to seat himself again, we are told that he looked almost as white as the frock he wore. He returned to Sorèze greatly fatigued, and spoke freely to both pupils and friends of his breaking health. His chief anxiety was for the interests of his Order. 'I am preparing all things,' he writes to an intimate friend, 'so as to leave its affairs in a good condition, both morally and financially. If I should die, I am sure you will not abandon this work, the great work of my poor life. If I only last till my provincialate expires, I hope

to get our debts paid, the seven houses satisfactorily settled, and St. Maximin made the citadel of the Order in France ; but if death should call me away in the meantime, I fear our poor Fathers may find themselves greatly embarrassed.'

His strength continued to decline, and he was persuaded to try the effects of rest and change of air. After an absence of some weeks, during which his health seemed to gain little of the hoped-for benefit, he returned to Sorèze for the last time. He looked pale, was greatly fatigued, and altogether unable to enjoy the reception which had been prepared for him both by the students and the inhabitants of the little town, who were devotedly attached to him who had brought them so much prosperity, and were always proud of being addressed by him as ' My dear fellow-townsmen.' An immense crowd was assembled to greet him ; a triumphal arch was raised for him to pass under ; he thanked both the school and town, promising, in a feeble voice, to live and die at Sorèze.

Some days after this he received the sorrowful tidings of the death of Father Besson. The heat of summer set in, hasten-

ing the progress of his malady. Towards the middle of August he became rapidly weaker, but was still able to drive out occasionally, and look once more upon the hills and valleys and peaceful farms, the very aspect of which had always cheered him.

His friends hastened to gather round him. M. Foisset, oldest among them all, between whom and Lacordaire mutual regard had continued unbroken since their student days at Dijon; M. Cartier, his favourite and *familiar*, as he used to call him playfully, who had been his companion in almost every journey undertaken for the re-establishment of the Order in France; the Abbé Perreyve, and M. de Montalembert. When this last illustrious friend arrived, Lacordaire, then so weak as to be scarcely able to support himself, came down the steps to meet him and to receive his affectionate embrace. Montalembert was greatly affected by his pale and altered looks. Lacordaire continued to decline, and was at this time prayed for not only in all the Dominican establishments, but in nearly all the religious houses in France. At St. Maximin some of the youthful novices spent nights before the altar in prayers and tears and severe

bodily austerities offered up for his recovery. On the ninth evening spent in these ardent supplications the whole body of monks carried the reliques of St. Mary Magdalene in solemn procession through the cloisters, with supplications, chants, and psalms. The night was spent in such exercises, hoping to win the miracle of his recovery.

But Lacordaire knew that his hour had come. His daily reading was Bossuet's 'Preparation for Death,' or '*L'Acte d'Abandon à Dieu.*' And above all, his life-long devotion to the Passion of our blessed Lord had for long rendered the thought of death easy and familiar to him. When he drew very near death, some one said to him, 'Dear father, you have always loved our crucified Lord.' 'Oh, yes, yes!' he answered, kissing the crucifix tenderly. And on another occasion, turning to a crucifix which hung before him, 'I can no longer pray to it, but I look.'

He was still able to attend to some pressing affairs connected with the Order. He took a tender leave of some of the assembled brethren, blessed them, and said,—'I did not expect to leave you so soon. God is calling me to Himself; it is better that I

should go. I shall be more useful to you on high ; pray for me.' The Pope sent him his third apostolic benediction, accompanied by a plenary indulgence for the hour of death. For many months past, he had received the sacrament daily. His bodily sufferings continued to increase, and his last agonies were very great, extending over many days. But nothing troubled his deep interior recollection ; his friends came to his room at their will. Each would kneel for a while in prayer before a little altar raised there, and would retire as silently as they had come. Among them was M. Barral, the Emmanuel of his 'Letters to a Young Man ;' he sometimes looked at them, but did not speak.

There was something solemn, even majestic, in this continued silence, and in the look which would fasten itself during these long speechless hours upon the crucifix. 'His eye,' says Montalembert, 'no longer gave forth its old fire of enthusiasm ; the light of nature burned low, and yet about his face, wan and contracted with pain, and about his whole aspect, there was still the strong patience of the athlete ; still something which, to the very last, kept up the

masculine character that had always marked his faith, his speech, his soul.'

His speech now became confused and inarticulate ; he was unable to take any nourishment, and he continued slowly sinking until a night which brought on a violent crisis of his malady, the immediate forerunner of death. The last struggle was a terrible one : he seemed about to suffocate, he raised himself in bed, stretched forth his emaciated arms, opened wide his eyes, which had been long habitually closed, and looked round the room with a slow, wandering gaze, that passed from one object to another with a look of agonized inquiry. Then lifting up his arms, he cried out with a loud voice, 'My God, my God, open to me !' These were his last words. The last prayers now began : he sank back in bed, and seemed to listen to them, silent, attentive, absorbed in God. At length arose the solemn words, '*Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo,*' beginning that sublime prayer with which the Church of Rome commends the departing soul to its creating, redeeming, and sanctifying God, which bids it speed upon its way 'unto Mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, the heaven-

ly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.'

'*Mitis atque festivus Christi Jesu tibi aspectus appareat :*' the prayer was ended, the crisis of anguish over. Lacordaire sank into a stupor, in which he continued all night, and until the evening of the next day, when his spirit passed quietly away from earth.

L'onda dal mar divisa
Bagna la valle e'l monte,
Va passegiera
In fiume
Va prigionera
In fonte
Mormora sempre e geme
Fin che non torna al mar ;
Al mar dov' ella nacque
Dove acquisto gli umori
Dove da lunghi errori
Spera di riposar.'

CHAPTER VIII.

LACORDAIRE'S PERSONAL AND MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS — HIS STYLE — LITERARY VALUE OF HIS WRITINGS—HIS LIFE OF ST. DOMINIC—VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT OF AUTHORITY.

‘I READ your manuscript,’ writes a friend to whom I had sent some of the foregoing pages, ‘on Sunday afternoon, within sight of the glorious hill of Buchal Etive (the Watchman of Glen Etive), which guards the entrance of Glencoe; and from the rock on which I was seated, I glanced upwards to the bare solitary crags and corries, the haunts of the eagle and the red deer, and looked down into the glen with the dark mountain gloom resting over and within it, and gazed across its treeless waste of brown heather and black moss water, and its rocky ravines scarred by the marks

of winter torrents. Last night, as I walked across the moor, I picked up a moulted eagle's feather.'

The picture these lines convey has linked itself with the thought of Lacordaire's whole life,—its seclusion, its peace, its long bright golden afternoon of Sabbath and autumnal stillness,—above all of its deep loneliness, as of a valley shut in by no bars, but girdled by mountains of steadfast strength and endurance; a mental and spiritual solitude; the home of soaring contemplation open only to the eye of Heaven.

Lacordaire's soul seems to have been always lonely; his youth, he tells us, was severe and studious, passed in isolation from home and the joys that belong to opening life: his after days, so thickly sown with interests and friendships of the most intimate kind, still bear the impression of having been passed in a populous solitude, where many might press upon and throng him, but where none really *touched* him. His letters are full of deep, and even ardent, expression of feeling, but they bear on them the print of a lonely heart and of an unshared life; he is often playful, often endearing, yet there is something which we

always miss—the warm, firm pressure of the living hand—the core of reality, which the sweetness of personal experience can only give. So, in his brightest play of thought, there is always a tinge of melancholy,—there is nothing in it warm and meridian ; it has the broad oblique glow of the winter noon-day, the red flashing of a November sky. Something of this may be attributed to his peculiar temperament, in which there was a certain restraint arising, as his biographer expresses it, from an antagonism between the bright ardent faculties of his soul, and a sheathing of exterior reserve ; but more to the fact of his having never loved. Of his youth, he expressly tells us, ‘ Before I loved God, I loved glory, *and nothing besides ;*’ and his after-life was calm and uniform, uninvaded, as regards the affections, by any of those perilous experiences which so many lives like his, at once repressed and exalted, have known, when feelings long stemmed back assert themselves with sudden vehemence, and threaten to overwhelm the existence they were meant to gladden and fertilize. No one writes of love more frequently or more eloquently than Lacordaire ; of beauty too, for which he

seems to have had an extraordinary amount of susceptibility, even to the extent of pronouncing it to be the 'only cause of love.' Yet in all this there is something brilliant, and, at the same time, metallic; a cool, cloistral shiver passes over us as we read, and we feel that these are the words of one who might say with Sir Galahad :—

' I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.'

From this charge, however, must be excepted the following words, worthy of being printed on the heart's most red-leaved tablet as the creed and confession of all true feeling, the very *summa theologia* of affection :—

' When I have said to a man, I esteem you, I admire you, I venerate you, is there nothing else for me to say ; have I exhausted the capabilities of human language ? No, there is still one thing left,—only one, the last of all, I can say to him, *I love you*. Ten thousand words may go before that one, but after it language can do no more, and having once said it to a man, but one alternative remains,—it is to repeat it to him for ever.'

And if Lacordaire in describing the more

complex and troubled emotions of humanity seems to miss the true accent of passion, he is never more at home, more natural, and more at ease, than when he has to deal with the simple everyday affections of our nature, which, in reality, have a far stronger as well as more lasting hold over us than its passions, and live by a deeper root. Writing to a young friend, he says, 'I would gladly know if you are affectionate; if you feel the value of another soul, and if affection is that which in life would chiefly influence you. For everybody has some one leading inclination, the centre of all the rest. In some this is vanity, a cold and barren sentiment, living in externals, content to shine from without; in others we have the hard ambition for pre-eminence and domination, the desire to rule, which looks upon other people as its slaves. But when the heart is really affectionate, it is *content with its own life*; a life which is no longer self-centred, but the holy sanctuary of the heart, to which one only other being is so sufficient *that memory is enough to fill up our day*. Externals become nothing to us, and we trouble ourselves little about the crowd, and what it may choose to think of us.

This is the love of all true and lofty souls, and I should wish it to be yours, not that it has not its risks and dangers, for where shall we avoid these? But if these are once escaped, the heart enters upon its only true earthly consolation. True love is peace; it lives in the heart, and not in the senses; all that has to do with sense is liable to satiety, to degradation, and no one is so incapable of love as a profligate. The more a heart is raised and purified by the love of God, the more true and enduring will be its affection.'

He would often say that all love is one by its very nature; heavenly and earthly love are the same thing, except that the love of Heaven is infinite. If you would wish to know how the Almighty feels towards us, listen to the beating of your own heart, *and add to it infinity*; a golden sentence, seeming to reveal more of the fulness of the Divine benignity than does Dante's world-famous inscription over the gateway of eternal doom—

'Fecemi la divina Potestate
La somma Sapienza e il primo Amore.'

Speaking of the Real Presence in the Eucharist, Lacordaire asks, with sacred bold-

ness, why should it seem strange that God should come so near to us,—is it a matter of indifference to Him whether He is absent from or present with those He loves? I will appeal only to human instinct; it will tell us that presence is the invincible demand of love (*la présence est un besoin invincible de l'amour*).

Lacordaire often leaves these lofty heights to gather a flower—an herb, perhaps, we may more fitly call it, that continues in bloom when life's roses wither. He is never more eloquent than when he writes of kindness. He would say with our own George Herbert :—

' Be useful where thou livest, that so men may
Both want and wish thy pleasing presence still.
Kindness, great parts, and good plans are the way
To compass this. *Find out men's wants and will
And meet them there*; all worldly joys grow less,
To the one joy of doing kindliness.'

' Above all other things,' so he writes to a young friend, '*be kind*. Kindness is the one thing through which we can the most resemble God, and the most disarm men. You have already the traces of it in your heart, *but these are tracks which can never be too deeply furrowed*. Kindness in mutual relations (*dans les rapports*) is the principal

charm of life. A mind which occupies itself with others, which seeks to avoid all that can cause any one uneasiness, which is never silent through temper or through pride, this mind is that of a Christian, and it is one which makes the delight of all that have to do with it. Kind and gentle thoughts towards others imprint themselves on the countenance, and in time give it an impress which attracts all hearts. I have never felt any affection but for persons in whose looks kindness was thus manifest. All besides leaves me cold, even if it were a head which bears the stamp of genius. But the first person who gives me the idea that *he is kind* touches and carries me away.'

As Lacordaire advanced in life, the warmth of his somewhat repressed nature seemed to centre itself upon the young. As the shadows of age fell, his heart, in his own touching language, was visited by the deep, disinterested sentiment of Paternity, which he looks upon as the crown of all life's affections, and considers to be the one which brings us into the nearest likeness with God. Like God's love for us, it is a disinterested affection, one that can never find the equal return that friend gives to friend, or lover

expects from his beloved. 'When we were ourselves children, people loved us more than we loved them; and now that we have grown old, we must be content to love children more than it is possible for them to love us in return.'

When we turn from the consideration of Lacordaire's moral nature to that of intellect, we shall see this also manifesting the kindred peculiarity of a latent fire of ardour, which reveals itself with effort and difficulty, and seems almost to require the shock of exterior excitement to set it free. It was evidently one secret of his immense oratorical success, that his spirit rose to the electrical influence of a vast auditory; and he who in his own little room, with a single companion, was locked up in silence and constraint, was free and unfettered when he felt that innumerable eyes were fastened on his own, and thousands of hearts were following the accents of his voice with eager sympathy. Even in his writings we may trace something of that which warms as it goes on, and see sparks struck off from the rush and whirl of the rapid chariot wheel, a white heat which has kindled through friction. The openings of most of his *con-*

férences are cold and measured; in fact there is much in all his writings that is rhetorical, even commonplace,—all this we feel reads well and flowingly, but much of it with a little change might have been spoken on the other side, on any side, with equal fitness; then suddenly, and when we least expect it, some word of deep, true feeling surprises us, some bright victorious truth flashes forth. He gains some height at a bound, and is able to bear his reader aloft with him, perhaps only for a moment, but in that moment he has shown us the glory of a whole spiritual world. His wing soon wearies, but a few bold strokes have been strong enough to carry us to the mountain summit, from which he can bid us look upon kingdoms in a moment of time.

Lacordaire was a great foe to desultory and miscellaneous reading; his letters to his younger friends teem with warnings against the aimless mental distraction it leads to. Nothing could exceed his indifference for ordinary books; and he would sometimes say that a person who has read Homer, Plutarch, Plato, David, Cicero, St. Paul, St. Augustin, St. Theresa, Bossuet,

Pascal, and a few such others, might think himself entitled to a general dispensation as regards literature. Many of his sayings on this subject remind us of Carlyle's question: '*Hast thou not thyself thy book to write?*' 'Above all things,' says Lacordaire, '*have a life—your own life; live to a centre of lofty and consistent aims.*'

It is difficult to form an estimate of the literary value of his own writings, as whatever may have been the pains bestowed by him in arranging his famous *Conférences* of Notre Dame and of Toulouse, they still bear the character of spoken discourses; they are diffuse and oratorical, and cannot be read without weariness, although, as I have said, they are relieved by passages of high beauty. To judge of Lacordaire's real power as a writer, we must turn to a work in which, in his later years, he seems to have concentrated the leading ideas which, in his *Conférences*, are scattered over so wide a surface, the admirable '*Lettres à un jeune homme sur la vie Chrétienne*,' of which I have endeavoured to give a *résumé* in the following chapter. His *Life of St. Dominic*, though carefully and exquisitely written as regards language, shows little of his accustomed

verve and freedom, and it affects the mind with a sense of painful sadness. When we see a spirit so generous as Lacordaire's compelled to defend, extenuate, or, if nothing else can be done, to *ignore* deeds which offend every natural instinct of humanity, we can only suppose that to be a Roman Catholic, a *Papist*, is to abnegate all power of moral discrimination. It is to be committed to a system which, like Wordsworth's cloud, moves altogether, if it moves at all, and obliges all things to move along with it.

Dominic's personal history is so much obscured by legend that it seems difficult to learn its real incidents, or to gather the actual part he took in the unspeakable atrocities of the Albigensian war.¹ All

¹ 'Never,' says Milman, 'in the history of man were the great eternal principles of justice, the faith of treaties and common humanity, so trampled under foot as in the Albigensian war. Never was war waged in which ambition, rapacity, implacable hatred, and pitiless cruelty played a greater part. And throughout the war it cannot be disguised that it was not merely the army of the Church, but the Church itself in arms. Papal legates and the greatest prelates headed the host, and mingled in all the horrors of the battle and the siege. In no instance did they interfere to arrest the massacre; in some cases urged it on. When Toulouse was taken by De Montfort, we are told that the Car-

that we can be quite certain of is, that he was throughout the friend and ally and counsellor of De Montfort, and of the rest whose share in it has condemned their names 'to everlasting fame.' Even Lacordaire has not much to say in praise of men like the

dinal and Foulkes (its own bishop) held secret council with him, proposing to pillage and burn the city; but De Montfort,' says the naïve historian, 'reflected that "if he destroyed the town, it would be to his own loss." "*Slay all; God will know His own,*" was the saying, now become proverbial, of Abbot Arnold, legate of the Pope, before Beziers. Arnold was captain-general of the army. Hardly one of the great prelates of France stood aloof.

'In Beziers it is supposed that not fewer than sixty thousand perished by sword and flame; a large proportion of these were women and children, who fled there from the surrounding country. Not a single building was left standing, *nor one human being* left alive. In the church of St. Madeleine alone seven thousand persons who had fled there for refuge were slaughtered. An even greater number fled to the great cathedral. The canons surrounded the altar, and tolled the bells in a solemn and incessant appeal for pity. Not one was spared. The town, set on fire in every quarter, was but one vast pile. But this may be said of the whole of Languedoc, given up to the sword and stake and gibbet, devastated for eight years by legions as innumerable, and even more insatiable, than those winged battalions of Scripture, who found before them the garden of the Lord, and left behind them a desolate wilderness. In reading the annals of this war the mind succumbs under accumulated horrors; shock succeeds hock so rapidly, wave after wave comes on so quick,

implacable Innocent III., of De Montfort, of Foulkes, of Arnold; but he has no word of condemnation for the decrees through which the great Father of the Christian Church pandered to the worst passions of the worst men by holding up the rich country

that we end by feeling but little emotion, save when here and there some tragedy stands out in terrible relief from the dark background. Such was the taking of the Castle of Minerva, a strong fortress in the neighbourhood of Narbonne, which had gallantly defended itself seven weeks against De Montfort, and was then about to capitulate on honourable conditions. Before, however, these could be carried into execution, Arnold, the Papal legate, arrived, and was, says the monkish chronicler, profoundly afflicted at the idea of any of the enemies of Christ escaping. Through his influence the terms of agreement were broken and the conditions changed, so that those only who renounced heresy should leave the castle alive. But this seemed too merciful for the zeal of the crusaders. One of them, a man of noble birth, devoted to the Catholic faith, exclaimed that he had not assumed the cross to show favour to heretics, but to exterminate them! Arnold reassured him by saying,—“Do not fear, for I foresee that we shall have few converts.” He was not deceived in his sanguinary hope. “We have renounced,” said the garrison, “the Romish Church. You work in vain. Neither in life nor in death will we give up the faith we have embraced.” The women were as resolute, and even more enthusiastic. De Montfort had built up an enormous pile of dry wood. He bid them mount it, or embrace the Catholic faith. He had no need to use violence; women and men rushed into the fire of their own accord, recommending their souls to God.’

of Languedoc as a prize to the greed and hate of every fierce fanatic, of every covetous and ruthless lord ; that gave it over for a prey to every wandering marauder, whose inborn instincts, even without such privilege, would have led him direct to rapine. All who joined this sacred war were pardoned, by Papal indulgence, of every sin committed, or yet to be committed, between birth and death ; all who perished in it were insured of Paradise.

Nor has Lacordaire a word of generous regret for the fair land of Provençal song and mirth, literally burnt and wasted with the fire and sword of fanaticism ; its peaceful villages demolished, its towns ruined, its commerce destroyed, its arts driven back to barbarism, its rich, picturesque, and flexible language—the native tongue of poetry—which seemed formed to be the first among European languages, degraded into a *patois* ! And we must remember that this fearful war was, as regarded the south of France, but the beginning of sorrows. Two hundred years from this time found the evil passions of bigotry and hatred still unslumbering. ‘ After seven or eight of these so-called crusades, one might have thought,’

says Sismondi, 'that Languedoc would at least have enjoyed the peace and silence of the tomb ; but no, these scenes of violence were succeeded by a slow agony, during which persecution never ceased, and victims were never wanting.' The hateful tyranny of the Inquisition seemed to call out hatred, and even to create heresy. Day after day numbers of Catholics abandoned the faith of their fathers, and embraced the opinions that were to lead them to a fiery death. Even some that had been themselves persecutors, chose rather to become martyrs than to bear the insupportable yoke of a thralldom that left no hearth undisturbed, no secret sanctuary of thought uninvaded.

Lacordaire is at great pains to clear Dominic of being the founder of the Inquisition. It does not seem to have come into full operation in his lifetime ; but if not its founder in an actual and historic sense, the spirit of intolerant zeal which he awakened seems to have been always its presiding genius, so that perhaps the popular voice which has linked it for ever with his name, has not been altogether unjust. Lacordaire does not defend the Inquisition, but tries to prove, and as far as regards

Spain with some success, that it was kept up by the civil power ; that it was a royal tribunal, rather than an ecclesiastical one. He lends himself with a special pleading, altogether unworthy of his usual openness and candour, to the fiction that the Church never condemned any one to death, referring in this to what has been truly called the hypocrisy of the well-known phrase, 'giving over the guilty to the secular arm.' The sentence of the Inquisition concluded with this formulary:—'The accused must be abandoned to justice and the secular arm, *which we pray and affectionately charge*, as well and strongly as we can, to act towards the convicted with kindness and pity.' Besides this, we are told to remember that the Church condemns no one for their opinions, only for 'dogmatizing' or teaching those opinions to others. Arguments such as these, in the face of the historical facts they are connected with, remind one of an anecdote recorded of Timour. At the taking of Aleppo, when the streets were running deep with blood, and his soldiers busy collecting heads to frame his gigantic pyramid of skulls, he was quietly engaged in controversy with the doctors on points of

law and discipline, labouring to prove to them—we are not told with what success—that he was himself a quiet and peaceable person, no lover of cruelty, and only the enemy of wicked and unbelieving persons.

As we have said, Lacordaire does not justify the Inquisition; but we miss in these pages that firm, explicit condemnation, not only of its deeds, but of its principles, which would naturally have sprung from so true a heart as his, at the contemplation of an institution which seems to have turned the civil virtues in which he so greatly delighted into crimes, and to have rendered good citizenship an impossibility. What would he have said in his own days to decrees which, under the holiest names and most awful sanctions, called forth the worst passions of our fallen nature,—which allowed no man to trust his brother, no parent his child,—which set a premium on delation and treachery, and hardened the general human heart, by the continual spectacle of public atrocities, to say nothing of the unspeakable tortures of that prison-house, the secrets of which few would dare even to look into? For these things Lacordaire has no word of comment,

and his book, though carefully and exquisitely written, leaves the heart cold. Of Dominic himself, when divested of the after-splendour cast about him by his Order, we seem to learn little, and not to desire to know more. We read of his prayers, his tears, his miracles, his *love*, but we read under a continual protest; the intellect refuses him as a teacher, the spirit rejects him as a friend, the heart turns from the fierce sword-glare of his consuming zeal to seek the fire which its Lord came to kindle upon earth,—a fire ‘which comforts and does not burn.’

The consideration of the days and scenes with which Dominic’s history is connected, leads an unprejudiced mind to ask why the collective conscience should be less tender than the individual one. If men are called to repentance, surely Churches also! No individual, no family, no nation, has ever so grievously erred or transgressed so deeply as has the great Christian Church; surely it does not become her to cast from her the broken and contrite heart which her God has told her is alone acceptable in His sight. What church or communion has not its crudities, its cruelties, its bitter persecutions

to answer for; but what other church than Rome has ever extenuated such deeds, or gone, as she has done, to the extent of glorying in them? A mind lying outside of her communion finds it so hard to understand how goodness, mercy, and truth can be made to depend upon a decree or dictum of any man, or body of men, that it will strive hard to place itself, even by a conscientious effort, at the point of view from which the sincere believers in Papal Infallibility contemplate the history of Christendom. Above all, it will desire to penetrate the secret of this tremendous claim, and to acquaint itself with the historical data upon which it is founded. Lacordaire ascribes a sort of occult virtue to the Papacy, making it a centre of spiritual light and strength and inspiration to the whole Church. To any but a Romanist there seems something missing in all he says, a want of clear historic proof; before we can admit these magnificent pretensions, we want to see the title, the deed of gift from on high, by which they were conferred. But we must remember that Lacordaire is not writing controversially, or with the object of convincing gainsayers. Many of his expres-

sions upon Papal infallibility, like those of Count de Maistre, seem to place it upon an almost Utilitarian basis. De Maistre, than whom the Papacy had never a more ardent upholder, describes it as a mediating, moderating power, an authority determined by no formal act, antecedent, or law, which grew up gradually because the vast extent of Christian association demanded a monarchical head. In all societies, human or divine, there must be a final appeal, an ultimate referee. 'Infallibility,' he says, 'is a mere question of words; it is in the spiritual order what in the temporal order is called sovereignty—the right common to all possible sovereignties of not being accusable, or considered as subject to error. There must always be a last resource, *a judge who is not to be judged*, who is able to make obedience instantaneous and obligatory.' Much of Lacordaire's teaching is but an expansion of this argument. He bids us first of all discriminate between the ideas of certainty and of infallibility. Certainty, in any given case, is founded upon a truth having been proved beyond the possibility of mistake; *infallibility upon the not being able to be mistaken.*

‘All teaching,’ he goes on to say, ‘*must* be dogmatic in so far as it assumes its own truth—a *fallible authority would be but a tyranny*, subjecting the mind to possible error; and all religion that does not give itself out for infallible, is by that very fact convicted of error; it has avowed that it *may* be mistaken, an avowal which is at once absurd and dishonourable in an authority which teaches in the name of God. *Religion without authority is but a philosophy.*’

He says, with De Maistre, that there can be no universality without unity,—no unity without a final standard of appeal; and in all these propositions reason seems to go along with him. There seems in them nothing which can be fairly resisted or disallowed. These steps, however, lead to a conclusion that bids us pause. ‘Unity,’ says Lacordaire, in a letter to the Countess Edling, a member of the Greek Church, ‘is the only source of union. All heretics, all schismatics, desire union, and would willingly make concessions and sacrifices to obtain it. The Catholic Church alone *maintains unity by the way of exclusion*—the exclusion of all that contradicts her. Schismatics are already self-condemned before the tribunal of

God, because they have seen enough to understand that they were not the whole Church in themselves, and yet have not chosen to submit to the Church, which feels and which declares itself to be the whole Church (*l'église qui se sent et qui se dit toute l'église*). The prayer of your Greek priests—their daily prayer,—which has so deeply touched you, in which they beseech God for the re-union of all the apostolic churches, is but their own judgment daily self-pronounced before heaven and earth. *The true Church does not ask for the re-union of the apostolic churches. She asks that every knee should bend to her ; every soul bow down to the Vicar of God, who governs her, so that at last a day may dawn when there shall be but one flock and one shepherd. She alone dares so pray, because she alone is assured of being the bride of Christ.*¹

¹: See *Correspondance de Lacordaire et Madame Swetchine*, p. 217. The same rigorously exclusive spirit is shown in a letter in which Lacordaire notices the death of General Swetchine, whose wife had ardently but vainly wished that he should exchange the Greek Church for the Latin. 'He was a man,' he wrote, 'inaccessible to all religious influence; it was remarked, however, that during the last year (General Swetchine died at the age of 93) he has assiduously practised all

This language is sufficiently lofty, so is that of some other passages; yet Lacordaire, in his general mode of viewing both the Papacy and the Church, seems to place much of their claim upon a sort of moral necessity which makes authority the *needed* refuge from the tyranny of individual opinion. 'Men,' he says, 'are weak, incapable, ignorant, unable either to find or to keep truth for themselves.' He sees in the Church a great power of deliverance (*autorité libératrice*), an escape from the weakness of human reason, from the deep poverty of human feeling. With him, as with the learned Klee, authority gives us a general free objectivity in exchange for the bondage of our own limited individual subjectivity. He sets forth the Church as the grand supernatural aid to humanity; the needed auxiliary force to all that natural nobility *which, without its aid, can never attain to perfection.* And as the individual Christian, in the language of Scripture, is the new man, even so is the Catholic Church a new, a restored Humanity, vivified by

the observances of his own Church, *which gives us leave to hope that he may perhaps find before God the excuse of good faith.'*

faith, guided by charity, and enlightened by the Spirit of God. He sees in the power of the Church, in its penances, in its ability to bind and loose, a fountain of mercy, the only one yet opened out for man. Nature punishes evil both in body and in soul, her judgments are inexorable ; civil society punishes guilt, its judgments are also without mercy, attended with disgrace, and little concerned with the improvement of the offender ; the Church knows how to make punishment a salutary thing, she alone can at the same time wound and heal, can strike and yet reconcile, can cast down in order to raise up. She does not make known the faults of her children to a pitiless and corrupt world,¹ but hides them in her own bosom. Her watchwords are penitence in the place of punishment, expiation rather than repression, rehabilitation instead of death.

From these considerations he passes to those connected with the Church as an outward tribunal ; such as its power of excom-

¹ 'When Protestantism,' he says, 'has abolished confession ; when it has taken away the priest, and sent men to confess to God, *what has it done but left him alone with his guilt !*'

munication, shown in the withdrawal of certain spiritual advantages from the perverse and rebellious. In this power he justly sees a power to which *every* society, whether spiritual or civil, has a claim, and sees in it the exercise of a high and just liberty, the freedom of action which every such society must claim.

He denies that the Church has any right to the use of the sword ; but justifies its having sometimes employed it, on the ground that it was obliged to avail itself of the temporal arm on defensive grounds, to protect herself from encroachment, and to check the advance of heresy. Here again, Lacordaire does not face the question of the Church's persecutions openly ; or meet it on the only ground where it can be met honestly, that of the ample recognition of error, stated in words as large and liberal as those of her own confession, ' I have sinned through my fault, my own fault, my exceeding great fault.'

' In the two first words of the creed, *I believe,*' says Lacordaire, ' lies hidden the principle of all spiritual life ; and the saying, '*I believe in the Catholic Church,*' is the deepest cry of liberty that ever rose from

the breast of humanity. To repeat it is to say, 'I believe in a heavenly society founded by God in light and love. I believe freely in the spiritual presence of God in His Church, so that I may not believe blindly in men and in their inventions. I believe in truth socially taught and promulgated, so as not to believe in the individual propagation of error.'

Words like these and many others, in which Lacordaire sets forth the fair beauty of the Church, its universality, its tenderness, its clear perfection, seem to recall the deep saying of Tertullian, '*all things ripen, and righteousness also.*' Such words seem rather prophetic than historic, they certainly cannot be spoken truly of Rome, or of any other existing Church; yet such words can never be spoken in vain. They testify to the presence of a Divine idea, even now existing in the midst of much that is both false and formal, and able in the fulness of God's time to disentangle itself from all that is unworthy. Such words bid us feel that 'a time to build, a time to gather stones together' has come; and they may act as a call upon powerful, sincere, and trained thinkers to aid in framing the lofty synthesis of Catholic truth. Protestantism

does not even profess to present us with this synthesis; its search after truth is analytical—a painful search, reminding us of the quest of Isis for the severed fragments of the body of Osiris; it seeks these fragments with care, and puts them together with difficulty, and the hardest part of its task seems to lie in its being one which must start afresh with each individual spirit. In the next chapter we shall have to consider the doctrines which place the Catholic, in this respect, on a footing very different from our own.

CHAPTER IX.

SOLIDARITY, REVERSIBILITY, AND EXPIATION
—RÉSUMÉ OF LETTRES SUR LA VIE CHRÉ-
TIENNE.

CATHOLICITY, as it comes before us in the writings of Lacordaire, is represented as ever working towards the whole of things. Each one of the words with which the present chapter is headed, is a word weighted with hope and mercy for the whole family of man. Each spiritual fact which these words represent holds by one common root—Redemption, or the meritorious work of Christ. Lacordaire would tell us that the gifts and graces of the renewed mind, such as faith, humility, charity, are not mere developments and adornments of natural character, they are the flowers which grew out of Christ's tomb; they are the

fruits of a supernatural intercourse with God, an intercourse established upon the work of sacrifice, through which God, in the person of Christ, was in the world, reconciling that world to Himself. These flowers, these fruits, of love even unto death, of costly self-denial, of patience, of meekness, of broken-hearted repentance, are themselves supernatural; they are not reared in the soil of nature; they can only grow in 'that garden where Christ's brow dropped blood.' They belong to the Church which He loved, and for which He gave Himself; that Church which, in Lacordaire's sublime expression, was '*born crucified*.'

Therefore we must not wonder if each of these doctrines takes us back to that work of death through which Death itself was overcome, if each of them so nails and fastens the heart to the cross of Christ, that the life of nature dies, and the soul can only say, 'I am crucified with Christ, yet behold I live: yet not I, but Christ, which liveth in me.'

Catholicity considers humanity in the light in which the Apostolic Epistles place it, as being One in its original constitution, and as One in its Redemption by Christ.

‘As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.’ St. Paul seems never weary of enlarging upon the lofty, the consoling certainty, that all which we lost *as a race* through Adam has been restored to us *as a race* in Christ; and Lacordaire seems but to condense St. Paul’s arguments when he asserts that man having, through his hereditary union with Adam, lost all by way of solidarity, God has seen fit to restore him also by *way of solidarity*, through the supernatural union by which the miracle of the Incarnation has made Christ one with our fallen family.

Solidarity, as applied to spiritual life, occurs so often in Roman Catholic writings, and is so unfamiliar to our own circle of thought, that it seems well to be informed of its exact meaning as applied to ordinary practical affairs. I find it thus defined in the *Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française* :—

‘*Solidaire* (terme de jurisprudence), Qui fait que, de plusieurs personnes, chacune est obligée directement au payement de la somme totale.

‘*Solidarité*,’ or mutual responsibility,

‘(terme de jurisprudence), Engagement par lequel deux ou plusieurs personnes s’obligent les unes pour les autres, et chacune pour toutes, s’il est nécessaire.’ When spoken of a contract, ‘cette obligation porte solidarité,’ unlimited liabilities are incurred. ‘Quand une ville, une commune est obligée à la solidarité, elle tombe sur chacun des habitans. Il y a solidarité entre eux. *La solidarité ne se présume pas, elle doit être stipulée expressément.*’

If solidarity is thus expressly stipulated for in our Saviour’s kingdom, and to the full extent to which these simple definitions lead, we shall find ourselves pledged to some solemn and weighty conclusions. Among other cognate doctrines it will become easy to accept that of Reversibility, which is indeed but solidarity in practical operation. Penance, austerity, works of reparation, intercession, prayers for the living and the dead, much of that in which Romanists most strongly differ from us, much also in which we virtually agree, may be traced to the working of this principle. The whole Christian Church believes that man, through conscious and willing co-operation with the work of his Saviour, may obtain gifts for men, may quicken or retard, through his

individual prayers and efforts, that final restoration of all things in Christ, for which the whole creation groans and travails. To be fully persuaded of this is the secret of all fervent prayer for our fellow-men, of all holy and courageous effort for their benefit. It has not been in vain, as regards the universal Church, that God has shown us men like Abraham and Phineas, the princes of the elder covenant, endued with power to prevail even over Himself. It has not been in vain that He has made known to us, in His afflicted patriarch, a Priest through whose mediation He would alone pardon the arrogance of Eliphaz, Zophar, and Bildad. *They* were to offer sacrifice, but God said, 'My servant Job shall pray for you, *for him will I accept.*' Not in vain has St. Paul spoken of the prayers, the tears, the labours and sacrifices through which he and his converts gave and received strength in mutual interchange; nor in vain has the beloved apostle cheered us by the intimation that there is but one sin the pardon of which God will refuse to faithful intercession (1 John v. 17). All Christians act as believers in Reversibility; but with us the belief is latent, less fully outlined, less clearly articulated, than

in the Church of Rome. With them, if I dare venture to speak of so sacred a mystery in very homely language, intercession becomes a matter of business,¹ a literal *work* of faith, which pursues the sinner with love, which weaves around the impenitent a network of prayer, from which he may find it hard to extricate himself. Reversibility, of all doctrines co-related to redemption, seems to be that which springs out of its very heart, and extends the mediatorial work of Christ into every act of ordinary daily Christian life, while it gives a common-sense aspect to its most exalted heroisms. Who would not pray and weep and suffer all things willingly, if he believed that his solitary tears, his apparently unheeded efforts, *told* through all the infinite circles of spiritual existence, and aided Christ's great 'labour working to an end?'

'Our Protestant brethren,' says De Maistre, writing on this great subject, 'are displeased with our doctrine of transference of merits; they will not consent to the idea of a foreign satisfaction being acceptable to the

¹ As when St. Vincent de Paul, with the most touching simplicity, conveys some of his prayers (as by a definite grant) '*to the most forgotten soul in purgatory.*'

Divine justice ; yet they, with ourselves, acknowledge and adore Redemption,—*and what is redemption but a mighty indulgence, an infinite transference of merit ?*

Lacordaire, commenting upon another of De Maistre's incomparable sayings—' For aught we know there might be in the heart of Louis XVI. an acceptability capable of saving France '—goes on to say, ' And there are doubtless others more obscure in the sight of men, who are even yet more precious towards God. May not the life of one sister of charity be a sufficient balance (*contre-poids*) against the crimes of a multitude ? I can well believe it may be so, when I know that God would have spared a city given up to crime for the sake of ten righteous persons, *and I believe it all the more easily when I consider that the salvation of the world is due to one sole sacrifice, a sacrifice incomparable as regards the dignity of the victim and the movement of the heart which prompted it ; but which none the less, that proportion duly granted, proves to us how far intensity of goodness in one single spirit can prevail against an abyss of iniquity.*'

Expiation is but another aspect of the same doctrine, and one upon which it is

less necessary to enlarge here, after what has been said on the subject of Lacordaire's austerities. Many of his letters are interesting as showing the light in which the reception of this doctrine places the deep sorrows and sufferings of humanity. To each of these, to mental and bodily pain, disappointment, loss, to all the unutterable blank and waste of natural life, it gives weight and value, a value far beyond that of mere discipline. In writing to console a father for the death of a son in early life, Lacordaire says: 'In losing one whose future appeared uncertain, we might believe that God was willing to save him, comparatively untried; but if, on the contrary, his life has been pure and holy, we are justified in believing that he has been a victim for the salvation of others, and that his blood will weigh in the balance wherein God will judge the world.' In another letter, addressed to a young friend who is about to enter into a *confrérie* for expiation, he warns him against incurring a responsibility for which he may not yet be sufficiently strong:—'Yours is assuredly a pious intention, and yet it startles me a little. For to offer one's-self to God, body and soul,

to expiate the sins of the world, is to expose one's-self to great and sorrowful sacrifices, in which it is true we all participate in some degree, but in a less full measure when we do not seek from God more than we shall meet with through the general laws of His righteousness.'

These great religious ideas, if once received within the heart, open a door there which no man can close. They link all spiritual and intelligent existence in a chain, beginning with God Himself, and ending with the lowest savage,—a chain, do I say? —a circle, in which these two extremes meet, and which needs but to be touched at any one point, for a vibration to pass through the whole. What matters it that my brother is ignorant, incapable; that he is placed far above me by the pride of station; that he is sunk far below me in depths of infamy; a point of contact still remains between my spirit and his, which cannot fail but with the final severance of our souls from God. We pass each other in the street, sometimes with shrinking; we sit by each other at the social board in apparent equality, but with inward separation. Original differences of temperament

and character create a gulf between the mind of one human being and another, which the artificial distinctions of society tend continually to widen. In this man or woman I may see nothing to attract me, and I may feel that I am to them absolutely indifferent. We have no thoughts, no topics, no sympathies in common, we have traversed different regions, we live in different worlds ; it matters not, we are fellow-sinners, *solidaire* in Adam and in Christ ; this mind, impenetrably closed on the intellectual side, may yet be entered on the spiritual ; where argument, where eloquence would fail, prayer may yet triumph. A Christian need never grieve over his deficient gifts, his scanty resources ; let him unite himself to his Saviour's great continual work, and his own is already done. Who shall separate the believer from the love of Christ ? what shall separate the lover of Christ from the love of souls ? Shall it be distance of time or space, coldness, apathy, despair of heart, or decay of mind ; shall it even be death itself ? For these, for all of these, Christ, who tasted death for every man, is sufficient ; and the soul that is united with His has found a way

that nature knows not of, to join itself to His work of reparation and of love.

'Love,' says Lacordaire, 'knows nothing of the impossible (*l'unréalisable*) or of the absurd. Some of the actions of the saints undoubtedly appear extravagant, yet all turn to the general good of humanity; if the saint fasts, do not a part, a large part of the human family *hunger*, and share in a fearful involuntary fast? If the saint tortures his body by strange inflictions, are there not in our prisons, in our galleys, in our colonies, human beings enough who groan and languish in torment and affliction? If the saint, in one word, takes upon himself a weight of voluntary suffering, *who is there on earth that does not suffer?* and we have not now to learn that God has hidden in suffering a mysterious balm of restoration, *and it is rendering no vain service to humanity to make it aware of its full resources against calamity*, to make known to man by some deed, be it however strange and unlooked for, that whatever fate may befall him, into whatever dishonour, into whatever dungeon he may be cast, there is no punishment, no disgrace, no conceivable depth of abjection which the thought of God is not enough to

transfigure. The Divine goodness is far more completely justified in the order of grace than it is in the order of nature.¹ *Nature itself can only be justified from the point of view which grace takes.* If grace is less abundantly bestowed on some than on others, *they who receive it in abundance are themselves a grace for the human species.* All the world has not been converted like St. Paul upon the road to Damascus, but all the world has profited by the doctrine of St. Paul and by his glorious death for the truth. *Thus individual graces become universal graces through the solidarity of examples and of works.'*

Lacordaire always contemplates Humanity as being, in the words of the Council of Trent, *wounded and weakened*, needing a supernatural work of reparation. All his teaching leads to the cross, but he does not leave us there. If his spirit drank deep

¹ To enter into the spirit of this deep but somewhat obscurely worded truth, we must take in the whole question of solidarity. The gifts of God both in nature and in grace are very unequally bestowed, but in the kingdom of grace the principle of transference and of mutual accountability restores the balance to evenness, which is not the case in the boons and advantages of natural life.

into the lesson of separation which the cross and the word teach, 'even to the dividing of soul and marrow;' if he was ready to lay down his life with Christ, the life that he took again in Him was full and free; the way into which he led the redeemed and ransomed soul, was, in his own words, 'a large and living way,' exceeding broad. There is something almost awful in the abruptness with which, after having set forth Jesus Christ as 'the way, the truth, and the life,' he says—'Yet if I were to leave you at the point we have now reached, *you would have an idea of the Christian religion so incomplete as to be even false.*'¹ He then passes boldly on to the consideration of a question upon which no thinker in our own

¹ *Lettres à un Jeune Homme.* No joy, no pride, no exaltation of the human heart, the rejoicing of the bridegroom over the bride, the poet's deepest inspiration, nothing that is, or that will be, is more than the image, the shadow, the forerunner of what the worship of Christ is to the soul. Every other thing is either too little or too much; it either goes beyond or it fails to satisfy us. *Jesus Christ alone has the measure of our being.* He alone has made up out of greatness and infirmity, out of strength and sweetness, out of life and death, a cup such as our souls desired even without knowing it, a cup with which those who have once drunk can never be satiated.

communion seems to have ventured, and says, 'Without doubt the worship of Jesus Christ is the foundation of Christianity, *but is it its final term?* Does all centre in this worship, *or is this worship itself but a starting-point, an efficacious means to an ulterior end*, an end to which Jesus Christ is accessory, but to which He is not all? Let us ask this question of Christ Himself. Now, if we deeply examine His gospel, and inquire into His acts and words, we shall hear Him everywhere declare Himself as the Son of God, accomplishing a mission from His Father. "My bread," He says, "is to do the will of Him who hath sent me." I can do nothing of Myself; I judge according to what I hear, and My judgment is right, because I seek not My own will, but the will of Him who hath sent Me. The works that I do bear witness that My Father hath sent Me; and My Father who hath sent Me hath Himself borne witness of Me. The will of My Father who hath sent Me is that I lose none of them whom He hath given Me, and that I shall raise them up again at the last day. "No man can come to Me unless My Father, who hath sent Me, draw him." "My doctrine is not Mine, but that

of Him who hath sent Me." "As My Father hath sent Me, so send I you."

'It is not then Jesus Christ, *that is to say, God who was made man*, who is the foundation of His own word, of His own doctrine, of His own will, or of that work for which He took upon Himself our nature, and lived and suffered. Of all this He is only the predestined instrument chosen by His Father from whom He has received all things by an eternal gift, to communicate to men the boon of restoration, after the original boon of creation. *Neither is He Himself the end of His own work*, He attaches that work to another source, and when His disciples ask Him how they ought to pray, *He answers them by effacing Himself from their thoughts*, and teaching them to say,—“After this manner pray ye, Our Father which art in heaven, *Thy* kingdom come; *Thy* will be done.” It is towards His Father that He directs their hearts¹ towards Him of whom He said in His ascension, “I ascend to My Father and

¹ Michelet says that Christianity in the Middle Ages had sunk to a gloomy mythology, founded upon the worship of Jesus Christ, the Virgin, and the Saints, with the negation of God as the Father and the Creator of the natural world.

to your Father, and to My God and your God." It is the coming of His Father's kingdom which He proposes as the ultimate term of their aspirations, and when, in the whole course of His gospel, He speaks to them of this kingdom of blessedness and perfection, He never calls it anything but *the Kingdom of God*, or *the Kingdom of Heaven*. It is true that this kingdom is also His own, but it is His own only because it is that of His Father, and that all things have been given Him by the Father in the eternal act of filiation.

'Jesus Christ being neither the beginning nor the end of Man's redemption, what part does He then take in it? He is, as I have already said, its instrument, or rather, to make use of the language of Scripture, its *Mediator*. It is to St. Paul we owe this word. "There is," he says, "but one God, and one sole mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all." And elsewhere he speaks of Him more than once as the Mediator of the new testament. Thus, faithful to the luminous track which leads to God through Christ, the Church in its liturgy usually addresses its prayers to the

First Person of the Holy Trinity, "of whom is all Fatherhood in heaven and earth,"¹ and winds them up with the solemn ascription which places them under the intercession and mediation of the Saviour. "We pray," she says to God, "through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Spirit, world without end." This admirable conclusion incessantly repeated, reveals to us at once the supremacy of the Father, *to which all returns, because all proceeds from it*, the Sonship of Jesus Christ and His mediatorial office between God and man, the link which unites the Father and the Spirit in one sole life, one sole reign, one single and indivisible unity. In this absolute unity the Son, as the co-eternal Word of God, is equal to the Father in all respects but in that of having proceeded from Him; but as the Word made flesh by the side which brings Him near to us without involving the loss of His Divine personality, He takes a subordinate position (*il prend une situation qui le subordonne*), and of which He Himself says, "My Father is

¹ Eph. iii. 15. In the French translation, '*D'où procède toute paternité au ciel et sur la terre.*'

greater than I." St. Paul, casting a prophetic glance towards the time when our Lord's mediatorial mission shall be accomplished, expresses himself in language which completes the explanation of the mystery : ' At last cometh the end, when Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father ; when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and all power. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith, All things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.'

The second part of the *Lettres à un Jeune Homme* is upon the study of Holy Scripture, to which Lacordaire was through his whole life devoted ; this chapter is full of excellence, but less original than the two others. In the third, he opens up the great question of the Church of Christ.

'The Scriptures,' he says, 'have shown us the life of Christ in the past; they, like Him, are immortal, and, like Him, full of grace and of truth. This book of the Divine Word was written under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and all that has been done, or that can be done, since that Word was once given, is fitly to interpret its Divine voice. Beyond this, with whatever assistance from on high, neither the Fathers, the Councils, nor the Sovereign Pontiff can go. *And yet it is not the Scriptures which bring Jesus Christ most near to us.* He is present to us in the prophecies which have announced Him, and in the acts which He Himself wrought upon earth; but these prophecies belong to the region of antiquity, these acts to that of history, they lie far back in the distance of ages, and Scripture is the monument which alone recalls and brings them to our view. If no more than this remained of Jesus Christ, *He would still be the world's most glorious memory; but He would not be its soul and its salvation.* We might say of Him that He was announced as a God, that in God He lived and died; we might admire such a glorious apparition without understanding

it, and Faith, finding no effect consequent upon such a cause, would fall back upon itself in the sterility of dumb astonishment. There is no creature so weak as not to leave behind it some trace of its passage upon earth; we have seen empires founded by conquerors, schools of thought established by philosophers. Shall Jesus Christ alone, because *He is God*, vanish altogether, unable to justify His coming by the immortality of its results? But it has been far otherwise; Jesus Christ, in guiding His disciples to return to His Father, gave them this supreme word for farewell: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Lacordaire, in commenting upon this text, turns first to the Church under its hierarchic aspect: 'The apostles have founded the peace of a sole and universal society, the recognised depositary of the revelations of Christ, of His commandments, of His grace, of His virtues, of His rights, and of His power; a society which, disarmed of all power except that which it derives from Him, continues, under the sceptre of one man, sole vicar of one sole Master, to hold to its allegiance each conscience which

believes, and each intellect that knows. It is here that Jesus Christ, without distinction of race or of country, reigns, and accomplishes His plighted obligation to be with His own until the consummation of all things. It is here that His voice is heard through that of the hierarchy who represent Him, and of which He is the invisible Head ; here that He may be approached in a holiness which the unaided heart of man can never attain to. It is here that the soul feeds upon Him as on an immaterial food. It is here, in short, *that Scripture itself lives*, no longer the simple monument of an antique history ; but as the Word of God, assisted by the Spirit which dictated it, upon lips which are never silent, the infallible organ of its divinity.'

But even while Lacordaire is thus writing, his heart seems to kindle and expand, and to bear him to a wider region. He proceeds to define the Church in language which might suit a Protestant. 'It is,' he says, 'a society of souls through the love of God, and whoever loves God is a living member of it, in whatever age he lives, and under whatever sky. *For the Church has an*

existence beyond its apparent one. It exists not only in that visible edifice within which is built up all history, authenticity, hierarchy, the splendour of graces and of miracles; it exists also in what is dimly seen undeveloped, unremembered, in sanctities lost to human sight, *in all which, adding nothing to the legitimate glory of the truth, yet goes to make a subterraneous foundation which supports it.* There is no human soul,¹ even the most ordinary one, which does not contain within itself a mysterious sanctuary, and which does not in this Holy of Holies offer up unto God an incense unknown, of no account as regards this earth, but of weight in the glory of the next. I speak to you, Emmanuel, who, young as you are in the mysteries of the soul, know enough of them not to confine the Church to its visible walls and towers. *Wherever there is the love of God, Jesus Christ is found; and wherever Jesus Christ is, the Church is there*

¹ Does Lacordaire mean that all beings simply by *living* glorify God, and answer the end of their creation? The star, the flower, the animal, may be said to glorify God by simply being what they are; but it seems that the homage of an intelligent being *must* be conscious and voluntary, in order to be acceptable.

with Him. And though it is true that every Christian ought to unite himself to the body of the Church so soon as he knows of its existence, it is also certain that invincible ignorance exempts him from this law, and leaves him under the immediate government of Jesus Christ, first and sovereign head of Christendom. "For two affections," says St. Augustine, "have founded two cities, the love of this world has established the city of this world; the love of God, the city of God, and of this love Jesus Christ is the Father. It is He who, through the sacrifice of His own blood offered up for us from the foundation of the world, has quickened our blood, too cold and too guilty to move of itself towards God. *Dead through love, He has created a love that dies* (through self-sacrifice), and the society of souls is welded by Him in this invulnerable cement. All, it is true, do not know the source of the fire by which they are consumed. There are souls which cannot name Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ has never been named to them. *Obscure victims of the Cross which has saved them,* it has not been given them to look upon Him in the agony which He endured for their salva-

tion; but they have been reached by a drop of His blood, following some invisible track."

'The Church, then, has an extent which no human eye can be cognisant of; its world, like the natural world, takes in a horizon *under the sunken as under the risen sun*. And it is not only souls touched with the love of God who belong to the Church. If it were composed altogether of the just, it would want a second hold upon the Divine favour; it would want sinners, sinners too much beloved by Jesus Christ to be excluded from His work, and from all fellowship with Him. The heart of a sinner is alienated, it is not dead; it preserves in its alienation a capability of return. God discovers amid the windings of the heart a spark of yet unextinguished fire; secret tracks yet open to repentance, chinks where light may still find entrance, *memories that nurse hope*. There may be left some one invulnerable point through which life may re-enter suddenly, as a guest who has been sleeping on the threshold. Sinners lie open to the grace of God as chaos at the time of creation did to His power. "The earth was without form, and void; and darkness covered the face of

the waters, but the Spirit of God moved upon them." So it moves upon the sinner's soul.'

Lacordaire goes on to say, 'It would have been impossible, but for a contrivance (*un art*¹) full of mercy, that the sinner should be a real member of the Church of Christ, for the Church is founded upon love, and the sinner does not love. It has therefore pleased Jesus Christ to attach the sinner to Himself by a contrivance worthy of the blood which has saved the world. A sacrament was instituted which should plant in the yet unconscious soul the germ of all the Christian virtues; which should endow it with the unction of the Holy Spirit, and engrave on it the ineffaceable print of its calling to Christ, to the Church, and to eternity,—Baptism, at once symbol, remedy,

¹ This seems a strange word to use in speaking of a rite ordained by God, and in Lacordaire's view of representing this Divine ordinance there is something which, even in exalting it, seems to lessen it by turning it into a kind of charm, the effects of which a person can scarcely shake off, even if he wishes to do so. Surely baptism must share in the characteristic of *all* Divine gifts, and become to the hardened and impenitent soul the savour of death unto death. 'My Spirit,' says God, 'shall not *always* strive with man.'

and initiation—symbol of purity, remedy of original sin, efficacious initiation into the supernatural life,—*thus becomes at once the invisible and the external foundation of the community of saints.* If the soul remains faithful to the virtues of which it is the hidden source, it flourishes in the Church as a plant lifts up its head in the field which has brought forth and nourished it; but if it proves false to baptismal grace by voluntary adhesion to the world, even then *the soul is held to the Church, as a root without culture and without fruit attaches itself to the soil which bears it, and which can still make it grow.* It is in vain that the sinner still grieves love by his indifference; hope and faith still remain to keep him upright before God. It is in vain that he relinquishes hope and abandons faith; the germ of each, and of love also, continues to exist in the sacred imprint of his baptism, as the river dried up by the heat yet exists in the spring which can still renew its waters, *and in the desolate banks which still await their return.*

‘Baptism holds us, in spite of ourselves, to the anchorage of faith, hope, and love. Neither the seductions of vice nor our own culpable carelessness can detach us from it.

To effect this demands a formal apostasy on our part, and on that of the Church an entire excommunication. Failing this extreme stroke, the baptized soul remains in the Church which has imprinted it with the blood of Christ, and marked its inner garment with that indestructible stain.'

NOTES.

NOTE A (p. 10).—*Conversion.*

LACORDAIRE, speaking of his own conversion, says: 'It is impossible for me to tell how, or at what day and hour, my faith, which had been lost for ten years, reappeared in my heart, like the flame of a torch which has never been quite extinguished. We learn from theology that there is another light than that of reason, another drawing than that of nature, and that this light and attraction, proceeding forth from God, act upon us without our knowing whence they come or whither they go. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

'When I examine the travail of my spirit during the last five years, when I return to the point I started from, and survey the steps my mind has passed over, with a view to the definite result of my slow progress over a path set thick with obstacles, I am astonished at myself, and can only lift up my heart to adore God. To feel this as I feel it one needs to have passed, as I have done,

out of error into truth, so remembering all one's forepast ideas as to be able to compare the strange alliances, the different epochs of one's conviction. *It is a sublime moment when the last ray of light penetrates within the soul, and attaches all the truths scattered throughout it to one common centre.*

'There is always such a distance between the moment which precedes and the moment which follows this one, between one's former and one's after state, that the word *grace* has been invented (?) to express this magic stroke, this flash of light from on high.'

It is strangely interesting to compare these views of Lacordaire's on conversion with some remarks of F. W. Newman's on the same subject, and to observe their entire coincidence:—'There is no single thing which more strikes me as indicating a defective philosophy current concerning the soul than the incredulity and contempt which is cast upon *sudden* conversions. Sudden political revolutions are never treated as incredible or marvellous. It is readily understood that in a State two or three different powers are struggling together with independent force, and often with alternate success. At last the depressed party rises in sudden might, deposes that which held the chief power, and assumes the helm.

'Many moralizers seem not to be aware that similarly in the narrow compass of one man's bosom two or three powers are often striving for mastery. Rather they know of nothing but "Reason and Passion," and as Reason acts gently and very steadily, and only Passion by violent

impulse, they can understand indeed that a man may fall into dire sin all in a moment, *but not how he can rise out of it all in a moment.* This is because they know nothing of the forces of the soul, which are in fact true passions themselves.

‘May we not truly say of *all* intuitive impressions that they are at first sudden and impulsive? The beauty of a scene, of a face, strikes us with sudden impetus; not that we always discern it at first sight; we may have needed some familiarity with it before we see it in the right position, and gather up into a single whole that on which the effect depends; *but at last we catch it all in a moment, and wonder why it never so affected us before.*’

Speaking of a mode of preaching which is commonly termed fanatical, Newman says: ‘It has been practically proved to be far more powerful to convert and rescue than any wisdom of the mere moralist. When violent or vicious men are melted into apparent sorrow for their sins, by the thought that there is *mercy even for them*, we discern at once that they are not hopelessly hardened, for the most dreadful consequence of wilful sin—sin against moral and spiritual light—is this very thing, that it palsies the heart against believing and accepting mercy. The word of the preacher,’ he says, ‘which assures a heart convicted of sin that it is already pardoned by God, and by Him accepted, which encourages the sinner to come to Christ, to come *now*, to come as he is, without waiting to make himself good and righteous, is the word which the human heart needs. His faith or

his credulity (let men give it what name they will) grasps at the idea that, in spite of all that has passed, he may yet live a purer and a better life under the smile of God; and the fact of his grasping at it attests the birth of higher desires, which forthwith become cultivated by exercise, and, in happy instances, are ultimately triumphant.'—*The Soul*, p. 69.

NOTE B (p. 25).—*Lamennais*.

‘So thy quest

Ended like mine, with naught to call thine own,
Made end with all fond searching first and last,
All ventured, dared, imperilled,—nothing known.’

With these keen words, like eager sword-strokes
fast

Flung forth, methought another spirit passed;
I knew him by the mighty shade he cast.

‘Yet not to failing love, but unto Truth
I gave the promise of my golden years,
And tracked her flying footsteps as the youth

‘Tracks the bright nymph that flits and disappears,
And lures him on through paths that weave and
wind,

Till in the forest thick with spells and fears

‘She leaves him desolate and mad, and blind.
Rich was the life I lost, the soul I gave!
And strong the charm wherewith I sought to bind

' Her strength to mine ! I rifled earth, air, wave,
Yea, oft the dead I questioned ! but no word
I found, nor any that could guide or save.

' Then from my way died off each flower ; no bird
Sang from the blasted bough, a crash—a cry—
Of giant tree that fell, afar I heard,

' Or fierce beast snared in deathly agony ;
And all was silent ; then afar I spied
A few, who on a mountain pathway high

' Held on their upward way, by love nor pride
Seduced, enticed by knowledge nor dismayed
By fear,—the followers of the Crucified.

' These lingered not for song of bird, nor stayed
To mark what hues the glittering insect glossed,
That dipt across their path from sun to shade.

' These won their steadfast goal—and have I lost,
Who flung my soul within the crucible,
And saw it shrink, nor counted up the cost,

' So that Truth's bright elixir clearer fell
In sparkling drops ? Of all I ventured there
Is nothing found ? Have I loved Truth so well

' To lose my Christ ? lost God through loving men ?
—Speak now, my soul ! if all to win and lose
Once more were thine, if choice were given again,

' Would it be thine the *surer* way to choose !—
Though o'er my grave no word of hope was said,
Above it raised no cross, behold the dews

‘Lie on it fresh! Though all whom once I led
Fell from me, shunned me, banned me, held my lore
For spells accurst, unhallowed, backwards read,—

‘I was God’s Priest, His Prophet ever more.’
Then raised he that old cry of anguish sore,
‘Hast thou no other blessing, Father, say?’

From an unpublished poem.

NOTE C (p. 30).—*Self-Sacrifice.*

‘Religion,’ says Lamennais, ‘or society between God and man, is founded upon the mutual gift and sacrifice of God to man, and of man to God.’ He sees in the Christian doctrine of self-abnegation the endorsement of a great natural law, that of the mutual gift and sacrifice of man for man, without which,’ he says, ‘human society, under its simplest conditions, could not hold together; as human beings, to live together in any sort of harmony, must agree to the partial surrender of individual claims and interests in favour of the common good. *Thus sacrifice is the base and essence of all true society,* and what in the Gospel strikes us as strange and as foreign to natural reason, is only the expression of a grand natural and social law. Rousseau has stated this truth with his usual clearness in saying that the difference between the good and the wicked man is, *that the good man plans his life with a reference to the whole, while the wicked man would gladly order*

all things with reference to himself. The latter makes himself the centre of all things, the other orders all with reference to a common centre, even to God. 'The spirit of self-sacrifice, or in other words, the spirit of love, is engaged,' says Lamennais, 'in an incessant combat against the disastrous principle of selfishness, and fights a winning or a losing battle in proportion to its strength of aiding faith.' He seems to see in self-sacrifice a solemn testimony to that principle of unity which is one with holiness itself; the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, is a principle of love, of union, *of life which consummates itself through union*, the sign of possessing this spirit is the tendency to accomplish this unity by sacrifice or the gift of self.

'Self-abnegation is the first condition of all Christian greatness; a greatness, the *image and source of all the conservative powers and forces of social order*, which few men are found able to bear.'—*(Essai sur Indifférence.)*

In this essay occurs the following striking passage upon the sin against the Holy Ghost. 'Whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him, for he may yet return to the truth by the way of love; but he who speaks against the Holy Ghost, *who obstinately persists in hardening himself against love itself*, is left without excuse and without hope. What shall restore him, who has resisted all at once—light, truth, and the inspirations of love? God himself can do no more for him; he has exhausted the power as well as the mercy of the Infinite Being, and his sin, which involves the total opposition of the will to the whole

Divine order, shall not be remitted him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.'

NOTE D (p. 63).—*Madame Swetchine.*

The following extract is an admirable example of Madame Swetchine's calm and cheering wisdom, of her exquisite discrimination, and of the light and tender touch with which she could probe the deep original wound of humanity. Writing of moral progress, she thus enforces St. Paul's great saying, 'Overcome evil with good : '—

'We often try vainly to cut up our errors by the quick, to fight evil hand to hand *on its own ground*, where it has us at a disadvantage. We should rather seek to overcome evil with good, to draw that life which gives evil all its strength into some innocent and useful direction, to give it an issue instead of cutting off its retreat. Evil under our present order *must* continue; it is in vain to look for its disappearance, *or for its continual decline in direct and positive warfare.* Our most sure and certain way to such victory as we can obtain over it is that of developing, feeding, and fortifying the good which exists along with it. We have within us but a certain measure of strength and of activity; as much of this as is added to the good is taken from evil. *The more free and developed life of one good feeling is often the death-warrant of many guilty ones.* Let us then be less vehement against error, but more careful to raise up the truth; let

us endure the evil we cannot prevent, let us sometimes even tolerate it, but all the while in hasting to do good.

‘Passion cannot be opposed by frigid reasoning. Evil inclinations cannot be checked one by one. Counterbalance is perhaps the only method which can be successfully employed in the great work of human amelioration. To re-adjust, to keep up the equilibrium, is perhaps, in moral as in physical life, the only way left open to useful efforts. It is not virtue which the fall of man has rendered impossible, only its peaceful and assured possession. Human corruption has not established the empire of evil, but it has condemned what is good to a mixed and partial existence.’

All that Madame Swetchine writes bears the mark of originality, also of an over-refinement and subtlety of thought in itself exquisite, but which would be apt to become wearisome from its tendency to analysis and mental shading, were it not in her case redeemed by the native force and impetuosity of what she herself describes as *an ardent personality*. She says, ‘I find much in myself to remind me of Buffon’s theory of the formation of our earth. *I have surely been detached, as it were, from a burning sun.* How many years have I spent in growing gradually cooler, and I am yet far from polar frost!’

To some thoughts written in her earlier days she gives the name of *Airelles*, a little northern marsh plant, whose small berries ripen and redden beneath the snow. ‘The analogy,’ M. St. Beuve remarks, ‘is one easily entered into, most of

Madame Swetchine's thoughts seeming to have rather ripened through the warmth of an inner self-sustained fire, than to have been fed by the sunshine and dews of the outward heaven. Some of these are full of point and delicacy.

'People who appear cold, and are only timid, adore so soon as they once dare to love.'

'Love can sometimes raise a whole nature, create new qualities, and hold guilty ones in check, but this is only for a day. *Its power is but that of an Eastern monarch, whose look can lift a slave from the dust, soon to fall back whence he has risen.*'

'Heaven is but to love in peace.'

Among her more directly religious thoughts the following seem instinct with true spiritual acumen:—

'Family unity, national unity, unity of the whole human race, make up, in the eyes of God, one great family, and involve *solidarity* for all. Redemption is the confirmation of this idea; *it has considered us as forming but one man.*'

'It was God upon the cross who could say, "Father, forgive *them*." The most just and simple among men can but say, "Forgive us;" *he has no right to separate himself from the guilty, even when he is their victim*, for he might possibly have committed the very crime he suffers from. Sacred solidarity of ignominy, of expiation, and of remorse, how dear art thou to the contrite and humiliated heart!'

She considers that there is something chimerical in the idea that passes by the name of disinterested love, 'a love which banishes hope.' 'Thought,'

she says, 'can with difficulty conceive of a state for the soul, the life of which is made by love, *with the exclusion of the happiness which love gives.* A heart truly touched by God is less occupied with the glory of blessedness which God is preparing for it, than *with the heart which He opens to it, the hand which He holds out, the union which He promises, the mysterious asylum in which the soul hides, rests, and is absorbed.* *Pure love in no way excludes the idea of reward, but it leaves no place for the thought of it.'*

Of prayer she says: '*Prayer is so excellent an act that God blesses it even when He does not grant it.* Prayer fertilized (*fécondé*) by grace is mediatory between Christ and God, as Christ Himself is Mediator between God and the world. God has given prayer a right over Himself. Not only does prayer move and shake God in His designs, and make Him suspend their execution, *but this same human prayer is at the bottom of almost all miracles.* Miracle is, by its very nature, of this earth; we have no reason to imagine that it can happen in heaven. Miracle enters into our privileges (*attributions*), our possibilities, *consequently into our hopes.'*

Prayer, in Madame Swetchine's view, is the intervening point between sensibility and spirituality, the meeting-ground of natural feeling and heavenly aspiration. Nature and grace meet here, and are reconciled in God, to whom the soul takes all its wishes, trials, and affections.

NOTE E (p. 68).—*Ozanam*.

Frederick Ozanam was one of those beings equally favoured by nature and by providence, whose rich mental endowments are so fostered and matured under every favouring outward circumstance, that in them no rare gift seems wrecked or wasted, no lofty aim falls short of its end. Lacordaire, in a beautiful sketch of his life, says of him, 'that he was one with whom all blooms quickly, and all comes into bloom at once, as if time and eternity were at work on them together.' Even so early as the age of sixteen, and before leaving his native city of Lyons, he had won the most distinguished honours in rhetoric, philosophy, and the ancient languages of the world, including Hebrew and Sanscrit. On his first coming to Paris he enjoyed the rare advantage of living two years with M. Ampère, at that time the patriarch of mathematics in France, and a Christian thinker of high and enlightened character, who took most kindly to his young student-friend, and opened out to him his rich treasures in science and natural philosophy with free and generous hand. Ozanam was at this time studying civil law, and not only rapidly attained the highest eminence in the profession he had chosen, but rose to such celebrity in studies connected with general literature, as to be called to fill the chair M. Fauriel's death left vacant in the Academy, and this at the age of thirty-two, earlier in life than that distinguished post has ever been conferred on any one. Here, until the time of his death, twelve years after, he was the most

popular of professors, combining two gifts seldom found united—patient and laborious erudition, with rare eloquence. He was intimately acquainted with the radical principles of language; vowed, Lacordaire tells us, in this respect, to an ‘indefatigable exploration,’ but gifted with a poetic instinct which enabled him to rise from these labours to the direct contemplation of pure literary beauty, ‘great among smoke and powder, when busy with the miner’s pick-axe; great, too, under the daylight of heaven, where the clear outlook of the mind gives all.’ At home in every literary region, the Middle Ages seems to have been his favourite ground. His *Etudes Germaniques* was twice crowned by the Academy; he wrote also an admirable paper on the Italian Franciscan poets of the thirteenth century, and at the time of his death he was busy with a work which was to gather together the mental labours of his life, in the history of thought and literature from the fifth century until the time of Dante, whose sombre genius had even from earliest days exercised a singular hold over his imagination, and who was to him the splendid culmination of all that is most distinctive in the spirit of the Middle Ages. The dominant thought of this work was one with that which had governed his whole life, and animated all his labours, ‘the conception of Christianity in its connexion with culture and civilisation,’—considering it as a *new society* capable of possessing truth, of working righteousness, and appreciating beauty.

In his opinion the friends of Christianity and of the Catholic Church, in their exclusive attention

to dogma, had too much neglected history ; his idea was to reconquer this vast neglected territory, to trace the growth of the Church as it rose from amid the ruins of the Roman Empire, and the barbarous tribes encamped upon those ruins, into splendour, dignity, and beauty. He desired, like another Dante, to paint it as it appears in the rude shocks and invasions of the Dark Ages, '*sombre et sanglante comme l'enfer,*' to touch with a lighter pencil the sunnier vistas of hope and enlightenment that from time to time present themselves in the peaceful figures of the monk and scholiast.

The missionary-saint, the king, the crusader, were all to have been restored in these pages, prepared for by the loving researches of eighteen years. He did not live to complete this undertaking, but he had already, through the labours of a life of love, and the triumphs of a rare eloquence, finished a greater work—even that which his Father had given him to do.

In 1830, the time when Ozanam came to Paris as a student, there was a wide divorce between religion and all nobler and freer thought. Chateaubriand alone maintained a strong hold upon public admiration and favour, and stood up, Lacordaire says *alone*, a lofty and sorrowful figure ; while the defence of the Church in general was left to narrow brains and unskilled hands ; 'to men who, with the best intentions, would shipwreck the cause of God Himself, if it was possible He could be shipwrecked.' The Bourbons on their return had brought back with them a dull bigotry

that utterly missed its hold upon the more generous instincts of the age, and seemed to *create* around it that blank vacuum which life abhors. Yet this age, troubled to its very centre, had many prophets, prophesying to it out of their own hearts, full of gigantic schemes for human progress and amelioration, bent upon bringing back to earth a reign of temporal felicity, the millennium of the *Bien Etre*,

‘Where the passions, cramped no longer,
Should have room and breathing space.’

All asking, ‘who shall show us any good?’ all agreeing in ignoring the root of the evil which they strove to banish. In all their philanthropic speculations there is no recognition of sin, the principle of corruption inherent in mortality, which must be ever striven against with but a partial measure of success, and which Christianity itself does not pretend to extirpate. To Ozanam’s mind, early instructed in the Gospel, this one cardinal weak spot in so many varying theories was from the first apparent. He did not, however, withdraw from the questions of the day; but strove to enter into them in a deeper and more evangelic spirit. While others were attacking the wide problem of human misery from the theoretic side, Ozanam was following out a simple practical idea, which had grown up between his heart and that of eight young friends, who used to meet him for discussing philosophic and social questions,—that of an association for visiting and comforting the poor in their own homes; which, under the

name of the Confraternity of St. Vincent de Paul, has extended in Paris alone from its original 8 to 2000 members, and can now number 500 principal centres, and which has spread not only throughout France, but to England, Spain, Belgium, America, and even to Jerusalem itself.

'Charity,' says Lacordaire, 'is beautiful in itself, beautiful in all in whom it makes its presence manifest,—admirable in the man of middle life, who takes an hour from his many avocations to bestow it on the cares and sufferings of others—excellent in the woman who, crowned with happiness and love, is mindful of those who know either only by their names—excellent, too, in the poor, who are able to find a kind deed and word for those yet poorer than themselves; yet charity itself is never so fair or so perfect as when it finds its shrine in the heart of the young man, and draws around it all the strength and glory of natural life, and of opening manhood.' 'I have written to you, young men,' says the apostle, 'because ye are strong.' When the strength of manhood is joined to the tenderness of charity, we see the fairest combination our nature has to offer. Ozanam's ardent mental pre-occupations in no way deadened his susceptibilities to the wants and sorrows of the humblest among his brethren. The poor were his friends, his guests, actively sought out by him in their wretched abodes, tenderly welcomed when they came to seek him at his own—importunity did not weary him, nor interruption, even when it called him from his cherished literary labours, irritate,—the

face of a suppliant, we are told, was never a troublesome sight.¹ Ozanam appears to have been also rich in that, perhaps even higher, charity, which is 'ready to distribute, willing to communicate,' the best treasures of heart and mind. In his after days, and at the time when his reputation was most brilliant, he remembered his own comparatively obscure youth, and lent himself generously to the young, who sought him from every quarter; never refusing an interview with any student, whether recommended to him, or entirely unknown. Five days in the week, that is to say, on every day when his public duties did not claim him, his doors were open from eight o'clock in the morning till ten; and though often, doubtless, devoured by the ardour of his own interrupted work, nothing in his manner ever betrayed impatience or hurry. He felt himself in a priestly relation to these young intelligences, a *debtor*, as St. Paul

¹ Ozanam seems to have inherited a treasure of charity; his father's life was shortened by an accident incurred in doing good, and Lacordaire says that when he first began to mount the stairs that led to the poor man's garret, he followed in the steps of both his father and mother, who had often made that steep ascent before him. A tale is on record of these admirable people, that when they were growing old, they laid each other under a mutual interdict never, in visiting the poor, to mount beyond the fourth storey; a mutual promise to this effect had been exchanged, but only to be broken by a charity stronger than their prudence, and they one day met each other by the same bedside, not, we may believe, to interchange any very urgent recriminations.

expresses it, *to all*. And it is needless to say that he was surrounded in life and death with all the warmth that affection, admiration, and reverence can give; popular with a solid,¹ enduring popularity, that enabled him to say, to do much that none other could have ventured on. In his warmest advocacy for the causes his life was devoted to, he was never betrayed into any severe or bitter aspersion; gentle towards every one, '*and just towards error*,' says Lacordaire, 'it was a joy and consolation, amidst the harsh din of controversy, to have among us *one* pure and feeling voice, that was never sharpened to recrimination, or raised in malediction of opponents.' In controversy, he was distinguished by an infinite care not to wound the feelings of those he was contending with: it seemed to him that so soon as a mind was once awakened to take interest in Divine things, even so far as to discuss them, it *was already on the way to God*, and that a keen and scornful word might turn it farther aside, and inflict an injury

¹ His young friends loved him with the ardent affection of disciples. Lacordaire, in commenting upon this, makes some beautiful remarks on what is required for true and solid popularity; and, after the kindness without which no genius or force of character will avail to win it, finds much of its secret in unshaken convictions and persevering aims. 'The man,' he says, 'who is apt to change his opinion, if his disinterestedness is recognised, may perhaps preserve esteem; but he will never draw confidence to himself, or obtain authority. *None can influence the souls of other men whose own convictions are not deep and abiding.*'

never afterwards to be repaired. Such a spirit was evidently formed to be the soul and founder of a society, which, like that of St. Vincent de Paul, aims at being a universal Agapè, a resurrection of the unity of love ; which, in Lacordaire's words, in its community of good works, is a sort of anticipation of a great and general Truce of God, where conflicting opinions are for the moment silenced, and we concern ourselves not with what people believe, but with what they suffer.

Ozanam married early in life, and most happily ; his heart was alive to every domestic joy, and even covetous of all the little outward signs and tokens that at once manifest and feed the hidden life of love. In his soul there was nothing of austerity ; he was careful to keep up family festivals, mindful of a birthday souvenir, and pleased to be so remembered. Lacordaire tells us *that his faith in all that concerned home was great.* He adored his mother in her lifetime, and after her death still seemed so little separated from her, that he used to say that he felt her still about him, caressing him as in the days of his childhood, and was accustomed to speak of the effect this had upon his life, as his belief *in his mother's real presence.* Among all these closer ties his warm and generous nature still found room for friendship ; his intimacies were kept up through life ; though blest in marriage and rich in celebrity, and often overwhelmed with occupation, we are told that he could never do without having friends, the equals of his heart and mind, to love.

His piety was deep and fervent. He never

went to lecture without kneeling down in prayer to ask God that he might say nothing in opposition to truth, or with a mere view to applause and glory. Each morning he strengthened his spirit by secret and intimate study of Scripture, and daily renewed his active service of devotion to the great society of souls which the redeeming work of Christ has founded upon our earth, the Church, which he lived to serve, and even in dying hoped to bless, in the conviction that suffering might be accepted by God in the place of work. His bright career was not a long one ; he died a little above the age of forty, on his return from a journey to Italy, undertaken for the restoration of his failing health.

Not long before his death, he turned to his beloved wife and said, 'I wish you to join with me in blessing God for my sufferings ;' then throwing himself into her arms, he said, 'I bless Him also for the consolations which He has given me.' As he drew near the brink of that dark river, 'the waters whereof are to the stomach cold, and to the taste bitter, the thought of which hath been a terror to many,' he seemed with the steadfast-hearted pilgrim 'to stand easy.' And while he passed over there was a great calm, a calm which belonged neither to life nor death, but which was visible in his whole aspect ; he seemed already to touch the shore he had loved and laboured for, the land where his fathers in the faith had gone before him, and in drawing near it he suffered no longer. In this state he received the last sacraments of the Church he had through life revered and defended.

The priest told him to have confidence in God. 'Why,' he said, 'should I fear Him, I love Him so much.'

After this he never spoke again, except in some few words of thanks or of blessing; he could still extend his hand for a loving pressure, could still smile with his old irresistible smile, that had won him so many hearts. On the day of his death, that of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, he opened his eyes, uplifted his arms, and said with a powerful voice, 'My God, my God, have pity upon me!' the last earthly words of the eloquent voice of him who had been through the whole of life the friend and the advocate of all that was lovely, excellent, and of good report—'*the master of many minds, the comforter of all.*'

NOTE F (p. 114).

The spiritual letters of Besson are models of a wisdom and tenderness, of which any one selected passage can give but a faint idea. The warm fragrant breath which they give forth of purity, of peace, of self-sacrificing love, is something which belongs to them as a whole, and it becomes difficult to choose among so many flowers bound up together in one 'bundle of life.'

'You have done well,' he writes to a convert, 'to write to me; in the beginning of spiritual life it is above all things necessary to open the heart

T

freely; constraint would be even as death to many of the good resolutions you have lately taken; the way of perfection is rugged, straight, and difficult, Love alone, which knows how to change and soften all things, can make it broad, easy, and straight. It is narrow as regards mortification, and the renunciation of all self and all creature-love—it is large through the happiness which arises through union with the God who is beloved, joyful in possessing him in privation of all other things. But as, to reach our God, we are obliged to leave the objects we know and love, to arrive through this act of abandonment at the sovereign good as yet unknown to us by experience, there cannot fail to be something dark and painful in the path of self-renunciation, something which alarms our feeble reason. We are entering upon an unknown world, a world of which nature and our senses can reveal nothing to us, all in it is so far beyond their range. We shrink back, as if entering on some vast subterranean realm where light fails, and darkness thickens on every side; all that the heart can then do is to unite itself to the heart of its Saviour, to study Him in all things, and, above all others, in His passion; for it is there He shows Himself like the sun at mid-day, in all the ardour of His love.

‘I cannot, at this moment, reply to all the particulars you enter upon in your letter; and, perhaps, were I to do so, your circumstances may have so changed in the meantime, as to render what I might say no longer applicable. I will then confine myself at present to the one great

reality which has for such a long time governed your whole existence. Our Lord, in making your career a career of suffering, has called you even by this very means to unite yourself closely to Himself. *You must oblige yourself to believe this*, for the more your heart is able to enter into this secret, the more you will feel your sorrows changing into ineffable consolations. The only real earthly joy is that which is derived from the Cross, *and this joy is only won at the price of a complete death to ourselves*, so that we may live entirely in God and by Him. Sacrifice is an indispensable condition of the Christian life, and its plenitude is to be only reached by entire self-immolation; they who think otherwise are deceived; but this is a truth which can only be entered into by the heart, love alone makes it fruitful. *The Cross must be loved before we can understand all the excellencies the Cross contains.* Fearful as it may be to the sight of nature, *it will be divinely transfigured in the arms of those who know how to hold it in a loving grasp.* Beg then, my daughter, beg earnestly of our Lord to *bestow on you a still greater and greater love for His Cross and for your own.* Understand that your Cross is His, because it is for love of Him that you carry it; and understand that His Cross is yours, because it was for love of you that He bore it, it was for love of you that He died in unimaginable sorrows. It was the infinite love which He bore to our souls which condemned Him to suffer the torments of His Passion. And it is through love, only through love, that we must accept our own

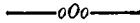
sufferings, as the means of attaining to perfect union with Him. What is very difficult to the rich and learned is made easy to the poor and humble, *because the simple acceptance of their condition introduces them into the pathway of safety and of joy.* And you, my child, *forgotten and always suffering,* are evidently called by God, and that in an especial manner, to be the disciple of the Divine Cross. *Your* happiness will never be found in freedom from pain; but only in holy and entire resignation, and in the closest union with Him who has suffered for your sake.'

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