

It was about noon when the Sisters first discovered the sacrilegious theft. The robbers had entered by one of the windows, which they had reached by means of a board; then they unscrewed the hinges of the door of the Tabernacle, after rifling which, they carried off the chalice which was in a box near the altar. A solemn Mass of reparation will be sung here to-morrow; and at this Mass a general Communion will be offered up to the same end, while awaiting what you yourself, Rev. Father, may decide should be done in this matter by the whole Society.

If it be true that God knows how to make even the crimes of men redound to His glory, I have reason to believe that this will serve for the instruction, the amendment and the perseverance of many here, and perhaps, too, in France. As for me, on whom so great an impression has been made, I shall have ever present before me through my whole life the most forcible lesson that can be given in this world. Were it not that so great an outrage had been committed against the Saviour of the world, I would thank God for having given us the lesson. Like a clap of thunder it has struck all hearts in this mission—each one believes himself the culprit, whose little faith has drawn down this punishment. May God grant that this stroke may arouse many a one from a dangerous lethargy!

Your devoted son in J. M. J.,
E. SORIN.

No. II.

ST. MARY'S, October 14, 1857.

MY DEAR DAUGHTERS IN JESUS CHRIST:

I deem it my duty not to conceal from you the sad intelligence that the terrible crisis which has already spread so much desolation over the country has also affected our Community to a frightful extent. Indeed, our material existence is seriously threatened; and were it not for the memory of the wonderful blessings of the past, I would almost despair of the future. But I hope yet that the blessed Hand, which has so mercifully rescued us from danger and necessity whenever every human help had failed, will still support us in this new trial, if we humble our souls in earnest supplications to Heaven, and strive to turn away the anger of God provoked by our sins, and to make Heaven once more propitious unto us in our affliction.

I therefore direct that a crown of Communions be commenced in the Community, and continued until new orders be received; also that the prayer of St. Bernard to the Blessed Virgin—the *Memorare*—together with the invocation to the holy and faithful heart of

St. Joseph, be the first and last prayer of every member of the Congregation daily for the same time.

The day assigned to you and companions for the extra Communion is Wednesday, for the Sisters at Notre Dame.

I now leave to the religious and affectionate heart of everyone to secure, by every possible effort, all the blessings we stand in need of; to avoid all unnecessary expense, and forward, without delay, to the Secretary at St. Mary's whatever can be saved or spared.

If such be the holy will of God, in atonement for our iniquities, that we should be crushed down by the storm now raging over the land, let it not be before we have sincerely craved pardon and become better. At least, let a new spirit of poverty be introduced in all the members of the Community, and who knows if our good God will not be moved to mercy by the sincere return of our hearts to Him?

Recommending you to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I remain,

Your devoted, in J. M. J.,

E. SORIN.

No. III.

FESTIVAL OF THE SACRED HEART.

MY DEAR SISTERS:

Before the close of this beautiful day, I feel an irresistible desire to address you a few words, which, I trust, will afford you some consolation. In the first place, I am glad to inform you that we have made arrangements for your Annual Retreat before I leave for the General Chapter in France. It will commence on the 9th of July, the Feast of the Prodigies of the Blessed Virgin. It will not be possible for all the Sisters now engaged in the hospitals to leave their posts; but at least the Directresses should by all means endeavor to be present; the same applies to establishments in the East. A good retreat is, perhaps, more needed this year than ever before. No one should be deterred from attending because our little troubles may not yet be ended by that time. As far as we are concerned, they may be already considered at an end. We have lately learned from the Mother-House that the whole affair had been submitted to Rome by our Very Rev. Father Superior-General himself; therefore, all that remains for us to do is simply to await in peace the decision of the Holy See, and meanwhile to pray that the holy will of God may be accomplished in your regard. This is no commonplace remark on my part; I wish to be clearly understood, and to impress upon your minds the importance of the fact that you must now dismiss from among yourselves even indirect references to the subject of those difficulties. For my own part, I do not wish to hear a word of it; and I pledge you my word that whatever may be decided I will enforce the same, with zeal and energy, if

I have anything to do with your Society, whether it be favorable or contrary to my own views. Indeed I would feel equally surprised and mortified, if any one of you would be otherwise disposed. The only proof we can offer of the honesty of our designs is our readiness to accept with gladness the final arrangements for which we are looking, whatever they are. God forbid that these temporary little troubles should create any division among you! We must, on the contrary, take it for granted that those who have had to examine these differences have been actuated by the best motives. But even while equally prompted to promote the general good of the Community, it is no wonder if they did not arrive at the same conclusion, as to the best means to obtain the end. The same difficulties have perplexed other communities before. To prevent a recurrence of the same, and to secure you a permanent peace, and the religious harmony which a Community must enjoy, I can not help deeming it a great favor that learned and saintly Bishops have deigned to examine seriously your interests and present the result of their considerations and consultations to the Holy See. Hitherto, we have perhaps too easily felt at liberty to censure and criticise what did not appear to suit us; grounded or not, such censures weaken more or less the spirit of respect and veneration that should be entertained towards the Rules and authority.

This, with many other causes of sufferings, almost unavoidable in a state of things not clearly defined, is to be obviated by the final arrangement now looked for by all your Society. True, I do not know any more than yourselves how this arrangement will be fixed ultimately; but I feel more than ever confident that it will be a precious gain for your Community, and that, ere long, you will see yourselves what a debt of gratitude you owe to God, who has thus drawn good from evil, as He always does to those who love Him. Great blessings are not necessarily gratuitous. They are often purchased at no small sacrifices. Do not imagine that your little Society is destroyed because it has been somewhat agitated; the more a young plant is shaken by the wind, the deeper and stronger it grows its roots into the ground. In the eyes of faith, it is an elementary principle that those whom God loves He chastises, and that "power is made perfect in infirmity." Perhaps it was so ordained that you should suffer, to merit your beautiful name of Sisters of Holy Cross.

In your present trials I see no mark of the anger of Heaven upon you, but rather love to consider them as the forerunner of greater favors. The many souls your brave and heroic Sisters in the Government hospitals have themselves introduced since twenty months into a blessed eternity would be more than a sufficient guarantee that God is with your little family; the excellent condition of your schools, and especially that of your principal establish-

ment here, is another. Your finances, although yet embarrassed, were never so prosperous. In three years at farthest, with the same Heavenly protection, your debt shall be totally liquidated; and even now the income arising from your Readers fully meets the annual interest of your entire indebtedness.

Therefore—I say it with deep gratitude to God—I consider your Society well and really established in the United States, from the moment you have a permanent and suitable government, as I firmly believe you will soon obtain. With the elements of success you already possess; with the life, the energy and devotedness, which, under God, form the features of your Society as a Religious body; with the memory of so many blessings already received, you need not fret, nor be solicitous for the future. Otherwise I would say to you: fear not little flock, for besides the Kingdom Almighty God has promised you, you have already received no small share of your hundredfold reward for the little nothing you have sacrificed.

Continue, then, in peace, and with a loving heart, the labors assigned you by obedience; and when they are brought to a close for the present year, come joyously to your peaceful home, where you may forget and repair your fatigues and little troubles in the enjoyment of your best and truest friends.

But, once more, bear in mind that I would be grieved to hear that, from this moment, so much as an allusion had been made among you to the vexed subject of past disturbances. “Above all things, have charity, which is the bond of perfection; and let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body.”

The occasion of the Retreat shall serve, as usual, to regulate many things I have postponed until then, the execution of a plan which has been in my mind for many years,—I mean the organization of a normal school at St. Mary’s for training Catholic young girls to become teachers; as the attention of the public has lately been drawn to its importance, and as you have the necessary means to commence with, you should, I think, defer it no longer. Such a step, when fully appreciated, will appear to you even more important in its bearings than your present ministration to sick and wounded soldiers. Before I close this letter, let me entreat all of you to show yourselves in every possible way worthy of the interest your revered Bishops and Superiors have manifested towards you.

I commend you to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; there I invite you all to meet every day, to pray, to thank, to adore and to love our Blessed Lord.

Ever your devoted, in J. M. J.,

E. SORIN, C. S. C.