

Mothers' Gonna.

SISTERS OF CHARITY.

BY R. D. WILLIAMS.

"SISTER of charity, gentle and dutiful,"
Loving as seraphim, tender, and mild,
In humbleness strong, and in purity beautiful;
In spirit heroic; in manners a child.
Ever thy love, like an angel reposes,
With hovering wings o'er the sufferer here,
Till the arrows of death are half hidden in roses,
And the hope-speaking prophecy smiles on the bier.

When life, like a vapour, is slowly retiring,
As clouds in the dawning to Heaven uprolled,
Thy prayer, like a herald, precedes him expiring;
And the cross on thy bosom, his last looks behold.
And, oh! as the spouse to thy words of love listens,
What hundreds of blessings descend on thee then;
Thus, the flower-absorbed dew on the bright iris glistens,
And returns to the lilies more richly again.

Sister of charity, child of the holiest,
O, for thy living soul, ardent as pure!
Mother of orphan, friend of the lowliest;
Stay of the wretched, the guilty, the poor!
The embrace of the Godhead so plainly unfolds thee;
Sancity's halo, so shines thee around;
Dazing the eye that unshrinking beholds thee,
Nor drops in thy presence abashed to the ground.

Dim is the fire of the sunniest blushes
Burning the breast of the maidenly rose,
To the exquisite bloom which thy pale beauty flushes
When the incense ascends, and the sanctuary glows,
And the music that seems Heaven's language is pealing,
Adoration has bowed him in silence and sighs,
And man intermingled with angels is feeling
The passionless rapture that comes from the skies.

O, that this heart, whose unspeakable treasure
Of love hath been wasted so vainly on clay,
Like thine, unallured by the phantom of pleasure,
Could rend every earthly affection away!
And yet in thy presence, the billows subsiding,
Obey the strong effort of reason and will,
And my soul in her pristine tranquility gliding
Is calm as when God bid the ocean be still.

Thy soothing, how gentle! thy pity, how tender!
Choir music thy voice is, thy step angel grace;
And thy union with Deity shines in a splendour
Subdued, but unearthly, thy spiritual face,
When the frail chains are broken a captive that bound thee,
Afar from thy home, in this prison of clay,
Bride of the Lamb, and earth's shadows around thee
Disperse in the blaze of Eternity's day.

Still mindful, as now, of the sufferer's story,
Arresting the thunders of wrath ere they roll—
Intervene as a cloud between us and his glory,
And shield from his lightning the shuddering soul,
As mild as the moonbeams in autumn descending,
That lightning, extinguished by mercy, shall fall,
As he hears with the wail of a penitent blending
Thy prayer, holy daughter of Vincent de Paul.

SUEMA,

OR

THE LITTLE AFRICAN WHO WAS BURIED ALIVE.

ALIVE.

CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

WE passed several days at Quilon, days which gave me some respite from my sufferings. There, at least, no one ill-used me. I used to lie down all day in the darkest corner of the hut, and I had plenty of water quite close to me, which enabled me to quench the burning thirst brought on by fever and grief, and which probably brought me back to life. I had, however, no wish whatever to live; everything became indifferent to me. I hardly understood where I was for a time, and retained only a vague remembrance of my terrible sufferings.

All the weeks which had elapsed since my separation from my mother seemed to me like a horrible dream which was to come to an end after a time; and then I fancied that everything around me would disappear, and that I should wake up some day by the side of my darling mother, in the little hut where we had been sad, it was true, but where we had been so happy in comparison with our actual position. Alas, from this dream there was no awaking but to a reality which was more terrible still.

One morning while I was indulging in these illusions, without exactly realising where I was or what I was doing, a slave came into the hut where I was lying, and without speaking took me up in his arms and carried me on board a little coasting vessel bound for Zanzibar. All the slaves who, like me, had been embarked in this manner were filled with fear, and trembled violently. 'Ah,' they exclaimed in the midst of their lamentations, 'we are lost. We are going to Zanzibar, where the white men eat the blacks.'

Although I had become, as I said before, almost indifferent to everything that went on around me, I could not remain where I was; but the hope of a speedy death gave me courage.

On this ship (or *boutre*, as it was called) our sufferings were

redoubled. We were so jammed together, that not only we could not turn, or move, or lie down, but we could scarcely breathe. The heat, coupled with a burning thirst, became insupportable, and a strong breeze from the sea brought our misery to a climax. At night the cold wind froze us and covered us with sea spray. The next morning every one was given a small ration of water and a bit of manioc root, and thus we passed six long days and six nights which seemed longer still.

Hunger, thirst, sea-sickness, the sudden transition from intense heat to icy cold, the impossibility of resting one's head for a moment from want of room, in a word, all imaginable sufferings and horrors being concentrated upon us during that time, made me regret at last even the terrible journey across the desert. But still we lived on; and at last hope revived in our hearts, for we were in sight of the island of Zanzibar, and some change must come in our miserable existence.

The wind swelled our triangular sail, and very soon we found ourselves in front of a large town. A salute of two guns made the little vessel quiver from one end to the other, the sail was taken in, and we cast anchor in the bay, and were still.

I heard my companions in misfortune admiring the walled town with its white houses, and alternately expressing fear and hope. As for me, I was too weak to look at anything. A kind of mist seemed to be before my eyes, and the only thing which kept me alive was the thought that when we landed, they would perhaps give me a little water. O, what a terrible torment it is to suffer so much from thirst! I do not remember in what way we were carried on shore, or how long we were detained at the custom-house. The sight of the great crowd of negro porters, all carrying heavy weights and uttering a peculiar cry to keep step with one another, added to my excessive weakness, so bewildered me, that I really was unable to realise the thousand and one new objects which passed before me, and moreover it was getting dusk when we landed.

When we arrived at the depot of slaves, which is a great stone house, it was completely dark. There I saw that the conductor of the caravan, whom I had considered the most powerful man on earth, was cringing in the most servile manner before another Arab, who was evidently his superior, and seemed to be loading him with reproaches, but in a language which I could not understand. I fancied he was scolding him on my account, for I saw him very often pointing at me with his finger. At last, turning to me in a familiar tongue, he told me to get up. I made almost superhuman efforts to obey him; but could not succeed.

'This slave is lost,' said this new and important personage; 'it is a great pity, and very annoying. Six yards of cloth, the transport by land and sea, and the custom-house dues—at least five piastres gone for nothing' (twenty-five francs). 'Conductor, be so good as not to be guilty of such stupidities in future.' Then turning towards two great negroes who were standing by, he added: 'Here, Khamis and Marzouq, put this carcass in a bit of matting, and carry it to the cemetery. It is quite useless to go to the expense of feeding her any longer, for one can't save her.'

No sooner said than done. The two slaves seized me and wrapped me up in an old matting, which they took care to bind carefully with cocoa cords. Then they hung me up in this sort of bundle on a long stick, placed me on their shoulders, and carried me off far from the depot.

I was so effectually wrapped up in the matting that, though I could breathe, I could see absolutely nothing. The noise of the crowd made me understand that I was being carried through the streets of the town. To this sound succeeded that of rubbing against boughs and branches, which warned me that we were passing through a wood. At last they came to a standstill, and I was thrown on the ground. I heard them digging in the sand, and I then understood fully, that I was going to be buried alive.

The bed of sand which had been thrown over me was so light, that I heard the receding steps of the porters returning in haste to the town. Very soon a profound silence settled round me, and a horrible fear took possession of my whole being. It was true that I had suffered terribly of late. Except during my childhood, which I have already described, my life had been one prolonged martyrdom. But the thought of dying under such horrible circumstances caused me an inexpressible terror. I made the most extraordinary efforts to get clear of the cords which bound my matting; but I had not strength to do it. Only, with immense trouble, I managed at last to wriggle the upper part of my body out of the sand, so as not to be quite stifled. At the same time, I set to work to cry out with all my might; but my weak voice was lost in the silence of the night. Once or twice I thought I heard the footsteps of people who were passing near me. Then I called out still louder. But my cries, instead of bringing help, only frightened these nocturnal visitors, whom I heard running away as fast as they could.

Again around me there was a silence which could be felt—a silence as of death. Then suddenly the bushes near me began to be moved by some one or something, and I had a glimmer of hope. But, O horror of horrors! in an instant a whole troop of howling jackals surrounded me. I knew the way they haunt the cemeteries, when once they have tasted human flesh, and the very blood froze in my veins with terror.

My cries and despairing efforts to escape kept them at bay for a little while; but by and by, encouraged by my forced immobility, I heard them barking nearer and nearer. Presently they began scratching close to my body, and very soon uncovered the lower part of it, and began biting my feet. I gave one great cry, and lost all consciousness.

When I came to myself, I found that I was in a room with white hangings, such as I had never seen before in my life. I was lying in a comfortable bed, and covered with a white sheet. Two white-faced persons, whom I did not know, were standing at the head of my bed, and carefully watching my movements. They were dressed in white and black; and seeing this, I imagined I was dead, and that I was in the land of spirits (Péponi). My first thought was for my mother.