

me. I have never been able to thank him; give me, I beg thee, some news of him, if thou art acquainted with him." "It was I myself," answers this poor invalid. At these words the Father falls upon him and embraces him,—showing him with heart, eyes, and voice the grateful emotions which he felt for such a benefit. "Ah! how sad I am," he said to him, "to see thee in this pitiful state; what regrets I feel, to be unable to help thee in thy sickness! I have often, without being acquainted with thee, prayed for thee to the great master of our lives. Thou seest me in great poverty; but, nevertheless, I will do thee a favor greater than that which thou didst to me." The sick man listens; the Father announces to him the gospel of Jesus Christ; he makes him understand that he can enter a life of pleasure and glory; in a word, he instructs him. The sick man believes, and gives indications of his belief; the Father baptizes him; and shortly after, he took his flight to Heaven, rewarded more than a hundredfold for the compassion which he had extended to the servant of Jesus Christ.

The Father's fatigues in that journey of more than eighty leagues were fully soothed and rewarded by the [111] salvation of his Benefactor. There was never Anchorite more abstemious than this poor captive on that journey; his living was only a little wild purslane which he went to gather in the fields, with which he made a soup without other seasoning than clear water. They gave him, indeed, certain seeds to eat,—but so insipid and so dangerous that they served as a very quick poison to those who knew not how to prepare them; and he would not touch them.