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THE LIFE OF ST. FRANCIS BORGIA.

ROEHAMPTON :
PRINTED BY JOHN GRIFFIN.

QUARTERLY SERIES. VOLUME EIGHTY-EIGHT.
FOR THE YEAR 1908.
LONDON: JOHN GRIFFIN.

THE LIFE OF ST. FRANCIS BORGIA

Of the Society of Jesus.

BY

A. M. CLARKE. *D*



BOSTON COLLEGE
CHESTNUT HILL, MASS.
RECEIVED
JUN 11 1913

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON : BURNS AND OATES (LIMITED).

NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO : BENZIGLER BROTHERS.

1913.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS book was undertaken at the instance of Father John Morris, S.J., who had for many years desired to see published a Life of the Saint in English. He revised and corrected the proof-sheets almost to the end, and was occupied with the concluding pages at the time of his death, having expressed to the author a short time previously his great satisfaction at the completion of the work.

For the friends of Father Morris this will give to the Life a special interest, and the more so as they will recognize many curious points of resemblance between the character of the Saint and of the holy priest who has been instrumental in introducing him to English readers.

AUTHORITIES QUOTED IN THIS WORK.

1. Vida del P. Francisco de Borja. que fue Duque de Gandia, y despues Religioso y tercero General de la Compañia de Jesus. Escrita por el P. Pedro de Ribadeneyra, d.l m C Madrid, 1594.

2. La Vie de St. François de Borgia Par le R. P. Verjus, de la Compagnie de Jesus. Paris, 1672.

3. Ristretto della vita del beato Padre Francesco Borgia, Duca de Gandia, &c. Dal Padre Scipione Sgambata, d C.d.G. Roma, 1702.

4. Ristretto della vita del beato P. Francesco Borgia. Dal P. Virgilio Cepari, d.C.d.G. Roma, 1624.

5. La heroica Vida, Virtudes y Milagros del grande San Francisco de Borja, antes Duque Quarto de Gandia, y despues Tercero General de la Compañia de Jesus. Escrivela el Eminentissimo y Reverendissimo Padre Don Alvaro Cienfuegos, Cardenal de la Sta. Iglesia de Roma, Arçobispo de Monreal, &c. Madrid, 1726.

6. Geschichte der Päpste seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters. Von Dr. Ludwig Pastor. 1 und 2 Bände. Herder'sche Verlags-handlung. Freiburg im Breisgau, 1886, 1889.

7. Don Rodrigo de Borja (Papst Alex. VI.) und seine Söhne. Von Constantin v. Höfler. Denkschriften d. Kaiserl. Akademie der Wissenschaften. Sieben und dreizigster Band. Wien, 1889.

8. Le Pape Alexandre VI. et les Borgia. Par le R. P. M. H. Ollivier, O.P. 1^{ere} Partie: Le Card. de Llançol y Borgia. Paris, 1870.

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CHAPTER 1.

THE HOUSE OF BORGIA.

THE Spanish house of de Borja, better known under its Italianized form of Borgia, is both ancient and illustrious. It descends from the old Catholic kings of Arragon, and its sons have showed themselves worthy of their royal lineage, many of their exploits being recorded in their country's history. Nature bestowed her gifts upon them with a liberal hand; they were conspicuous for personal beauty and physical strength, for talents, courage, and daring, for the energy and force of will which almost invariably commands success. Early in the twelfth century, when as yet the name of de Borja had not become their distinctive appellation, several members of the family had already acquired fame on account of the intrepidity they displayed in the defence of their country and of their faith. We read in the annals of Arragon that in 1115, King Alphonsus I. to reward Don Pedro d'Aybar for the valour he exhibited in the contest with the Moors, gave him a portion of the territory wrested from the enemy. In these lands, situated to the north of Saragossa, was a small town of great antiquity, which under the rule of the Moors had exchanged its Celtiberian name of Belsinum for that of Borja. Don Pedro, on taking possession of these estates, added to

his own patronymic the title of de Borja, and by it his descendants have subsequently been known.

We hear of the de Borjas again in 1244, when Don Jaime the conqueror, having driven the hated Moslems step by step out of the beautiful province of Valencia, *la huerta*, the garden of Spain, as it was called, distributed its smiling and fertile lands among his principal followers in much the same way as William of Normandy gave the estates of Anglo-Saxon England to his Norman barons. The fortified town of Xativa, with Gandia and some adjacent cities, fell to the share of the de Borjas, who fixed at Xativa their permanent abode. In the year 1376, also, mention is made of the military achievements of one Don Ramon de Borja, although it is not said that any territorial recompense was awarded to his services.

But not on the battlefield alone did the scions of this noble line render themselves conspicuous. The house of Borja gave to Christendom two Pontiffs, and to the Society of Jesus one of its earliest and most eminent Saints. Pope Calixtus III., who saved Europe from the yoke of Islam, was a Borgia; so was Alexander VI., whose character has unhappily dimmed the glory of his line. The former of these two Popes was the first member of the family who made his name known beyond the limits of his native land; St. Francis Borgia, the third General of the Jesuits, is the last who has attained to any great celebrity.

Alonzo de Borja, who on ascending the Papal throne took the name of Calixtus III., was the only son of Don Rodriguez, the head of the elder branch of the family. He was born at Xativa, in 1378, and received his education at the University of Lerida. Whilst still young he acquired the reputation of being

the best jurist of his day. His talents and learning attracted the attention both of Pedro de la Luna, the Antipope, then recognized in Spain under the title of Pope Benedict XIII., who bestowed on him a canonry, and of the King of Naples, who called him to his Court, and whose secretary and Privy Councillor he became. In this capacity his prudence and skill in conducting negotiations proved most valuable, not only to the monarch he served, but also to the Holy See, since at the period of the deplorable schism he succeeded in securing for the rightful Pope, Martin V., the allegiance of Spain. For this service he was rewarded with the bishopric of his native province of Valencia. Again, he was instrumental in healing a breach between the King of Naples and the Pope, in consequence of which the latter raised him to the Cardinalate.

When, in 1455, on the Chair of Peter becoming vacant by the death of Nicholas V., the Cardinals met in conclave to appoint his successor, they found it impossible to come to a decision. The Sacred College was then divided into two factions, that of the Orsini and that of the Colonnas, each of which, although strong enough to prevent the election of the candidate of the opposite party, was yet too weak to carry through its own. To end the debate they agreed to elect the Cardinal de Borja. He was already an old man, seventy-seven years of age, and the consciousness that his pontificate would in all probability be short was perhaps in a great measure the motive for his election. His elevation to the Papal throne had not been anticipated, yet after the event, a prophecy uttered by St. Vincent Ferrer returned to men's minds. It is said that when the great Spanish Dominican was preaching a mission in Valencia, among the persons who came to

ask his advice or commend themselves to his prayers, was Don Alonzo de Borja, then quite a young man, not long in Holy Orders. The Saint contemplated him attentively for some moments in silence, and then said: "My son, I congratulate thee; remember that thou art called to be the glory of thy family and of thy native land. Thou wilt be invested with the highest dignity to which mortal man can attain, and after my death I shall be the object of thy veneration. See that thou persevere in the practice of virtue." Alonzo laid up these words in his memory, and never lost confidence in their ultimate fulfilment. The first act of his pontificate was to raise to the altars of the Church the servant of God who had predicted the dignity awaiting the simple priest in the far future.

The Cardinal of Valencia, as he had till then been called, deservedly stood high in public opinion. His learning was profound, his character blameless, his political capacity universally recognized, yet his election to the See of Rome was by no means popular. He was a Spaniard, and the choice of a foreigner gave great offence to the Italian people. It was feared, and only too justly, that he would introduce his fellow-countrymen into high places, from whence on his death it would not be easy to oust them. Nevertheless at that juncture of affairs, when the Turks, having already possessed themselves of Constantinople, were threatening to overrun the Continent, and endanger, if not destroy, the faith and civilization of Christendom, the election of a Spaniard was the most fortunate event for Europe. For seven centuries Spain had been engaged in an unceasing struggle with the Moslem power, and undying hatred to the creed of the Prophet and the followers of the Prophet was the strongest

feeling in a Spaniard's breast. Calixtus recognized the gravity of the situation. No sooner did he ascend the Papal throne than he made a solemn vow to sacrifice everything, his life if needs be, to drive back the Turks, to deliver the captive Christians, and to achieve the triumph of the true Faith. A new Crusade was preached; Legates were sent to every country to awaken the zeal of European potentates. The bell of every church was ordered to be rung at mid-day, and a large Indulgence was granted to the faithful who should on hearing the sound of it, say three *Paters* and three *Aves* for the success of the Christian arms.¹ To raise funds Calixtus freely sacrificed the gems and objects of value in the Vatican treasury. It is said that one day his eye fell upon a salt-cellar of richly chased goldwork upon his table. "Take it away," he cried, "take it for the Turkish war; an earthenware salt-cellar is good enough for me." His efforts were at length rewarded by the victory of Belgrade, August 6, 1456, in which the Ottoman power was broken. In thanksgiving for this he instituted the feast of the Transfiguration on the 6th of August; on that very day two years later, death ended his brief but important pontificate.

Calixtus III. did great service to the Church, not only through his activity and resolution in the defence of Christendom, but by his wise administration of ecclesiastical matters, his care for souls, and his vigorous suppression of heresy. In private life he was an example of virtue, and his memory would be handed down to the unqualified admiration and gratitude of posterity, had it not been for one fault, that of nepotism.

¹ This is generally said to have been the origin of the Angelus, but some allege it to have been instituted in the preceding century.

The love of family and of country was strong in him, in fact he carried it to an extreme which was both injudicious and blameworthy. From the very commencement of his reign he showed undue favour, not only to his relatives, but to all his countrymen. The Romans regarded with anger and aversion the influx of strangers, for the most part less polished than themselves, while many Germans and French who held offices at the Papal Court withdrew to their own country, saying they would not be subject to "Catalans." Their posts were immediately filled with Spaniards. Most of all Calixtus promoted the advancement of two favourite nephews, Pedro-Luis and Rodrigo de Llançol, the sons of a sister who had espoused a gentleman of Valencia. On his elevation to the Papal See he summoned them to Rome and conferred on them his name of Borgia, with the right to wear the armorial bearings of the family, a red bull on a gold field, the motto being *Tentanda via*. On the elder of the two brothers, who was destined for a secular career, worldly distinctions were heaped; he was made Gonfalonier of the Church, Prefect of Rome, and later on Commander-in-chief of the Papal forces on sea and land. His career was a brief one. On the death of his uncle he fled to Civita Vecchia, one of the strongholds under his authority, and shortly afterwards died there.

The history of the other brother, Rodrigo, destined at a subsequent period to wear the tiara under the name of Alexander VI., is a very different one. Born at Xativa, on the 1st of January, 1431, he was twenty-four years of age on his coming to Rome. Like his uncle, he too studied jurisprudence in his youth, but afterwards served in the army of the King of Naples.

Conscious of the rare talents the young man possessed, Calixtus desired to induce him to seek distinction in the Church. He made him his successor in the bishopric of Valencia, ecclesiastical dignities being at that time by a grave abuse frequently held by seculars. In February, 1456, he caused him, together with another nephew, Juan Luis de Mila, to be raised in a secret Consistory to the Cardinalate, although their promotion was reserved *in petto* until the following September, owing to the opposition of the Cardinals, who protested against the nomination of men so young and, as they alleged, of unsuitable character. Furthermore, Calixtus heaped upon him benefices and dignities, and finally nominated him to the lucrative office of Vice-Chancellor. Thus for a time the management of affairs, military and political, was virtually in the hands of the Pope's relatives, and the power they exercised was despotic. But when the report was spread abroad that Calixtus lay on his death-bed, the smouldering hatred to the "Catalans" burst into flame. Spaniards were attacked and roughly handled in the streets, and one of them lost his life in a fray. All houses bearing the Borgia arms were ruthlessly plundered; so that the majority of the Spanish residents were fain to fly in haste from the city. Rodrigo Borgia displayed more courage. He was absent from Rome when the tidings of his uncle's illness reached him, and he returned thither immediately, to find his staff of servants gone and his palace sacked.

Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia was, like most of the race from which he sprang, a man of splendid physique and lordly bearing. He united, as is the case with some of his nation, to the proud carriage of a hidalgo, a winning grace of manner that none

could resist. A contemporary¹ describes him as "a comely man of cheerful countenance and honeyed discourse, who gains the affections of all the women he admires, and attracts them as the loadstone does iron." It can hardly be matter of surprise that a young man of so fascinating an appearance and manners should have been led away by the laxity of morals prevailing in Italy at that period, and have forgotten what was due to the clerical character with which he was to a certain extent invested. It cannot possibly be denied that his manner of life previous to his ordination gave great scandal, and his unseemly conduct brought down upon him a severe reprimand from Pope Pius II. Unhappily in those days a man might enjoy the rank and revenues of bishoprics and of the Cardinalate, though not even in Holy Orders; and however blameworthy the conduct of Rodrigo Borgia may have been during his life as a Cardinal, there is no proof of any immorality in him after he ascended the Papal throne.

The vigour of his character, his liberality in relieving the needy, and the magnificence he displayed on occasions, rendered him during his Cardinalate extremely popular with the Roman people, and when, in 1492, he was elected to the Pontifical throne, the announcement was hailed with acclamations of joy. The ceremonies and pageants attending his coronation exceeded in pomp and grandeur all that modern Rome had before witnessed and whilst the new Pontiff, who took the name of Alexander VI., passed under the triumphal arches erected in his honour, he read on them inscriptions that augured the return of a golden age, and welcomed him as a conqueror and a king.

¹ Gaspar Veronensis, quoted by Muratori, iii. pt. 2, p. 1036.

He was called to take the helm of the bark of Peter in troublous times. He brought to the government of the Church an intelligence, a prudence, and a foresight of no common order. His capacity as a secular ruler is sufficiently evinced by the tranquillity he maintained in Rome, the regularity wherewith financial obligations were discharged, and the energetic prosecution of useful public works.

Pope Alexander VI. has been made the subject of unmeasured abuse, and the most heinous crimes have been imputed to him. His memory was stigmatized and his name held up to the reprobation of posterity by a majority of the historians of his day, and their example has been followed in succeeding ages. To what extent these charges are true, or to what extent the reprehensible partiality he exhibited for his relatives, whose aggrandisement he made an object of primary importance, may have prejudiced against him the minds of men already irritated by the preponderance in Italy of an alien race, is an inquiry upon which it is not for us to enter. At any rate not only Pope Alexander VI. but also the members of his family have become legendary as types of unrestrained violence and wickedness. "It appears to me," says an Italian writer, "that history has made use of the house of Borgia as a canvas whereon to delineate the unbridled license of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries."¹

It may possibly be in consequence of the odium attaching to the name that the life and virtues of so illustrious a Saint as St. Francis Borgia have hitherto

¹ "Mi sembra che la storia si sia servita della famiglia Borgia come di tela sopra la quale abbia voluto dipingere le sfrenatezze dei secoli 15 e 16." (*Ragguagli sulla vita de Marino Sanuto*, p. 207, note.)

been allowed to remain comparatively unknown in our country. In other lands, amongst Catholics, the heroic virtues and remarkable graces of the great grandson of Rodrigo Borgia have rescued the family name from obloquy and have restored to it its savour.

We must now proceed briefly to narrate the history of the more immediate progenitors of the Saint.

Pedro, the eldest of Cardinal Borgia's sons, entered the army of Ferdinand of Arragon. Whilst fighting against the Moors, he was the first to scale the walls of the fortress of Ronda, the capture of which was the turning-point of the war. In reward of his prowess, the King bestowed on him and his heirs the duchy of Gandia, which through the failure of the succession in the younger branch of the House of Arragon, had lately reverted to the Crown. What induced the young Duke to return to Italy it is impossible to say, but we read that a year or two later he died in Rome, struck down by a fatal malady. He left behind him a blameless reputation; and the fact that at the time of his death he was betrothed to a cousin of King Ferdinand, shows that he stood high in that monarch's favour. His brother Juan succeeded to his title and estates, as well as to the hand of his bride, Doña Maria Henriquez, of whom more will be said hereafter.

The marriage of the second Duke of Gandia was celebrated with great pomp at Barcelona, where the Spanish Court was then held. All the grandees of the kingdom were present. For months previously, the most skilful goldsmiths in Rome had been busied in fashioning choice and costly ornaments for the Duke to take with him to Spain, to be distributed as presents on the festive occasion. He did not remain long at Gandia. About 1496, at the time of the invasion of

Charles VIII. to assert the claims of Anjou to the crown of Naples, Alexander VI., who had a high opinion of the military capacities of his son, recalled him to Italy to take part in the war. After the retreat of the French, he entrusted to him the command of the Papal troops. But a tragic event speedily cut short the career of the young man. One night when he was returning from an entertainment given by his mother in his honour, he was assassinated, and his body, pierced with many wounds, cast into the Tiber. The Pope was overwhelmed with grief; but in vain did he seek to discover the author of the crime.

Doña Maria had not accompanied her husband to Italy. She was at Gandia with her two young children when the news reached her of the terrible misfortune which had befallen her, and there she remained during her widowhood, occupied as a Christian mother should be, with their education. The elder of the two children, Isabel, was, when scarcely more than an infant, affianced according to the fashion of the time, to the son of the Duke of Segovia. However, the sad event that darkened her childhood, impressed her so deeply with the vanity of earthly things, that at a very early age she desired to take the veil in the Convent of Poor Clares, founded on her father's estate. To this her mother hesitated to give her consent, on the ground that as she had only one other child, she feared to endanger the succession. Whereupon Isabel, after recollecting herself a moment in God, uttered these prophetic words, her countenance beaming with a supernatural radiance; "I assure you, Señora, on the part of our Lord, that the Duke my brother will have a son who will be called Francis, and that with him the succession will not fail, but he will render his house glorious in Heaven and on earth."

This remarkable prophecy was recorded in the annals of the monastery, in order to preserve the remembrance of an utterance so evidently inspired by the Holy Ghost.

Don Juan Borgia, the third Duke of Gandia, the father of St. Francis, married young. His wife was Doña Maria of Arragon, grand-daughter of the Catholic King Ferdinand, and consequently cousin to the Emperor Charles V. Thus was she, too, of royal lineage. She was a model Christian matron, being throughout her life distinguished for her great liberality to the poor, her kind condescension to her dependents, and her unceasing care for the pious training of her children, in whose instruction she took a personal share. But of all the lessons she gave them day by day the best and most forcible was her own admirable example. She had a special devotion to the Five Wounds of Christ, and also to the succour of the souls in Purgatory. Her favourite occupation was the adornment of churches, and many splendid pieces of needlework were wrought by her skillful fingers. One biographer tells us that she was never idle for a single moment.

Nor was the Duke, her husband, less remarkable for piety and virtue. He appropriated to the poor a considerable proportion of his yearly revenues, his munificence eliciting, on more than one occasion, the respectful remonstrances of his faithful steward. It was his invariable custom to assist, with all the members of his family, at the sermons which were preached in the principal church of Gandia. His profound veneration for the Blessed Sacrament was a silent sermon in itself. Whenever he was aware that Holy Communion was being taken to the sick, it was his habit to accompany the Sacred Host, bearing a lighted torch in his hand. The deep reverence of his demeanour impressed all

who beheld him. When It was carried to the poor, he always left a large alms with the sick person, laying down his gift in such a manner that it could not be discovered until after his departure, thus proving that to reverence and piety he united humility and charity.

We are told that, when quite a young man, he was upon one occasion eagerly engaged in a game of cards with some of his companions. On hearing the bell which warned him that the Blessed Sacrament was about to pass that way, he promptly left the table and hastened to follow *His Majesty*.¹

Another day when, with a party of huntsmen, he was in hot pursuit of a wild boar, the bell of a distant parish church, announcing that some dying person was about to receive the Viaticum, fell upon his ear. Without delay he left the chase, and, turning his horse's head, galloped off in the opposite direction. "The piety which pierced his heart was," as a biographer quaintly expresses it, "a spur yet sharper than that with which he pricked on his steed."

The present chapter may be suitably brought to a conclusion by a statement of the privileges granted by Pope Clement VII., in 1531, to the Duke of Gandia, to his heirs and descendants of either sex, and to whomsoever they may marry, in acknowledgment of the signal services rendered to the Holy See by the House of Borgia; and pre-eminently the prowess exhibited by the third Duke of Gandia (the father of the Saint) in the defence of Rome, on occasion of the assault of the city by the Constable de Bourbon, when that redoubted warrior fell from the walls mortally wounded at the moment of victory. The Bull grants:

¹ *Su Majestad*. This is the beautiful expression used by the pious Spaniards to designate our Lord in the Sacrament of His Love.

To any confessor whom they may select, powers to absolve them from the gravest ecclesiastical censures and penalties; to commute the fasts of the Church into almsgiving; once a year to absolve them in cases usually reserved for the Holy See, or from any oath or vow, but those generally excepted.

Special Indulgences for the hour of death and for every visit to a church or an altar; also for every Mass celebrated by a member of the family (he being in Priest's Orders), or offered for the intention of any member of the family, Indulgences equal to those gained at certain altars in Rome.

Permission to eat not only milk-food, but meat in Lent (at that time meat was prohibited during the whole of Lent, and on all Saturdays throughout the year), and on other fasts when it is forbidden; and permission extending to all servants and guests of the family. To take collation at mid-day and the meal in the evening when so disposed. To eat meat on Saturdays. To receive the sacraments if necessary within prohibited times, also for members of the household to be buried on any day in the year, Easter Day only excepted.

Permission to priests of the House of Borgia to anticipate or postpone the recitation of the Breviary without observing the fixed hours, reciting it all at once or dividing it at their pleasure.

To ladies who are members of the family, or connected with it by marriage, liberty to enter once a month into the enclosure of nuns, taking with them four others; to converse with the nuns and eat with them, provided only that they do not remain for the night.¹

¹ Cien-Fuegos, *La heroica vida, &c., del grande San Francisco de Borja*. Madrid, 1726, p. 4.

CHAPTER II.

FRANCIS' CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

IN one of the biographies of St. Francis Borgia, we find a quaint conceit which, if it appears to sober English ideas somewhat fanciful and far-fetched, may yet be fitly prefixed to a history of his life. It is not only pleasing in itself, but it serves to show how great was the esteem in which he was held by his contemporaries, who regarded him as one of the most prominent figures of the age in which he lived.

“In the year in which he died, nay more, in the very month in which he passed to a better life—possibly upon the day when he breathed his last—there appeared, in the constellation known as Cassiopeia’s Chair, a new and magnificent star which attracted universal attention. Numerous volumes were written at the time, and various theories propounded, both as to the cause of its appearance, and as to what it might signify.” In the opinion of the biographer to whom we refer, the most probable of all these theories seemed to be that God designed to indicate, by means of this fresh star, the entrance into Heaven of another and a glorious Saint. “The constellation, moreover, in which it appeared, may well symbolize the Holy Roman Church, firmly established on earth by means of the Chair of Peter, and no less firmly

seated in Heaven. Well, therefore, might she console herself for the loss of so eminent a man, since by his death she gained a powerful advocate in Heaven, a brilliant luminary which could not fail to rain down upon her gracious influences."¹

Thus we find fancy, in the ages of faith, expressing the idea of a modern poet,

The saints above are stars in Heaven.

But it is time for us to quit the realm of imagination, and return to the facts we have undertaken to relate.

In the preceding chapter we have spoken of the parents of Francis, of their piety and virtues. The Saint was born at Gandia, the town from which the duchy takes its name, on the 28th of October, the feast of SS. Simon and Jude, in the year 1510. The sufferings of his mother were so prolonged and severe, that the physicians feared her life must inevitably be sacrificed. It was thought that the child was already dead; in order to avert so great a calamity as the loss of both mother and child, many Masses were said, and many prayers offered up. The Duchess, who was fully aware of her critical condition, had all her life cherished a tender devotion to St. Francis of Assisi. She had unbounded confidence in his intercession, and had at various times received signal benefits from his hand. She now made a vow that, if she were safely delivered of a living son, she would give to her first-born the name of the Seraphic Saint. A few hours later, all danger was pronounced to be over, the birth being nothing short of miraculous.

"When the Duchess heard that the infant was alive and was a boy, she could not restrain her joy.

¹ Sgambati, *Ragguaglio della vita di S. Francisco Borgia*. Roma, 1702, p. 5.

Her tongue was inspired by the Holy Ghost, and she greeted him in a clear and sonorous voice, saying: 'Welcome, Francis, my angel!' Thus did she announce what the child was to be in his life and in his purity, and what also he was to appear in the beauty of his person. She gave him the name of Francis, in order that the sweet Saint might, as it were, receive him in his arms before the cradle received his infant form, at the very moment, that is, in which he entered upon his life on earth. This being the first time that the name of Francis had been bestowed on a scion of the house of Gandia, the novelty of the appellation caused the reason why it was selected to be kept in remembrance."¹

The infant was extremely delicate, the greatest care and watchfulness being needed to keep alive the breath of existence in the fragile frame. To the circumstances of his birth, Francis probably owed the weakness of constitution which he never outgrew, and to which are to be attributed the severe illnesses which attacked him, and the more than ordinary amount of physical suffering he had to endure in the course of his life.

The advent of an heir was, as may be imagined, celebrated with great and universal rejoicings throughout the whole of the ducal possessions. But the joy of Francis' father ere long received a check. His mother, Doña Maria Henriquez, with whose name the reader has already been made familiar, unexpectedly announced her intention of withdrawing from the world, in order to spend her remaining days in the Convent of Poor Clares to which her daughter Isabel had already retired, and of which she was now the Abbess. This

¹ Cien-Fuegos, *La heroica vida, &c., del grande San Francisco de Borja*. Madrid, 1726, p. 10.

decision caused no little grief to the Duke, who repeatedly expostulated with his mother, begging her to rescind her resolution. He represented to her the great need he had of her maternal counsels, and the cruel void her absence would occasion. He entreated her to remain with him at least long enough for him to hope for the birth of another son, since the succession hung, so to speak, upon a single thread, his little son being at that time only ten days old, and moreover, a puny and delicate infant. Doña Maria adhered to her determination, telling her son for his consolation and encouragement that his family would be a numerous one. She added that even if Francis were to remain his only child, God had, in the person of that child, enriched the House of Gandia with so great a gift that his parents might well spend their whole lives in thanking and blessing the Divine Giver of all good things. This prediction was exactly fulfilled. Three more children were born to the parents of Francis, and after the death of his mother, his father married again, and had a very large family, among the members of which was Sister Jane of the Cross, foundress of the Convent of Discalced Carmelites in Madrid.

Even during his babyhood, Francis' mother took the utmost care that his attendants should all be pious and virtuous persons, in order that he might, from the very first, breathe an atmosphere of religion. Such precautions can never be deemed superfluous, in his case they were more than ordinarily necessary, on account of the quick intelligence, the retentive memory, and the uncommon impressionableness of which he gave proof when scarcely a year old. Before he could speak distinctly he tried to utter the names of Jesus and Mary, and would pronounce the word *God* with

reverential awe. By the time he was five, he was as fully instructed in all that it behoves a Christian to know as most children are at twelve or fifteen. He delighted to collect pictures of our Blessed Lady and of the saints, arranging them upon little altars. With the greatest facility he used to repeat the sermons he had heard, almost in the very words of the preacher, reproducing his gestures and the inflection of his voice with an exactness which bordered on the ludicrous. Nor was this all. He one day gathered together some relatives and friends who were staying in the house, and preached to them from a pulpit of his own construction, a sermon on the Sacred Passion. This discourse was characterized by so much depth of feeling, grace of expression, and originality of idea, that the hearers were filled with amazement. When discussing the occurrence subsequently among themselves, they unanimously agreed that the words they had heard were not those of the child who had uttered them, but of the Holy Spirit of God Who deigned to speak through his mouth even at so early an age.

Let no one suppose that his piety was not of a practical nature. On the contrary, he was fervent in prayer and careful in attending to all religious observances. One in particular which had long been customary in the family, became a special favourite with him. He introduced it into the Society of Jesus when he was elected General, and it has since been widely diffused, and is probably familiar to many of our readers. On the last day of every month, each member of the household drew by lot the name of one of the saints whose feast was to be kept in the course of the succeeding month, thus binding himself not only to honour and invoke that Saint, but further to strive

to the uttermost to advance in the particular virtue for which he had been most eminently distinguished. On the eve of the feast of his patron, St. Francis of Assisi, Francis used to give a dinner to the poor, waiting upon them himself with great zest and enjoyment.

Sincerely pious as was his mother, she thought he sometimes went too far in his devotions. Considering his religious practices overdone, she upon one occasion remarked to him: "A sword and a horse, Master Francis, not pictures and sermons! When I asked God to give me a little son, I wanted a duke, and not a monk. You may be a good Christian and yet a gallant knight." Her husband acquiesced in her opinion, and added that the boy seemed certainly to be taking the road to Heaven, rather than that which led to the Court.

As soon as Francis was seven, a governor was appointed to take general charge of him, and to form his manners. He had in addition a tutor whose duty it was to instruct him in the usual branches of learning, and in the accomplishments suitable to his rank. His teachers found their task both easy and pleasant. Francis was docile and obedient, while his unusual mental powers made learning a matter of no difficulty to him, in whatever direction his attention was turned. Indeed it was frequently remarked of him that "he needed the curb rather than the spur."

He was scarcely more than ten years old when, in 1520, he had the misfortune to lose his wise and tender mother, to whom he was devotedly attached. Not only was his grief overwhelming at the time of her death, but his sorrow was deep and lasting, contrasting strangely with the evanescent feeling usually shown

by children of his age. He prayed long and ardently for the repose of her soul, and, retiring into an out-of-the-way room in one of the turrets of his father's castle, used the discipline with severity. It was never discovered where he had acquired this spirit of penance and mortification which accompanied him throughout life.

A few months later a sudden and universal revolt broke out against the Ministers who were governing Spain during the temporary absence in Germany of the Emperor Charles V. The nobles were taken completely by surprise, so that the rebels gained a great victory in a battle which was fought in the neighbourhood of Gandia. They succeeded in making themselves masters of the town, on which occasion the Duke was severely wounded in the eye by an arrow. He was compelled to fly with all his family to a place of safety. Francis' escape was little short of miraculous. His tutor snatched him out of bed while still asleep, and wrapping him in whatever warm covering first came to hand, carried him down to the stables. He then caused a swift horse to be saddled, and rode off with his precious burden to the sea-shore. A small boat was drawn up on the beach, in the bottom of it lay a pair of oars. The rebels were in hot pursuit, already the tramp of their horses' hoofs was distinctly audible, so that there was not a moment to be lost. In fact, the tutor had scarcely pushed off the little skiff before they dashed furiously up to the water's edge, maddened to find themselves thus baulked of their prey. The night was dark and stormy, the waves ran high, threatening to engulf the fragile vessel, and rendering the oars useless. When the cause of his perilous and unwonted situation was explained to Francis, he showed no fear,

but on the contrary gave evidence of the moral and physical courage which had been born with him. In simple language he expressed his absolute trust in God and in the Blessed Virgin, assuring his companion that deliverance would not fail to come with the morning light, and so it proved. At break of day the occupants of the boat found that they had drifted close to the walls of Denia, a fortified city within whose precincts they found refuge.

The rebellion soon came to an end, and Francis joined his father at Saragossa, the archiepiscopal see of which was at that time filled by his uncle, a brother of his departed mother. The prelate was so much pleased with his nephew, that when the ducal family at length prepared to return to Gandia, he asked to be allowed to keep Francis with him for a time, in order that he might himself superintend his spiritual and mental development. The request was granted, and the boy made rapid progress, for his love of learning grew with his advancing years.

He strove with the utmost diligence to perfect himself in virtue, and to gain an ever-increasing knowledge of the things of God. His pious intentions were ably seconded by his excellent and judicious confessor. This holy man belonged to the Order of St. Jerome.¹ He awakened fresh fervour in the heart of his youthful penitent, and taught him to feel that all he had yet done counted for nothing, so that he hence-

¹ This Order was at that period widely spread throughout Spain. It had flourished there since 1370, when it was founded on the Rule drawn up by St. Jerome. The special duties of its members were to preach, hear confessions, and give retreats. In the present day it exists only in America. Numerous churches dedicated to St. Jerome, and formerly belonging to houses of his Order, sufficiently prove how many of these establishments must have existed in Spain.

forth made it his practice to say each morning, in the words of St. Bernard, *Nunc cœpi*. His director was also an able preacher, and two of his sermons, which treated respectively of the Last Judgment and of the Passion of our Saviour, made so deep an impression upon Francis, that he began to entertain serious thoughts of withdrawing altogether from the world, in order to consecrate himself to the service of his Divine Lord and Master. Nor did the wish for the religious life ever wholly abandon him, although the will of his father in the first instance, and later on his own inclinations, led him to walk for a while in a very different path. For the present, however, all plans for his future were held in abeyance. A dangerous and protracted illness attacked him, lasting quite six months. When at length he seemed in a fair way to recover, a series of earthquakes rendered it dangerous, if not impossible, to live within four walls. His attendants had therefore no other alternative except to camp out with him in an open plain, and since a litter afforded an inadequate protection from the weather, the hardships to which he was thus inevitably exposed materially retarded his convalescence.

As soon as he could be said to have completely regained his health, his father, anxious to procure for him a thorough change of air and scene, and desirous, moreover, of introducing him to the life for which he destined him, sent him at the age of thirteen to the Court of the Infanta Catherine, in the capacity of page of honour. This Princess was at that time residing at Tordesillas with her mother Joanna, Queen of Spain, concerning whom we shall have more to say hereafter. Francis specially became a great favourite with both the royal ladies, and indeed with every one around him.

He spent two very happy years at Tordesillas, and enjoyed Court life in a manner which he would have previously deemed impossible. On the marriage of the Princess Catherine with John III., King of Portugal, he would gladly have accompanied her to her new home in Lisbon. But the Duke of Gandia, who naturally wished his heir to settle in Spain, promptly and decidedly negatived the proposal as soon as it was made to him. Not knowing exactly what to do with his son, who was now fifteen, he sent him back to Saragossa, and placed him once more under the charge of his uncle. The transition was sudden and complete, it is not surprising, therefore, if Francis flagged at first and felt extremely dull. The Archbishop quickly perceived that his restless mind and active disposition needed incessant occupation. He lost no time in procuring for him an able professor, under whose tuition he began to study philosophy. He soon became deeply interested in this pursuit, so that in two years he attained a proficiency which would have enabled him, had he so wished, to take his degree in any of the European universities.

During this period he applied himself with even more than his former zeal to the performance of all his religious duties. Under the guidance of the same prudent director, from whose advice he had so greatly profited on a previous occasion, he strove to resist the temptations to which, as he grew up, he became increasingly exposed. Again his desires after the religious life awoke, and he expressed them with a fervour which rendered both his father and his uncle extremely uneasy. The former came to Saragossa, and after conferring with his brother-in-law, determined to introduce Francis into society without further delay. He hoped that the

ardent soul which felt so strongly drawn to the special service of the King of kings, might yet not prove insensible to the smile of an Emperor. Could it, he argued, be reasonably expected that Francis, now scarcely eighteen, would be able to withstand its subtle charm? Meanwhile the Duke took his son home with him to Gandia, where he exerted himself to the utmost in order to procure for him every kind of diversion and amusement.

Of the few succeeding months, no special record appears to have been preserved. One incident, however, which broke their tranquil uniformity, must not be passed over. Appearing at the time when it occurred to be of little moment, it was in reality of the highest importance, since it planted the seed of Francis' vocation to the Society of Jesus. Hitherto, when contemplating a retirement from the world, his thoughts had invariably turned to the Franciscan Order. This was a natural result of his affectionate devotion to his patron, St. Francis of Assisi. The occurrence to which we refer came about in the following manner.

During Francis' sojourn under his father's roof, he one day expressed a wish to visit the University of Alcalà. The Duke, always delighted to promote any project which seemed to interest his son, if only it had no reference to life in a cloister, readily consented, and arrangements for the journey were forthwith set on foot. Little did the father dream, as he watched his son ride out of the gates of the castle, followed by a numerous retinue, that in the streets of Alcalà he would behold for the first time the great Saint who was to exercise so potent an influence upon his after life. We will give the account of his first meeting with St. Ignatius of Loyola in the words of Cardinal Cien-

Fuegos, to whose accomplished pen we are indebted for one of the most attractive among the biographies which have been written of St. Francis Borgia.

“One morning, soon after his arrival, Francis was riding slowly down the principal street of Alcalà, when his attention was drawn to a group of officials, who were taking a man to prison. One would imagine that there was little in so ordinary an incident to attract the notice of the young hidalgo, yet it both interested and puzzled him. He stopped his horse, and looked attentively at the prisoner, wondering who he might be. Though poorly clad, and treated with scant courtesy by the guards, he presented nothing of the appearance of a common delinquent. There was about him an air of superiority, almost of majesty, as he walked along with downcast eyes, unmoved by the rough handling he received. His countenance was expressive of the utmost serenity, and a greatness of soul beyond the reach of persecution and insult. This man was Ignatius of Loyola, who had been arrested and was being led to prison by order of the Vicar-General.¹ The sight touched Francis deeply, to a degree unaccountable to himself, for he little knew the true significance of this meeting, and the influence that stranger would exercise over his future destinies. At a subsequent period, when the veil of mystery was withdrawn, he comprehended the reason of the emotions it

¹ The detention of St. Ignatius on this occasion hardly deserves to be termed imprisonment. He was, it is true, deprived of his liberty for a few days on vague suspicions, but his friends had free access to him, and every privilege consistent with his position was allowed him. He was examined about the Sabbath, being suspected of Judaizing; he was also accused of having instigated the departure of two ladies of rank and wealth, who had in a very rash manner abandoned their possessions and undertaken a long and hazardous pilgrimage. Inquiry having proved the falsity of these accusations, Ignatius was speedily released from confinement.

awoke within him. All at once Ignatius looked up. The eyes of the two men met, and in that instant, with that single look, Ignatius took possession of the soul of Francis, and won for himself and for the Society of Jesus one who was later on to rank among the most illustrious of its members. Don Francis rode away, but an impression had been made upon him which only became deeper the more he endeavoured to obliterate it from his mind.

“Now it happened that in that same street there lived a Doctor of Philosophy, who witnessed the incident just related from a window of his house. Long years afterwards, meeting St. Francis after he had become a subject of St. Ignatius in the Society of Jesus, he remembered the occurrence. ‘Who would have thought,’ he exclaimed in astonishment, ‘that the gallant youth, the heir of the Duke of Gandia, the flower of the Spanish aristocracy, who rode by, receiving marks of respect and admiration on every hand, would one day yield himself a voluntary captive to the man who was then the prisoner of an unjust court? Who could have foretold that this man, whom he accidentally saw in the character of a delinquent, would one day be his father, his master, his absolute ruler? Who, moreover, could have predicted to Ignatius, that the high-born youth would become the most docile member of his flock, obedient to his every word, whether uttered with the voice, or written by the pen?’ Yet perchance God did vouchsafe to His faithful servant this consolation under the ignominious and distressing circumstances in which he found himself placed. Some positively affirm that such was the case, and this at least we know, that Francis’ entrance into the Society was revealed to its Founder many

years before the event actually took place. O Divine Providence, how far are Thy mysterious counsels beyond the power of human understanding to fathom! How dost Thou dispose of men by what appears to be mere accident! How easily dost Thou change affliction into gladness, and make disgrace a stepping-stone to glory! How dost Thou cause circumstances apparently the most contrary and inopportune to work together for good! How dost Thou bring harmony out of discord, to the wonder and admiration of Thy loving and obedient children!"¹

Towards the close of 1528, Francis finally left home and went to reside in Madrid, where a suitable residence had been prepared for him. Few young men are exposed to temptations so numerous and so seductive as those which awaited him on his entrance into the magic circle which surrounded the Emperor Charles V. Fewer still, alas! have the faith to resist and surmount them. Well was it for the subject of this biography that he had already adopted as his motto the words of the Psalmist: "I have sworn and am determined to keep the judgments of Thy justice."²

¹ Cien-Fuegos, *La heroica vida*, &c., pp. 24, 25.

² Psalm cxiii. 106.

CHAPTER III.

HIS LIFE AT COURT.

FRANCIS had already been initiated, to a certain extent at least, into the routine and ceremonial of Court life during the two years' residence at Tordesillas, which has been mentioned in the preceding chapter. But he was then little more than a charming child, whom the Infanta and her mother sheltered under their wing, screening him as far as possible from the knowledge of everything which it was undesirable for him to know. He was still under the charge of his governor, who regulated the disposal of his time, selected his associates, and controlled his amusements.

Now all was changed. Though scarcely more than eighteen, he was completely emancipated from restraint. He found himself his own master, free to dispose of himself as he pleased, and act as he saw fit. His position was an exceptional one, from several points of view. Seldom does any one enter upon life under such favourable auspices as those which fell to his lot. He possessed everything this world can give; rank, wealth, the favour of princes, the esteem and admiration of his fellow-men. Nor were his physical and mental gifts less remarkable than the advantages of his situation. Rather did they correspond to these latter, each enhancing the effect of the others, and

combining to form a whole so brilliant, as to draw upon their youthful possessor an amount of attention, to the flattering nature of which he could not be insensible, especially as the Emperor and Empress showed him, from the first, a preference so marked as to leave no doubt as to the feelings with which they regarded him, treating him as a son rather than as a subject. Had he been less thoroughly well trained, less sincerely pious, less mentally superior, he must have succumbed, in a measure at least, to the poisonous atmosphere of flattery and adulation, which he could not choose but inhale. But his healthy system carried the antidote within itself. If many things which he saw around him pleased and delighted, many also repelled and offended him. He contrasted the idle self-indulgence of his present companions, with the busy occupied lives led by the inmates of his father's house, from the highest to the lowest. He remembered the sedulous application to business shown by his uncle, the Archbishop of Saragossa, the frugal simplicity of his private life, as contrasted with his official magnificence. Very strange did it appear that those about him should have nothing to do except to amuse themselves and get through the time which, in spite of their exertions, often hung heavy on their hands. He was surprised to find that so many of them evinced neither interest in study, nor care for religion. A feeling akin to contempt crept into his mind. He criticized his surroundings with the crude and merciless severity of youth, measuring them by the standard to which he had been accustomed from his childhood. His refined nature and delicate sensitiveness were especially shocked by the license of language and liberty of manners in which many indulged with unblushing

freedom, boasting of their amorous exploits and unlawful conquests in a style which heightened the colour in his cheek. Yet, as time went by, the vividness of his first impressions naturally wore off, and he entered with zest and eagerness into life as it offered itself to him. Looking back upon this period, at a subsequent stage of his career, he was wont to term it his "life of vanity and sin." It was far from meriting so harsh a condemnation, for he never allowed himself to be swept away by the current of evil, but resisted it with all his force. As he grew older and gained increasing influence, he did much, both by words and example, to stem and control it.

The next eighteen months offer no events of marked interest. We will take the opportunity of giving some details concerning Francis and describing his personal appearance, his accomplishments, his amusements, the manner in which he ruled his household, his difficulties and temptations. In doing so, we are aware that we cannot but appear sometimes to exaggerate. The simple truth, in regard to one so exceptionally gifted, will now and then sound like a page taken from the early romances of his country. His biographers do not hesitate to term him "a youthful Apollo," "a new Narcissus," "this king of men," "the flower of humanity," and so on. His figure was tall and perfectly proportioned, every movement being full of natural grace and easy dignity. His countenance was remarkable for beauty of feature and charm of expression. He had a fair, delicate complexion, bright colour, high forehead, aquiline nose, and small mouth with coral lips, brown hair with a tendency to curl, and those soft almond-shaped grey eyes, which are peculiar to one type of Spanish beauty. Nor were his

manners and conversation less attractive than his person. He was not a great talker, but whatever he said was full of good sense and originality. Even old age did not extinguish the vivacity which characterized him in youth. Had he been born in a humbler walk of life and compelled to earn his daily bread, it would have been no easy matter to determine in what direction to turn his steps and which of his various talents might be cultivated with the largest amount of profit.

In the study of music he took much delight. Not only was he a skilful performer upon several instruments, but he thoroughly understood the science of music and composed a series of motets which would have done credit to a professional artist. He arranged suitable tunes for some of the hymns and sequences of the Church which were special favourites with him. Many of his works were printed, and such was their merit that they were handed down from generation to generation, and widely diffused in Spain. It is said that some of them have survived to the present day. From his early childhood, Francis had been taught to ride. He was now a proficient in horsemanship, his equestrian feats being the envy and admiration of his associates who vainly strove to imitate and equal them. His force of will and firmness of nerve enabled him to master the most intractable animals, and he could ride horses which refused to carry any one else. He would sometimes laughingly say of himself that he would have made a first-rate horse-breaker. Among the valuable horses in his stables was a magnificent black charger, of the purest breed, which had been sent to him from Turkey as a present and which he generally rode. The courage of the spirited beast was equal to that of its rider, and

enabled him to gain many victories in the arena which he fearlessly entered on the occasion of bull-fights. Numerous were the prizes he obtained, it being the delight of the Empress to bestow them with her own hand upon her favourite. A considerable portion of his time was devoted to the chase, since the Emperor never liked him to be absent from any of the Court hunting-parties, and made a point of keeping him close to himself.

Of all the lighter amusements and occupations in which Francis indulged, there was none in which he was a greater proficient, or in which he found more real enjoyment, than in that of falconry. He was an adept in taming and training the birds, being, moreover, a most successful sportsman. He loved to ride out into the country on a bright summer morning with his dogs and his falcons, and the necessary attendants, in order to spend the day in the open air. The solitude and freedom he thus obtained refreshed and exhilarated him even more than the active exercise. With almost boyish glee he shook off the trammels of etiquette, feeling that in the intervals of the sport, and especially when riding home at night after the day's exertions, he was at liberty to pursue his own reflections. That his mind had lost nothing of the pious bent acquired in early childhood, is proved by the following account which he gave his confessor, at the request of the latter, of the thoughts suggested to him by a pursuit in which he found, not amusement alone, but from which, owing to his habit of looking below the surface and striving to gain instruction whenever he could, he derived much profit to his soul.¹

¹ It may be well to remark here, once for all, that whenever, in the course of the present biography, the outpourings of Francis' soul are recorded, they were either written down by him at the time, by the request of his confessor, or found among his papers after his death.

“I acknowledge,” he said, “that I received signal graces from God when out in the open country. Many a time, watching the birds at conflict in the air, I bethought me of the work of the devil in destroying souls; what wide circuits he makes in search of them, how swiftly he swoops down on them, how fiercely he attacks them, how he struggles to obtain the mastery, and how vigilant he is to prevent them from escaping from his talons. Then again I think to my own confusion, how an untamed bird, wild and shy by nature, if it receives but a little food and kind treatment from man, becomes gentle and docile, comes at his call, obediently does his bidding, and willingly submits to be deprived of liberty, to wear fetters on its feet and a hood over its eyes. Whereas man, whom God has created tractable and gentle, to whom He has given no means of escaping from His providence, turns from Him and rebels against Him, and will not return to His allegiance, though he is called and invited with many benefits and the bountiful supply of all his wants. At other times, observing how the dog and the falcon, however hungry they may be, even if they have the prey already between their teeth, as soon as their master arrives obey his word, and lay it down immediately at his command, I deeply deplore the disobedience and stubbornness of man, who, indulging his undisciplined passions, his unruly appetites, will not forego at the call of God the prohibited pleasures he has begun to taste, heedless alike of His promises and of His threats. Every day fresh thoughts of this kind suggest themselves to my mind, so that I derive much edification from the pursuit of the chase.”

Gambling was in that day almost as great and widespread an evil as it is in our own. It caused then,

as it does now in too many cases, the ruin of both body and soul, and brought poverty and disaster upon countless families. Protestantism had, it is true, not as yet sapped the foundations of belief, so that a sense of the supernatural and a dread of the judgments of God still exercised a restraining influence over the minds even of many irreligious men. The ruined gambler did not rush headlong, without thought or scruple, into the presence of his Creator, but endured, with what patience he could, the misery his reckless folly had brought upon him. The practice of playing for money was universal at Court, and indeed among most classes of the community. Francis quickly discerned the dangerous nature of the amusement, and resolved never to sit down at the gaming-table. He turned a deaf ear to all persuasion that he should do so, and was insensible alike to the shaft of irony and the smile of contempt. When questioned as to the reason of his invariable refusal, he used to answer that he feared to lose four things which he greatly valued: time, money, piety, and peace of mind. Nor was his determination based upon merely personal considerations. The passion for gambling pervaded all classes, and he felt that, were he to gamble in the society of his equals, he could not forbid the practice in the servants' hall.

Grateful for the good example which had been set him in his father's house, and becoming increasingly alive to the benefit he had derived from it, he set himself from the very outset of his residence in Madrid, to look well after his dependents and allow no vicious practices to be carried on under his roof. *Talis rex, qualis grex*, is a maxim which he bore constantly in mind. Every evening he assembled his household for night prayers and the recitations of the Rosary, each

member of it being required to hear Mass daily, and to approach the sacraments at stated intervals. He made a point of ascertaining that these rules were really carried out, and any individual who persistently refused to live, externally at least, as a Christian should, he discharged from his service. He used to say on such occasions that it was useless to expect those who would not serve and obey God, to do their duty to an earthly master. Seldom did he fail in bringing to a right mind even the most recalcitrant among his subordinates. He possessed that happy mixture of inflexible determination and gracious condescension which marks a man born to rule, and seldom fails to carry all before it when brought to bear upon inferiors. He was, besides, most liberal and open-handed in all his dealings, never allowing extra services and marks of personal devotion to pass without notice or recompense. Nor did he spare himself, or hesitate to take whatever trouble was necessary, in order to compass his ends. Before retiring to his own room for the night, he made a point of inspecting that part of the house appropriated to the men-servants, in order to convince himself that nothing objectionable was going on. Never, if he could help it, did he delegate this duty to any one else; on the contrary, he continued the practice at a subsequent period, when, first as Viceroy of Cataluna, and afterwards as Duke of Gandia, his household was a very numerous one, and he might in fact be said to have a little court of his own.

The gaming-table by no means represented the strongest of the temptations which beset him at this epoch of his career, when he was in all the bloom and beauty of his early manhood. Many were the snares

laid for his unwary feet, many were the schemes formed in order to induce him to forsake the paths of innocence and virtue. The struggle was a severe one, but he came out of it victorious. Conscious of his own weakness, he omitted no precaution that might preserve him from defeat. We know from the testimony of his confidential valet, that he made a point of wearing a rough hair-shirt, upon any occasion of special danger. Those who had constant opportunities of observing him, are unanimous in asserting that no word or look which could offend the most scrupulous modesty, ever escaped him. Nor would he listen to stories of dubious import, or join in singing songs the words of which he could not approve.

“He made it his chief care to resist the assaults of the enemy of souls, and to root up his sensual desires, as if they had been so many noxious weeds. For Satan, taking advantage of his youth and ardent temperament, as well as of the liberty he enjoyed and the splendour which surrounded him, instigated divers evil-minded persons to give him bad advice (as is too commonly the case in the palaces of princes) in order that the pure soul which had become the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost, might be profaned and polluted. But the same Lord Who had chosen Francis, strengthened and encouraged him, giving him grace to vanquish his haughty and powerful foe. He went frequently to confession, and told all his difficulties to his director, who advised him to be constant in prayer and in the practice of humility, to mistrust himself, and to trust in the Divine mercy, beseeching God to bestow upon him the priceless gift of chastity. All this Don Francis did, resolving never to consent with his will to any mortal sin. And, according to the witness of

his confessor, he preserved his original purity, until he entered into the state of holy matrimony.”¹

In 1529 he took this important step. He felt that in the position in which he found himself placed, marriage would be no small safeguard to him in many ways, and he began to experience the necessity of having a mistress at the head of his household. It does not appear that among the beautiful and accomplished women whom he had met in society, any one had captivated his fancy, much less gained his affections. The Empress Isabella, consort of Charles V., had brought with her from Portugal four noble maidens, to act in the capacity of maids of honour to Her Majesty. For one of the four, Eleanora de Castro, she had a great affection. She treated her in all respects as a sister, taking her into the closest confidence, and even waiting upon her in illness. Eleanora was worthy of this preference: not only was she descended, both on her father's and her mother's side, from the most ancient and illustrious families of Portugal, but her beauty of person, grace of manner, and cultivation of mind, were on a par with her exalted lineage. She was as modest and unaffected as if she had been quite an ordinary person, “for her virtues were based upon the solid foundation of true humility and a deep consciousness of her own real nothingness and unworthiness in the sight of the King of kings.” She had been admirably brought up, and was truly and sincerely pious. A fixed portion of each day was set apart for her religious exercises, and in spite of the demands made by her royal mistress upon her time and attention, she found means to spend an hour in mental prayer,

¹ Ribadeneira, *Vida del Padre Francisco de Borja*. Madrid, 1594, lib. i. c. ii.

her favourite subject of meditation being the sufferings of the Saviour. She further made a point of daily saying the Rosary, and reciting the Office of the Blessed Virgin. Is it wonderful that when Don Francis confided his intention to marry without delay to the ear of the Empress, her thoughts should turn to Eleanora, and that she should rejoice at the prospect of promoting the happiness of two persons whose interests lay so very near her affectionate heart? We are warranted in going even further than this, for the biographers tell us that the idea of this alliance had ever and anon flitted through her brain, as she watched the handsome couple threading side by side the mazes of some stately dance, and reflected that they seemed, to borrow a homely phrase, "made for one another." She was too wise, however, to give premature utterance to those secret musings of hers. Remembering the proverb of her adopted country which says that "Speech is silver, but silence golden," and knowing that many plans and projects come to utter shipwreck merely because they have been prematurely discussed, she held her tongue and waited. Her delight may be therefore imagined, when Francis readily fell in with her proposal. She lost no time in laying her plan before the Emperor, who promised to do all he could to promote the scheme thus happily inaugurated, and as the first step in carrying it into execution to write with his own hand to the Duke of Gandia.

Full of their own ideas upon the subject, it never occurred to the Imperial pair that the projected alliance could be regarded from a different point of view. But Francis' father refused to entertain the proposal for a single moment. In reply to the Emperor's letter he said that while it gave him much pain to resist the

expressed wishes of his Sovereign, all the traditions of his house warranted him in looking higher for a wife for his heir, and that he desired him to marry as several of his ancestors had done, into the family of Arragon. He added that it would be more agreeable to him if the choice of his son were to fall upon a Spanish bride. The Emperor wrote again, and yet again, the Empress uniting her solicitations to those of her husband. They promised that if the Duke would withdraw his opposition, they would treat the young couple as their own children, and keep them constantly at their side. Under this double pressure the Duke at length found himself compelled to give way, and the marriage contract was finally signed at Gandia. Charles V. created Francis Marquess of Lombay, and appointed him Chief Equerry to the Empress. The emoluments attached to the post were considerable, and Doña Eleanora's dowry was of ample amount, so that the bridegroom, whose own income was already large, now found himself a very rich man. The wedding was celebrated at Madrid, in the presence of the Emperor and Empress, and a brilliant assemblage, consisting of the principal personages of the Court. We will here give a list of the eight children born of the marriage.

1. Charles, who succeeded to the duchy of Gandia. He was named after the Emperor, the Empress being his godmother.

2. Isabella, married to the Marquess of Lerma.

3. John. He was Ambassador, first at the Portuguese Court, and subsequently at that of the Emperor Maximilian in Germany.

4. Alvaro. He was Envoy Extraordinary of King Philip at Rome.

5. Joanna, married to the Marquess of Alcañizos.

6. Hernando, major-domo to the Emperor.

7. Dorothea. At an early age she entered the Convent of Poor Clares in Gandia.

8. Alonzo, also major-domo to the Emperor.

The newly-married pair found themselves in possession of every earthly felicity, nor was anything wanting to the perfection of their lot. "But the fact that the sun of prosperity thus shone upon them with all its warmth and splendour, did not," as one of their biographers remarks, "render them insensible to the sorrows of those whose path lay in the cold and gloomy shade. Unlike too many of the wealthy and prosperous, who become selfish and callous, listening with indifference to tales of suffering, their own happiness only increased their sympathy for the afflicted, and augmented their desire to procure for them succour and relief." Instead of using the favour they enjoyed at Court to promote their own ends, and advance their personal interests, they employed it for the good of others. Many were the deserving persons whom they drew from want and obscurity, and for whom they found suitable occupation and remunerative posts. The prayers of the grateful individuals whose fortune they had been the means of making, brought down countless benefits and graces upon the head of their generous patrons. Both Francis and Eleanora were particularly assiduous in succouring the *pauvres honteux*, for whose misfortunes they felt a special sympathy. Their delicate and thoughtful charity discovered a thousand ways of relieving them, without wounding their self-love, or ruffling their susceptibility. Francis had, as we have already seen, learnt while quite a child to love and help the poor and needy. He now made it a habit to set aside every evening a certain

sum to be distributed on the morrow. The purse containing these alms he placed with his own hand under his pillow at night, as if it was not possible for him to fall asleep without the assurance of being able to relieve, when he should awake to a new day, the sorrows of his fellow-Christians. He endeavoured to inspire his head servants with a similar spirit of kindness and charity. Upon one occasion he ordered the comptroller of his privy purse to send an unusually large sum to a lady who through the death of her husband found herself left in very straitened circumstances, with a numerous family of young children. The comptroller ventured to remonstrate, alleging as an excuse for his presumption that the funds appropriated to purposes of charity were just then running rather low. Francis turned at once to the table, on which his breakfast still stood. "In that case," he said, "sell these silver dishes. The necessitous family of which I have just spoken, has a better right to them than I have."

About this time Francis applied himself seriously to the study of mathematics, devoting several hours daily to the pursuit. He took lessons of the best master of the day, occupying himself especially with those branches of the subject which bear upon the science of fortification and the art of war. He never found any difficulty in learning anything which he wished to know, and his progress was so rapid, that the Emperor, who took lessons of the same professor, made it a practice to go over each morning's lecture with Francis, saying that the latter taught him more than Sainte-Croix, the professor, could ever do. Politics began also to make increasing demands upon Francis, for as years went by, and his Sovereign perceived

that his rare intelligence ripened and matured, while his knowledge of men and things grew more extensive and more discriminating day by day, he frequently consulted him respecting the schemes he had in view, and ended by admitting him into his closest counsels regarding important affairs of State. It was with difficulty that the Emperor refrained from a too open expression of the admiration he felt at the judgment evinced by so young a man, and the faculty he already possessed of taking in with one rapid glance any given situation, and pronouncing upon the wisest course to be adopted.

For many months Charles V. had been maturing his warlike projects. In 1535, he deemed the hour to have arrived when he might proceed to carry them into execution. The Empress' brother, Don Louis of Portugal, rendered him valuable assistance, and in order to become more thoroughly acquainted with the plans of his brother-in-law, he made a lengthened stay at Valladolid, where the Court happened to be sojourning just then. The Marquess of Lombay was appointed to remain in attendance upon him not only during his visit to Spain, but on the voyage to Africa, and throughout the campaign. The charm of Francis' manners soon won the heart of the Prince, and the courage and presence of mind he displayed when brought face to face with the enemy surprised and delighted him. The flattering report he gave the Emperor of the Marquess' soldierly bearing and of his thorough acquaintance with military matters, advanced him to a yet higher place in Charles' regard.

After the enterprise had been brought to a satisfactory conclusion, and the army had returned home, Francis and Eleanora were one day dining in private

with their Imperial Majesties. Charles delighted the Marchioness by recounting to her some of her husband's feats of valour, and proceeded to remark, half in jest, "It is easy to see that he will become one of the first generals of his time!" The astute monarch had discerned in his favourite the qualities necessary to make a good soldier, namely, fearlessness, resolution, endurance, self-control. These qualities are equally necessary to make a good Religious, and the prediction was destined to be fulfilled in a sense which was far from the thoughts of him who uttered it. Francis was to fight in a spiritual army, under the banner of St. Ignatius, and to win victories indeed, but upon no earthly field. His preparation for the great future awaiting him was about to begin, and in his case the beautiful words of Holy Scripture were to find a special application: "Wisdom goeth about seeking such as are worthy of her, and she sheweth herself cheerfully to them in the ways, and meeteth them with all providence."¹

The heat of the African sun, together with the unaccustomed hardships and fatigues to which Francis was inevitably exposed, proved too much for his delicate constitution to bear with impunity. They sowed the seeds of an intermittent fever, which developed shortly after his return home, and nearly became fatal to him. He bore his sufferings with exemplary patience, to the edification of all who witnessed them. When parched with the burning fever, he reflected upon the tortures of Purgatory, and resolved, if restored to health, to do more than ever to succour the holy souls. Nor did he depart from this determination, but redoubled his prayers and mortifications on their behalf, as also the number of the

¹ Wisdom vi. 17.

Masses which, in imitation of the usage of the early Church, he was accustomed to have said for their relief. His convalescence was tedious and protracted, extending over several months, yet he turned it to such good account, that it became a season of no small profit to his soul. When looking back upon this illness in after years, he was wont to term it, "the beginning of my conversion," and to say that God then taught him his first lesson in contemplation and abnegation of self. Withdrawn as he was from the engrossing interest of politics, the whirl of social engagements, the tender charm of the domestic circle, and compelled to sojourn a while on the lonely mountain-side, he learnt to listen to the "whistling of a gentle air," and to say with the Prophet of old, *Non in commotione Dominus*. Until sufficiently recovered to read for himself, he caused his attendants to read aloud to him spiritual books and the lives of the saints. As he grew stronger, he spent many hours in studying the New Testament, and especially the Epistles of St. Paul, with the aid of a commentary. He used to say that more conversions were effected by means of these mute but eloquent teachers, than by all the most gifted preachers who ever ascended the pulpit. From this time forward he began to practise the particular examen twice a day, in mysterious sympathy with the soul of St. Ignatius, whom he did not know personally, and whom he had frequently heard spoken of in terms of disparagement. Later on he was able to take the air in a litter, or to stroll in the gardens of his palace. At such times he occupied his thoughts by musing on what he had read. The following passage from the *Imitation* was frequently present to his mind: "Behold, both joys assuredly thou canst not have, to delight thyself here in this

world, and afterwards to reign with Christ. All therefore is vanity, except to love God, and to serve Him only."¹

Although Francis imagined that he could enter into the truth of these words, he was yet, in point of fact, only beginning to understand them. A three-fold lesson was needed, in order that he might realize their full force. Three successive times he was to gaze into the face of death, under three widely different aspects. He was to behold death in the camp, death in the cloister, death in the palace. By this means he was to be born again, and arise to a new life.

¹ *Imitation*, bk. i. c. 24.

CHAPTER IV.

FRANCIS LEARNS THE POWER OF DEATH.

SCARCELY had Francis regained his strength, when his country once more made a demand upon his services. In 1536, Charles V. marched into Provence at the head of a powerful army, hoping to conquer and annex the province, and ultimately to gratify his long-cherished desire of subduing the whole of France and thus adding another and important territory to his already vast Empire. Francis equipped at his own expense a numerous regiment of volunteers, and distinguished himself yet more during this war by his skill and prowess, than he had done whilst fighting in Africa. The laurel wreaths he thus acquired, might have bound him more closely to the world, had not the death of one of his dearest friends, which occurred in the course of the campaign, forcibly shown him the frail tenure by which all earthly possessions are held. The brave soldier, whose premature end so deeply impressed his mind, was among the chief ornaments of the Court of Charles V., and merits a brief mention in these pages.

Garcilaso de la Vega was born at Toledo, and came of a long line of illustrious ancestors. His contemporaries tell us that "Nature had made his body a fitting temple for his majestic soul." He spoke his native Castilian with ease and grace, being moreover

so finished a writer, that he is said to have improved the language he employed. Nor was he a master of prose alone; he was an accomplished poet, and some of his admirers even called him "the Prince of Spanish poets." Italian was to him a second mother-tongue, and he spoke French with fluency. His education rested upon a solid basis, for he had made his Humanities at an early age, and was a first-rate Greek and Latin scholar. His social gifts were on a par with his mental endowments, he was a universal favourite, adored by his inferiors, beloved by his equals, esteemed by his Sovereign, of whose Court he formed one of the chief ornaments. Here he met Francis, with whom he soon struck up a close friendship. But Garcilaso, though a scholar and a courtier, was above all a soldier. If he gave his left hand to Mercury, he gave his right hand to Mars. "And wherefore," asks Cardinal Cien-Fuegos, "should we deem this to be an inconsistency? Wherefore indeed, since Homer himself did not disdain to place a lyre in the hand of Hercules, when he had just laid down his spear, the point of which was yet red with blood?" To Garcilaso's ear, the sweetest of all music was the trumpet call which summoned him to battle. It was his supreme delight to ride forth at the head of his men, waving his sword on high, and shouting, "Victory! Victory!" as if no such thing as defeat were possible. He accompanied the Emperor in all his wars, and rendered him important services on several occasions. Whilst fighting in Africa before the ruins of ancient Carthage, he was three times wounded by an arrow in the course of the same encounter, and the consequent loss of blood was so great that his life was despaired of. But his robust constitution enabled him to pull

through, and when the expedition into Provence, of which we have already spoken, was organized, he marched forth at the head of eleven squadrons of infantry. The route taken by the army was through Lombardy, and fortune favoured Charles' troops to such an extent, that before they reached France, they had already taken upwards of thirty cities and towns. They finally encamped not far from the coast in the neighbourhood of Frejus. The sea-board was at that time defended, to a great extent at least, by means of round towers. The garrison of one of these towers having harassed and annoyed the Emperor's forces, he resolved upon its destruction, and ordered a scaling-ladder to be forthwith placed against the walls.

Garcilaso de la Vega, ever first when a deed of daring was to be done, promptly began to mount. He had nearly reached the top of the ladder, when a shower of stones was hurled down by the besieged upon himself and his companions. One of the largest of the missives knocked out of his hand the shield by means of which he protected his head, at the same time striking him so violent a blow, that he lost his hold and fell backwards into the moat. Francis witnessed the accident and at once hastened to the assistance of his friend, who was carried to a place of safety. The injuries he had sustained, though serious, were not considered likely to be fatal, so that the surgeons had every hope of saving his life. But in the course of a few days, grave symptoms began to appear, and by the time a week had elapsed, every one knew that Garcilaso must die. Who was to announce this fact to him? The task was all the more difficult, because he himself had not the remotest idea of the state he was in. Of all his friends and comrades Francis

alone had the courage to perform the unwelcome duty, and he acquitted himself of it with a tact and prudence which would have done credit to an old and experienced priest. Garcilaso received the intelligence with calmness and self-possession, and from that moment turned his thoughts to the world he was so soon to enter. Francis remained constantly at his bedside, preparing him for death. He received the last sacraments with sentiments of the most edifying contrition and resignation to the will of God, saying that he regretted nothing, except his own sins. All those who visited him were surprised at his readiness to die, when he was being thus cut off in the flower of his age, while the world smiled upon him and life was still so full of promise, as well as of actual enjoyment. Even the thought of his wife and children whom he dearly loved, did not disturb him. He sent affectionate farewell messages to them, exhorting them to pray for his soul, and to serve God better than he had done. He had been a virtuous man, as the world reckons virtue, and an honourable man, as the world counts honour, but his heart had not been given to God. Of this he now became painfully aware, and during his last days he frequently bewailed to Francis the manner in which his time and thoughts had been engrossed by other interests than those of religion. "Alas!" he would say, "for the things in which I took so great delight, to the injury of my soul"—*O dulces prendas por mi mal halladas!*

Francis watched beside him during his last night on earth, ever and anon suggesting some pious thought or consoling reflection, as the sufferer retained his faculties to the very end. Amid the solemn stillness, broken only by the footfall of the sentries, and the sighing of the wind as it swept over the darkened

plain, a feeling of awe, such as he had never before experienced, crept over the mind of Francis, and many of his actions stood out before him in a new light. As the first rays of the rising sun shone through the opening of the tent, the dying warrior raised himself from his pillows. *Maria santissima!* he exclaimed three times, and so rendered up his soul to God.

On hearing that Garcilaso was no more, the Emperor burst into tears, and wept long and bitterly. Then with flashing eyes he swore that the death of so valiant a soldier should not pass unavenged, but that every stone of the tower whose conquest had cost him so dear should be levelled with the ground. Not satisfied with this he ordered fifty gibbets to be erected in a row, and upon them he caused to be hung, in the sight of the camp, the fifty brave Frenchmen who had gallantly defended the tower. *Suprema lex, regis voluntas*, is a maxim which was too often acted upon in those days, but it is probable that Charles, in his calmer moods, may have regretted the cruel and unjust procedure into which, upon the present occasion, he allowed himself to be betrayed by the warmth of his feelings and the intensity of his grief.

Francis' affectionate heart deeply felt the loss of his friend. A short time afterwards the Emperor, perceiving that he did not possess the physical strength necessary for life in camp, and wishing also to divert his thoughts from their present serious channel, sent him back to Spain in order that he might relate to the Empress the events of the war. He knew perfectly well that he could select no more acceptable messenger than the Marquess of Lombay, who met indeed with the warmest reception when he reached Segovia, where the Court was staying just then. Before, however,

many days had elapsed, he fell seriously ill, his complaint being an abscess in the throat, accompanied by swelling and inflammation of the part affected. He could neither speak nor swallow, and the doctors became extremely anxious as to the ultimate issue of the malady. The abscess broke sooner than had been anticipated, and Francis made a speedy recovery, as we learn from the fact that he was able to be present at Valladolid, on the occasion of the signing of a treaty of peace with the King of France, in accordance with the strongly-expressed wish of the reigning Pontiff, Paul III. When General of the Society of Jesus, Francis gave an account of this illness to one of the Fathers with whom he happened to be travelling. The two companions were compelled to make a halt in Segovia owing to the weak state of Francis' health. Referring to the thoughts and reflections which had occupied his mind while unable to utter a single word, he said that it had given him no small consolation to feel that he was better prepared to die than he had been during the fever which attacked him on his return from Africa, and that he had an increased sense of the holiness of God and of the evil of sin. He also remembered with gratitude that he had been enabled to persevere in his habit of approaching the sacraments every month.

The effect produced by the death of Garcilaso was destined to be ere long deepened and intensified. In 1537 Francis' grandmother died. This estimable lady had, as the reader will remember, retired into a convent of the Poor Clares shortly after the birth of her grandson, to the great grief of his father, the Duke of Gandia. As Sister Mary Gabriel, she lived twenty-seven years in Religion, observing her rule in the strictest manner.

The penances and mortifications she performed were so severe, her mental prayer was of so lofty an order, and the obedience she rendered to the Abbess, who was none other than her own daughter, was so perfect and so unvarying, that God deigned to communicate to her the knowledge of secret things. She had always been regarded by her fellow-Religious as a model of virtue, but it was not until the time of her death approached, that the extraordinary nature of her sanctity became apparent to all around her.

The day before she died she said to the Mother Vicaress, Sister Mary of Jesus: "To-morrow our Lord in His mercy intends to take me to that happy place where I shall enjoy His blessed presence for ever. From this hour until noon to-morrow I have to be cleansed from my sins by a burning fever. I entreat you that when I ask you for some water to drink you will give it me, for my need of it will be very great." Scarcely had she finished speaking, when she was attacked by a fever of such intensity, that the physicians perceived it to be no ordinary or natural malady, and declared their remedies to be powerless. So great was the heat of her body, that when her son, the Duke of Gandia, took her hand in order to raise it to his lips, he felt his own hand burn, as if it had been held in the fire. At noon the next day the fever left her, exactly as she had predicted. One of the nuns, named Sister Inès, had a special affection for her, having been accustomed to lean upon her for advice and comfort, and to derive much profit from her conversation. Sister Inès dreaded lest she should outlive her beloved friend, who was her senior by many years, and she therefore implored her to ask of God that whenever she should herself leave this life, it might be granted

her to follow quickly. This Sister Mary Gabriel had promised to do. Now, when she lay upon her death-bed, all the nuns were assembled around her, in order that she might give her blessing to each. To the surprise of the community, she passed over Sister Inès, and when the Mother Vicaress pointed out the omission to her, she replied: "It is not necessary that I should give her a parting blessing. Before a month has passed, she will rejoin me in Heaven." This indeed she did; nor were the other prophecies uttered by Sister Mary Gabriel, in regard to some of her relatives and friends, less exactly fulfilled. She took an affectionate leave of her daughter, Sister Frances, and seeing her deep emotion, she bade her not return to the sick chamber, but go to the chapel and there spend her time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament until she should have breathed her last. "Then," she concluded, "you are immediately to intone the *Te Deum*, as an expression of your gratitude to our Lord for having taken me out of this exile and admitted me to gaze for ever upon His ineffable loveliness."

"Nor did that which happened after her death afford a less convincing proof of her sanctity. Even before her body could be removed from the infirmary, the nuns heard the voices of the angels chanting celestial melodies. And when the Duke, her son, arrived at the convent together with a great number of the clergy, both secular and regular, in order to attend her obsequies, they heard a sound of the sweetest singing, proceeding from within the house. One of the priests remarked to the Abbess that he thought it would be better if the nuns were not to sing at that time, when the Office was to be chanted in the choir; she replied that perfect silence prevailed

throughout the house, as far as any human voices were concerned. Then every one felt convinced that these delightful harmonies were produced by angelic voices and the music of their golden harps. Such was the end of this servant of God. She was a great lady in the eyes of the world, and possessed of a rich inheritance. Yet greater far was she in the sight of God, and more splendid was her inheritance in Heaven. Can we wonder that such a grandmother should have such a grandson, and that from so choice a tree should spring so rare a fruit? Francis experienced a painful sense of solitude and loneliness when the death of his grandmother was announced to him. He had been accustomed to regard her as his mother and teacher, his refuge and consolation, and he knew that by means of her daily prayers on his behalf, the Lord had bestowed upon him many and great graces. But these graces, far from being diminished, were increased after her death, for her pure soul, being nearer to God, and not needing to ask favours on her own account, asked them for her grandson, doing this in so efficacious a manner, that he every day received them in fresh and greater abundance. To this he frequently bore witness when Marquess of Lombay, saying that he had felt animated by the love of God, and by a sincere desire to please Him, after his saintly grandmother had departed to a better life.”¹

Another biographer tells us that Francis experienced a singular increase of power to struggle with the world and with himself after her decease. Nay more, he said that through her intercession favours had been bestowed upon him of so exalted a nature as to transcend the power of words to describe. He was

¹ Ribadeneira, *Vida del B. P. Francisco de Borja*, lib. i. cap. vi.

filled with peace and consolation whenever he thought of her, and he frequently felt her to be present with him. "For," as Cardinal Cien-Fuegos remarks, "it is well known that distance cannot separate souls, but that they can hold converse with one another, and mutually exchange their thoughts."

From all accounts it is easy to gather that the event we have just recorded formed a marked epoch in Francis' spiritual life. Of his external history during the next two years (1537—1539), there is not much to relate. He appeared to have spent them quietly at home, occupying himself with the care of his soul, the education of his children, the duties connected with his station, and his favourite pursuits and amusements. He went, however, less frequently into society than he had done formerly, leading a more retired life as far as he could do so without attracting attention.

The year 1539 opened under the happiest auspices for Spain. After long and costly wars, peace prevailed over the greater part of the civilized world. Charles V. profited by the breathing-time thus afforded him to summon the Cortes to meet at Toledo. The assembly was a very brilliant one, and the social gatherings held at the time were on a scale of almost unprecedented magnificence. Horse races, bull-fights, and other public amusements were provided for all classes of society, the city being thoroughly *en fête*. Alas! how little did these gay revellers imagine that the joy bells were quickly to be changed to a funeral knell!

Subsequently to the premature birth of a dead child, the Empress became dangerously ill with fever. For several days she hovered between life and death. During this time of suspense, unceasing prayers were offered on her behalf by her subjects, in whose hearts

she was securely enthroned. The churches were thronged by weeping crowds, Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament took place daily in the Cathedral, processions were to be met in the streets at every turn, private individuals of all classes multiplied their fasts and penances, no means were left untried, which might perchance serve to avert the dreaded blow. Francis and Eleanora were specially distressed, and remained constantly in the palace. One writer tells us, that the Marquess went so far as to offer up his own life, and that of all his children, in the hope that God would accept the sacrifice and spare the Empress to her people. This statement, however, savours somewhat of exaggeration, and is scarcely to be received literally, but rather to be regarded as an expression of the grateful, unselfish affection he felt for his royal mistress. Eleanora hardly left the sick-room. She allowed herself no rest, but nursed the invalid day and night with the utmost tenderness and devotion. The Empress bore her excruciating sufferings with heroic courage and patience, never allowing a groan to escape her lips. Once when Eleanora begged her to relax her self-restraint, since an open expression of what she was enduring might perchance bring her some measure of alleviation, she replied in her native Portuguese, "I can die, but I will never complain." This beautiful and beloved Princess expired on the 1st of May, 1539. Shortly before her death, she begged her husband that her body might not be embalmed, but that the Marchioness of Lombay alone should prepare it for burial.

When all was over, Charles, overwhelmed with grief, retired for some days to the Monastery of St. Jerome, outside the city walls, in order to give free

vent to his feelings. He sent for Francis, and requested that he would, conjointly with his wife, accompany the corpse of the late Empress to Granada, where it was to be entombed in the vaults of the Chapel Royal, which Ferdinand, King of Spain, had caused to be erected as a burial-place for the monarchs of that country. He had done this at the close of a war, during which he had wrested the city from the hands of the Moors. Charles said he could confide the jewel to no other hands, and forbade Francis to lose sight of the coffin, until it should have been placed in the vault. The latter, deeply touched by this mark of his Sovereign's confidence, promised to carry out his command to the letter. The body was placed in a leaden coffin, securely fastened, and covered with magnificent brocade. No time was lost in setting out, and the journey was accomplished with the utmost haste possible in those days. It was feared that the body not having been embalmed, but merely anointed by the Marchioness with aromatic unguents, decomposition might set in before Granada was reached, where the coffin had to be opened in order that the formality of identification might be gone through. So faithfully did Francis fulfil the duty he had undertaken, that he never for one moment quitted the coffin of his mistress. For five or six nights he took no sleep, except such as he could snatch while lying on the pavement of the various churches where the bier was placed in the course of this melancholy journey, and where he passed the night beside it alone. He even caused his food to be brought to him there, and when the time came to proceed, he closely followed the coffin on horseback, his eyes fixed upon it, his heart in Heaven.

As the mournful procession approached the gates of

Granada, his grandmother appeared to him, surrounded with celestial light and accompanied by a number of angels. She drew near to him, and regarding him with a look of deep affection, said: "It is time, my son, that thou shouldst begin to walk in the way God has prepared for thee, and in which thou must serve Him." Then the vision faded away, and Francis rode slowly on with throbbing pulses, his heart fluctuating between hope and fear. His wife noticed his extraordinary preoccupation and asked the cause of his altered mood. With some embarrassment he replied that he felt a secret presentiment that something was about to happen to him, he could not tell what. He said no more, for he could not be sure whether this vision had been an illusion, or whether it was a favour from Heaven, intended to admonish him to follow in his grandmother's glorious footsteps.

On the evening of the 7th of May, the coffin was placed in the vault beneath the Chapel Royal, in order that it might be opened in the presence of the clergy of Granada, the principal personages of the city, and the nobles who had composed the escort. Francis was then to take an oath that the deceased was none other than the Empress Isabella, consort of His Imperial Majesty Charles V. It was his duty also to sign a formal attestation to the same effect, which had already been drawn up by a notary, who was in attendance to witness the signature. No sooner, however, had the lid been removed, than the spectators perceived with horror that, although scarcely a week had elapsed since the death of the Empress, decomposition had reached so advanced a stage as to render identification an absolute impossibility. The corpse presented a ghastly sight indeed, the details respecting its appearance being

too revolting to be reproduced here. Terrified and awestruck, driven back by the overpowering effluvium proceeding from the remains, those present retreated into the farthest corner of the vault. Some of St. Francis Borgia's biographers assert that this unusual rapidity of decay was specially permitted by God in order to convey a lesson to his soul. Be this as it may, he alone recoiled not from the terrible spectacle. Pale and motionless, he remained rooted to the spot, and stood for some minutes speechless, his eyes fixed upon the disfigured countenance, formerly so beautiful.

"By the grace of God this awful sight wrought a change in Francis' heart, a change greater and more marvellous than that which death had wrought in the Empress' body, awakening him from death to a new life. For he was illumined with a sovereign and Divine light, penetrating and keen, so that in a single moment it was given him clearly to see and recognize the vanity of all which the votaries of this world prize most highly and pursue most eagerly, and to regard them with abhorrence and contempt. At the same time he was inspired with a strong and efficacious desire to know and love those things that are true and lasting, and to strive manfully to attain them at the cost of any labour, suffering, and shame. And so powerful was the light of Divine grace in his soul, and so permanent the effect it produced, that from that instant until his latest breath (a period of thirty-three years) it was never obliterated from his mind; nor did he waver in the resolutions he then formed, or relax in any degree his first fervour."¹

Turning at length to the notary, Francis declared that it was not possible for him to take the required

¹ Ribadeneira, *Vida del P. F. de Borja*, lib. i. cap. vii.

oath, since the countenance of the Empress now offered not the slightest resemblance to what it had been during her life-time. He felt compelled, therefore, to content himself with declaring that he had never allowed the coffin to be out of his sight either by night or by day, and that it could not, therefore, have been in any way tampered with. He then left the vault and proceeded to the inn, where apartments had been prepared for him. He asked to be conducted to his own room, where he immediately locked himself in. Prostrate before God, he reviewed the whole of his past life as it appeared to him when seen in the new light which had been shed into his soul. With sighs and tears he lamented his worldliness, his unfaithfulness to the inspirations of grace, his love for the things of time and sense. Over and over again he repeated the celebrated words which are inseparably connected with his name: "Never more, never more will I serve a master who can die"—*Nunca mas, nunca mas servir à señor que se me pueda morir.*

In this manner he spent not only the remainder of the day, but the whole of the succeeding night. Not until the time came to attend the obsequies of the late Empress did he emerge from his strict retirement. The funeral oration was delivered by Father John of Avila, one of the most famous preachers of the day. He was not less distinguished for the sanctity of his life than for the eloquence of his sermons. Looking round on the vast audience which thronged the Cathedral, he commenced his discourse with these words: "All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field. The grass is withered and the flower is fallen."¹ After paying a suitable tribute to

¹ Isaias xl. 6, 7.

the virtues of the deceased, he addressed himself to the living. In graphic terms he depicted the allurements of worldly pleasure, the futility of human schemes and plans, the unstable basis upon which the happiness of even the most prosperous must inevitably rest. He spoke of the frivolous nature of the amusements in which the greater number of those who belong to the upper classes of society spend their time and thoughts, and of the lamentable folly of the numerous persons who forget, as they travel along the road of life, the momentous character of the end to which their journey is necessarily conducting them. "With infinite pains," he said in conclusion, "do they build for themselves perishable habitations, while they take no pains to acquire eternal mansions in Heaven. Thinking only of the brief life which is our portion here, they forget to provide for the life which knows no end."

Francis sat as if spell-bound. This moving and powerful sermon seemed a message directly sent him by God, and he felt as if the preacher had read his most secret thoughts, and had been an unseen witness of all which had passed within him during the foregoing night. As soon as possible he sent for Father John and opened his whole heart to him. The experienced priest perceived at a glance that the impression made upon Francis' soul was not destined to be of a transitory nature, but would, on the contrary, mould and influence the whole of his after life. He confirmed him in his resolution to hold himself aloof, as far as possible, from Court life and worldly pleasures, while waiting to see what the will of God might be concerning him. Meanwhile Francis made a vow that, if he should survive his wife, he would enter some Religious Order, provided that his age, state of health, and external

circumstances should then be of a nature to render it possible for him to carry out this solemn promise.

Yet this was not all. Shortly before his departure from Granada, he received from his aunt, Sister Frances of Jesus, who was, as the reader will remember, Abbess of the convent in which his saintly grandmother had died, a letter in which she showed herself perfectly acquainted with all which had passed in his soul. She concluded as follows: "On that day of your conversion, child of my heart (*hijo de mi alma*), I was earnestly entreating our Lord for your health, and yet more earnestly for your salvation. And then I saw you humbly prostrate at the feet of Christ, with tears and sighs asking pardon for your sins. I saw how our Lord gave you His Divine hand and raised you up, promising you His favour. Give thanks therefore to Him as I give thanks, and serve Him with greater fidelity and more love than I serve Him. Of our sainted Empress I can give you good news, since by the mercy of God, we, the religious of this house, have seen her soul pass out of Purgatory, and, accompanied by a numerous escort of angels, enter rejoicing into eternal bliss."

Francis was deeply affected by this communication. He felt no doubt as to the truth of the vision, and rejoiced not a little at the tidings of the Empress' entrance into Heaven, which did not in the least surprise him, as he well knew how holy a life she had led while yet upon earth.

Upon his return to Toledo, he was received by the Emperor with the utmost affection and cordiality, and gave him a detailed account of all which had happened at Granada, not omitting his own more personal experiences. He assured his Sovereign that life could never wear its former aspect for him, nor could the

stream of his daily existence ever again flow in its old channels. He entreated permission to leave the Court and withdraw to Gandia, in order to devote himself to the care of his soul, alleging as a further reason for this step, the age and infirmities of his father, who would fain have his eldest son near him in his last days. The Emperor promised to think the matter over, adding that for the present Francis could live as quietly as he liked, since the Court mourning would preclude all festivities.

Even the most casual observers could not fail to perceive that the Marquess of Lombay was a changed man. His acquaintances and friends were never tired of discussing the matter among themselves, and marveling at the sudden and complete transformation, for which they were at a loss to account. Try as he might, Francis could not conceal it. "For," as a biographer remarks, "he saw with other eyes and heard with other ears than before; he spoke with another tongue, because his heart was not the same, but a new one."

He was not destined to be kept long in suspense. In the course of a few days the Emperor sent for him, and in a private audience informed him that he could not afford to part with so valuable a servant. On the contrary, it was his intention to send him to Cataluna, in the capacity of Viceroy, that province being in a disturbed condition and requiring a firm hand to reduce it to order. This announcement was, as might be easily imagined, no welcome one to Francis. It opened to his view a perspective widely different from that which he had destined for himself. He knew that his acceptance of the post would compel him to lead a life the exact opposite of that he would have chosen. He made no effort, however, to set aside the distasteful

proposal. Regarding the will of his Sovereign as an expression of the will of God, he obeyed without a murmur. "My hope," he said, "is that Divine assistance will make up for my numerous deficiencies, and that the Heavenly Master, Who is so plainly calling me to this responsible post, will not refuse me the light and grace which are needed in order to the due discharge of the weighty and varied duties appertaining thereto."

Charles was more delighted than ever with Francis. During the period which elapsed before his departure for Cataluna, he loaded him with marks of favour and esteem. On the occasion of his birthday, October 28th, he bestowed upon him the Cross of the Order of St. James, a Military Order founded in Spain in early times with a view to the defence of religion against the Moors. Contrary to established precedent, the Emperor almost immediately afterwards created the new Knight a Commander, and placed him on the list of Councillors, the Council of the Order being composed of the thirteen principal Commanders.

All legal preliminaries having been completed, Francis was formally appointed Viceroy of Cataluna. With a heavy heart he took leave of his friends, and set out for the distant province which was to be the scene of so much anxious labour, and where he was to be the means of effecting so vast an amount of good.

CHAPTER V.

HE IS APPOINTED VICEROY OF CATALUNA.

TOWARDS the close of November, 1539, the Marquess and Marchioness of Lombay, accompanied by their children, and attended by a numerous suite, arrived at Barcelona, and took up their residence in the Viceregal Palace, which was situated in that city.

Each day the wisdom of the Emperor's choice became more apparent to all who had eyes to perceive and intelligence to appreciate it. Among the evil-doers of every description with which the unfortunate province of Cataluna literally teemed at this period, opinions were divided as to the new Viceroy. Some believed that because he was young, they might hope to be left undisturbed, and so they lulled themselves in a delusive sense of security. Others again, more justly thought his youth to be an argument the other way, and deciding that a man upon whom the Viceroyalty had been conferred before he was thirty years old, could be no ordinary person, concluded that they had therefore all the more reason to tremble. Well might Charles have adopted the words of the Apostle: "Let no man despise thy youth."¹ Francis had enjoyed opportunities of observing men and things, such as fall to the lot of few. Having begun life early, at twenty-

¹ 1 Timothy iv. 12.

nine he was an accomplished statesman, a prudent diplomatist, a finished man of the world. No one was ever better qualified to soften asperities and respect quick sensibilities, to dissipate the little clouds which without his tact and charm, command of temper, and consummate insight into character, might easily have ripened into serious complications. Born, as we have elsewhere said, to rule, he possessed that innate respect for authority which is an indispensable qualification for a wise and judicious ruler. His Sovereign knew that he would never abuse the trust reposed in him, nor allow himself to employ his personal gifts and power of influencing others, in order to promote his own ends or further his own advantage, and imperceptibly undermine the prestige of the throne. Never had monarch a more loyal and devoted vicegerent. It was a favourite saying with him, that our Lord founded upon an equally solid basis the Chair of Peter and the throne of kings, and he acted out what he said. When any one ventured to discuss in his presence the character and policy of the Emperor in a depreciatory or contemptuous tone, he would quote the words of Holy Writ: "He that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation."¹

His Viceroyalty was a splendid and complete success. He won for himself the lasting gratitude of his Sovereign, as well as that of those over whom he held sway. The Emperor used to conclude the letters he wrote from time to time to thank him for his services in the following words, which speak for themselves: *Infinitas gracias os rendo de mi parte*. We further learn from the processes for the canonization of St. Francis

¹ Romans xiii. 2.

Borgia that the Archbishop of Saragossa affirmed in his depositions: "It was publicly said and believed, that during the government of the Marquess of Lombay, justice, prudence, and temperance reigned; that malice and wickedness were banished, and that it appeared to every one as if an angel had been sent down from Heaven in order to rule over them."¹ Nor will this language be deemed exaggerated, and this praise overwrought, when the record of all that Francis accomplished has been laid before the reader. Upon the history of these four years (1539—1543) we now propose to enter, giving an account, in the first place, of his external labours, and then of the spiritual progress which made him what he was in regard to the people he was called to govern. In the course of his last illness, he remarked to one of the Jesuit Fathers, that he had derived much benefit from the uncongenial duties at which he had too often allowed himself to chafe in secret. "It was when I was Viceroy of Cataluna," he said, "that God prepared me to be first Commissary General and then General of the Society of Jesus. I learnt to decide important questions, to settle rival claims, to adjust differences, to enter into both sides of a question, in a way I could not otherwise have done. It all proved to be *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam*."

He strove to raise the tone of society in Barcelona without arousing hostility, and spared no pains to abolish various practices of which he highly disapproved, but which were only too prevalent. One of his principal endeavours was to put down slander,

¹ "Erat publica vox, et fama, quod tempore gubernationis ejus regnabat justitia, temperantia, et prudentia; et exclusa erat malitia atque iniquitas; et omnibus communiter videbatur, angelum de cœlo descendisse ad eos gubernandos."

detraction, and personal gossip. At social gatherings he encouraged those around him to talk of things rather than of persons, being ably seconded in these efforts by his wife, who was of one mind with himself. A biographer tells us that, "when the Marquess and Marchioness made their appearance, evil tongues were silent at once, just as, when the sun arises, the birds greet him only with melodious songs." Any one who ventured in Francis' presence, to repeat anecdotes to the discredit of absent persons, was sure to be reprimanded by him on the first suitable occasion. Such offenders were reminded that, even apart from the laws of Christian charity, it is a mean and dastardly thing to speak against the absent. To do so is tantamount to striking an enemy in the dark and from behind, thus leaving him both ignorant of the hand that deals the blow and unable to parry or avoid it.

As a matter of course, circumstances arose from time to time, which subjected Francis' self-control to a somewhat severe test. Those who saw him come victorious out of these struggles with himself, could not but perceive the progress he had made in virtue since the days of his life at Court, when his naturally high spirit, and extreme sensitiveness where a point of honour was concerned, not unfrequently betrayed him into hasty speech or action. The following incident which occurred during the first year of his residence at Barcelona, may be suitably recorded here.

It had long been customary in that city to celebrate the feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross, May 3rd, with very special honour. The day was wound up with a grand entertainment, given at the Viceregal Palace, consisting of dancing, singing, theatrical performances, and other similar amusements. On these

occasions invitations were sent to all the principal persons residing in the city itself as well as in the immediate neighbourhood. The Marchioness, however, felt that a gathering of this kind was scarcely in keeping with the character of the day, the latter part of which she desired to spend quietly in her own apartments with the ladies of her suite. Her husband agreed entirely with her views, and a later day was fixed for the reception. To avoid the possibility of any intrusion, Francis kept guard in his wife's antechamber, in order to warn any chance comer who might make his appearance, not having heard of the new arrangement, or noticed the date on his card of invitation. Erelong a young man belonging to one of the first families of the province presented himself. Being accustomed to carry all before him, and get his own way, at whatever cost, he haughtily demanded to be allowed to pass. When Francis firmly, yet politely, refused his unwarrantable request, he had the bad taste to persevere in it. Growing more and more angry, he at last drew his dagger from its sheath and pointed it at the Viceroy's breast, declaring with an oath that he would make his way into the presence of the Marchioness, even if he had to step over the dead body of her consort in order to do so. Francis waited until the tirade came to an end, then moving quietly aside, he pointed to a closed door, before which hung a curtain of crimson velvet. His cheek was not even flushed, as he said to the intruder, in low, well-modulated accents: "It is far better, my lord, that the ladies who are gathered in yonder rooms should have to put up with your company than that you and I should exchange blows, more especially on a day like this. Such conduct would tend to promote neither your honour nor mine. I beg

you therefore to proceed." Unabashed by this moderation, the young nobleman pushed on. But the glacial reception accorded him by Eleanora, and the frigid politeness with which, following her example, all the ladies who were present received him, made him ere long only too glad to beat a hasty retreat. Francis' generosity did not end here. The affair having reached the Emperor's ears, he was extremely angry, and determined to visit with condign punishment the insult offered to his representative. The latter, however, successfully interceded on behalf of the offender, who consequently escaped with no worse chastisement than a severe reprimand. Every one praised and admired the conduct of the Viceroy. But a higher and more precious reward was in store for him. "For," to quote the words of Verjus, "the King of kings and Ruler of emperors, afterwards filled his heart with an overflowing abundance of the purest delight he had ever experienced. His intimate friends more than once heard him say, in reference to this occurrence, that if he had reaped no other fruit from the effort he had made to overcome his passionate impulses, he would have been recompensed a hundred-fold, on that feast of the Holy Cross, since God then vouchsafed to teach him the nature of the rewards He deigns to bestow upon His faithful servants, by granting him to experience in his own soul a foretaste of their ineffable sweetness."¹

But there were sterner duties which Francis had to brace himself to perform, duties which lay far outside the sphere of palaces and drawing-rooms. Disorganization was rife in all departments of the public service,

¹ *La Vie de Saint Francois Borgia.* Par le R. P. Verjus, de la Compagnie de Jésus. Paris, 1672.

and owing to the companies of freebooters which overran the province, no man's life or property was secure. Disaffection prevailed everywhere, even among the garrisons of the fortified towns, so that trade and commerce were paralyzed. Francis' courageous spirit quailed now and then, as he examined into the condition of the Augean stables it behoved him to cleanse. His proficiency in military matters stood him in good stead. Collecting around him those regiments upon whose fidelity he felt he could best rely, he set himself to dislodge the brigands from their mountain fastnesses, and so successful were his tactics, that ere long he rid Cataluna of the plague which had for many years been the bane of its prosperity. The extirpation of one of these predatory bands has been related in detail and is of sufficient interest to merit repetition here.

A considerable number of lawless soldiers of fortune had, under the guidance of their chief, a man of no common ability, gained possession of a castle and fortified themselves there with so much skill and science, that a regular siege was necessary in order to oblige them to surrender. The Viceroy headed the attack in person, and aided by the artillery which he had caused to be brought up, soon made breaches in the walls, compelling the banditti to abandon the defence, and allow themselves to be made prisoners. They were taken to the nearest town in order to be tried, when thirty of the most hardened were condemned to death, while the remainder were sent to the galleys. In the flush of Francis' victory, this news completely overshadowed his joy. It cost him a severe effort to sign the death-warrant of these misguided men. Before he could bring himself to do so, he spent four or five hours on his knees in his oratory, "shedding," to quote

the words of one of his biographers, "as many tears as the criminals were to shed drops of blood." He did everything that charity could suggest, in order to procure their eternal salvation. During the time which elapsed between their sentence and its execution, he caused them to be daily visited and instructed in their prison by priests whom he selected as specially qualified to undertake the melancholy office. After the death of the malefactors he had thirty Masses said for the repose of their souls, at each of which Masses he made a point of attending.

After abolishing the scourge of brigandage, he next addressed himself to the reform of the army, which was in a thoroughly unsatisfactory state. Through the weakness and indecision of former Viceroys, discipline had become relaxed. In all the garrison towns, the soldiers behaved towards the inhabitants as if they were enemies whose town had been taken by assault. They did not scruple to levy black-mail, whenever it suited them to do so, and however violent and irregular their proceedings might be, their victims dared not complain. Francis went from place to place, making searching investigations as to the root of the evil. Erelong he discovered that the chief blame rested with the officers, who did not hesitate to appropriate to their own use large portions of the sums remitted to them, thus cheating the men under their command of their pay, and forcing them to seek discreditable means of subsistence. Examples were made of two or three of the principal offenders, and a better state of things was the speedy result. The defences of Barcelona being in a defective condition, especially on that side of the city which is washed by the sea, Francis caused several bastions to be erected, mainly at his own

expense. One in particular was, long after his death, known as the bastion of St. Francis.

Reform was no less urgently needed in the law-courts than it had been in the barracks. Bribery and corruption were the order of the day, so that those who were ill-advised enough to resort to legal methods of settling their differences were equally sure to be ruined whether they lost or gained their suit. Francis made it his practice to go down to the courts, and give audience to any one who requested to be heard. He never favoured the rich and great, but listened to all with perfect impartiality, the wisdom displayed in his decisions being no less admirable than the unfailing patience which enabled him to bear with the tedious and long-winded narrations of poor and ignorant complainants. "So that," as Verjus tells us, "throughout the entire province of Cataluna, no one, however wretched, needy, and forlorn, could feel himself altogether friendless, while there reigned over him a Viceroy, whose tender heart regarded the sufferings of others as if they were his own, and whose ready sympathy caused him to forget his own trials, while endeavouring to relieve those of the people committed to his care."¹ Being, as we have said on an earlier page of this history, possessed of a large private fortune, Francis expended the greater portion of the emoluments he received in his public capacity, in charities of every kind. Now, as formerly, he succoured by preference those who had not been brought up in poverty, but whom the loss of fortune had reduced from comfort or affluence to straitened circumstances. He felt more keenly for such persons than for the poor properly so called, because the former are less able to

¹ Verjus, *Vie de S. F. de Borgia*, p. 53.

bear hardships and privation. He was fond of quoting in regard to them the words of Livy: *Ultimum ac maximum telum est necessitas*.¹ He bestowed marriage portions upon many destitute orphans, and often paid the premium required for apprenticing boys to a useful trade.

Fully aware of the supreme importance of Christian education, as the foundation upon which the welfare and prosperity of a nation must rest, he spared no pains to promote and ensure it. Nor did he overlook the need there is for good secular teaching. He appointed Inspectors of schools, whose reports were made to him. Any masters who were found to be superannuated, or otherwise unfit for their duties, were at once pensioned off, abler instructors being appointed in their place. In districts where the school was so far off that children could not reasonably be required to attend, he built and endowed a new one. In colleges where the salaries of the Professors were derived from foundations made by benefactors in ages long gone by, these salaries had sometimes, from one cause or another, become so diminished, that only second-rate men would accept the posts so poorly paid. Francis contributed sums large enough to make the Professorships sufficiently remunerative to attract men of learning and ability, and if such did not present themselves, he made it his business to seek them out.

Deep as was his compassion for the sufferings which afflict the body, he grieved far more for the ills of the soul. He knew that he could not prevent men from committing sin, but he determined that open sinners should not be allowed to go unpunished, and that vice should as far as possible be compelled to hide

¹ Livy, *Decad.* i. lib. 4.

its head, instead of stalking through the streets with unblushing effrontery, after the fashion which too many of his predecessors in the Viceroyalty had tolerated, or even countenanced. Any one who was proved to have publicly indulged in foul or blasphemous language, was condemned to pay a considerable fine, the sums thus obtained being made over to the hospitals. Immoralities and misdemeanours of a different nature were not more indulgently dealt with. Francis could never listen without pain to the tales of wickedness and crime which were laid before him. Regarding himself as the Vicegerent of God still more than of the Emperor, he felt that his own infidelity to grace was in some measure the cause of the sins of his people, and he considered himself responsible for their shortcomings. Sadness and gloom often encompassed his soul, and he would exclaim, in the words of Holy Scripture: "They have made me the keeper in the vineyards: my vineyard I have not kept."¹

Yet he did not belong to the number of those who, whilst caring for the souls of others, forget their own. The impression made upon him by the events narrated in the previous chapter was not lessened by the fresh scenes amidst which he was thrown, or by the new duties which crowded upon him day by day. He constantly called to memory the death-bed of his friend and companion in arms, Garcilaso de la Vega, the peaceful and blessed end of his saintly grandmother, and the ghastly spectacle he had beheld in the vaults at Granada. From the time when he took up his abode in Barcelona, he determined to dispense with the services of his valet, whilst undressing at night and dressing in the morning. This he did in order to

¹ Cant. i. 5.

conceal from the knowledge of every one the lateness of the hour when he went to bed, and also the length of time he spent in meditation and prayer. He devoted to this employment four, five, or even six hours consecutively. He remained all the while prostrate on the floor of his room, his face towards the ground, thus not only causing several of his teeth to drop out, but on one occasion placing his life in danger, through a cancer which began to form in his mouth, and which must have proved fatal, had not his physicians detected its existence at an early stage and promptly removed it. Beginning by taking the discipline once a week, he soon took it three times, and such was the severity with which he treated himself, that the linen he wore was stained with blood to an extent which betrayed this secret practice. This induced him to adopt the habit, which he continued when General of the Society of Jesus, of keeping in a box of which he alone had the key, not only his hair-shirts, disciplines, and other instruments of penance, but also a number of linen cloths. With these he used to wipe the blood he caused to flow freely from various parts of his body. Those persons who, after his death, beheld the contents of this box, affirmed that they could have imagined nothing more ingenious than some of these devices for mortification, and that the mere sight of them was sufficient to inspire horror and amazement. Frequently were the walls of his apartment literally bespattered with blood. Especially was this the case in regard to a secret oratory, in which, when he became Duke of Gandia, he used to spend several hours of each day. For a long series of years this room was shown to strangers who visited the castle, the stains on the wall being pointed out to them as the marks

left by the Saint's blood. We shall have more to relate hereafter in regard to his mortifications, but we may take this opportunity of saying once for all, that he himself, when reviewing them towards the close of his life, considered them to have been excessive. Indeed they caused him many scruples when he was on his death-bed, and he could only console himself by hoping that God would pardon his want of discretion, for the sake of his purity of intention and ardent desire to do penance for his sin.

At the conclusion of his morning devotions he used to go straight to his wife's apartments, in order to give her his customary greeting, before beginning the business of the day. It was about this time that Francis and Eleanora, by mutual consent, agreed henceforward to live together as an affectionate brother and sister might do, rather than as husband and wife. Partly in order to save time, partly also in order to atone, as he said, for the undue indulgence of his appetite in his early life, Francis resolved to take no supper for the future. But he was not content with this. During the whole of two successive Lents, he restricted himself each day to a single dish of vegetables and two or three slices of bread, drinking nothing but water. This meagre diet having no serious results as far as his health was concerned, he persevered in it for an entire year. All this did not prevent him from entertaining his numerous guests on a scale befitting his rank and position. While choice viands were being handed round, he would slowly eat his plate of vegetables, endeavouring by exerting to the utmost his rare conversational powers, to divert the attention of those at the table with him from his abstemious practices. If any of his more intimate friends ventured a word of

remonstrance, he would smilingly quote the example of a famous captain of the day, who, in order to reduce his increasing corpulence, for a considerable period drank nothing but vinegar. "Surely what one man does for the sake of his body," Francis would conclude, "another may do for the sake of his soul."

How he can have fulfilled so exactly as he did his social and official engagements, and at the same time devoted so large a portion of the day to his religious duties, affords no small matter for surprise. From the time when he was appointed Commander of the Order of St. James, and consequently came into possession of the income attached to the dignity, he felt it incumbent on him to perform the obligations connected therewith. Among these was the recitation of a special Office. He divided the history of the Passion into seven parts, on one of which he used to meditate while saying each of the seven Hours of the Office. Moreover, he daily recited the whole Rosary, concentrating his thoughts with the deepest attention upon the various mysteries in succession. When reflecting upon these mysteries, he used in the first place to thank God for having bestowed upon him the inestimable gift of His grace; in the second, to abase himself on account of his failure to profit by it as he ought; in the third, to beseech God to enable him to practise some virtue connected with the particular mystery under consideration.

He was always ready to acknowledge with gratitude the debt he owed to his director, Father John Texeda. This holy man belonged to the Franciscan Order. His coming to Barcelona was the result of a coincidence so striking, as to be little short of a miracle. In a manner which was truly marvellous, God imparted to him his own future destiny, and enabled him also to

predict various events in the career of the Viceroy, all of which came to pass exactly as he had foretold. Francis became convinced that this wise and saintly Religious was intended by God to be his guiding angel, an oracle which he could at all times consult. He therefore obtained permission, first of all from the Holy Father, and then from the Superiors of the Franciscan Order, that Father John Texeda might remain constantly with him. "And we can truly say," remarks Father Verjus, "that this eminent priest rendered no less signal service to the Church, by devoting himself to the training of a man from whom she was, in after years, to receive so great benefits, than he would have done if he had spent his life in travelling hither and thither in pursuance of his apostolic labours."

From all which has been just said, it follows as a matter of course, that Francis was both regular and devout in frequenting the sacraments. For years it had been his habit to approach them every month; he now began, not only to receive Holy Communion publicly in the Cathedral on all great feasts, in order to set an example of piety and devotion, but also to receive It every Sunday in a more private manner. "He took care to make a most thorough and careful preparation, and after having received the Sacred Body of Christ our Lord, he appeared to be absorbed in contemplation and unconscious of external objects. He shed a profusion of holy tears, his soul being filled with such sweetness, that he became a wonder to himself. He greatly marvelled, considering his own vileness and unworthiness, at the immense and infinite goodness of God, Who deigned thus to load him with favours. His delight in this Royal Banquet caused

him frequently to say that one drop of the celestial elixir which God poured into his soul, was worth all the joys of this life put together; nay more, that such a treasure would be cheaply purchased by the sacrifice of his own life, and that of his children and of all created things. He would sometimes compare spiritual joys with worldly pleasures, contrasting the truth and reality of the former with the vain and fleeting nature of the latter, the peace and repose enjoyed by those who possess the first, with the weariness and vexation which are the portion of all seekers after those which must fade and pass away. 'O material life,' he would exclaim at such moments, as if unable to restrain his emotion, 'O life of the lower animals, how dark, how vile, how despicable dost thou appear, in contrast to the brightness, the grandeur, the happiness of the spiritual life! How quickly that false and lurid glare wherewith thou dost blind and dazzle those who follow thee, fades and vanishes away, when the clear light of the true day dawns upon their heart!' These and similar reflections engendered in him a tender compassion, both for those who, though they are in bondage to their passions, know it not; and also for those who, though conscious of their condition, in their eagerness to enjoy illusory yet attractive delights, are content to forfeit for ever true and lasting felicity rather than forego the semblance of happiness."¹

At the period of which we are writing, weekly Communion was an almost unheard-of thing. Hence the practice of Francis in this respect could not fail to draw upon him public attention, and to excite general remark. In fact, it originated one of the most famous among the numerous discussions on the subject, which

¹ Ribadeneira, *Vida del P. F. de Borgia*, lib. i. c. 10.

at that epoch ran rife in the Universities of Spain; discussions which were, as has been remarked by a writer on this question, "eager and violent in proportion to their uselessness, since it is obviously impossible in such a case to lay down a general law." Long did the pendulum of opinion oscillate from side to side. The controversy was protracted, and in the heat of argument, many things were uttered on both sides which would have been better left unsaid. In Valencia the dispute was particularly fierce, and lasted for seven or eight years, being only terminated in 1548, by the exertions of the Archbishop, St. Thomas of Villanova. The excitement was scarcely less in Toledo. Some theologians are said to have even gone so far as to assert that Holy Communion might be received with profit twice daily. Others affirmed that those who desired to show real respect to the Sacrament of the Altar, ought not to approach It more than once a year. These extreme views were, however, held only by a small minority. The greater number of well-instructed and virtuous persons considered that the Viceroy evinced but scanty reverence for the august Mystery. They did not hesitate to pronounce it an unseemly thing that a married man, living in the great world, holding a high official position, constantly occupied by business of importance, and compelled, in virtue of his position, to preside at sumptuous banquets and maintain in his household and surroundings an almost regal style and splendour, should presume to make it his custom to communicate weekly.

All this caused Francis no small grief and perturbation of mind. Unwilling as he was on the one hand to cause scandal, he could not but hesitate on the other to abandon a habit which he had embraced by the

advice of a prudent confessor, and from which he had derived much profit to his soul. At this conjuncture Father Antony Araoz arrived in Barcelona from Rome. After the ten Fathers who may be said to have founded the Society, he was the first professed Jesuit. Remarkable as he was in more ways than one, he was especially distinguished for his eloquence in the pulpit. From the very outset, his sermons drew together crowded audiences, including the *élite* of society in Barcelona. Among the throng of his hearers, none was more attentive, more constant, more deeply interested than the Viceroy, who literally hung on Father Araoz' lips. Not content with listening to him in public, he invited him to visit him in his palace. In this way he learned every detail concerning the newly-organized Society, which had just been confirmed by a Bull of Pope Paul III. The more he heard, the more delighted he was, the more powerfully attracted to the Jesuits. He took particular pleasure in asking everything about St. Ignatius, whose marvellous sanctity and miraculous powers were at that time beginning to be generally talked of. No one could have been better able to answer these questions than Father Araoz, who was intimately acquainted with St. Ignatius, being not only a near relative of his, but having studied his spirit and character with a very close scrutiny, before placing himself under his direction. He knew better than almost any one else, how visible an influence the Holy Spirit of God exercised upon the soul of the Saint, ordering and directing all his plans and actions. He knew also how wonderful was the infused knowledge wherewith he was endowed in order that he might guide aright the souls of others. In such a manner did Father Araoz speak to the Viceroy upon this latter

subject, that he resolved to apply without delay to head-quarters, and consult St. Ignatius in reference to the subject which was just then causing him so much pain and uneasiness. Many centuries before his day, the same question had been discussed in Spain, with perhaps no less bitterness and asperity. A pious nobleman, a native of Andalusia, wrote at that time to inquire the opinion of St. Jerome, who was then living at Jerusalem, receiving from him an answer which was virtually, if not literally, identical with that returned by St. Ignatius, when Francis, in pursuance of his determination, unfolded to him in a lengthy epistle, his manner of life, his interior dispositions, the mortifications he practised, the religious exercises he daily performed, together with all other details bearing upon the question he wished to be decided for him.

St. Ignatius was at this time staying in Rome. When the letter was brought to him he happened to be engaged in conversation with a certain Dr. Michael Arrobara, who had come to call on him. The messenger therefore delivered the epistle in silence, and quitted the room. St. Ignatius laid it on the table and went on with what he was saying. Yielding to a movement of natural curiosity, Dr. Arrobara inquired from whom the letter had come. Without even glancing at, much less opening it, St. Ignatius made reply: "This letter is from Don Francis Borgia, Viceroy of Cataluna. Who would dare to tell him that in course of time, he will join our Society, and come to Rome in order to be its General?" This unexpected answer greatly perplexed Dr. Arrobara, because he knew that the Viceroy was married, and that the Vicereine was still quite a young woman, comparatively at least. At the

same time he was fully aware that every word which fell from the lips of St. Ignatius was an oracle, especially when uttered under circumstances such as the present. He wisely refrained from expressing what he felt, or mentioning the occurrence to any one, until the prophecy had received its fulfilment.

The reply of the Saint ran as follows: "It is not possible to lay down a general law in a case which essentially depends on the circumstances and dispositions of each individual. One of the results of frequent Communion is to preserve from sin, and to enable those who fall through weakness, to rise up again. It is far more advisable to approach this Most Blessed Sacrament frequently with feelings of love, reverence, and confidence, than to abstain altogether from approaching it through fear and pusillanimity. Each one must therefore, according to the counsel of the Apostle, judge himself, and, to a certain extent, determine for himself according to the purity of intention, hatred of sin, and fervour of devotion that he discerns within his soul, and according also to the care with which he prepares himself to partake of this Heavenly Feast and the benefit he subsequently experiences in regard to the conquest of his passions, evil desires, and besetting faults. Before all things it is necessary and advisable to lay open the state of one's soul to a wise director, and implicitly follow his guidance. As far as you are yourself personally concerned, your manner of life being such as you describe, I feel fully justified in advising you to persevere in weekly Communion, with entire trust in the infinite mercy of God. In conclusion, I cannot but express the hope that not only will your own soul derive much profit from so doing, but that the example of your Excellency

will be useful to many persons, to whom our Lord will give grace to follow it."

This letter soothed and tranquillized the mind of Francis, putting an end to the disquiet which had so long troubled him. He resolved to have recourse in future, in all his doubts and difficulties, to the same adviser, and also to further and promote, by every means in his power, the interests of the Society of Jesus, for which he, from that day forward, felt and professed the utmost regard and esteem. In accordance with the counsel of St. Ignatius, he continued to receive Holy Communion every Sunday. "But in order to guard against the evils which result in the case of weak souls, from partaking very frequently of the Bread of the strong, he prepared himself with more care than ever for Its reception. During the three days preceding Communion, he employed himself in acts of love and of ardent desire to receive our Lord; during the three succeeding days, he spent his time in acts of humble thanksgiving to so good a Master and so liberal a Benefactor. A set of prayers and other devotions, which he drew up for use on these occasions before his entrance into Religion, was subsequently printed with his other works."¹

It is now time to resume the thread of our history, and record the external events which marked the conclusion of Francis' Viceroyalty. In 1542, the Emperor convoked an Assembly of deputies from the various provinces, in order to deliberate on important affairs affecting the welfare of the whole of Spain. The presence of Francis was naturally considered indispensable, and during the time he spent at the Court, he received fresh proofs of the unbounded

¹ Verjus, *Vie de S. F. de Borgia*, pp. 76, 77.

esteem and affection entertained for him by his Sovereign, who made no secret of his preference, but allowed it to be manifest to all. He placed Francis, on public occasions, before the other grandees of the country, and even paid him visits at his own house, an honour he accorded to none other of his subjects. Francis desired to use the favour thus shown him, for the good of the Emperor's soul. From this period he began to exercise a great influence over him in regard to spiritual things, an influence which strengthened as years went by, and lasted up to the day of Charles' death. On one particular evening when the Viceroy was walking arm in arm with the Emperor up and down a gallery of the latter's palace, he opened his whole heart to him, and related the lesson he had himself learnt of the vanity of this world, and the happiness of that better life beyond the grave, to the attainment of which all our endeavours ought to tend. He also mentioned his determination to enter some Religious Order, in case he should outlive his wife. Charles was deeply moved. He declared that though far beneath his friend in piety and virtue, he was equally disgusted with the world and its pleasures, adding that the wish of his heart was to seek some tranquil retreat in which he could devote himself to the care of his soul and its eternal salvation. He even added that he had determined to renounce the sceptre, as soon as Don Philip should be of an age to rule over his vast dominions. Thus he spoke, under the pressure of strong emotion, kindled by Francis' generous ardour. At the time he no doubt meant what he said, but he showed less courage than the Marquess in regard to putting his design into execution. Shortly after

this conversation the Assembly was dissolved, and every one returned home.

Towards the close however of the same year (1542), the Emperor paid a visit to Barcelona on his way to Italy. Francis availed himself of this opportunity to beg that he might be released from this Viceroyalty. Charles had heard and seen so much, on his journey through Cataluna, of the altered conditions of the province and of the numerous reforms Francis had effected there, that he was very reluctant to grant the request. It is probable that he would have altogether refused to do so, had not circumstances come to Francis' aid in a manner which it will be our business to relate in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

HE SUCCEEDS TO THE DUCHY OF GANDIA.

ON the 7th of January, 1543, Francis' father, the aged Duke of Gandia, died. We have spoken in an earlier part of this history of his pious and exemplary life. It is therefore sufficient to say, on the present occasion, that his death was peaceful and edifying. For several years previous to his decease he had been in failing health, and quite unable to attend to the affairs of the duchy, which had consequently fallen into confusion. Francis' presence was on this account urgently required at Gandia. He represented to the Emperor the position in which things stood, and the latter at once saw that he could not reasonably refuse to grant him the release he desired. A new Viceroy was at once appointed, in the person of the Marquess of Aguilar. At the same time Charles expressed a strong wish that Francis should return to the Court, as soon as it should be in any way possible for him to do so. With a view to rendering the fulfilment of his desire more certain and secure, the Emperor nominated him major-domo to the Infanta Maria of Portugal, who was shortly to be married to his son, Don Philip; the marriage contract having been already drawn up and signed. At the same time he appointed Eleanora first lady-in-waiting, and her two elder daughters maids of honour, to the

Princess. Francis agreed to this stipulation, but, enlightened by a spirit of prophecy, he told the Emperor that the time would never come in which either he, the Duchess, or his daughters, should serve the Princess, since it had been otherwise decreed in the secret counsels of God. Charles paid but little heed to these words, considering them to be dictated by hope rather than by conviction, for he was well aware that the prospect of resuming his life at Court was very distasteful to Francis. But when the sudden death of the Princess, on the eve of the day fixed for her wedding, rendered the arrangements which had been made null and void, Francis' utterance recurred to his mind, and he perceived that a spirit of foreknowledge had been granted to him and that he had spoken accordingly. We mention this incident as being the first recorded occasion on which the future Saint exercised the prophetic gift for which he was afterwards remarkable.

No sooner had the Emperor set sail for Italy, than Francis prepared to leave Barcelona. The delight with which his arrival in Gandia was hailed, equalled, we are told, the regrets which his departure from Cataluna had awakened amongst all the inhabitants of that principality. His first occupation was to regulate the affairs of the late Duke's household. Some of his retainers were pensioned off, as being too old for service. When this was done, there remained a far more numerous staff of domestics than the quiet and retired life Francis desired to lead could render necessary, especially as several of his own and the Duchess' personal attendants had accompanied them on their removal from Barcelona. Yet he determined not to discharge any of the servants whom he found already

in the castle, for, as he himself expressed it: "If I do not need them, yet they need me." In regard to him we may suitably quote the well-worn proverb which tells us that "charity begins at home." Like Cornelius the centurion, he was "a religious man, fearing God with all his house, giving much alms to the people, and always praying to God."¹ Many persons who, from time to time, came from a distance to stay at the Castle of Gandia, were much struck with the sight of so well-regulated a household, and profited by an example which filled them with shame, contrasting as it did, in a manner only too forcible, with the condition of their own homes. Several prelates of high rank have left on record the feelings of confusion and self-abasement with which they saw a grandee of Spain living on his ancestral domains like a holy bishop, while the life they led in their dioceses resembled that of the general run of nobles and great ones of the earth.

Among these prelates, Don Stephen of Almeida, Bishop of Carthageua, merits a special mention. He was so deeply impressed by what he witnessed in the ducal household, that shortly after his return to his episcopal residence, he wrote to an intimate friend as follows: "During my recent stay at Gandia, I found in Don Francis a model Duke, and a perfect Christian gentleman. He is so humble, so truly saintly, a man of God in every sense of the term. I had heard a great deal about his virtues, and his careful management of his household, but the reality has more than equalled my expectations. I am filled with self-abasement when I perceive how little fruit all the graces of my state, as a priest and Bishop of the

¹ Acts x. 2.

Church, have produced in me, and how inferior I am in virtue to my host, who lives a secular life. Truly can I adopt as my own the words of the Psalmist: 'All the day long my shame is before me: and the confusion of my face hath covered me.'¹ With St. Jerome I deplore that there are in the Church of God secular persons, who set a better example than some of us who are priests. How many things did I not see in the palace of the Duke, which are too often not to be found in houses bound under far stricter obligations! How carefully his children are brought up! How thoroughly his dependents are looked after and cared for! How great is his delight in the company of priests and religious, not those only who belong to the Society of Jesus, but many others also! Among these latter I particularly noticed a certain Father John Texeda, of whom I cannot speak too highly. I do not know whether I marvelled the most at his simplicity and humility, his prudence in spiritual matters, or the marvellous light which God has infused into his soul."

Francis' devotion to the Blessed Sacrament could not but impress every one who approached him. While Duke of Gandia, he made a point of accompanying the priests on foot, whenever the Holy Viaticum was carried to a sick person, not hesitating to walk seven or eight miles, rather than fail in this pious practice. In order that he might be enabled more readily to carry it out, he gave orders that the largest bell in the city should be always rung an hour beforehand, to give public notice of what was about to be done. By his exhortations and his example he did so much, that in the course of a few months, quite a procession of devout persons used to follow the Blessed

¹ Psalm xliii. 16.

Sacrament along the streets, to the great edification of all the beholders. With a view to still further promoting devotion to this august Mystery, he erected a Confraternity which he subsequently affiliated to one recently established at Rome, and in this way he gradually introduced the practice of monthly Communion, which none of the members used to miss.

The letter we have recently quoted, speaks of his delight in the society of priests and religious. Besides these he had many friends whose sanctity of life and ardent love of God, attracted him strongly to their company, and whom he tenderly loved. Among these latter was a man in very humble circumstances, named Ginet Molto. He had attained an uncommon degree of sanctity, and had been favoured by God with many supernatural gifts and graces. He was a special favourite with Francis, who being much occupied during the day, used to walk on the bastions of the city with his humble friend late in the evening, often prolonging these interviews far into the night. The two companions, so far apart in the eyes of the world, so closely united by their mutual love of God, used to pour out to one another the inmost aspirations of their souls, each inciting the other to serve Him more perfectly. The gracious master, who never permits Himself to be outdone in generosity, did not leave their petitions unanswered, but inundated their souls with spiritual consolations, and on one occasion permitted them to see as it were the heavens opened before them. They remained for upwards of half an hour in an ecstasy, during which they beheld things so glorious, so magnificent, so brilliant with supernatural light, as to surpass anything they could ever have imagined. Yet neither of them could afterwards tell the other

what he had heard and seen while the vision lasted. These particulars were not known until after the death of St. Francis, who maintained his close friendship with Ginet Molto during the whole of his life. They were related by the latter after the decease of his illustrious friend, and when at length his own time to depart from this world drew nigh, St. Francis appeared to him, radiant with celestial brightness, and assured him that he would speedily be received into Paradise. "How close," remarks Father Verjus, "is the bond which unites hearts made one by the love of God alone, and how impotent are all the efforts of death to sever it!"

From what has been said of Francis' watchful supervision of his household and domestics, it follows as a matter of course that he paid the closest attention to the education of his children. As far as other claims upon his time permitted, he personally superintended both their studies and devotions. He taught them how to meditate, so that at a very early age, they began of their own accord to spend a short time every morning in mental prayer. Possessing as he did the art of giving a charm to everything he touched, he made this exercise both interesting and delightful to them, supplying them beforehand with subjects and reflections suited to their childish capacities. They drank in his instructions with the utmost eagerness, and considered the time spent with their father the happiest in the day. The influence he exercised over them was boundless, and his sagacious eye soon began to perceive a lurking danger in this. He feared lest they should do from affection for himself what they ought to do solely from love for God. He therefore transferred their spiritual training to Father John Baroma, S.J., who

successfully carried on the good work he had himself begun. On a certain Good Friday, in what year we are not told, an especially moving and pathetic sermon was preached in the Cathedral by Father John Texeda, upon the sufferings of our Lord. The children listened as if spell-bound, and upon their return home, Francis' eldest son, the youthful Marquess of Lombay, drew aside the tutor who had accompanied them to church, in order to beg him to procure for him a discipline without delay, that by its diligent use he might prove, in a practical manner, the compassion he felt for the sufferings of the innocent Victim Who suffered for our transgressions. The tutor referred this strange petition to the Duke, who was not a little delighted to hear of it, and unhesitatingly granted his son's request, adding such prudent restrictions as might guard against any injurious outburst of fervour, more particularly at the outset.

One point upon which he laid particular stress, was the practice of almsgiving, and the inculcation in the hearts of his children from their earliest years, of a love for the poor, and a habit of sympathy with sickness and sorrow. He used to give them large sums of money, in order that they might relieve the necessitous, and he insisted that these bounties should be distributed with their own hands. Frequently did he make them his companions on the visits of charity he paid to the public hospitals, as well as to the private homes of the suffering and afflicted. Tender love and sympathy for the sick had ever been, and ever was, one of the most marked features of his character. On this subject we shall have more to say at a later period of his history. At present it is enough to relate that his first public act after succeeding to the duchy, was to

rebuild and enlarge the Hospital of Gandia. That part of it which ought more properly to be termed the *Hospice*, since it was intended for the reception and entertainment of poor travellers and pilgrims, he caused to be fitted with comfortable beds and everything which could promote rest and refreshment. The interest he took in the welfare of the sick is best shown by the fact that the doctor in charge had orders to come to the palace every day before dinner and give Francis a report of the various patients. Delicacies from his own table were sent to those who needed them, and any urgent cases he made a point of personally visiting, in order to cheer the invalids not only by gifts, but by words of kindness and encouragement. His presence in the ward was like sunshine, and the doctors used to say that the Duke did their patients more good than any medicine. His light footstep was music in their ears, as it sounded along the echoing corridors. *El Duque santo! El Duque santo!* was the exclamation which spread like wildfire from bed to bed. Nor were the poor people who lay sick in their own humble homes, overlooked or forgotten. Each day an account of them also was laid before Francis, who made it his business to see that they were not left without anything required by their condition. Animated by the example of her husband, the Duchess asked and obtained leave to enter the enclosure of the Convent of Poor Clares. She used to visit the dispensary, the store-room, and the infirmary, noting down what was lacking in each, and supplying the needs out of her own private purse.

Francis was, however, too large-minded to allow the stream of his benevolence to flow in one particular channel alone, just because his own sympathies went in that special direction. He tried to comprehend

the needs of every class, and to provide for them accordingly. At his own cost he erected a Dominican monastery in Gandia, in order to provide additional spiritual assistance for its citizens. This house he largely endowed, wishing by so doing to set the Fathers free from all temporal cares, and give them liberty to devote themselves entirely to working for souls. He built a beautiful chapel for them, and presented to it a costly set of vessels for the altar, and some splendid vestments.

Although the accommodation offered by the castle was amply sufficient for the wants of his family, and for the comparatively modest establishment he kept up, he felt it his duty to consult the interests of his heirs and provide for their possible wishes. With this view he thoroughly restored such parts of the building as had been suffered to fall into bad repair, and added a new wing. He also largely augmented the revenues of the duchy and increased its importance, by buying up, one after another, several large estates in the neighbourhood of Gandia, which happened about this time to come successively into the market. This action of his gave great satisfaction not only to the farmers and peasantry, but to all those who in this manner became his vassals. For he deputed to no one the duty of looking after his bailiffs and land agents, but exercised a ceaseless vigilance in regard to their dealings with the country-folk. Very frequently did he ride out to make an inspection of his estates, listening to all complaints and severely punishing any case of oppression or unjust dealing on the part of the stewards he employed. When industrious and deserving persons became involved in pecuniary embarrassments through sickness or other misfortunes, he used

to help them to tide over their difficulties by means of a loan. In this way he preserved many families from irretrievable ruin, by preventing them from falling into the hands of money-lenders.

Not content with doing all that lay in his power to ensure the prosperity of his vassals in time of peace, he provided for their safety in time of war. The defences of the sea-board were far from being adequate to the protection of those who lived in its vicinity against the sudden and frequent descents made by Corsairs. Francis multiplied the forts which guarded the shore and materially strengthened the fortifications of Gandia. Moreover, he caused a number of fresh pieces of artillery to be cast, so that the bastions of the castle literally bristled with cannon, and became a terror to the Moorish invaders.

Thus three years of Francis' life slipped quietly away (1543—1546). They were filled with active labours for the good of others, and rich in spiritual profit to his own soul. His children were growing up around him, healthy and handsome, pious and intelligent, worthy in every respect of the tender and watchful care their affectionate parents had bestowed upon them from the cradle. Little indeed could any of the inhabitants of the ducal castle imagine, as they kept the Christmas of 1545 with all due rejoicings, how dark a cloud was coming up behind the mountains, and how heavy a storm was soon to break over their heads.

In the early part of January, 1546, the Duchess became seriously ill. Her disease was of an extremely painful, as well as lingering nature, and the sufferings she endured increased continually in their intensity. "Thus did God," as Father Ribadeneira remarks, "purify her soul from any remaining imperfection,

and lead her on to greater perfection, before He delivered her from this miserable exile, and took her to enjoy for ever the ineffable bliss which is to be found in His immediate presence."

If we have, in the course of this narrative, said but little in regard to Francis' admirable and devoted wife, it is because, as far as was compatible with the duties of her exalted station, her life was essentially a hidden one. She never shrank from any of those duties, but performed them all with unflinching fidelity. She abhorred singularity, and though free from any love of dress for its own sake, she used to appear on public occasions magnificently attired, and sparkling all over with the valuable diamonds which were heir-looms in the Borgia family. She did this more especially while her husband was Viceroy of Cataluna, and was compelled, in virtue of his official position, to give banquets and other entertainments on a large scale in the vice-regal palace. She obeyed him and looked up to him in all things, always considering his will to be, as far as she herself was concerned, an expression of the will of God. Her beauty, intelligence, and charming manners, naturally drew around her a crowd of admirers. Yet few dared to approach her with open flatteries, for with all her gentleness, a glance from her dark eyes, or a quick retort from her ready tongue, never failed to silence any one who ventured to address to her too open a compliment. When the family removed to Gandia, and lived in a more quiet and secluded manner, she adopted a simpler style of dress. Several ladies with whom she was on intimate terms, asked her why she did not conform more closely to the fashions of the day. "I should be ashamed," she replied, "to deck myself out in splendid attire, while he whom God has appointed

to be my guide and example, goes about clothed in a hair-shirt, and is a model of contempt for the world and of Christian humility."

But it is time to give some account of the last weeks of her life. The malady from which she suffered appears to have been an intermittent fever, accompanied by many painful and distressing symptoms not usually to be found in similar instances, which rendered her case a very complicated one. Day by day and week by week, she grew feebler and more exhausted, wasting away until she was but a shadow of her former self, and there appeared to be scarcely any hope of her ultimate recovery. The grief of her husband was profound, not only because the thought of losing so beloved and faithful a companion was bitter to him, but because he was well aware of the irreparable loss her death would be to their children, who now needed a mother's watchful eye and prudent counsel more than ever, since they were about to enter upon life and be introduced into society. His prayers were fervent and unceasing; he redoubled his alms and penances, causing many Masses to be said and petitions offered up, not only in the public churches, but in the convent chapels, for the restoration of the sufferer. At length there came a day when the doctors declared her to be much better, and she was herself conscious of a sensible diminution in her sufferings. The happy news was at once carried to Francis, who was awaiting in an adjoining room the opinion of the physicians. Full of joy, he repaired straightway to his oratory, and kneeling down before the crucifix, implored our Lord to restore the Duchess to her former health and strength. Scarcely had these words passed his lips, when the image of Christ began to

speaking in accents low indeed and gentle, but so clear and distinct that no mistake was possible on the part of him who heard them. "If," said the mysterious voice, "you wish Me to leave your wife longer in this world, I will do so. However, I warn you that it will not be for your profit." This supernatural utterance filled Francis with shame and self-abasement, at the same time that it kindled his heart with a glowing love of God. It seemed to him a thing incredible, that the Ruler of life and death should put into the hands of a creature a decision reserved for His supreme wisdom alone. As soon as he could regain the power of speech, he gave vent to his profound emotions in the following words, which he afterwards repeated to his confessor. "What is this, O my God? Dost Thou indeed commit to a weak and trembling hand like mine a power which belongs to Thy Divine Omnipotence? What art Thou, O my only Good, and what am I, that Thou shouldst desire to do my will, when I was sent into this world for the sole purpose of doing Thine alone, and of obeying, not only every command, but also every inspiration of my rightful Master? What immeasurable goodness is this, that in order to show favour to a creature, Thou shouldst be willing to abdicate Thy supreme prerogatives as his Creator? Since it is my wish to belong, not to myself, but altogether to Thee, I desire that not my will, but Thine should be done. Leave nothing, O Lord, to the decision of Francis Borgia. Remember how often his feelings have blinded him, and led him astray. Surely I cannot do less, in return for Thy infinite condescension and gracious generosity, than offer to Thee the life of my wife and children, as well as my own, and everything in fact which I possess in

the world. From Thy hand I have received it all, to Thee do I give it all back, earnestly entreating Thee to dispose of all according to Thy good pleasure." After this he remained for a considerable time motionless upon his knees, his hands clasped, his head bent upon his breast.

Two or three days later, a sudden relapse took place in the condition of Eleanora. All the worst symptoms, which had seemed in a fair way to disappear, set in again with more violence than ever, baffling the skill of the doctors. For a week or two she hung between life and death, and then it became apparent to all that every hope of her recovery must be finally abandoned, and that the end could not be far off. With serene courage she received the announcement that the time had come for her to leave this world, expressing the most complete acquiescence in the will of God. She made a general confession of her whole past life, and afterwards received the last Sacraments with such piety and contrition that none of those present could restrain their tears. She retained full possession of all her faculties up to the very end. The words which fell from her lips, during her closing hours, showed that her thoughts were occupied with the Passion of our Lord, which during her life had been, as we have said elsewhere, her favourite subject of meditation. *In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum*, was the last sentence she was heard to utter, and she repeated it over and over again. Like Fabiola, in Cardinal Wiseman's exquisite story, she had requested that when her power of speech should fail, the crucifix should be held to her dying lips. "For," she said, "when I can no longer kiss the sign of our redemption, then indeed I shall be no more." After

making one final effort to press her lips on the feet of the Redeemer, she peacefully expired *in osculo Domini*.

Immediately after the obsequies were over, Francis retired to a monastery in order to spend some days in prayer for the soul of his late wife. During this period of seclusion, his food was bread and water, he remained in absolute solitude, practising austerities the mere mention of which is sufficient to cause horror, and passing whole nights in prayer, prostrate on the marble pavement of the chapel. When at length he returned home, it was a great consolation to him to be able to entrust the care of his household to his sister-in-law, Doña Joanna de Meneses, a sister of the Duchess. This lady filled a mother's place, as far as possible, in regard to her nephews and nieces, and continued to make the castle her abode until Francis finally quitted Gandia.

The subjoined anecdote proves the high degree of detachment to which he attained, in regard to the memory even of her who had been for upwards of seventeen years, the faithful and beloved companion of his life. The incident may be suitably introduced here, although it belongs to a period subsequent to his ordination. The exact year in which it took place does not appear to have been anywhere recorded. With very questionable taste, his son-in-law, the Marquess of Lerma, upon one occasion caused to be placed upon the altar of the chapel in which Francis was about to say Mass, a portrait of the late Duchess of Gandia, painted as St. Catherine of Sienna. Francis offered the Holy Sacrifice in his accustomed manner, without the slightest indication of any unwonted emotion. Whilst he was afterwards breakfasting with his Socius, the latter could not refrain from asking him

whether he had noticed the portrait placed upon the altar. "Of course," he replied, "I at once perceived that it was Eleanora, and it reminded me to pray for her soul. But through the grace of God I was no more affected by it than I should have been if the original had been altogether unknown to me." Then after a moment's pause he added: "I must, however, request you to signify to the Marquess that in future I should prefer not to have a picture of my wife placed over the altar at which I am to say Mass, even though she is represented in the character of a saint."

In order not to suspend, at a future period, the thread of our narrative, we will conclude the present chapter with an account of all that remains to be told in connection with the wonder-working crucifix which played so strange a part in regard to the death of the Duchess of Gandia. Neither at that, nor any other time, did Francis think for a moment, that he had been the victim of a delusion, and that his imagination had deceived him respecting the voice. On the contrary, his belief in its reality grew and strengthened with advancing years. A few months only before his own death, he made a solemn declaration to his confessor, Father Gaspar de Hernandez, to the effect that nothing had ever shaken, or could ever shake, his implicit faith in the Divine origin of the words he had heard. The supernatural favours then bestowed upon him, were by no means the only ones of which he was made the recipient by means of this crucifix. From the depositions made during the process of his canonization, we learn that he one day went to visit a poor man whose wants he had from time to time relieved in the course of his last fatal illness. The sufferer was now lying on his death-bed, after having led a life stained by crimes

of a peculiarly vile and revolting nature. Finding that all his efforts to awaken a feeling of contrition were in vain, Francis drew forth the crucifix from his breast, hung it on a nail at the foot of the bed, and kneeling down beside the unhappy sinner, remained for some time absorbed in prayer, imploring God to soften the stony heart. All at once, drops of blood began to trickle from each of the Five Sacred Wounds, and the lips of the bronze figure of Christ unclosed in order to utter severe and terrible denunciations and threats of judgment to come. The wretched man remained, however, totally unmoved, and Francis had the grief of seeing him die in impenitence. His last words were an expression of hatred and enmity in regard to the kind and merciful Saviour Who had deigned by a miracle to remind him of His Most Precious Blood shed for his salvation.

This occurrence must have taken place somewhere between 1546 and 1550, for in August of the latter year Francis left Gandia, to return no more. Before doing so, he gave his crucifix to Doña Joanna de Meneses, as an expression of his gratitude for the manner in which she had presided over his household and watched over his children, ever since the death of her sister Eleanora. As he put it into her hands, he said: "As a return for all the kindness you have shown me and mine, I can give you nothing which I value more highly, or which is more precious to me. Many and great are the favours which God has bestowed upon me by means of this sacred representation of my crucified Redeemer."

At a later date we find the treasure in the possession of Don Charles, Francis' eldest son, it having probably been left him at her death by his aunt Joanna. So

great was the esteem in which it was held, that he used to take it with him whenever he paid a visit to the Convent of Poor Clares at Gandia, in order that the nuns might have an opportunity of venerating it. In the course of years it was carried to Peru, by the Duke of Esquilache, a grandson of St. Francis Borgia, who was appointed Viceroy of that country. The wonders worked in the New World were more numerous and still more surprising than those effected in the Old. Unfortunately, few particulars appear to have been preserved concerning them. We find, however, the case mentioned of a man possessed by the devil, upon whom every form of exorcism sanctioned by the Church had been tried in vain. When the crucifix which had belonged to St. Francis was placed in a room next to that in which he was, he evinced the utmost terror, uttering a series of unearthly shrieks, and writhing on the ground in contortions terrible to behold. Yet he had never seen this crucifix, nor even heard of it, nor was it possible, humanly speaking, that he could have become aware of its proximity. When the paroxysm had subsided, the enemy of souls was forced, through the mouth of his wretched victim, to render unequivocal testimony to the eminent sanctity of the great servant of God whose history we are tracing.

We left Francis standing, as it were, by a newly-made grave. In our next chapter we shall see in what spirit he turned away from that grave, and how thoroughly he adopted as his own the words of the Apostle, *Quæ retrorsum sunt, obliviscor.*

CHAPTER VII.

HE ENTERS THE SOCIETY.

It can surprise no one to learn that during the time he spent at the Monastery of the Hieronymites after the death of his wife, Francis' thoughts were much occupied with his own future. He could not but feel that an important crisis in his life had arrived, and that he was brought face to face with a weighty and momentous question. Seven years had elapsed since, after the decease of his Imperial mistress, he had bound himself by vow to embrace the religious life, if ever it should be in his power to do so. That solemn promise was as fresh as ever in his mind, and the conviction was irresistibly borne in upon him that the day had now come when God was calling on him to fulfil it. Much had been accomplished by him in the interim. He was scarcely to be recognized as the same man who had gazed, with unspeakable horror, at the ghastly spectacle presented by the open coffin in the royal vaults at Granada. With the same courage which he had displayed beneath the sun of Africa and upon the sea-shore of Provence, he had addressed himself to that most difficult of all conquests—the conquest of self. He had put down the haughty spirit and pride of birth, which had been, in early life, one of his besetting faults. He had conquered his lower

nature to an extent which astonished all who knew him, having learnt to deny himself not only every enjoyment that was unlawful, but much also that was lawful. As the reward of his generous self-sacrifice, he had received from God many supernatural graces and favours. An ordinary man might have asked: "What is yet wanting to me?" But Francis was one of those whom the familiar words of the poet aptly describe as

Nil actum reputans, dum quid superesset agendum.

He could not help owning that, with the will of God, he had already done much, but he fully recognized how much yet remained for him to do. He was aware that he was lord of many lands, and that a large number of vassals owned his sway, a sway gracious indeed and kindly, but peremptory withal, and allowing of no opposition. He had a very strong will, and this will was law to those beneath him, whether children, servants, or other dependents. It was so, partly because they all loved him, but partly also because with this affection there mingled no small element of salutary fear. He knew that his will must be broken and subjected to the will of another, he knew also that he owned many rich and costly possessions, that vast wealth was at his command, that he was the honoured friend of his Sovereign, the chosen associate of princes. He felt that he must either renounce much which he valued, and break many ties which he held very dear, or else stand still and cease to pursue the steep and rugged ascent which he had already in part accomplished.

Through one of those curious coincidences in which the children of this world see nothing but the chance action of circumstances, but in which the children of

God recognize the hand of a gracious Father, the first thing which Francis heard on returning home was that Blessed Peter Faber had called to see him, and was intending to call again that very afternoon. It is beside our present purpose to speak at length concerning this holy man, who was, as all know, the first companion of St. Ignatius, and upon whose sanctity the Church has now set her seal, by recognizing his claim to the honour of the altars. Francis received him with open arms, and made the most of every moment he could spend at the Castle, as his stay in Gandia was to be a brief one. In order to explain the reasons which had brought him thither, it is necessary that we should retrace our steps for a while.

A year or two before the death of the Duchess, Francis had been anxious to found a Jesuit College in Gandia, partly with a view to the conversion of such of the Moors as had settled in Spain and become naturalized subjects of the Emperor, partly in order to procure additional advantages in the way of a thoroughly good education, secular as well as religious, for the children of all parents who might desire to profit by the opportunities thus held out to them. A correspondence with St. Ignatius upon the subject ensued, and though he deemed the right time for the realization of the project, in its full extent at least, to be yet in the future, he so far yielded to Francis' request as to send six Fathers to settle in Gandia. The Superior of the house was Father Andrew Oviedo, who at a later period, by command of the Pope, was compelled to accept the post of Bishop of Hieropolis, and afterwards became Patriarch of Ethiopia. He was a man of rare sanctity, a model of zeal, patience, and apostolic poverty. Both before and after his

death, numerous manifestations of a miraculous character showed the world what he really was, and revealed the uncommon character of the virtues which in his humility he had striven to conceal. It was on the arrival of these Fathers that Francis, as we have seen, confided the spiritual training of his children to Father John Baroma, who was one of their number.

In 1546, however, St. Ignatius, who was increasingly impressed with the paramount importance of Christian education, and had heard from the Fathers already established in Gandia how wide a field for exertion was opening there, determined to found a College in that city. Father Faber had just been summoned to Rome by Paul III., in order that he might assist at the Council of Trent, and St. Ignatius instructed him to take Gandia on his way, and do everything that lay in his power to forward the affair, knowing how eager a fellow-worker he would find in the Duke. The latter, who had rejoiced at his arrival, rejoiced yet more when he heard the reason of his coming. Providence ordained that this College, the first in which the Jesuits taught publicly, and which was to serve as a model and pattern for innumerable similar establishments all over the world, should be founded by four illustrious servants of God, namely, St. Ignatius, the Blessed Peter Faber, Father Oviedo, and St. Francis Borgia. After imploring the guidance of the Holy Ghost, they drew up the necessary rules and constitutions, and as soon as arrangements for this purpose could be made, the building itself was begun. Out of respect for Father Faber, Francis insisted that he should lay the first stone, he himself laying the second. By his express wish, each of his eight children in turn then placed one on the foundation which had

been prepared. Father Oviedo was, by order of St. Ignatius, appointed Rector, and professors were selected from various nationalities, who were thoroughly capable of imparting a knowledge of theology, philosophy, the humanities, and everything which it was desirable to teach. Francis displayed a truly royal munificence, and the recipients of his bounty found themselves compelled to set limits to it. He completed the house, and erected a chapel, in such a manner as should best suit the requirements of the Fathers; he presented to the College an extensive library, and endowed it with a considerable annual income. He also founded a number of burses, in order to provide for the free education of poor scholars, and also of children of Moorish extraction whose parents might consent to see their offspring brought up as Christians, provided they were themselves freed from the burden of their maintenance. Shortly afterwards he erected this College into a University, and obtained from the Pope and the Emperor a charter which placed those who should study and take their degrees there on an equal footing with students at all other Spanish Universities.

Father Faber was so impressed and delighted by the admirable dispositions he discovered in the soul of Francis, that he delayed his departure from Gandia for the express purpose of giving him a retreat. By thus making him acquainted with the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, the Blessed Peter Faber foresaw that he was doing a more important work for the cause of God, and of his Order also, than he had done by founding the College of Gandia. Francis had frequently heard of the Exercises and had learnt to admire them, as it were, from a distance. Now he was to experience their

effect upon his own soul. He made his retreat with the utmost fervour, and when it was concluded, he told Father Faber that no words could adequately express the admiration he felt for the extraordinary Book, which could, he said, be the production of no mere human intellect, but must have been dictated by the Spirit of God. Nearly three centuries and a half have passed since it was written. It has wrought the salvation and sanctification of innumerable souls, but in the present day it would be a superfluous task indeed to attempt either to praise or to describe it, since it is more or less intimately known to almost every Christian throughout the length and breadth of the earth. At the time of which we are speaking it was a novelty, and as such was regarded by many persons with doubt and suspicion, if not with positive dislike. Francis spared no effort in order to make it generally known and appreciated, and it is to his exertions that its diffusion and success are, under God, to be attributed. He supported, as it were, the Exercises with all the weight of his high position, and wrote in such unequivocal terms to Paul III. regarding them, that the Pontiff caused them to be carefully examined by several learned theologians, who pronounced a unanimous verdict in their favour. Shortly afterwards His Holiness issued a Brief with the sole object of recommending them to the use of the faithful everywhere. In the same Brief he further declared that this action on his part was mainly due to the pious prayers and reiterated requests of the Duke of Gandia. So numerous and so signal were the conversions which resulted from the use of the Exercises in retreats given by the sons of St. Ignatius, that they soon attracted general attention; and the enemies of God and of His

Church did not scruple to attribute them to Satanic agency. Among these blasphemers Calvin holds a prominent place, and he speaks of them with a malignant rage, due doubtless to the numerous breaches made in the ranks of his unhappy followers by these potent spiritual weapons. It would be vain to attempt to recount the names of all the saints and great servants of God who, even in these early days of their existence, admired and made use of them. But before quitting this part of our subject we may be permitted to mention St. Charles Borromeo, who was accustomed to say that from them he had gained all the light and all the good desires with which God had ever inspired him. He invariably carried on his person a copy of the precious volume, and when upon one occasion the Duke of Mantua was showing him his own extensive and well-chosen library, he did not hesitate to say, as he brought out of his pocket a well-worn volume of the Exercises: "And yet within the compass of this little book a richer library is to be found than the splendid collection which your Grace is kind enough to show me, and one also from which infinitely more may be learnt." But it is time to resume the thread of our narrative.

The Blessed Peter Faber arrived at Rome in a weak and exhausted state, being literally worn out by the fatigues of his journey and the weight of the heavy anxieties and responsibilities which had devolved upon him. He became very ill and a few days later expired on August 1, 1546, to the great grief of St. Ignatius. "Likewise the brethren in Religion of Father Faber wept bitterly, seeing so great a pillar of their Order broken and prostrate on the ground. They mourned for the first-born son of their spiritual Father, for him

whose aid had been necessary in order to effect the conversion of St. Francis Xavier, as was wittily expressed in the following words: *Solus non sufficit ignis; Fabro opus est.* They all destined him for their second General, should he survive St. Ignatius, and indeed no vote except his own would have been wanting to secure his election. In one of his letters, St. Francis Xavier compares him with St. Ignatius, and expressed his definite hope that he might succeed the Founder in the government of the Society. St. Francis was moreover, accustomed to invoke him whenever he was exposed to any special danger, during his journeys in India, and it was his invariable habit to insert the following clause in the Litanies he recited: *Sancte Petre Faber, ora pro nobis.* The death of Father Faber was known in Gandia, almost at the same moment when it occurred, as if the winds of heaven had borne thither his latest sigh. For the holy Duke clearly discerned him in the midst of a shining cloud, escorted by many glorious denizens of Paradise. At the same time he received an interior intimation, that this special glory had been conferred on the departed Jesuit, because he had laid down his life through his practice of holy obedience, in continuing and bringing to a close the painful and wearisome journey upon which he had been sent. Truly was it most right and meet that St. Francis Borgia should behold the glory enjoyed in Heaven by him whose successor he was to be on earth, in order that the sight of so splendid a reward might stimulate him to follow closely in the footprints of this valiant soldier of Christ, to seek to become animated with his spirit and fired by his zeal.”¹

St. Ignatius could not but deeply feel the loss of

¹ Cien-Fuegos, pp. 132, 133.

one of the chief ornaments of his Order, upon whose co-operation he could thoroughly rely in regard to everything he might desire to undertake. Nevertheless he found consolation in the knowledge which God imparted to him, that the place just left vacant would be more than filled. With this assurance he consoled his sorrowing children, telling them that a new member would ere long be added to their Society, who should equal Father Faber in sanctity and should do even more than he had done for the good, not of the Order only, but of the whole Church of God. We have already seen on a previous page of this history that St. Ignatius had definitely predicted the vocation of St. Francis Borgia some years before, while the latter was Viceroy of Cataluna.

The retreat which he made under the direction, as we have seen, of Father Faber, left him more determined than ever to enter upon the religious state. Every one who has so far followed the narrative of his life, has seen the mysterious affinity which existed between his soul and the soul of St. Ignatius, even before these two eminent servants of God had become personally acquainted, the manner in which the former unconsciously adopted various practices of devotion recommended by the latter—such, for instance, as the Particular Examen—before he knew them to have been thus recommended, and the delight which everything he heard and everything he saw of the infant Society afforded him. As a natural result of all this, we should expect that no room would remain for wavering or hesitation, but that the one desire of Francis' heart would now be to become a Jesuit. In a large majority of parallel instances, such is ordinarily the case. Let us not however forget that “there are

diversities of grace, but the same Spirit; and there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but the same God, Who worketh all in all.”¹

Before arriving at a final decision, Francis had to pass through a period of painful doubts and indecision. At the outset, he felt strongly attracted to enter some Order of penance in which, “the world forgetting, by the world forgot,” he could spend the rest of his days in retirement and solitude, seeking only the fulfilment of the prayer of St. Augustine, in whose writings he took a special delight: *Noverim me, noverim te*. But the more he thought of this, the more conscious did he become that a subtle selfishness and self-seeking mingled with his desires, and that it would be more in conformity with the will of God, if he were to strive to promote the salvation of his neighbour by means of active exertions on his behalf, instead of aiming solely at procuring rest and repose of spirit for himself.

His second idea was to enrol himself among the sons of St. Francis of Assisi. He had never forgotten how much he owed to the Seraphic Saint on the occasion of the critical circumstances of his birth, and he had, so to speak, drunk in a tender devotion to his glorious Patron with his mother’s milk. The reader will remember how, in his early youth, his eyes had turned lovingly to the monasteries of this Order, and how he would fain have entered one of them, had not the current of existence been turned for him into a different channel. The extreme poverty practised there delighted him, and the religious austerities. Besides, he knew that he should as a Franciscan, have opportunities of working for the salvation of others, especially as he

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 4—6

was never tired of owning the debt he owed, under God, to the spiritual exhortations of holy men who were members of that Order. We have already mentioned among these Father John Texeda, whom Francis had by special permission brought with him when he came to Gandia, and who dwelt habitually in the Castle.

There remained the Society of Jesus, then in its cradle, but already attacked, hated, and persecuted by innumerable persons of every condition and state of life. It was the fact of this persecution and opposition which mainly influenced St. Francis Borgia in wishing to join it, the same feeling which actuated the saintly Father Olivaint in more recent times. Another and even more potent incentive in the case of Francis was the hope of being altogether obscure and unknown, and safe from all danger of being elevated to any ecclesiastical dignity, which he dreaded above all things. The Jesuits, as is well known, under vow only accept such at the command of the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

Thus time passed on, and Francis gradually began to perceive that whenever his choice seemed to turn definitely towards the Society, his soul was filled with joy and consolation. When, on the other hand, he turned his thoughts in a different direction, a chilling lethargy crept over his spirit, benumbing his faculties, and depriving him of all sensible love of God or delight in holy things. Mistrusting himself, and not desiring to rely on his own judgment or feeling, where so important a decision was at stake, Francis laid bare his whole interior to his wise and holy confessor, Father John Texeda, leaving the final determination in his hands. Day by day the latter offered the Holy Sacrifice with the intention of obtaining light and guidance from on high, while Francis prayed and waited, and found the

interval painfully long. At last the morning came when Father Texeda, on coming out of the sacristy after Mass, took him solemnly by the hand and said: "My Lord Duke, both God and His Most Holy Mother desire that you should enter the Society of Jesus." Francis inquired in what manner he had been led to speak in such unequivocal terms? "After making my usual meditation," replied Father Texeda, "I prostrated myself upon the ground, and with copious tears implored the Queen of Heaven, the Morning Star, to enlighten my mind. Shortly afterwards I heard a sound which caused me to look up, and I saw Mary herself standing before me. With ineffable sweetness she smiled upon me and said: 'Tell the Duke to enter the Society of my Son, for this is my wish, and will be most pleasing also to Him. Tell the Duke also, that he is to extend and glorify in the eyes of all men this Order, now so poor and despised, and that he is to be the means of rendering great services to the whole Church.'"

Francis was overwhelmed with confusion on finding himself thus favoured by the Blessed Virgin, and at once retired to his oratory in order to pour forth his soul in thanksgiving. Whilst on his knees before her image, the statue began to speak. "Francis," it said in accents full of tender affection, "hesitate no longer. Enter into the Society of my Son." The subject of this biography had always been remarkable for his devotion to the Mother of God. The reader will remember how, when quite a child, he had reassured his terrified tutor by telling him that Mary would bring them both safely over the stormy sea to a haven of security. But after the occurrence we have just related, this devotion was increased tenfold. He used always to say, that to Mary he owed his vocation, and we shall see how, later

on, when he found himself in a position of authority, he taught all those under his influence to love and honour her in like manner. Nay more, he insisted that they should do so. "For," he used emphatically to declare, "it would be a monstrous thing indeed if any one were to belong to the Society of Jesus, and not love, serve, and revere the Mother of Jesus." *Regina Societatis Jesu, ora pro nobis*, was an invocation constantly upon his lips.

Thus was all doubt at an end. The voice which Francis had desired to hear, had spoken; the word of one admonishing: "This is the way, walk ye in it, and go not aside either to the right hand or to the left."¹ Yet one final trial was in store for him, to one last test was his fidelity to his religious vocation to be subjected. How this occurred we will relate in the words of Father Ribadeneira. "After the Duke had resolved to enter the Society of Jesus, a thing happened to him which was so extraordinary, that I judge it worthy to be recorded here. For seven successive days he clearly perceived with his bodily eyes, whilst he was engaged in meditation, a splendid mitre suspended in the air above his head. Fearing that by this might be signified some ecclesiastical dignity, to which God might design that he should be appointed at a future day, he was greatly afflicted. With copious tears he besought the Divine Majesty that, since he desired to become poor in order to become a follower of Christ in His Cross, and to flee from the perils which riches and greatness bring in their train, he might not be exposed to dangers even more subtle and ensnaring than those which he strove to avoid. Yet the same vision recurred day after day, in the same place and in the same manner, as soon

¹ Isaias xxx. 21.

as he began his meditation. At last he felt that he could bear it no longer, and addressing himself to God with simple faith and childlike confidence, he exclaimed: 'Pardon my boldness, O my Lord, and be not angry with me for saying that I cannot endure to behold this mitre. I solemnly declare to Thee that if Thou dost not cause this vision to cease, and promise me that I shall be able to practise poverty and remain in Religion all my life, I will never put on the clerical habit, nor attempt to become a priest. For this mitre represents to me a greater danger than that from which it is the desire of my heart to flee.' When these words were concluded the mitre vanished, and he saw it no more."¹ Francis quitted his oratory with the happy assurance that his prayer was granted. When, however, he was elected General of the Society, he acknowledged to his confessor, Father Gaspar Hernandez, that by this appointment was fulfilled all which God had signified to him in the vision of the mitre, which had been withdrawn in gracious condescension to his weakness. Yet his petition was heard and answered in a manner of which he little thought. The disappearance of the mitre was not merely a concession granted to human frailty, as he imagined in his humility. Had he lived but a few years longer, he would in all probability have been called to wear the Papal tiara, and it would have been out of his power to refuse this supreme dignity. Before the time for the election arrived, God called His faithful servant to Himself, and thus answered the request he had made with so much earnestness in his oratory at Gandia many years before.

His resolution being finally taken, Francis' first step was to make St. Ignatius acquainted with it. For this

purpose he wrote a long letter to the Saint, requesting him to receive him into the number of his children, to guide and direct him in all things, and to permit him to take the vows of Religion in the Society. He gave at the same time a minute and detailed account, not only of his interior dispositions, but of his physical constitution. He stated his own age, the number and ages of his children, the amount of his yearly income, the general position of his affairs, and of the various enterprises on which he had embarked in connection with the duchy. The reader will already have anticipated us when we say that St. Ignatius received this letter with extreme satisfaction indeed, but without the very least surprise, since God had revealed to him that the Duke was to fill the place left vacant by Father Faber, and to be, as he used frequently to term him, "the Founder of the Society in Spain."

The courier who had been the bearer of Francis' letter, brought back to him the following answer from St. Ignatius.

Most Noble Lord,—It gave me great delight to hear of the resolution with which God in His infinite goodness has inspired you. Since we who are on earth are unable to render Him sufficient thanks for the mark of favour He has been pleased to show our humble Society, in calling you to join it, I beseech the angels and saints who are now enjoying His presence in Heaven, to supply our deficiency in this respect. I trust that Divine Providence will cause this decision of yours to be the means of effecting much good, not in regard solely to your own soul, but to the souls of many others, who may be led to follow your example. As for us, who are already members of the Society, we shall

strive to serve with increased devotion the gracious Father Who has given us so skilled a labourer, to aid in the work of tending and cultivating the tender vine which He has been pleased to entrust to my care, although I am in every respect unworthy of the office. In the name of the Lord I therefore receive you at once as our brother, and shall henceforward regard you as such. Most truly can I promise to feel for you now and always, an affection proportioned to the large-hearted generosity with which you desire to enter the house of God, in order there to serve Him more perfectly.

With reference to your inquiries about the time and manner of your entrance into the Society, I have laid the matter before God in prayer. It is my opinion that this change must be made with much caution and deliberation, in order that you may not leave any of your immediate duties unfulfilled, otherwise it will not prove to be *ad majorem Dei gloriam*. You had better keep the affair a secret at present, as far at least as it is possible to do so, striving meanwhile so to arrange things as to be free as soon as you can, and at liberty to carry out the plan you so ardently desire to execute for the love of our Lord.

In order to make myself more plainly understood, I may as well say that as your daughters are of marriageable age, I think you ought to endeavour to see them suitably settled. It would be well if you were also to choose a suitable wife for your eldest son, the Marquess of Lombay. In regard to your other sons, it would be better not to leave them dependent upon their elder brother, but to assign to each a suitable and sufficient income of his own, allowing them meanwhile to pursue their University career. It is reasonably to

be hoped that, if they fulfil, as I trust and believe they will, the promise of their youth, the Emperor will extend to them the favour he has always shown to you, and will bestow upon them, when the right time comes, appointments in keeping with their rank. You must also try and push on the various buildings you have begun, for I think it desirable they should all be completed before the great change you are meditating is made generally known.

Meanwhile you cannot do better, since you are already a proficient in most branches of human learning, than apply yourself to the study of theology. It is my wish that you should do this with much care and pains, for I should like you to take a doctor's degree in the University of Gandia. I cannot conclude without once more inculcating upon you to take every precaution in order to prevent this astonishing piece of news from being prematurely divulged. I feel that I need add no more upon this head. I shall hope to hear frequently from you, and I will try to give you all the advice and assistance you may need. In the meantime I shall beseech our Lord to grant you all graces and blessings in ever increasing abundance.

Francis received this letter as if it had come straight from Heaven. His joy and gratitude knew no bounds. Yet when the first tumult of emotion had subsided, and he had leisure to reflect, a certain element of disappointment began to mingle with his gladness. Eager and impetuous by nature, he viewed with regret the delay imposed by St. Ignatius upon the consummation of his desires, and it was not without an inward struggle that he brought himself to acquiesce in the wishes of him, whom he, from that

time forward, regarded as his Religious Superior, and whose will consequently represented to him the will of God. Considering himself as utterly unworthy of the honour to which he aspired, and to which he had, in part at least, already attained, he bent all his energies to the task of rendering himself more fit to receive it. As the first step in this direction, he began to study with minute care and scrupulous attention the Life of our Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that he is the best Jesuit who most closely imitates this Divine Model, and that he who desires to benefit the souls of others, must leave no means untried to promote his own sanctity. He also read the works of the early Fathers, and was greatly impressed by the beautiful sermon of St. Bernard upon the Precursor of our Lord,¹ in which, after taking for his text the words, "He was a burning and a shining light,"² the Saint proceeds to explain that he who would shine to good purpose, must likewise burn, and to contrast the health-giving light of the sun with the cold brightness of the moon. "A holy man continueth in wisdom as the sun: but a fool is changed as the moon."³

About this time Francis began his work as a preacher. We shall have much to say of his pulpit oratory, when we come to speak of him as a priest, but we cannot pass over these early discourses of his altogether without mention. At the outset he delivered them in the Convent of Poor Clares, where his appearance soon came to be hailed with the utmost delight. The nuns were surprised at the force of his words and the intimate acquaintance they displayed with spiritual things. We are told that his exhortations produced

¹ St. Bernardi Opera, *Serm. in Nativitate S. Johannis Baptistæ.*

² St. John v. 35.

³ Ecclus. xxvii. 11.

effects which seemed perfectly incredible. Nor were the results less astonishing when his addresses were confined to his domestic circle. He made it his habit, as long as he remained in the world, to give short addresses to his children and servants. One in particular, which deserves to be recorded, was preached from those words of our Lord: "If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace!"¹ In it Francis dwelt especially on the supreme importance of self-knowledge and self-examination, and of the duty which is laid upon every Christian of seeking to discover the path in which it is the will of God that he should walk. The best tribute to the excellence of this discourse is the simple fact that by means of it the tutor of Francis' sons, and several of his servants, were led in due time to enter the Society of Jesus.

Charles V. was at this period absent in Italy, having left his son Don Philip, Regent of Spain in the meantime. In 1547, the latter convoked an assembly of the Cortes, and, as a matter of course, desired that the Duke of Gandia should be present there. Francis repeatedly begged to be excused, but all his representations had no effect, and at last he found himself compelled to yield the point. Following the example and exhortations of his father, the young Prince treated Francis with marked attention, consulting him upon matters of the highest importance, and appointing him one of the *Tractadores*, or Presidents of the Assembly. He threw himself heart and soul into his uncongenial occupation, and tried to realize the fact that, under present circumstances, he could best serve God by consulting the wishes of his Sovereign. His advice

¹ St. Luke xix. 42

proved of so much use in settling various delicate questions, and the tact he displayed in smoothing away difficulties was found to be so invaluable, that Don Philip became increasingly reluctant to part with him. It was reported in Court circles that he intended to make him major-domo of his household, and it was evident to all that the influence the Duke exerted over him was literally boundless. The only use Francis made of it, was to bring about the reformation of several convents of women in Cataluna, where, as he well knew, the Rule had become grievously relaxed, and various scandals and abuses had crept in.

Meanwhile his own position grew every day more equivocal. Feeling himself to be a Jesuit novice, and being, in spirit at least, utterly at variance with his surroundings, he yet could not shut his eyes to the fact, that the meshes of Court life were being gradually, if imperceptibly, drawn more tightly around him, and that unless he made a prompt and vigorous effort, the net would ere long be so tightly closed, as to leave no chance of escape. As soon as he could discover a colourable pretext for so doing, he pleaded the necessity of his presence at home, and obtained the Regent's leave to return to Gandia. Having arrived there, he wrote an urgent letter to St. Ignatius, imploring him to delay no longer the time of his profession, and promising that he would not neglect any of the duties which it was incumbent upon him to fulfil before finally leaving the world. He said that, on the contrary, he would be better able to attend to them, if only his mind were set at ease, and he could be permitted to enjoy the happiness of knowing himself to be irrevocably bound by the sacred vows of Religion.

The keen eye of the Saint took in the situation at a glance. After commending the matter to God by means of long and fervent prayer, he consulted with the Supreme Pontiff as to the desirability of conceding the unexampled request of the Duke of Gandia. The result of these deliberations was that the latter received, together with the answer of St. Ignatius, a Papal Brief wherein permission was accorded him to spend four years in the world, after making his profession, in order to arrange all his affairs, and provide for the future of his children. We shall see how his characteristic energy, and his constant longing to unite himself openly with his Religious brethren, enabled him to shorten the allotted term, and accomplish in three years what would have amply sufficed to occupy almost any one else for the space of four, at the very least. The thrice welcome Brief arrived towards the close of 1547, and in the following year Francis made his profession on February 1st. He did this, as one of his biographers informs us, "with so great a joy, and so many tears of sweet consolation, that it seemed as if on that day some heavy chains had been struck off, and he had been freed from a grievous and wearisome bondage." The ceremony took place before a very small number of witnesses, in order that the secrecy recommended by St. Ignatius might be more easily preserved.

We give the terms in which Francis pronounced his vows: "I, Francis Borgia, Duke of Gandia, a miserable sinner, unworthy of the vocation of God and of this my profession, yet trusting in the mercy of the Lord and hoping He will be propitious to me, do make a solemn vow to observe poverty, chastity, and obedience in conformity with the Constitutions of the Society, through the favour which has been granted me by

Father Ignatius, General of the same. I implore the angels and saints who are in Heaven to be my protectors, and the witnesses of my act. I ask a similar favour of the Fathers and Brothers now present here."

In a manuscript which was not discovered until after his death, Francis pours out, in touching terms, the humble gratitude and unfeigned delight wherewith his soul was inundated. It is too long to be quoted *in extenso*; we must therefore confine ourselves to laying some portions of it before the reader. The commencement is as follows:

"O my Lord, in Whom alone is my trust, what is there in me that Thou shouldst look upon me? What hast Thou found in me that Thou shouldst call me to form one of the Company of Thy chosen servants? For they ought to be valiant, and I am a coward; they ought to be despisers of the world, and I am a slave to its opinion; they ought to be haters of themselves, and I am full of self-love. What then, I ask again, didst Thou find in me? Perhaps Thou didst perceive me to be bolder than others in disobeying Thy commands, in manifesting my contempt for them; more indifferent to Thy glory, more wedded to my own interests. Truly if Thou didst seek these things, Thou didst find them in me. O bottomless ocean of wisdom! O height of power immeasurable! Thou dost choose the weakest of Thy creatures to show the abundance of Thy might. The angels praise Thee with adoring love, but confusion of face becomes me, a sinner, when I see with what feeble instruments Thou dost accomplish Thy lofty designs. Meditate attentively on this, O my soul, and if grace is vouchsafed thee to make satisfaction for

thy sins, marvel not. For hitherto thou wast a captive, henceforward thou wilt be free; hitherto thou hast possessed little, and that little with pain; henceforth thou wilt possess all things, and rejoice in their possession. What, O my Lord, is this change Thou dost effect? What is the penalty the sinner has to pay? Truly Thou dost but feign when Thou declarest Thy commands to be grievous, for instead of penance Thou dost give rejoicing, instead of fasting, fulness. And if Thou dost thus order things for the sake of all Thou hast suffered for us, and in order that I may follow Thee, imitating Thy life of poverty and obedience, I find here yet more cause for wonder. Thou didst leave Thy own country and Thy Father's house, and I leave a land of exile; Thou didst go out from the Father to come into the world, and Thou dost bid us leave the world to go to the Father; Thou wentest forth to meet sorrow, and I go forth to embrace gladness; Thou wast led out to captivity, and I am set free from prison; Thy portion was tribulation, mine is joy. What returns can I make for Thy mercy? How can I respond to Thy love? My understanding is too weak to grasp it, my tongue to speak of it. Enlighten my blindness, O my Lord, that by knowing what I am, I may know what Thou art; by accusing myself, I may glorify Thee; by humbling myself, I may extol Thy greatness; by dying to myself, I may live wholly to Thee. And since by Thy goodness Thou hast called me away from the possession of riches, of which Thou hast said that those who have them can hardly be saved, make me to merit that which Thou dost promise to the poor, saying to them: Amen, I say to you, that you who have followed Me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the seat of His majesty,

you also shall sit on twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”¹

We must here pause to remark that, besides the instance of St. Francis Borgia, who, although a professed Jesuit, remained for a considerable period in the world and led a secular life, no other is recorded in the annals of the Society. It is said that Sir Toby Matthews, the convert son of the Archbishop of York, who was knighted by James I., was really a Jesuit, but no further proof is forthcoming than that he was buried in the church of the English Fathers at Ghent.

Before Francis' profession, St. Ignatius left him free to regulate for himself the distribution of his time, his prayers and mortifications. Now, however, the Saint judged that the hour had come when it was right that he should take matters into his own hands. Accordingly, he wrote Francis a letter in which he enjoined upon him to relax somewhat of his perpetual fasts, to devote to study a portion of the time he had been accustomed to spend in prayer and meditation, and to moderate his austerities. This letter, which is replete with what has been well termed “the common sense of sanctity,” concludes as follows: “You have already seriously weakened your digestive organs, and you must completely change your regimen. I do not forbid you to take the discipline every day as you have been accustomed to do. At the same time I must impress upon you that as no one can live or die for himself, but for Him Who is the sole Author of life and death, you must content yourself with inflicting upon your body that amount of suffering which is necessary to mortify it and render it subservient to the spirit. I forbid you to go further than this, for if you do, you will be simply

¹ St. Matt. xix. 28.

— killing yourself. Remember that your body, as well as your soul, is a gift which you have received from God, and for the right use of which you are accountable to Him. Austerities which, by inducing physical weakness, interfere with the exercise of the mental faculties, prevent us from doing what we otherwise might, in order to promote the glory of God, and have an effect the very reverse of desirable. In fact, mortifications of this kind are almost as worthy of blame as those which are regulated by prudence and discretion are deserving of praise.”

Father Cepari gives us the subjoined terse and comprehensive account of the manner in which Francis' days were spent, after he had taken his vows. “He rose at two o'clock in the morning, and devoted the next two hours to mental prayer. In this he found so much delight, that he used to say that the time seemed only like a quarter of an hour. Immediately afterwards he went to confession, and then heard Mass and received Holy Communion either in his domestic chapel or in that attached to the Convent of Poor Clares. On great feasts and holidays of obligation he went as formerly to the Cathedral, for the sake of setting an example to his vassals. He then attended theological lectures, and went over the substance of those he had heard on the previous day. The hours before dinner were devoted to business of a public or private nature, and the afternoon was passed in the society of his children and friends, some portion being set aside for study and serious reading. Towards evening he was ready to receive all who desired to see him, in order either to seek his help and advice, or to speak to him about necessary matters connected with his household affairs. As he never partook of

supper, he was able to retire very early to his room. There he said his Breviary, recited the Rosary, and read a portion of Holy Scripture, besides some part of the writings of the Fathers. Moreover, he closely examined his conscience, rendering to himself a strict account of all the actions of the past day, which he always found to be full of defects and imperfections, because he compared them with the infinite greatness of the Master for Whose sake they had been performed. Finding himself to be thus guilty in the sight of God, he could not lie down to rest until he had made reparation to the Divine Majesty by means of some penance and mortification. He discontinued the practice of sleeping in a bed, but took his repose on one of the steps of an alcove in his room, which was covered merely by an ordinary carpet."¹

As soon as possible after the marriage of his eldest son, the Duke ceased to reside at the castle. With his younger sons he went to live in a comparatively small house, close to the College. There he considerably reduced his establishment, in order to avoid the elaborate ceremonial and formal routine which were almost unavoidable, so long as he continued to occupy the ducal palace. Under this humbler roof he gave himself, heart and soul, to the prosecution of his studies. No one could witness without admiration the assiduous attention with which he listened to the instructions of the various professors, the deferential humility with which he consulted them upon any intricate point, the care he displayed in taking notes of their lectures and of impressing the subjects treated of upon his memory. His progress was truly surprising,

¹ *Ristretto della Vita del Beato Padre Francisco Borgia, d. C. d. G.* Dal P. Virgilio Cepari, d.m. C. pp. 42—44. Roma, 1624.

and his studies, far from proving a hindrance to him, served rather to promote his spiritual progress. "For his true teacher was the Holy Spirit of God, Who gave him lessons in that secret school where the saints learn theology by means of the interior dispositions of the heart, rather than through any mere intellectual force or power of human reason." Moreover, notwithstanding the many hours he devoted to study and to prayer, he always had plenty of time to attend to his secular affairs.

We must not omit to mention that one of his occupations appears to have consisted in re-arranging, and publishing in a collected form, his various spiritual *opuscula*. He did this at the request of many of his friends. The two volumes came out in the course of the year 1548. The following extracts will illustrate their exceedingly practical character, and their great simplicity.¹

WHILE DRESSING IN THE MORNING.

1. Enter into a profound sentiment of confusion, in considering that you are well clothed, and that Jesus Christ was fastened naked to a Cross for love of you.

2. Thank Him for having assumed our nature, although He knew at the time how ungrateful we should be for this favour; and also for having given us clothes to cover us, although we have so often despised the nuptial robe of grace, with which He clothed us. While dressing yourself you are performing one of the works of mercy, which is to clothe the naked: implore Him to accept this action, in consideration of

¹ *The Spiritual Works of St. Francis Borgia.* Translated from the French. London and Derby: Richardson, 1875.

the garment of ignominy with which He was covered in the palace of Herod.

ON ENTERING A CHURCH.

1. Humble yourself in considering how unworthy your imperfections render you to enter the house of God, where He is adored by angels with so much awe and purity.

2. Thank Him, that after having so often strayed far from Him, owing to the enormity of your sins, He is well pleased to receive you into His house; that He ever seeks for you and begs you to enter.

3. Ask Him for the grace to offer yourself to Him with the same love with which the Blessed Virgin presented her Son in the Temple, with the desire of becoming yourself the temple of God, in which the Holy Ghost may dwell.

ON ASSISTING AT MASS.

1. Reflect humbly with how little devotion you come to see and to adore your God. Reproach yourself that the continuance of so great a benefit is the cause of the light esteem in which you hold it, instead of the cause, as it ought to be, of an increase in your respect and love; since God renders His favours so common only to make better known the great charity which He has for you.

2. Thank Him for making you resemble the angels each time you adore Him with true faith; for these blessed spirits are always employed in His presence, praising and glorifying Him unceasingly.

3. Since this Sacrifice is offered to God in memory of the Sacrifice of Calvary, ask of Him, through the

merits of His Precious Blood, the grace to cleanse yourself in It from all your sins, and to efface them by the abundance of your tears, that the old man may die within you and the new man live therein.

DURING DINNER.

1. Humble yourself for having betrayed Him Who gives you food, and for being so ungrateful for the benefits you have received.

2. Thank Him for having so long preserved you, and for having nourished you with so much care, even when you were His enemy.

3. Beg Him by the charity with which He fed so great a multitude in the desert, to give you the celestial nourishment of His grace, and that this may be your daily bread.

WHILE PERFORMING SOME ACT OF CHARITY.

1. Humble yourself that having so often contributed to the disedification of your neighbour by your bad example, God is yet pleased to make use of you in an affair so important as that of the salvation of others, to effect which He sent His beloved Son into this world.

2. Thank Him, that being in want of nothing, He nevertheless accepts the little good which you do for Him, as though it were necessary to Him.

3. Implore Him, by that charity with which He said that His business was to employ Himself in the service and glory of His Father, that He will give you the grace to occupy yourself only in holy actions, in order that they may serve for the advancement of His glory.

WHILE UNDRESSING.

1. Consider that you undress yourself in order to sleep with more comfort, while Jesus Christ was born on straw for love of you and had not whereon to repose His Head.

2. Thank Him for having suffered so many hardships, to merit for you the grace to renounce the devil.

3. Pray Him by the extreme torment He endured when, before crucifying Him, they tore off the garment which adhered to His Sacred Wounds, to deliver you from your vicious habits, that being entirely divested of all affection to earthly things, you may embrace the Cross, may die upon it with Jesus Christ, and merit afterwards that robe of glory which God has prepared for those who love Him.

It is characteristic of the Saint that nearly all the reflections here recommended for use in our ordinary daily actions begin with some act of humility. He adds some other practices of a more general character, from which we may extract the following :

When standing.—Represent to yourself our Saviour and reflect on the manner in which He stood before His judges.

When walking.—Think of Jesus Christ going to Samaria and Calvary.

When your good works are censured.—Remember how those of our Lord were blamed, all holy as they were, and how men murmured at His curing the sick on the Sabbath-day.

When your neighbour rejects the counsel you had charitably given him.—Offer this refusal to our Lord, in remem-

brance of how little profit men have drawn from His holy doctrine.

In another little treatise called *Collyrio spiritual*, St. Francis Borgia dwells upon the thoughts proper to excite humility, which may be found in the consideration (1) of things under the earth, (2) of things upon the earth, (3) of things above the earth.

We may borrow a few sentences from the second of these divisions :

Let us consider that the earth is naturally prolific in producing all kinds of fruit, and that we are sterile by nature, and incapable of performing any good work. Let us remember that the water has been given us to fertilize the earth, and to quench our thirst, and that we have refused it to God, from Whom we received it, in refusing to the poor who ask for a drink in the name of God.

Let us consider that the fire which warms us, and prepares the food which nourishes us in this life, shall perhaps be our punishment in the next ; that this same fire which appears to us so intense, is nothing in comparison to that which the anger of God has prepared for sinners.

Since the air we breathe unceasingly preserves our life, we are bound to employ it all in the service of Him Who gave it, and it should be a great subject of confusion for us if we have failed in doing so.

Let us reflect, with regard to the stones and rocks, that these were broken and rent at the Death of our Blessed Saviour, and that we are insensible at the sight of so much suffering.

Let us consider that the plants grow and shoot

upwards, and that sinful man alone debases himself unceasingly by his attachment to terrestrial things. We should imitate the luxuriant trees which strike their roots deep into the earth, that their branches may be loaded with fruit. Happy is the man who in like manner throws down deep roots of humility, that he may merit to produce abundant fruits of virtue.

Let us remember that we have rendered ourselves, by our sins, like the beasts that serve us; that they deserve less than ourselves to be ill-treated when they refuse to obey us, for they are deprived of reason, but we make use of the gifts of God to resist His will. God never repented having created the beasts, but He has repented of having created man. What a subject of confusion for us!

If you are poor, attribute your poverty to a just judgment of God, Who punishes you for having squandered the spiritual gifts with which He had enriched your soul, or for having neglected to relieve the poor by your alms, or at least by your prayers. If your neighbour is in want, very far from esteeming him less, believe that God loads him with interior riches, in order to render him entirely conformable to His well-beloved Son. Neither should you despise those who are below you; on the contrary, you ought to respect them, since you see that the providence of God more frequently makes use of persons contemptible in the eyes of the world, for the accomplishment of His designs, than of those who hold the first rank. If God has placed you in a high position, do not attribute it to your own merit. Persuade yourself rather that He has had compassion on your weakness, that He has wished to spare you, that you are not suited to a laborious life, that you have not strength of mind enough to support

great adversities, and that you would undoubtedly have sunk under the hardships which those have to bear whom the necessities of their condition oblige to work day and night for their livelihood. If you have servants, humble yourself at seeing that they obey, serve, and honour you, although you have often refused to obey your Sovereign Lord, and to render Him the honour and services which you owe Him.

In 1549, Francis took his Doctor's degree. The light in which he regarded himself may be gathered from the following theses which he sent to Father Emmanuel Sà, who had in March of that year come from Portugal in order to teach theology in the University of Gandia. These theses ran thus: "Conclusions of confusion. I have been made out of nothing. I have been brought to nothing. I do not know what I am. If I know anything, this only do I know, that Hell would be my proper abode. Of myself I do nothing."¹

Before quitting the subject of Francis' studies, we may mention that he arranged the whole of the first part of the *Summa* of St. Thomas in the form of litanies and pious aspirations, in order to guard against the danger he continually dreaded, of allowing himself to study theology as a mere barren and speculative science, and not as a means of gaining an increasing love of God and a closer union with Him. The list of these litanies is as follows:

1. Litany of the Divine Attributes.
2. Litany of the Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity

¹ "Positiones confusionis. Ex nihilo factus sum. Ad nihilum redactus sum. Quid sim ignoro. Si aliquid scio, hoc tantum scio, infernum domum meam esse. Ex me ipso facio nihil."

in general, and of each of the three Divine Persons in particular.

3. Litany of the Holy Angels.

4. Litany of the Mystery of the Incarnation, and the union of the Divine Nature with the Human.

5. Litany of the Virtues and Graces which adorned the Incarnate Word.

6. Litany of the Annunciation and Conception of the Eternal Word.

7. Litany of the Mysteries of the Life of Christ, beginning with His Baptism.

8. Litany of our Lord's Passion.

9. Litany of the Mystery of our Lord's Resurrection.

10. Litany of the glorious Ascension of our Lord.

11. Litany of the Adorable Mystery of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. (This litany is of great length.)

12. Litany of Thanksgiving for the endowments of the created Soul.

13. Litany of the Benefits conferred on the Soul by infusion of the moral, cardinal, and theological virtues.

14. Litany of the Soul in its glorified and beatified state.

CHAPTER VIII.

HE LEAVES THE WORLD.

TOWARDS the close of 1549, the various undertakings which had hitherto occupied a not inconsiderable portion of Francis' time, thoughts, and attention, were brought to a satisfactory conclusion. His landed possessions had been freed from debt, or other pecuniary encumbrance. The public buildings he had commenced to erect, were all completed. His pious foundations were placed on a permanent basis and endowed, where need was, with a liberality which seemed to promise usefulness and stability in the future. Many aged retainers of the family, whose infirmities incapacitated them for service, were pensioned off, and secured against want for the remainder of their lives. His eldest son and two of his daughters were suitably married, his youngest daughter had become a Poor Clare, and his other sons were placed under guardians in whose fidelity and judgment he had every reason to repose implicit confidence. He was now able to tell St. Ignatius that he had conscientiously accomplished the work for the sake of which he had remained in the world. He entreated the Saint to allow him to leave Gandia and go to Rome, though he could not but see the magnitude of the obstacles which even now seemed to bar the way. The longer he remained in Spain,

the more certain was it that he would be called upon to render to his country services of a political nature. Indeed he had already received from Germany, where the Emperor still was, more than one very broad hint as to some responsible and prominent post which His Majesty was intending to press upon his acceptance. If, on the other hand, he were at once to repair to Rome, he was fully aware that dangers of another kind would meet him there. Paul III. was under great obligations to the house of Borgia, and he embraced every opportunity of marking his sense of this indebtedness. He had already conferred a Cardinal's hat upon Don Rodriguez and Don Henry, younger brothers of the Duke of Gandia, who had both died at a very early age. After their decease he had proposed to bestow upon two of Francis' sons the places thus left vacant in the Sacred College. But their father had always declined to entertain the idea, alleging their youth as a reason for his refusal. This reason would, however, he was fully aware, fail to hold good in his own case, and he felt morally certain that as soon as the Supreme Pontiff should learn that, by becoming a Jesuit, he had for ever renounced all worldly honours, he would be more eager than before in urging him to accept ecclesiastical dignities. It seemed to Francis that to do this would only be to leave the world in order to re-enter it in a yet more dangerous manner, and the dread which had weighed so heavily upon him before he decided to enter the Society, now recurred to his mind, and was the cause of no little distress and uneasiness.

But the Master Whom he desired to serve was not long in putting an end to his difficulties. At the close of 1549, Paul III. died, and was succeeded by Julius III. who, not having the same reasons for gratitude towards

the house of Borgia as his predecessor, was not likely to show the same desire to further the advancement of its members. Francis, therefore, thought that he might now venture upon the journey to Rome, and St. Ignatius coincided in his opinion, especially as the Jubilee of 1550, which was now close at hand, furnished an additional reason for repairing thither. As Francis was about to die to the world, he lost no time in making his will. A few days before his departure he caused his heir, the Marquess of Lombay, to be summoned to his study, and addressed to him the following exhortation:

“I think, Don Charles, that after the preparations which I have been making, it will scarcely be a surprise to you to hear that I am hoping very shortly to set out for Rome in order to visit the tombs of the Holy Apostles and to endeavour to gain the Jubilee. But I must further inform you that it is my intention, if I can obtain the consent of the Emperor, to make over to you all my possessions and to retire into the Society of Jesus, in order that I may there serve God more perfectly, according to the solemn promises I have made to Him. I will now tell you as briefly as possible what I want you to do, leaving the rest to your own good sense and uprightness of heart.

“It is very important for the glory of God, for my satisfaction, and for your own advantage, that you should so live and so govern your vassals as to cast no reflection upon my conduct in leaving you, while still so young, in so responsible a position. Do not let the world say that my confidence in your virtue and discretion was misplaced. Keep the law of God always in your heart and before your eyes, obey it strictly and follow it literally, disregarding the law of the world, which is too often diametrically opposed to it. Make

it your glory and honour to promote the honour and glory of God. Do not forget that I leave you *in loco parentis* as far as your younger brothers are concerned; be a father to them as well as to your servants, and to all who are in any way subject to you, striving to make yourself more loved than feared. See that virtue always finds in you a support and protector, and never allow vice to presume to show its face in your presence. Be not proud of the power and position which raise you above the level of so many of your fellow-men, but rather humble yourself the more on account of them, remembering the strict account you will have one day to render to Him from Whom you have received them. You cannot take with you into the next world the smallest portion of all your riches and possessions, for when you die you will be as poor and destitute as the meanest beggar in the streets of Gandia.

“Avoid hasty decisions in matters of importance, and keep the thought of death ever before your mind, for this is the real touchstone by which the value of earthly things must be tested. Though God has bestowed upon you a large amount of good sense and mental ability, do not rely upon your own judgment, but whenever affairs of moment are at stake, take counsel of wise and virtuous persons. Regard him as your best and truest friend who most freely reproves your faults and checks any outburst of passion, but turn a deaf ear to the voice of those who hide from you your failings and flatter all your inclinations.

“It is my special wish that you should do all you possibly can for the Dominican Fathers who are now settled in Gandia, and for the Jesuit Fathers likewise. Remember that both these foundations have been

made by members of your family, and that you will render to God no less a service in preserving than they did in establishing them. It is hardly necessary for me to commend to your care the Convent of Poor Clares. You have a sister and several other relatives among the nuns, and we know that their prayers will aid and protect you, and help to ensure your eternal salvation. But the best advice I can give you, and the point which I desire to impress most earnestly upon your mind, is to seek counsel in all things of God Himself, and to have constant recourse to the Source of light and truth, where you can find all you need. And I am certain that if you ask for wisdom in a spirit of humility, and with a sincere desire to obtain it, God will not fail to grant your request."

The Marquess was so profoundly touched by these words that he could not utter a single sentence. His sole answer was a flood of tears. Francis addressed suitable advice to each of his other children, according to their individual needs, as well as to his servants and retainers. All were deeply distressed at the prospect of his protracted absence, though they little dreamed that they were in reality taking a final farewell of their beloved father and master, as far at least as the greater number were concerned. He left Gandia on the 31st of August, 1550. On this occasion he shed as many tears as those whom he was leaving behind, but theirs were tears of sorrow, while his were tears of joy. When he had ridden as far as the gate of the city, he paused, and turning round, fixed his gaze on the stately towers and ancient battlements of his home, which he had secretly resolved that his eyes should never behold again. Then he passed out into the open country, carolling forth in the gladness of his

heart as he rode along Psalm cxiii.: *In exitu Israel*, wherein David depicts the blessedness of the chosen people on leaving Egypt. Having recited the *Gloria Patri*, he added, as if unable to contain the transport of his joy, the following words of another Psalm: "The snare is broken, and we are delivered. Our hope is in the name of the Lord, Who made Heaven and earth."¹ Don John, the second son of the Duke, accompanied him on his journey. Francis was attended by about thirty retainers, all mounted on horseback. The band of travellers also included several Jesuit Fathers whom St. Ignatius had summoned to Rome, in order that they might be present at a meeting of professed Fathers shortly to be held there. Yet it seemed as if they were not the only Religious comprised in the party, so great, we are told, was the piety and spirit of recollection displayed by every one without a single exception, so regular was the manner of life observed, and so devout the attention paid to every exercise of piety. As for Francis himself, it is easy to believe that he permitted himself none of the indulgences which a traveller might have reasonably claimed. On the contrary, he relaxed not one of his usual austerities. On one occasion, when the party were spending the night in an hotel, one of his pages, more curious and less discreet than the rest, arose softly from his bed, and crept on tip-toe to the door of his master's room. Francis was taking the discipline, and in the stillness of the sleeping house, the listener could hear each blow as it fell. He counted up to five hundred, and then, awe-struck and half terrified, withdrew as noiselessly as he had come.

Francis was naturally anxious to reach Rome with

¹ Psalm cxxiii. 7, 8.

the least possible delay. Yet he could not resist the pressing invitation of the Duke of Ferrara to spend a few days with him in that city. This nobleman was a connection of the Borgia family, and lavished upon Francis during the four days he passed beneath his roof, every courteous attention and mark of hospitality. With equal honour was our traveller received by Duke Cosmo dei Medici, with whom he stayed for a short time at Florence. All these manifestations of esteem and respect were so foreign to his wishes and intentions, that he wrote to St. Ignatius, declaring his determination to enter Rome by night, in order to do so unnoticed. The Saint promptly sent a reply in which he positively forbade him to do anything of the kind. "You cannot," he said, "decline the public reception which so many persons are desirous of giving you, without offending them. The interior repugnance you feel will procure for you the merit of humility, without losing that of obedience and charity." Hence it came to pass that the procession which met Francis outside Rome, and conducted him within the gate of the Eternal City, was one which would have beseeemed a king. The Spanish Ambassador, several Roman princes, several Cardinals, and a large number of noblemen, not to mention the retinue of all these grand personages, formed a very numerous train. To crown all, the Pope sent a special messenger, in order to request the Duke of Gandia to take up his abode in the Vatican. With the utmost reluctance Francis refused this offer. He felt that he could alight at no other door than that of the Jesuit house. St. Ignatius met him on the threshold, and tried in vain to prevent him from throwing himself at his feet and kissing his hand. Both these great servants of

God wept for joy and embraced each other with the utmost tenderness, nor is it easy to say to which of the two this meeting, so long desired, afforded the sincerest satisfaction.

Their first conversation was but brief, since Francis was anxious to go at once and pay his respects to the Pope. His Holiness received him with more than ordinary cordiality and distinction, and expressed himself in the most eulogistic terms in regard to the piety which had drawn him to Rome. "It is much to be wished," he said in conclusion, "that the admirable example your Grace has given, could have a due effect upon the mind of other princes and noblemen. We should then have the joy of witnessing the revival of the faith and fervour displayed in the early days of the Church, when kings and emperors came from afar in order to kneel before the tombs of the Apostles, and to show honour to Jesus Christ by reverencing the person of His Vicar." The Holy Father then repeated his hospitable proposals, and once more expressed the pleasure it would afford him to have Francis as a guest beneath his roof. The Duke excused himself as best he could, assuring His Holiness that he entirely appreciated his paternal kindness, and that he should hope frequently to be permitted to kiss his feet and receive his benediction. He then withdrew, and returned to the Jesuit house, where all the Cardinals and prelates then in Rome successively came to call upon him. In his turn he paid them each a brief visit, but he grudged every hour thus spent, deeming it altogether wasted. His humility prevented him from perceiving the edification he gave to all by the modesty of his bearing, the prudence of his conversation, and his truly Christian charity.

But it was in the midst of his brethren in Religion that he appeared to the best advantage and felt most at home. His admiration for the Founders and earliest Fathers of the Society knew no bounds, and he envied all who were appointed to render them the lowest and most menial services. He seized every opportunity of himself performing these offices, regarding such humiliations as his truest glory. He spent as much time as possible in the company of St. Ignatius, opening to him the inmost recesses of his heart in a manner which could not be practised by letter. The more the Saint saw of Francis, the more delighted he was with him. He explained to him all his views and plans in regard to the future of the Society, and spoke at length of the virtues which he desired his children to study more particularly in order to fit themselves to carry out the special objects for which the Order was founded. Francis drank in with avidity these instructions, which were in due time destined to be productive of so much good. He moulded his mind in such a manner that it began to wear the very features of his teacher, and thus he was enabled, when by the will of God he found himself occupying the place of the Saint, to continue the undertakings the latter had commenced, and to bring them to a successful issue, without deviating by so much as a hair's breadth from the plans originally conceived by the master-spirit of St. Ignatius.

Francis prepared himself to gain the Jubilee by making a general confession of his whole life. He subsequently devoted several weeks to visiting all the spots which make Rome interesting and attractive to the Christian. The remains of Pagan Rome had no charms for him. Like St. Fulgentius in early times, he desired to see that only to which faith and piety lend

a halo of beauty, and gazing around him in this spirit, he used to say that the sights and associations of Rome made him long, with ever-increasing fervour, to behold the Heavenly Jerusalem. He loved to trace the workings of the Holy Ghost in the heroic courage of the saints and martyrs, and to seek out the monuments of their victories over the powers of darkness. Every day he discovered fresh wonders, which animated his faith, and aroused in him a still more profound attachment to the mysteries of our holy religion.

Yet he did not permit these various occupations and interests to absorb all his thoughts, or prevent him from reflecting upon what he might do for the good of others. In the course of his journey to Rome, he spoke to the Dukes of Ferrara and Florence, to the Archbishop of Genoa, to the Papal Legate at Bologna, about the Jesuits, and represented to each of these personages the benefits which would accrue to their cities if a house of the Society were founded there. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that the Colleges which were founded, at no distant date, in the above-mentioned localities, owed their origin to him. During his stay at Rome, he achieved great things for the glory of God, by setting on foot the Roman College. Every one knows the immense services it has rendered to Christendom, by means of the hosts of valiant soldiers of the Cross who have gone forth from its walls. To enlarge upon the subject would be therefore superfluous, and is foreign to our present purpose. Francis spent upon this edifice almost the whole of the sums which yet remained at his disposal, and procured from Spain the means of keeping it up. St. Ignatius wished to confer upon him the title of Founder, but Francis persistently refused to accept it, saying that

the honour would be more fitly worn by him to whose lot it should fall to complete the undertaking. The title was finally accepted by Pope Gregory XIII., who contributed to the adornment of the College with a munificent liberality worthy of so great a Pontiff. Francis found his stay at Rome so profitable to his soul, and so delightful in every way, that he became increasingly desirous to remain there for several years, under the roof of St. Ignatius. To this end he took steps for divesting himself of his rank and titles, and for making a formal and final renunciation of the power he still retained over his estates and possessions. In order to the accomplishment of his project the consent of the Emperor was absolutely indispensable. He therefore despatched a courier to Augsburg, where Charles V. was then staying, with the following letter.

Our Lord knows how anxiously I have hoped that your Majesty would, in compliance with the general expectation, pay a visit to Italy on your way home. I am certain that in this case your Majesty would have been graciously pleased to grant me an audience, in order that I might say by word of mouth all that I am now doing myself the honour of putting on paper. But in whatever manner I offer myself to your notice, I can only do so with a sense of extreme confusion, being, as your Majesty must be only too well aware, a miserable sinner, and having been far from giving the edification I ought, during the period of my sojourn at the Imperial Court. For this I crave your forgiveness, and I am ready to make any satisfaction which it may seem fit either to my earthly Sovereign or to my Heavenly King to impose upon me. I trust that you will extend towards me your royal clemency, remembering how

Almighty God has preserved me alive until the present day, although I have over and over again deserved to be cast down into the very depths of Hell, on account of my innumerable transgressions. He has, moreover, opened the eyes of my soul, and enabled me to see what He has done for me, and what I have done against Him.

Immediately after the death of the Duchess of Gandia, He inspired me with the resolution at which I have finally arrived after a lengthened period of mature deliberation, and after due consultation with many servants of God, who have not ceased to offer for me their prayers and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. My wish to give myself altogether to Him has increased day by day, as His grace has gradually dispelled the darkness of my heart, until at last I have ventured to enter the vineyard of the Lord and offer to work there, although as yet I have spent my life in doing nothing but harm. It has pleased His infinite goodness, which is like an ocean without bottom or shore, so to influence His servants who belong to the Society of Jesus, that they have admitted me into their Order. As yet I have been unable to carry out my design of leaving the world in order to serve God as a Jesuit *usque ad mortem*, because I have been obliged to discharge the duties of a father in regard to my children. I hope, however, in the course of two or three months at the furthest, to find myself altogether free, and I believe that the Fathers of the Society will then allow me to take up my permanent abode in their midst. Under these circumstances I have no alternative except to implore your Majesty, as your humble servant and subject, and as Commander of your Majesty's Order of St. James, to give me the greatest possible proof of the favour with

which you have ever been graciously pleased to regard me. I beseech you to give me leave to spend the remainder of my days in lamenting over my past sins, and striving to make atonement for them, in recognizing the full extent of the miseries and dangers which surround me in the present, and in providing against the uncertainties of the future. Should our Lord vouchsafe me grace sufficient to correct my evil life and become more acceptable in His sight, I promise to offer my prayers and Holy Sacrifices without ceasing, for the temporal welfare of your Majesty, and still more for your eternal salvation. May God, Who has enabled your Majesty to win such signal victories over heretics and unbelievers, enable you to conquer no less completely the enemies of your soul and your own sinful inclinations, so that you may say with the Apostle: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."¹ Those who have not altogether lost their taste for spiritual things, can find true happiness nowhere but in this Cross. All the pleasures of the world seem to them heavy and wearisome, when once they have experienced the sweetness of the Saviour's yoke, so that it seems to them a grievous thing if they have no cross to carry, and are left to live on without trials or sufferings. I beg Him Who endured so much upon the Cross for your Majesty's sake, to be pleased to guard and watch over your Imperial person.

Rome, January 15, 1551.

Francis had fully intended to await in Rome the reply to this epistle. But circumstances upon which he had not reckoned, and which were beyond his

¹ Galat. vi. 15.

control, intervened to frustrate his plan. The life he had led since his arrival in Rome had awakened, in the minds of many persons, shrewd suspicions as to his ultimate object in coming thither. After the departure of the messenger he despatched to Charles V. the truth began to leak out more and more, so that the matter became ere long an open secret. While evincing unfeigned admiration for Francis' piety and humility, the Pope was reluctant that he should remain, as His Holiness expressed it, "buried in obscurity in the retirement of the religious life." He therefore desired to make him a Cardinal with the least possible delay; and the members of the Sacred College, who had been won by the irresistible charm which he exercised over all who came in contact with him, unanimously concurred in the wish of the Pope. The news of this intended honour soon reached the ears of its destined recipient, who could not feel otherwise than deeply grieved at finding himself obliged to quit Rome for the very same reason which had, under the previous pontificate, prevented him from journeying thither. He had only spent four months there, and he would fain have stayed for at least as many years. However, the case was one which left no room for either hesitation or delay, but called, on the contrary, for prompt and energetic action. There was no alternative but to go, and that with as little delay as possible. Francis' departure was a somewhat abrupt one, for he omitted many of the ceremonious visits which he would, under other circumstances, have paid. His parting from St. Ignatius was most affectionate. Both felt the leave-taking very keenly, although they consoled themselves with the consciousness that no distance can really separate those who are united in thought and

affection, and in their mutual love of Jesus Christ. *Ubi amat, ibi habitat*, as St. Augustine beautifully expresses it.

On arriving once more in Spain, Francis travelled straight to the Castle of Loyola, and asked to be shown the room in which St. Ignatius was born. He kissed the floor several times, and then, kneeling down, fervently thanked God for having there caused to arise so great a light of the Church, and also for having bestowed upon him so great a favour as to become the son and disciple of this admirable Father and teacher, whose life and virtues he ardently desired to imitate. This done, he heard Mass and received Holy Communion at Loyola, after which he proceeded to the little town of Oñate, situated only a few miles distant. Here Father Araoz, whose name has already several times occurred in these pages, had recently established a Jesuit house, and here Francis determined to wait for the anxiously-expected letter from the Emperor, which would, he hoped, enable him to complete all that was yet lacking to his happiness. This letter, which shows a generous forgetfulness of self rarely to be met with in a great and powerful monarch, arrived in the course of a few days. It bears date the 12th of February, 1551, and ran as follows:

Most Noble Duke,—I have received from your messenger the letter you sent to me. And although the determination you have formed, of retiring from the world, in order to devote yourself altogether to matters pertaining to a better life, is holy and praiseworthy, it cannot but cause me deep and lasting regret. Yet I will not allow my personal feelings to prevent me from freely granting your request, and giving you my gracious permission to make over your title and estates

to Don Charles, your eldest son. Of one thing I am quite certain, namely, that in taking the step you propose, you will find more admirers than imitators. For it is very easy to admire an example of eminent virtue, and very difficult to imitate it. By leaving your children, you lay upon me the obligation of caring for them, and I shall endeavour to do this to the very best of my ability, whenever opportunity may offer. I can never forget the virtues of their admirable mother, nor the services their illustrious father has rendered to me and to my Empire. May our Lord God be your guide, most noble Duke! I earnestly recommend myself to your prayers, as well as all my undertakings, and indeed the whole welfare of Christendom.

When Francis had perused this letter, he withdrew to the chapel, where, after fervently thanking our Lord for the favour thus granted him, he implored grace to detach himself from all affection for the perishable possessions he was now about to renounce. He then returned to his apartments, and the joy which irradiated his features spoke for itself as to the nature of the Emperor's reply. He lost no time in summoning the notaries and other members of the legal profession, whose business it was to draw up the documents necessary for a formal act of renunciation in regard not only to his title, but to everything he possessed, without the slightest reservation.

We may here relate that it was only under one of the three following conditions, that Francis ever referred to his former title or allowed himself to make any use of it. When he perceived that persons who wished to try their vocation, and enter the Society as novices, were, for some reason or other, refused

admission on account of unsuitability, he used to say : " Now I thank God from the bottom of my heart for having made me a Duke ! Assuredly there was nothing else about me which could possibly have induced my Superiors to accept me." Again, when in the course of his frequent journeys he paused at any place in order to say Mass there, his request was not always granted at the outset, in districts where he was not known. The alleged excuse was sometimes the lateness of the hour, sometimes the trouble which would be incurred by re-arranging the altar. But Francis desire to offer the Holy Sacrifice was not so easily baffled. On such occasions he would turn to his Socius with a smile, saying : " Now it is time to call in the aid of the secular arm, since my ecclesiastical power does not suffice." Then in the simplest manner he would make known who he was, and it is needless to add that all hesitation on the part of the local priest vanished in a moment. And finally, Francis wished still to be considered as Duke of Gandia, in regard to the foundations which had been made of Masses and prayers to be offered for the souls of his predecessors. He desired that these intercessions and supplications should be sent up to Heaven on his behalf while he was still upon earth, in order that by being thus treated as if already dead, he might be warned to keep himself constantly in readiness to appear before God. In thus doing he was, as one of his biographers tells us, " actuated by a feeling similar to that which has induced certain princes and great ones of the earth to cause their mausoleum to be erected, their coffins made, or their obsequies performed, during their lifetime."

The deeds having been completed and signed, his next step was to divest himself of his secular garments

and assume the habit of the Society. He caused his beard to be shaved off, his hair to be cut short, and the tonsure marked upon his head, as a preparation for receiving Holy Orders. While this was going on, his servants wept bitterly, feeling that their beloved master was already dead, as far as they were concerned. They gathered up the fallen locks of his hair, to be kept as sacred relics, for they had seen him lead the life of a saint, and they felt that he was leaving the world for ever.

His transformation completed, Francis assembled them all around him. Previous to dismissing them, he delivered to them a short and simple, yet eloquent address. In it he once more urged upon them to try and remain faithful servants of Him Who has a claim to the best service that can be rendered Him. As a last mark of his regard, he asked Don John, his second son, to take some of their number into his service, and wrote a letter to Don Charles, the new Duke, requesting him to find places in his household for the rest. There now remained nothing but to say good-bye. The pathetic scene which followed, closely resembled that which took place on the departure of St. Paul from Ephesus, and may be described in the words of Holy Scripture: "When he had said these things, kneeling down, he prayed with them all. And there was much weeping among them all; and falling on the neck of Paul, they kissed him, having grieved most of all for the word which he had said, that they should see his face no more."¹

It is time for us also to take leave of the Duke of Gandia, whom we shall meet in the next chapter as Father Francis, S.J., by which name alone he will henceforth be called.

¹ Acts xx. 36—38.

CHAPTER IX.

HIS FIRST MASS AND SERMON.

"It is," says Father Cepari, "altogether beyond the power of words to express the spiritual content, the joy of soul experienced by Francis, when he realized the fact that he had now laid aside his title once and for ever, and divested himself of all his dignities and possessions. He seemed now for the first time truly to belong to himself, or, to speak more correctly, to his Creator and his Lord, since there remained nothing which could prevent him from giving himself altogether to Him. Seeing himself to be clothed in the garb of poverty, feeling himself to be at last a Religious in very deed, he once more betook himself to the oratory. There prostrate on the ground before the Blessed Sacrament, with abundance of the sweetest tears, he gave thanks to God for having made him His servant, the bondsman of Jesus Christ. 'O Lord,' he exclaimed, 'I am Thy servant; I am Thy servant and the son of Thy handmaid. Those hast broken my bonds; I will sacrifice to Thee the sacrifice of praise.'¹ Then, since he had enlisted beneath the banner of Christ, he desired to spread abroad the holy name of Jesus without regard to human respect or the judgments of men."²

Francis was not one to allow his grateful joy to

¹ Psalm cxv. 16, 17.

² Cepari, pp. 54, 55.

evaporate in outpourings of sentiment or bursts of rapture. His eager and energetic character delighted in action, and he now panted to be at work. Not a day did he lose in finding out what he was to do next. Having already, as the reader has seen, completed his studies, his immediate business was to prepare for the reception of Holy Orders. This he did not only by prayer, penance, and mortification, but by a careful and minute study of the ceremonies of the Mass. Even the least and apparently most unimportant of these, were regarded by him with the utmost respect and admiration, on account of the spirit in which the Church has instituted them, and the traditions of the holy Apostles and Pontiffs who have handed them on from age to age. His extreme reverence for holy things made him fear lest familiarity should diminish his sense of the sacredness of the Mysteries of the Altar, and of his own unfitness to approach them. When, at a subsequent period, his position in the Society entitled him to speak with authority, he used to endeavour by every means in his power to instil this reverential awe into the minds of those who were preparing for the priesthood. He dwelt with all the greater stress upon the necessity for it, because he believed it to be too frequently lost sight of. To any one whom he considered to be deficient in this respect, he would recall the terrible fate of Oza. With a solemnity of manner which baffles description, he would repeat and comment upon the words of Holy Scripture: "Oza put forth his hand to touch the ark. And the Lord was angry with Oza, and struck him, because he had touched the ark; and he died there before the Lord."¹

¹ 1 Paral. xiii 9, 10.

Francis was ordained priest by the Bishop of Calahorra on Saturday in Whitsun week, 1551. He did not, however, say his first Mass until the 1st of the following August, the feast of St. Peter's Chains. It was celebrated in the chapel of the Castle of Loyola, the splendid vestment he wore on the occasion being the work of his sister, Doña Louisa Borgia, Countess of Ribargorça. This vestment was preserved in the Jesuit house at Vergara, and many striking miracles have been accomplished through its application to sick persons, whose maladies have been by this means instantly and completely cured. Don John Borgia was present at the Mass, and partook of Holy Communion. "Thus," as Father Ribadeneira remarks, "did the son receive from his father's hand the most precious gift that Heaven or earth can bestow." Pope Julius III. granted a Plenary Indulgence on the usual conditions to all those who should assist at Francis' first public Mass. For the greater convenience of those who might desire to be present, arrangements were made for it to be said at Vergara, a town a few miles distant from Oñate. The principal church of the place was, moreover, selected for the purpose, in order to afford, as was supposed, ample accommodation for all intending worshippers. Every anticipation was transcended by what actually took place. The day fixed was the 15th of November, and the announcement of the Indulgence to be gained, together with the curiosity awakened by this first opportunity of beholding the Duke of Gandia in the character of a priest, drew together so vast a concourse of persons, that the church was inadequate to contain more than a mere fraction of them. An altar was therefore set up in the open country outside the walls of Vergara, in the vicinity

of a hermitage dedicated to St. Anne. An improvised pulpit was also erected close at hand in readiness for the sermon which was to follow the Mass. So great was the number of those who pressed forward to receive the Bread of Life from the hand of him whom they already regarded as a saint, that Francis was ever and anon compelled to pause from sheer exhaustion and inability to continue the distribution of It. We are told that the Mass began at nine o'clock in the morning and was not concluded until three in the afternoon. This statement savours somewhat of exaggeration, and must, in any case, be taken to include the sermon, which merits a very special mention, as being the occasion of the first of the many open miracles by means of which God was pleased to set His seal upon the sanctity of His servant.

In regard to the subject originally chosen by the preacher as the theme of his discourse, no particulars have, unfortunately, come down to us. But the day on which it was delivered may truly be termed a second day of Pentecost, so plenteous was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God which then took place, and so manifest was it to every one that Francis was endowed, at least on that memorable occasion, with the gift of tongues in a degree scarcely less striking than that which was vouchsafed to the earliest and chosen Apostles of the Lord. His voice was distinctly audible to the farthest verge of the immense assemblage met together on the plain to hear him, although this could not possibly have been brought about by any natural means. But, more wonderful still, every sentence he uttered, every idiom he employed, was perfectly intelligible to each one of his hearers, although he spoke the purest Castilian, while they were acquainted

only with their own provincial dialects, which in most cases, and especially in that of the Basque provinces, to which the greater number of them belonged, were so marked and so peculiar as to form a separate language. They were all amazed and wondered, saying: "How have we heard every man our own tongue wherein we were born?"¹ Yet the greatest marvel of all still remains to be told. Not only was every word St. Francis uttered distinctly audible by, and perfectly intelligible to, each member of the almost countless multitude that hung upon his lips, but the voice of the preacher became to every hearer the voice of God in a special and peculiar manner, since it spoke in the depths of his soul the message most needed by him at the moment. Every one said in his heart, "This is what the holy Duke is preaching"—*Esto es lo que el Duque santo predica*. The hardened sinner heard an earnest call to repentance, coupled with a forcible reminder of the terrible judgments awaiting the impenitent after death. The individual who, in spite of repentance, had relapsed into sin, was warned to beware, lest, presuming on the mercy of God, he should fall to rise no more. The man who was battling with some seductive temptation, to which he felt himself on the eve of succumbing, was encouraged to struggle on, and to remember that God never refuses His grace and help to those who humbly trust in Him. The just were exhorted to higher perfection. The weary and sorrowful were cheered and soothed. Those for whom there remained no hope of happiness on earth, were bidden to wait in patience for the breaking of that day when the shadows shall retire.

At length Francis ceased to speak and the congre-

¹ Acts ii. 7, 8.

gation began slowly to disperse. A feeling of awe, produced by the close contact into which they were conscious of having been brought with the supernatural, hovered over them all. They went their several ways, for the most part in silence. If any one less reticent and more loquacious than his companions attempted to discuss the sermon, he found himself completely nonplussed, since, as is obvious from what we have just related, no two accounts were found to coincide. The impression thus created became permanent, and was productive of much good. Whenever Francis went forth, as he frequently did during his residence at Oñate, with a bell in his hand, in order to collect the children of the adjacent hamlets and villages that he might teach them the catechism, and instruct them in the truths of the Christian religion, persons of every age eagerly gathered together to hear him, saying one to another, *Vamos a oír a este hombre venido del cielo*. Indeed he was commonly known among the peasantry as "The man who came down from Heaven," and his admonitions were received with proportionate reverence and attention.

Having thus given an account of the first sermon delivered by Francis in public, we will proceed to gather together some details concerning him as a preacher, in order not to be obliged to recur to the subject at frequent intervals, and thus break off, from time to time, the thread of his history.

Regarding him from a merely human point of view, it is undeniable that nature had bestowed upon this favoured child of hers, every gift that is necessary to constitute an orator. As he was a born ruler, so was he also a born orator. He possessed a handsome person, a pleasing and well-modulated voice, a cultivated

and richly stored mind, a ready flow of language, an apt choice of illustration, together with that combined grace and dignity of gesture which is more frequently to be met with among Spaniards than among members of any other European nation, and has been well described as "the Spanish arm." Prior to his withdrawal from the world, Francis' speeches in the Cortes excited universal admiration, and there is no doubt that, had his political career not been abruptly broken off, he would, in course of time, have been the acknowledged leader of that assembly. When to all his other and natural gifts, we add that eminent personal sanctity, without which they could avail little in regard to preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it must at once become apparent that the newly ordained priest was destined to do an immense amount of good, if only by means of his sermons. The eagle eye of St. Ignatius quickly discerned the fact, concerning which there could indeed be but one opinion.

After hearing a discourse delivered by Francis, Don John, brother of the then King of Portugal, said to his courtiers: "Here truly is a preacher to whom I delight to listen, because he teaches us by his actions, and practises what he preaches." On another occasion, when Francis was preaching the Lent in the Cathedral of Evora, Cardinal Don Henry, who made a point of being present at every sermon of the course, remarked to more than one person: "It is enough if Father Francis does but show himself in the pulpit. The mere sight of so saintly a man, who has given up so much for God and achieved such great things in His service, is sufficient to melt the hardest heart and convert the entire audience." The Duke of Braganza, who, together with a number of other noblemen, had

come from a considerable distance in order to hear these same sermons, was equally impressed and edified.

Among the first of Francis' sermons, in order of time, were some which he preached in Valladolid, not very long after his ordination, during a temporary sojourn in that city, made by command of St. Ignatius. We give them a special mention here on account of the numerous conversions they effected, two of the most remarkable of which may be related in detail as follows.

Don John de Moschera, an officer of high rank in the army, had for many years led a life which gave open scandal. Not content with steeping himself to the lips in vice, he cherished so bitter a hatred against virtue, that the mere fact of leading a good and pious life was certain to awaken his enmity in regard to any person, however otherwise unknown to him. Priests who, by reason of their office, might have exhorted him to amendment, abstained from doing so; some, because they considered his case to be a hopeless one, others because they lacked the moral courage necessary to face the storm of rage and invective with which the gentlest remonstrance was invariably received. Thus time went by, until one day Don John happened to be passing the Church of St. Antony, in Valladolid, and noticed an unusual crowd at the principal entrance. He inquired the reason, and was told that the throng had gathered in order to hear Father Francis Borgia, who was announced to preach that afternoon. Don John had constantly derided the manner in which the Duke of Gandia had left the world, and he now burst into a violent passion. "Rather," he declared, "would I go straight down to Hell this very moment than enter that church! Father Francis is a devil, and so are

the other Jesuits who are with him. No words can say how I hate them all, and every member of their Society besides!" These extravagant expressions were repeated to Francis, whose soul was at once filled with the tender compassion he felt for all sinners, and more especially for those who declared themselves to be, not only his own personal enemies, but enemies also of the Society.

During eight days he offered the Holy Sacrifice in order to obtain the conversion of so great a sinner. He, moreover, besought God to accept all his prayers and penances for the same end. On the morning of the ninth day, as soon as he had finished Mass, he set out in order to call upon Don John at his country-house, which was situated about a mile and a half from the small town of Simancas, and nine or ten miles from Valladolid. The announcement of the visitor's name caused the officer to experience no slight embarrassment. He was too well-bred not to feel heartily ashamed of his public outbreak, as well as the abusive and undignified language in which he had indulged. The admiration he had formerly entertained for the Duke of Gandia, rendered him reluctant to behave with discourtesy to Father Francis. After a few moments' hesitation, he desired his servant to admit the Saint. On entering the room where Don John was, the latter threw himself at his feet, imploring his forgiveness for any words or deeds by which he might have unconsciously caused so strong an aversion to himself to arise. Completely disarmed, Don John knelt down in his turn, and asked pardon, not only of Francis, but also of God. He declared his sincere sorrow for his wicked and irreligious life, and for the unbecoming expressions he had used in regard to

St. Ignatius and his brethren in Religion. Francis had the delight of reconciling this obstinate sinner with God by means of a general confession. He furthermore undertook the task of reconciling him with his fellow-men, for his unbridled licentiousness and shameless vices had made him a great many enemies. He began, from that day forward, to lead an utterly different life, under the direction of Father Francis. Every week he went to confession and received Holy Communion, preparing himself with the utmost care and devoutness for both these sacraments. He devoted much time to prayer, and practised severe penances and mortifications. His was one of those strong characters to whom compromises are abhorrent. As he had formerly been notorious for his vices and excesses, so did he now become remarkable for virtue and self-control. He embraced every opportunity of cultivating the acquaintance of the Jesuit Fathers, and of evincing by his conduct the honour and esteem he felt for them. Finally, he made over to the Society his country-seat near Simancas, to which, as we have just seen, St. Francis had gone in the first instance with the hope of gaining his soul to God. At a subsequent period the Saint established a Novitiate there. The house was a great favourite with him, and after he became General he used to retire thither whenever he felt that a few days' rest and quiet were absolutely necessary in order to recruit his physical and mental powers.¹

¹ Simancas is a compact little town, built on a hillside, and rather difficult of access. The house which formed the Jesuit Novitiate has ceased to belong to the Society. The Royal Archives of Spain are now kept at Simancas, in a castellated building occupying the centre of a square in the midst of the town. A considerable number of the documents relating to England during the reign of Elizabeth have been calendared by Don Pascual Gayangos.

Don John de Moschera begged as a great favour that he might be permitted to end his days in the house that had once been his. The request was, of course, granted, and he spent there the few years which remained to him on earth, edifying those who approached him by his charity and humility. He broke off all connection with the outside world, and ceased to take any interest in its affairs. During his last illness, which extended over several months, his patience was exemplary. When on his death-bed, he repeated at intervals the *Miserere* with every mark of sincere contrition, the last intelligible words he uttered being: "A contrite and humbled heart, O Lord, Thou wilt not despise."¹

The second remarkable conversion was that of a lady who belonged to one of the first families of Spain. She had lived in Court circles for many years, and was celebrated for her beauty, wit, and utter worldliness. A careless mother, and not too faithful wife, she was at length attracted by curiosity to go and hear Father Francis. His sermon so deeply impressed her that, as one historian remarks, "she went straight home and washed off all her paint. She laid aside her false hair, and discontinued the use of the artificial aids whereby she had been accustomed to heighten the effect of her charms." Nor was this a mere passing impulse. The interior change wrought in her was as great as the exterior. She became an example of piety, attending to her home duties, and living as quietly and dressing as plainly as was consistent with her high position and the wishes of her husband. After his death, she spent a large portion of her private fortune in works of charity. She founded a convent "of very strict

¹ Psalm l. 19.

observance," though of what Order we are not told. Into it she retired as soon as her children were suitably provided for, and there she ended her days in peace.

But it is time to return to Father Francis. Among his most celebrated sermons was a course which he preached at Alcalà, in the year following that in which he delivered at Valladolid the discourses of which we have just spoken. This second set consisted of an exposition of the Lamentations of Jeremias. They were intended to bring the meaning of this beautiful Book of Holy Scripture within the comprehension of the common people. But so many persons of rank and education, so many priests, so many University professors, crowded to hear Francis, that no room was left for a humbler and 'more ignorant audience. The most learned doctors of theology were astonished at the depth and extent of his attainments. They were frequently heard to remark to one another, on coming out of church, that there was more wisdom in Francis' words than in all their books, and that he who desires to enter into the true meaning of Holy Scripture ought to be a saint, as the preacher undoubtedly was.

Later on in his life we read of an address which he gave in Holy Week to the novices at Simancas. Taking for his subject the Last Supper, he described in the most pathetic terms the manner in which Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, not excepting even the traitor Judas. Then, turning to himself, he dwelt on his extreme unworthiness, and on the number and heinousness of the sins and infidelities to grace which made him still more guilty than the faithless Apostle. Every one of those who heard him, seeing his deep humility, felt with shame their own deficiency in that

virtue. Moreover, the words of the Saint were never forgotten by them, but remembered, to their profit, as long as they lived.

By far the larger number of St. Francis' sermons were delivered in the course of three years (1551—1554), during which he resided chiefly at Oñate. It will readily be understood that the weighty and important duties which devolved upon him, after he was called to take part in the government of the Society, prevented him from devoting any considerable portion of his time to pulpit oratory. This was especially the case, because the preparation he made for his sermons was always thorough and minute. Never did he presume upon either his natural gifts or acquired learning. When about to preach, he first of all went to confession, "for," as he used to say, "sin blinds the soul and deprives it of that discernment which is absolutely necessary for him who is to speak with the voice of God and become His mouthpiece." Then he would carefully read over the portion of Holy Scripture which he had selected as the basis of his discourse, and consult the writings of the early Fathers of the Church, in so far as they bore upon the subject. Among his particular favourites we may mention St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, and St. John Chrysostom. He next carefully marked down the various heads of his sermon, and the points upon which he desired chiefly to enlarge. If he feared lest his memory should fail, he employed a method of his own, in order to fix any details in his mind. But he never, unless upon some altogether exceptional occasion, wrote out his sermons at full length. He found that to do so only hampered him, since the Spirit of God often suggested to him while he was preaching better

words and more forcible expressions than any he could have thought of beforehand. Three days before he ascended the pulpit he used to invoke the aid and protection of the Blessed Trinity. On the first day he besought the Father to strengthen his memory and that of his audience; on the second day he implored the Son to enlighten their understanding; on the third day he entreated the Holy Ghost to kindle their will. He, moreover, invoked their Angel Guardians and also those saints who had most excelled in the virtues he wished to inculcate upon them. His own innate conviction of the truth of all he uttered, caused his words to go straight to the hearts of his hearers.

Although, as we have just said, his duties, first as Provincial, and then as General of the Society, left him very little time for preaching, he took immense pains in forming preachers. Some of his biographers do not hesitate to assert that to his care and training the Jesuits mainly owe their world-wide reputation as orators. Fearing lest his oral instructions should be forgotten, he embodied them in a treatise, which he wrote from time to time, as opportunity afforded. This work he entitled *Advice to Preachers*, and we may suitably conclude the present chapter by selecting a few extracts from it. We do this all the more readily, because the advice thus given by St. Francis Borgia is of universal application, and not limited in any way to members of the Society. The idea of publishing the volume was partly suggested by an incident which occurred during his provincialate, and occasioned him the deepest pain. Although it belongs to a later period of his life, we will relate it here, as it is not without a direct bearing upon the quotations which will follow it. It happened towards the close of 1554.

Among the Canons of Seville Cathedral, was one whose eloquence had obtained for him a place among the best preachers of the day. He was appointed Preacher-in-Ordinary to the Emperor, who took great delight in listening to him, and the highest ecclesiastical preferment seemed to be in store for him. He was a man of much learning and considerable mental acuteness, but pride and curiosity were his ruin. He procured the works of Luther, read them with avidity, and lost his purity of faith. Not content with this, he, having, as St. Paul says, "himself erred from the faith, subverted the faith of some."¹ Insidiously did he introduce false doctrine into his sermons, and was suspended in consequence. Unhumbled and unabashed, he persevered in his efforts to sow cockle around him, and led besides an immoral life, so that at length the tribunal of the Inquisition, like a wise surgeon, hesitated not to amputate the gangrened limb, in order to preserve the whole body, and condemned him to be burnt alive. Before the day fixed for the execution, St. Francis, who happened to be then in Seville, visited the unhappy apostate in his dungeon, and implored him with tears to realize his awful position, and repent of his grievous sins. But the pathetic exhortations of the Saint were totally without effect. The miserable man declared that he could neither repent nor believe. He had indeed lost the very principle of faith. Nor is this the end of the lamentable story, for a day or two afterwards he put an end to his own life by hanging himself in his prison cell. Who can wonder that St. Francis devoted a considerable portion of his volume to insisting upon the need for humility in the case of those who enjoy a reputation as preachers?

¹ 2 Timothy ii. 18,

“The preacher,” he says, “who desires to save the souls of others, and not lose his own, must before all things guard against giving way to pride when he comes down from the pulpit and listens to the compliments paid him. Let him be on his guard, and not become puffed up by vain flattery, remembering the judgments of God which he has just pronounced against himself, whilst addressing sinners. If he forget this, he exposes himself to be smitten by the same grievous leprosy from which he has been striving to deliver others, like Giesi, who, as a punishment for his sins, was afflicted with the foul disease which his master, the Prophet Eliseus, had just cured in the case of Naaman. He who desires to touch the sinner’s heart, must speak to him as if he were speaking to himself, and endeavour to realize the fact that he cannot be as well acquainted with the sins and miseries of any other person as he is with his own. Such reflections as these will remove any danger of exercising too great a severity in his manner of reproof, since he will feel the same compassion for the weaknesses of his auditors as he naturally does for those which he is conscious of himself possessing.

“Beware of indulging a restless vanity by striving after originality. On the contrary, try and make a judicious use of all that is suitable in the writings of others. Remember that our Lord did not disdain to take as the subject of His first sermon the necessity of doing penance, although St. John Baptist had recently preached upon the same subject. Try to imitate these two great models.

“Be careful to preserve unruffled self-possession whilst in the pulpit, in spite of any annoying disturbance, or interruption, which may arise. The preacher

who allows himself to be betrayed into showing signs of impatience or irritation, will destroy the effect of a very good and able sermon. For instance, should he notice that one or two members of the audience are reading, or otherwise proving that they are not attending to him, he must not pause, even for a moment, but pursue the even tenour of his discourse.

“Never say anything which could possibly be construed into a personal allusion by any one present, or a reproof addressed directly to his or her particular vices. Want of tact and judgment in this respect do an incalculable amount of mischief, and young preachers should be especially on their guard. Severity and irony are no less to be avoided, for, instead of curing the disease, they give the patient an aversion to the medicine, and make him refuse to swallow it.

“Whilst avoiding an affected or over-elaborate style, see that your language is always on a level with your subject. A pious, instructive, and well-prepared sermon may be rendered useless by the thoughtless introduction of some ludicrous metaphor, undignified expression, or vulgar phraseology. It is also very important to suit yourself to your hearers, and never soar out of their reach. Keep constantly in mind the class of persons you have before you, and beware of exhorting them to practise virtues to which they cannot attain, or which are unsuitable to their calling, position, or state of life. If you place before them an impossible standard, a feeling of depression and despair will arise in their minds, and cause them to sink down in discouragement and hopelessness of achieving success in the work of self-amendment. It is a good plan to suggest different methods of practising the same virtue,

in order that each may adopt the one most suitable for his own particular case.

“Every preacher should be so deeply and entirely convinced of the truth of those doctrines of the faith which are to form the matter of his discourse, as to be ready, if need be, to lay down his life in their defence at the foot of the pulpit-stairs. It is unwise to discuss heresies before Catholics. Rather should the doctrines of our holy religion be expounded to them, so that those who believe may be strengthened in their faith, and if they are ignorant of heresy, they may preserve their happy ignorance.

“In regard to sermons which are professedly controversial, the case is, of course, a different one. Take care not to adduce flimsy or superficial arguments, and take equal care not to employ expressions which might appear to savour, however remotely, of bitterness or contempt, for the intellect can never be gained by wounding the heart.

“In conclusion, the preacher should above all arm himself with those weapons of prayer and fasting which our Lord declared to be indispensable. Otherwise he cannot hope successfully to combat the evil spirit, who will strive to render his exhortations fruitless. He will do well to unite his prayer with that which Christ uttered on behalf of his disciples when He said to His Father: “Sanctify them in truth. Thy word is truth. For them do I sanctify Myself: that they also may be sanctified in truth.”¹

¹ St. John xvii. 17—19.

CHAPTER X.

HIS LIFE AT ONATE.

THE house to which Francis, as we have seen, retired before his ordination, stood in a lonely and unfrequented spot, about a mile and a half from the small town of Oñate. It had originally been a hermitage, dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen, and, though considerably enlarged and altered, could boast neither of architectural beauty nor commodious arrangement. Francis liked it all the better on this account, and the years he spent within its walls form no unimportant epoch in his life, since they may be said to have constituted his novitiate. Although at their commencement he was already a professed member of the Society, he had hitherto lived for the most part in his own house, and there held absolute sway. The life he had led had been austere indeed, and mortified, but yet, when compared with the fixed routine of a religious house, a life of freedom and liberty. He now had to bend his head beneath the yoke of the Rule, and to taste, for the first time, the trials and difficulties inseparable from community life. *Communitas, calamitas*, as the old proverb tersely expresses it, and saints have to experience the truth of all which this saying implies, quite as much as their more ordinary brethren.

We shall have much to relate of Francis in connection with his life at Oñate, not only because it was

there that he was exercised and perfected in virtue, but also because it is there that we have our best—almost our only—opportunity of considering him in the character of a simple Religious. During the eighteen years which elapsed between the time when he left, and the date of his death in 1572, he took a prominent part in the government of the Society, and hence it became his duty to rule rather than to obey. In the first place, we shall speak of what he was in himself, giving some account of his virtues and special characteristics. In the second place, we shall endeavour to relate what he did for others. Try as he might to bury himself in obscurity, his light was too bright to be long hidden, more especially as its rays attracted many to come from afar, like the Wise Men of old, to find our Lord in the Society which is called after His Name, and to offer to Him the holocaust of their whole self, as well as of all their possessions. St. Ignatius, moreover, as we have already said, sent Francis on journeys from time to time, in order that he might preach in various places, and in different ways promote the welfare of the Society.

To any one who saw him for the first time at this period of his life, it would have seemed strange, if not incredible, that he should ever have been compared to Apollo, or styled “the modern Narcissus.” Of the physical beauty for which he had been so remarkable, there remained but little. Though scarcely more than forty, he had aged to an extent which neither the lapse of years, nor the ill-health from which he so frequently suffered, could sufficiently account. Some people said that he looked twenty years older than he was. In this way he singularly resembled his Divine Master, to Whom when a little more than thirty, the Jews

remarked, "Thou art not yet fifty years old."¹ Francis had become thin, almost to emaciation; the delicate colouring of his complexion had given way to a waxen pallor; tears, vigils, and close application to study, had dimmed the brightness of his eyes; his hair had grown thin on the temples and forehead, and was already streaked with grey. Yet his appearance could never be otherwise than pleasing and attractive, so sweet was the expression of his countenance, so irresistibly winning the charm of his manner.

Our account would be very incomplete were we to omit giving some details concerning him in his character of a priest, and his manner of saying Mass. The first point to be mentioned is his extreme diligence in saying it. From the time of his ordination until his death, he never once omitted offering the Holy Sacrifice, except during seasons of serious illness, and in those cases he made a point of receiving Holy Communion. But no slight or ordinary indisposition prevented him from taking his place at the altar, and he would drag himself there, though he had barely strength to stand. When on a journey he would joyfully undergo any amount of fatigue or privation rather than deprive himself of what he held to be his supremest privilege. With this end in view, he would travel over rough and steep roads, make a circuit of many miles, or pass the night in the most wretched and ill-appointed inns.

In the character of Cardinal Legate of the Holy See, Pope Clement VIII. some time previous to his elevation to the Chair of Peter, accompanied Francis on a long journey which the latter undertook, towards the close of his life, through France, Spain, and Portugal. Pope Clement was never tired of expressing

¹ St. John viii. 57.

the admiration he felt for the Saint's devotion and piety. To quote his own words, as recorded after Francis' death: "Never during all the time I was privileged to be his companion did he once omit to offer the Holy Sacrifice. Neither scorching heat nor bitter cold, the fatigues of travel, the infirmities of old age, or the ailments from which he constantly suffered, could avail to prevent him from accomplishing what he felt to be both his duty and his delight. By special permission he carried with him a portable altar, which, when out of reach of a church, he used to set up in the open country. Words fail me to express the astonishment I have felt when seeing him prepare to say Mass under these circumstances. Frequently during the summer months was his uncovered head exposed to the burning rays of the sun, and nothing but the still more burning love for Jesus Christ which glowed within his breast could have enabled him to bear the fiery heat." His last illness affords a remarkable confirmation of the testimony we have just quoted. It was contracted, as we shall relate hereafter, in an exceptionally severe winter, while he was saying Mass in a chapel which Protestant hands had attempted to demolish, and through whose half-ruined walls the piercing north winds whistled at their will.

No one was ever present at a Mass said by St. Francis Borgia without being deeply impressed in one way or another. Many went for the express purpose of being stirred up to greater devotion in regard to the Mysteries of the Altar. Nor is this all. In the processes of his beatification and canonization, several instances are recorded of persons in whose case a thorough change of heart and life followed upon a single attendance at his Mass. From these examples

we select the following ; the date of its occurrence does not appear to have been anywhere mentioned.

Doña Catherine de Miranda, a young lady of noble birth, was appointed, when twenty-four years old, to accompany the wife of the Viceroy of the Spanish West Indian possessions, in the character of maid of honour. Shortly before setting sail, she happened to be staying in Seville on a visit to some friends. Though her heart was given to the world, she fulfilled the external duties of religion, and when Sunday came she went to the Jesuit Church in order to hear Mass. She did not know Father Francis by sight, she had not even heard his name, but what she witnessed that morning while he was at the altar, and what she simultaneously experienced within her own soul, filled her with an eager desire to learn some particulars concerning him. She saw that his face shone with celestial brightness, and that a halo of light surrounded his head. At the same time she was conscious of an ardent desire to serve God better than she had hitherto done, and to lead a holy and mortified life. Nor did this prove to be a mere passing impression. A few days afterwards Doña Catherine addressed herself to a Dominican Father, and after making a general confession of her whole life, related to him what she had seen and felt. He strengthened her in her good resolutions, and exhorted her to praise and thank God for the marvellous change which had been wrought in her soul through the means of his servant, Father Francis. She faithfully kept all the promises she had made to God during the half-century which remained for her to spend on earth. To so great a degree of sanctity did she attain, that a holy Bishop did not hesitate to declare, that among the large number of persons of every age, rank, and state

of life whom he had known in various parts of the world, he considered there was not one who equalled her in virtue, or who even came near her in this respect. He had the direction of her conscience for several years, and regarded her as one of those hidden saints, whose perfection is known to God alone, and will remain concealed from the eyes of their fellow-men until the hour of final Judgment. Setting at naught, as it appeared, the rules of human prudence, she habitually wore a hair-shirt of more than ordinary roughness and discomfort. On fast-days she passed the whole of the twenty-four hours without swallowing a morsel of food or moistening her lips with a little cold water. Her sole meal at ordinary times invariably consisted of a small quantity of haricot beans, boiled in water, and served with no seasoning except salt. She always rose at midnight, and after honouring the Blessed Trinity by repeating these words, "The Father is my Creator, the Son is my Redeemer, the Holy Spirit is my Comforter," knelt down and commenced her meditation, which she often prolonged for several hours.

Miraculous as it may appear, in spite of these austerities she attained the advanced age of seventy-four. The latter portion of her life was spent in Peru. She died at Lima, and the Franciscan Father who attended her on her death-bed relates that her last conscious act was to repeat the *Gloria Patri* as an expression of the deep thankfulness she felt to God for His goodness in having allowed her to be attracted to His service by the wonders she had beheld in connection with St. Francis Borgia as he appeared at the altar.

A few particulars in regard to his method of preparation for Mass, and to his habitual acts of devotion

whilst saying it, may be fitly introduced here. He wrote a volume on these subjects, which he intended for the use of priests. It was never printed, for what reason we are not told, but the manuscript was scrupulously preserved in the archives of the Society. Father Cepari has symbolized it in the shape which we will now quote. He employs the narrative form, probably for the sake of brevity, and also with a view to inserting various details which Francis himself would not have written down, as the reader will perceive. It seems most likely that the volume was originally written in the same manner as the *Advice to Preachers*, from which we gave some extracts in the preceding chapter.

“Before attempting to begin Mass, Francis cleansed his soul by means of penitential tears and sacramental confession. He remembered how Christ washed the feet of His disciples before He instituted the Most Blessed Sacrament and ordained them priests. The infinite greatness and immense majesty of this ineffable Mystery filled his soul with reverential fear and ardent love. During the process of vesting, he regarded himself as a wolf in the clothing of a sheep, and contrasted the sacred, precious, and costly garments he was about to wear with the vesture of shame and ignominy in which Christ was clothed at the time of the Passion. Whilst proceeding from the sacristy to the altar, he called to mind the awful threats contained in the Book of Exodus against any one who should dare to approach too near the holy mountain of Sinai. Thus was his soul filled with reverential fear. When repeating the Introit, and above all, whilst saying the *Gloria in excelsis*, it seemed to him a marvellous thing indeed, that being so grievous a sinner, it should fall to

his lot to sing the songs of the Lord and the hymns of the angels in a strange land. Little, indeed, he would inwardly exclaim, do these sublime words suit a mouth so impure as mine! When he came to the Collects, he was filled with shame at finding himself thus standing between God and the people. If the Epistle was taken from the Book of Wisdom, he remembered his own follies, and during the reading of the Gospel, he reminded himself how frequently by setting a bad example he had opposed the precepts of that very Gospel. At the Offertory he reflected with penitential shame that he, who had so often crucified the Son of God through his sins, was now about to offer to the Father that only-begotten and well-beloved Son, and he besought the Eternal Father not to reject the offering, but of His infinite mercy to deign to accept it with gracious condescension.

“At the approach of the Consecration, Francis began to tremble visibly, appearing almost overcome with emotion. At that solemn moment he seemed actually to hear the words of our Lord: ‘The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners.’¹ Words fail to depict his feelings on touching the consecrated Host. He used to entreat St. Simeon, St. Joseph, and above all the Blessed Virgin, who had held our Lord in their arms when He was a helpless Child, to teach him how to touch and handle Him. Sometimes he used to make an offering of himself to God each time he touched the Host, at other times he would beg to have some special cross laid upon him for each time he touched It. Again he would desire to be penetrated with sorrow as deep as that which St. John, St. Mary Magdalen, and the Mother of Dolours experienced when standing at

¹ St. Matt. xvii. 21.

the foot of the Cross. As he elevated the Host, he used to entreat our Lord to vouchsafe him a share in the suffering He endured on Mount Calvary, and as he bent over the chalice, previous to communicating, he would secretly exclaim: 'Grant me, O my Lord, to shed my blood for Thee!' After the Communion his countenance became suffused with a delicate glow. He regarded our Lord as buried within his breast, and desired to watch and guard the sepulchre.

"On leaving the altar, his colloquies with our Lord were long and loving. He laid at His sacred feet, not only his own needs and sorrows, but those of others. Moreover, he commended to the Source of wisdom and knowledge all the affairs he had in hand, the necessities of the Society as well as those of the Church. He remained the whole time on his knees, and absolutely motionless. Not unfrequently he would spend several hours in this posture, appearing as if in an ecstasy, and occasions were not wanting when it at last became necessary to shake him in order to recall him to himself that he might proceed to the refectory, the dinner-hour having arrived. He was often seen to shed a profusion of tears whilst saying Mass, and when he celebrated in a private chapel, he would stand at the altar for an hour with the Blessed Sacrament in his hand. Towards the close of his life, he would thus stand for so long, rapt into an ecstasy, that his Socius, not daring to interrupt him, would at last be fain to steal away in order to have his own dinner. Returning to the chapel, he would, to his amazement, behold the Saint in the same attitude as before."¹

From what has just been related, his intense love for our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament follows as a

¹ Ceparì, pp. 189—195.

matter of course. Not content with making an invariable practice of visiting It seven times a day, he used to seek guidance from that Source of wisdom whenever he was called upon to form an important decision or was in difficulty as to what course he ought to pursue. Hence he obtained the supernatural knowledge which enabled him to read the hearts of men and to predict future events. As if to reward the affectionate devotion of His servant in seeking and frequenting His Presence, our Lord imparted to him the gift of perceiving where the Blessed Sacrament was and where It was not, without the need of any outward sign. For instance, when walking out one day with his companions in the neighbourhood of Oñate, the party came to a village church, and entered it in order to spend a brief space in prayer. On leaving the building Francis assured those who were with him that the Blessed Sacrament was not absent from the tabernacle, although, owing to some carelessness, the lamp was not burning before the altar. Another day when asked why he quitted a chapel where the accustomed light was to be seen, he unhesitatingly replied that the True Light was not there. And so, upon inquiry, the state of the case was found to be.

During his most severe illnesses, he always recovered some measure of strength after receiving Holy Communion. When apparently unconscious, he used to wake from his lethargy as soon as the hour approached when It was usually brought to him. As we have already said, when unable to say Mass, he never passed a day without communicating. In the course of one protracted illness, he was entirely given over by the physicians. He fell into so prolonged a swoon that those about him feared his last moment was at hand

for he lay as if already dead, with closed eyes, motionless, seeming lost to consciousness of external objects. His breathing alone remained to show that the soul had not yet left the body. All at once it occurred to one of the Fathers who was in attendance on the sick man, that if the Sacred Host were brought into his room he might in this way be yet recalled to life. And so it proved. Scarcely had the Divine Physician crossed the threshold, when Francis opened his eyes, sat up in bed, stretched out his arms with a smile of rapturous welcome, and exclaimed in a clear and distinct voice: *Ave verum corpus, natum ex Maria Virgine!* thus proving himself to be in the entire possession of his mental faculties. He communicated with much fervour, and that day was the turning-point of his illness, for with it began a slow but steady recovery. We may here remark that he had a special devotion to our Lord in the Viaticum, and delighted to expatiate on the immense kindness and condescension thus shown to sinful men. "Our sweet and merciful Jesus," he used to say, "is like a monarch who, not content with receiving some repentant criminal into his royal palace, should go himself in order to escort him there."

Francis' devotion to the Passion of the Saviour extended to the literal Cross upon which He suffered. The hymn *Vexilla regis* was a great favourite with him, and on all who heard him recite it an ineffaceable impression was made. He loved especially to dwell on the following words:

Arbor decora et fulgida,
Ornata regis purpura,
Electa digno stipite
Tam sancta membra tangere.

Beata cujus brachiis
Pretium pependit sæculi,
Statera facta corporis,
Tulitque prædam tartari.

He always carried on his person a relic of the true Cross, and honoured it every day with distinct acts of veneration. We will here introduce two incidents which prove with how much affectionate sincerity this heartfelt worship was paid. They are related without any date, so that we are left in ignorance as to the particular period of the Saint's life at which they occurred. Princess Joanna, the daughter of Charles V., was attacked with intermittent fever. The doctors could not do much for her, and she became very weak. However she herself was persuaded that she should recover, and that, moreover, her recovery would be due to a relic of the true Cross, which Father Francis had given to the Emperor. She requested that, when the time came for the fever-fit to recur, the relic might be dipped into a glass of water, which might then be given her to drink. She also requested that Father Francis would kindly dip the relic into the water with his own hand. From a feeling of humility he was very unwilling to grant the petition, but the Princess would take no denial, and he finally consented. He knelt down in the sick-room, took the relic in his hand, and after a fervent prayer, dropped it into the water. This latter instantly became red, and appeared as if mingled with blood. All present were struck with awe on beholding the miracle, and in the course of a few days the Princess was restored to health.

On another occasion, a lady whose name we are not told, consulted Francis concerning a difficulty in which she found herself in regard to two relics of

the true Cross which she possessed. Respecting the genuineness of the one which had first been given to her, she entertained not the slightest doubt, but the second not being similar in colour, she feared lest it might be supposititious, and therefore unworthy of veneration. With an air of profound reverence, Francis lifted from the table the last-mentioned relic. "Madam," he said, "this is a fragment of the real wood of the Holy Cross, and in order that no lingering suspicion may disturb your mind, I will break it in two pieces, with the result which you shall see." He then divided the relic, holding it as he did so over a sheet of paper which chanced to be lying on the table. Blood at once dropped from each portion of wood and moistened the paper. The soul of the lady overflowed with devotion at the sight, and the relic, together with the paper which had been thus miraculously dyed, were preserved as inestimable treasures in one of the convents of Madrid.

Having thus given some details regarding Francis as a priest, we will return to the time when, shortly before his ordination, he commenced his three years' residence at Oñate. The Rector of the house, Father Michael Ochiva, was a man of more than ordinary virtue. God had granted him many supernatural favours, and sick persons thronged to Oñate from all the surrounding districts in order to obtain his prayers and receive his blessing, by means of which several of them were miraculously cured. Nevertheless, St. Ignatius himself does not hesitate to own that Father Ochiva often showed a lamentable want of prudence and caution in dealing with the subjects under his charge, for which, as well as for undue rigour in their

regard, he was sometimes severely reproved. He made a point of treating with especial harshness those who had filled high places in the world, quoting, as his reason for doing so, the words of Holy Writ: "The greater thou art, the more humble thyself in all things, and thou shalt find grace from God."¹ He took care not to swerve from this rule in the case of Francis, who certainly ran no risk of being spoilt at Oñate.

Father Ochiva set him to do the hardest and most laborious outdoor work. He ordered him to assist in digging the foundations of a new wing of the house, then in course of erection, to cast away the earth, to help the masons in sawing and carrying stone. Indoors he had to chop wood, to light and attend to the fires, to aid the cook in the kitchen. Yet, far from appearing excessive, the humiliations and fatigues imposed upon Francis by the Rector, did not keep pace with his own thirst for subjection and mortification. His delicate constitution, however, rendered him obviously unfit for such occupations as those which have just been enumerated. The effect upon his health was disastrous, and his biographers do not hesitate to assert that Father Ochiva's ill-advised method of training permanently weakened, if it did not entirely ruin, Francis' limited physical powers. He never evinced the least repugnance, but performed with unruffled cheerfulness and serenity, tasks the most revolting to nature. These were frequently appointed him. For example, we find him spending the greater part of a sultry summer's day in wheeling manure to the vegetable garden, and spreading it on the earth. Another time when it became his duty to act as porter, a charitable farmer from the neighbour-

¹ Ecclus. iii. 20.

hood brought, as a present to the Fathers, the carcase of a fat pig. After the most matter-of-fact fashion, Francis shouldered the greasy and unsavoury burden, and carried it, by dint of great effort, up a steep and narrow staircase. One of the Fathers, who happened to meet him at the top, could not repress a feeling of indignation. "My dear Father Francis," he exclaimed with warmth, "surely this is no work for you!" "What can be more proper and natural," Francis replied with a smile, "than that one pig should carry another on its back?"

Erelong St. Ignatius got wind of what was going on. A sharp reprimand reached Father Ochiva, and a certain Brother Mark, upon whose discretion St. Ignatius could rely, was sent from Rome to remain at Oñate as long as Francis should be there. He had full authority over the person of the latter, being empowered to restrain him from the practice of mortifications which exceeded his physical powers, from fasts which were unduly severe or prolonged, and from occupations likely to prove really injurious to him. It is impossible not to admire the wisdom of St. Ignatius who, while caring for Francis' bodily health and thus preserving him for future usefulness, humbled him and broke his will by placing him under obedience to one who was so greatly his inferior in every respect.

He was still allowed to occupy himself with the lighter kinds of manual labour, to help the cook in preparing the vegetables and fruit, to wait at table, and to assist in washing up the plates and dishes after dinner. Considering himself inferior in virtue to all around him, he used to prostrate himself before them, kissing their feet, and begging for their prayers. When he waited on the Fathers and Brothers in the

refectory, he invariably craved pardon, at the close of the repast, for his clumsy manner of serving. Once when helping the cook to get the dinner ready, a plate slipped from his unaccustomed fingers. It fell to the ground and broke into several pieces. Francis immediately asked the cook to set him a penance, which he performed in public in the middle of the refectory. Another day, seeing that a fellow-novice, like himself of high rank, felt an almost invincible repugnance to dip his hands into the greasy warm water in which they were both engaged in washing dishes, Francis took a glassful of this water and drank it off at one draught. He afterwards told his confessor that as he was swallowing this unsavoury beverage, it appeared to him to possess a flavour more delicate and choice than that of the rare wines he had been accustomed to quaff, when sitting at the table of kings.

From the time when he finally renounced his titles, he began to sign all his letters, to whomsoever addressed, *Francisco Pecador*. This practice St. Ignatius promptly vetoed. "Singularity in externals," he wrote, "is by no means a mark of sanctity, but rather the reverse. I desire to see uniformity prevail, as far as possible, among the members of my spiritual family. Every Christian, whoever and wherever he may be, must have a heartfelt consciousness of his own sinfulness and utter unworthiness in the sight of God. It is not right that any one should imagine himself to be more deeply impressed with this fact than his brethren, still less that he should give outward proof that he so thinks." It is hardly necessary to add, that from the day when he received the letter in which the above passage occurs, the subject of this biography signed himself simply "Francis." He never allowed himself

to be addressed otherwise than as "Father Francis," either by letter or by word of mouth, and invariably checked any one who attempted to make use of his family name or of his titles. Those who were intimately associated with him remarked that he never appeared so much tempted to forget the equable serenity which habitually marked his manner, as when he received letters containing complimentary allusions to his rank, talents, or virtue. He always replied to such letters with curtness and as little civility as is consistent with charity. Letters which bore on their cover any of his former titles he would not even open, but at once sent them back to their writers, having first endorsed them with his own hand: "Not for me. Francis, S.J."

Not less unsparing was he in dealing with those who ventured to pay him verbal compliments. On the occasion of his first visit to Lisbon, the King sent a member of his Court to inquire shortly after his arrival how he had borne the journey, and to express the pleasure His Majesty derived from the presence in his capital of the illustrious Jesuit. But the nobleman, however well versed in Court life, was deplorably wanting in tact. He interlarded his conversation with compliments, and incessantly addressed Francis as "Your Grace," or "My Lord Duke." At last the latter, unable to repress his annoyance, rose from his chair, and with a stately bow, said, "Wearied as I am with my long journey, I am far more wearied with these titles which you persist in giving me. Ill indeed do they become a poor Religious."

Another time when Francis was staying at Oporto, his head was seriously injured by a falling beam, the sharp edge of which laid the skull bare. A surgeon was sent for to dress the hurt. After thoroughly

examining it, "I fear," he said, "most noble lord, that in dressing this wound I cannot avoid giving your Grace much pain." "It is impossible," was the instant rejoinder, "that you can give me more than you are now doing by the unsuitable manner in which you address me."

Another incident, to which no special date is given, may be suitably recorded here. During one of his journeys, he arrived towards evening in a city of Spain, where a Prince who was closely related to him possessed a magnificent palace. To this palace Francis turned his steps, in order to request hospitality for the night, on behalf of himself and his Socius. Both were cordially welcomed, and after supper were conducted to superbly appointed apartments. Their host sent pages to assist his guests to undress, but Francis dismissed them with many grateful thanks for their proffered services. He waited until the house was quiet, and then slipped out with his companion and went to the hospice in order to sleep there. In the morning the pages waited a long while outside his door, every moment expecting a summons to enter. At last they went in, and finding the room empty, went to inform the Prince, their master. The latter soon learnt where Francis was. Much vexed, he went to the hospice, and reproached him with the slur his strange behaviour had cast upon the reputation for hospitality the palace had hitherto enjoyed. "If," replied Father Francis, "you had treated me like the poor Religious that I am, I should not have quitted your house. But, since you treated me like a noble lord, I was obliged to seek quarters more suited to my real condition."

In regard to obedience, he was accustomed to say that it is "a sound and safe vessel in which the

Religious can rest in peace, and which he must take care never to quit, either by day or night, if he desires to make a prosperous voyage, and at last to reach the haven of eternal bliss." Even while he was yet residing in Gandia, he never received a letter from St. Ignatius without at once kneeling down and, before opening it, imploring grace from God to enable him to receive and obey in a proper spirit whatever command it might contain. These pious prayers were heard and answered. God bestowed upon him a spirit of obedience so perfect that it became a real joy to him to obey. The slightest wish of his Superiors, howsoever and by whomsoever expressed, was for him what a direct command is for an ordinary Religious. *Amanti sat est indicare*, was a saying very frequently on his lips.

Sometimes one is tempted to imagine that the attainment of virtue presents, in the case of the saints, little or no difficulty. But the history of St. Francis Borgia during his life at Oñate, is in itself sufficient to refute this error. To obey St. Ignatius was one thing, to obey Father Ochiva was quite another. The man has yet to be created who could find it easy or pleasant to obey a Superior who treated him with undue and unjust severity, who neither liked nor appreciated him, and who was wholly unable to sympathize with, or comprehend, his delicate and sensitive constitution of both mind and body. Intentionally or unintentionally, Father Ochiva must have vexed and thwarted Francis at every turn, yet the latter never showed the least sign of irritation, nor did he ever speak of Father Ochiva except in terms of the highest respect and praise.

Not less perfect was his obedience to his inferiors, when they were placed in authority over him. We

have already mentioned a certain Brother Mark, whom St. Ignatius entrusted with the care of Francis' health. It was touching to see how implicitly he obeyed him, and how humbly he inquired of him whether he might perform some act of penance, and even whether he might eat of such or such a dish which happened to be placed upon the dinner-table. Again, when assisting the cook in the kitchen, he submitted to this functionary in all things. One day when the Saint was thus occupied, Princess Joanna called at the house and asked to see him. He immediately sought permission from the cook, who gave him leave to absent himself, but bid him not be long gone, as there was an unusual amount of work to be got through before dinner-time. The cook further desired him to inform her Royal Highness of the state of affairs, and to tell her that he could only spare her a very short time. Francis did exactly as he was told, and added that he could not do otherwise than obey the orders he had received. "The Princess remained," says Father Cepari whilst relating the occurrence, "filled with admiration and greatly edified. She beheld with wonder the literal and simple obedience paid by so accomplished a courtier, so noble a duke, and so holy a man, to the commands of a mere cook."

Throughout the whole of his life, Francis was remarkable for his love of poverty. Whilst still in the world, he tried to practise it as far as possible in order to imitate his beloved Patron, St. Francis of Assisi. From the day when he assumed the religious habit, he refused to have anything to do with money. Large as were the sums which in former times had passed through his hands, long before his death he had lost all knowledge of the relative value of different coins.

Only with the greatest difficulty could he be induced to have a new pair of shoes, however old and shabby those in actual wear might be. He made frequent excursions among the villages in the neighbourhood of Oñate, with a wallet on his shoulders, in order to ask alms for the love of God. When any one gave him dry crusts and odds and ends of stale bread, he used to ask leave to eat some of it for dinner, in preference to a whole slice cut from a fresh loaf. However long and fatiguing were the journeys he had to undertake, and however weak his health, he never allowed sheets to be taken among the baggage for his especial use. On the contrary, he usually slept in his clothes, wrapped in his mantle, a little straw spread on the floor being his only bed. He would never wear a travelling-cloak, his ordinary mantle being his sole protection against the inclemencies of the weather. He made a point of never carrying an umbrella, saying that his hat sufficiently protected his head from both sun and rain.

Out of love for holy poverty he learnt to use a needle, so as to be able to patch and darn his garments with his own hands. He took much delight in this lowly occupation, and greatly excelled in it. Indeed, when any of his brethren at Oñate found that his clothes had been mended with special care and neatness, he used laughingly to say to the rest: "See, Father Francis must have put in this patch!" During one extremely severe winter, when his wardrobe happened to be particularly ill-supplied, he asked the Duke, his son, as an alms to send him a warm-lined vest. When the gift arrived, Francis found that the outside was made of silk. He promptly sent it back to the donor, although he acknowledged to one of the

Fathers, who was in his special confidence, that he did so with much regret, as the act appeared ungracious, not to say ungrateful.

His zeal suffered no diminution when he became General. Whilst travelling in Spain, he had the misfortune to break a reliquary, which he habitually wore on his person. He ordered that it should be repaired with a circle of brass. But the silversmith to whom it was sent could not make up his mind to this, and used silver instead of brass. When it was brought home Francis refused to keep it. The workman, however, went down on his knees and begged him to accept it as a trifling gift, for the love of God. Seeing that the man was really pained at his refusal, Francis accepted it with graceful courtesy.

After he was appointed Vicar-General, and subsequently General of the Society, he, as a matter of course, received a great number of letters. From love of holy poverty, he used to cut out and keep any part of the sheets of paper which happened not to be written on. These various pieces he fastened neatly together and made them into pages, out of which, when sewn together, he fashioned note-books. Thus he saved a great deal of paper, and in these ingeniously-constructed books he wrote down, from time to time, the various ideas which occurred to him during his hours of meditation. Several of these manuscript volumes are preserved as precious relics in the archives of the Society in Rome.

From all which has been related, it is manifest that St. Francis practised poverty with such perfection that it amounted to an entire renunciation of all earthly possessions and of all personal comforts. He understood chastity to mean nothing short of a continual

crucifixion of the flesh, and as to obedience, he not only absolutely gave up his own will, but the exercise of his own judgment and intelligence. Thus far we have traced his progress in the religious life, but there remains much more to be told. In our next chapter we shall hope to give an account of the manner in which he acquired, and the perfection with which he practised, that painful and difficult lesson, which must, nevertheless, be learnt by all who are trained in the school of Christ—the lesson, namely, of detachment.

CHAPTER XI.

HIS LIFE AT ONATE (continued).

“IN studying the lives of the Saints, we shall find for the most part that God has imprinted upon each of these, His most faithful servants, some special characteristic, which is, as it were, the key to their other virtues. To a certain extent sanctity is everywhere the same, and the work of the Holy Spirit is manifest in every heart. But the graces by which we recognize His presence are different, according to the variety of His gifts. Love to God must exist in every heart, but this love may be shown in different ways. From it all virtues spring, since it animates and gives life to them all, but in the case of each individual Saint it assumes a different form, and is called by a different name, according to the particular virtue which reigns supreme in his heart. This virtue will prove our best guide in studying his life, and according to the degree in which we comprehend and enter into it, shall we be enabled to take a just view of his character.”¹

In regard to St. Francis Borgia, there can be no doubt that his distinguishing virtue was detachment and mortification. Well did he know, from the outset, the difficulty of the task he had set himself, well also did he recognize the necessity of accomplishing it. We

¹ Verjus, pp. 415, 416.

may here quote his own words : " The lesson is equally painful and salutary, but every true Christian must be crucified with Christ. ' We would not be *unclothed*, as the Apostle expresses it, but *clothed upon*.' ¹ Yet the one is impossible without the other, however abhorrent to nature the process may prove. ' The greater violence thou offerest to thyself, the greater progress thou wilt make.' " ²

Much has already been related in regard to the manner in which he practised mortification. From the day when, as a boy of ten years old, he began to use the discipline, he strove to detach himself, at first from all sinful pleasures, and, as he advanced in perfection, from all pleasures, of whatever kind, which are connected with the senses, and with the indulgence of the lower part of our nature. He regarded his body as an enemy with whom neither peace, nor even truce, could be concluded, and he considered all things which aided him in wounding and maltreating it as his best and truest friends. To the end of his life he made it his daily prayer that God would enable him to find enjoyment in suffering, and suffering in enjoyment ; to regard glory and honour as shame, and shame as glory ; to find his sole rest upon the Cross, and to rejoice when his will was opposed and contradicted, because he had so often resisted the holy will of God.

He kept these principles continually before him, and carried the exercise of them into the smallest things. During his frequent and painful illnesses, not content with bearing his sufferings with patience, he strove to increase them. For instance, when the doctor prescribed for him some peculiarly nauseous medicine, he would sip it little by little, and when pills were ordered

¹ 2 Cor. v. 4.

² *Imitation*, bk. i. chap. 25.

for him, he would chew them carefully with his teeth. Once the Infirmarian begged to know his reason for acting thus. He replied: "I have two reasons. The first is, that I desire to punish my palate for having delighted in choice flavours and dainty seasoning. The second reason is, that I desire to keep in mind the sufferings of our Lord, to Whom, when hanging on the Cross, gall was given to drink." Francis so frequently pierced his flesh with a sharp-pointed instrument, that portions of his body became permanently discoloured. He put sand, cinders, and pebbles into his shoes, in order to make walking painful and disagreeable; he rejoiced when some ill-cooked or unattractive dish was placed before him, and when he was asked, upon one occasion, how he could eat it with so much apparent relish, he answered, "I am thinking of the torments of Hell." As to the instruments of penance which he habitually used during his lifetime, they filled with horror all who chanced to behold them, and those which were discovered after his decease were more terrible still.

The recollection of the excessive and vigorous austerities he had practised, more especially before he entered the Society, and thus placed himself under obedience, occasioned him many scruples on his death-bed. He, however, consoled himself with the belief that God would graciously pardon the extremes into which he had fallen for the sake of the purity of the motives from which he had acted, and of the sincerity of his desire to please Him.

But mortifications of this nature constitute one branch only of detachment, and Francis was fully alive to the fact. He knew that he loved his country too well, and was too strongly attached to his home. It

was this consciousness which made him resolve, as he turned to look on the venerable outlines of his castle at Gandia, when setting forth on his journey to Rome, that his eyes should never again gaze upon those beloved and familiar walls. In a similar spirit did he set himself to overcome the somewhat narrow feeling, at that time prevalent in Spain, which led even persons of education and position to exhibit great reluctance to quit their own particular province. As to leaving their country altogether, even the most brilliant offers could scarcely tempt them to entertain the idea for a moment. But so generous was the love of our Saint for the King of kings, that his only wish was to go wherever he could best serve his Heavenly Master. Gladly would he have spent his life in the West Indies, in order to labour for the salvation of the heathen aborigines, but his Superiors refused to allow him to gratify this pious wish. So thoroughly did he subdue his undue attachment to his native land, that he appeared, to judge from his conduct, to belong to no country, or rather, to be a member of every nation under the sun, so entirely cosmopolitan was his spirit, so fully did he include all the peoples of the earth in the embrace of his universal charity.

At that period of her history, there existed between Spain and Portugal one of those race hatreds which are so impossible to extinguish, yet so greatly to be deplored, and so fertile in evil results. This aversion was of long standing on both sides, and though it might remain passive for years, ever and anon the slumbering volcano awoke to fresh life and renewed activity. The dislike just then entertained by the Spaniards for the French was equally strong, but far more reasonable. Indeed, it was only the natural result of the fierce and

protracted wars between the two countries. St. Francis soared above all such feelings. Knowing that both virtue and vice are everywhere to be found, he loved in every nation whatever was pleasing in the eyes of God. To such perfection did he carry the spirit of detachment, even before he became General, that both the Portuguese and the French believed themselves to be his especial favourites, and his fellow-countrymen complained bitterly of his impartiality. They felt much aggrieved because he did not study their interests, at the expense of those of all other nationalities. His proceedings gave offence at Court, so that some of his friends were compelled to undertake his formal justification on account of the sympathy he showed for France during the civil wars which afflicted her, and the zeal he exhibited in forwarding the interests of the Roman College, where subjects are received from all nations, and trained to go forth as missionaries to all quarters of the globe.

In order, however, to attain complete detachment, a yet more difficult task lay before Francis. Although, as we have had abundant opportunity of remarking, his mental gifts were of no common order, his nature was far from being one of the cold and purely intellectual type. His grief for the loss of his mother was no evanescent feeling, like that which characterizes even the most poignant sorrows of ordinary childhood. As he grew up, and indeed throughout his whole life, he was remarkable for the warmth and strength of his affections, so that it cost him no small amount of self-control to keep the stream of feeling from overflowing its banks and exceeding the limits within which he felt obliged to confine it. He was in himself, moreover, so charming and so attractive that it was almost impossible

to know him without loving him. Hence all the members of his family, and his numerous relatives, entertained for him a more than ordinary esteem and affection, and lost no opportunity of evincing the high regard in which they held him. "Now," as one of his biographers naively remarks, "it is no great victory over self-love, nor is it any heroic sign of self-abnegation, to divest oneself of all undue affection for one's relatives, when these latter possess no possible attraction, and when there exists no bond of sympathy between us and them. Or when, as is only too common among seculars, they regard those members of their family who have gone into Religion with indifference, not to say contempt. But it is a very difficult task to detach ourselves from those who love us, and are in every way worthy of our affection."

How perfectly St. Francis accomplished this task, which was in his case one of peculiar difficulty, is best proved by the calm resignation with which he received the tidings of the death of his relatives, and dwelt upon their memory. We have seen, in an earlier chapter of this biography, with what absolute composure he said Mass at an altar on which a portrait of his deceased wife had been placed. He gave evidence of the same detachment, and submission to the will of God, when he heard of the death of his favourite daughter, the Countess of Lerma. She possessed every virtue which could render her acceptable to God, and every grace and charm which could win for her the affection and esteem of her fellow-men. The news was told to Francis in the most abrupt manner, as he was passing along the streets of Valladolid, on his way to the royal palace. What rendered the blow all the more severe, was that it was totally unexpected, as the Countess

died quite suddenly, without any previous illness. Yet the Saint was in no way stunned, or even shaken. He paused for a moment in order to lift up his heart to God, and then tranquilly pursued his road. On arriving at the palace, he gave his undivided attention to the matters in regard to which the Princess Joanna, who was at that time Regent of Spain, wished to consult him. There was nothing unusual in his manner or bearing as long as the interview lasted. When, at length, it came to an end, he said to the Princess: "May I request your Royal Highness to pray for the soul of my daughter, the Countess of Lerma? I have just heard that it has pleased Almighty God to call her suddenly to Himself." The Regent, who was extremely fond of the Countess, burst into tears, and exclaimed in a reproachful manner: "Is this the manner in which to tell me such a distressing piece of news? How can a father show such utter want of feeling in regard to the death of a daughter, and a daughter like the Countess?" "Madam," replied the Saint, "God was her Master, as He is ours. He lent her to us for a time, and can we do otherwise than return the loan without complaining, but rather with heartfelt thanks for the favour conferred upon us? We ought also to be grateful to Him for releasing the Countess from the miseries of this exile, in order that she may, as I humbly hope, enjoy His blessed presence for ever in Heaven."

In the afternoon of the same day, the Constable of Castille went to pay Francis a visit of condolence. This nobleman was his uncle, and finding him so tranquil and composed, he broke out into expressions of hot indignation: "Is it possible, Father Francis," he said, "that you are utterly destitute of ordinary feeling? Have you no tears to shed for the loss of so charming

a daughter, who has been snatched away in the flower of her age? Though I am only her great-uncle, I loved her dearly, and my heart is pierced with grief!" "My dear uncle," answered Francis, gently, "we ought to look at all the events of this life with the eye of faith, and a view to the glory of God. If only He is glorified by what happened, we ought not to allow ourselves to grieve about it."

Francis showed exactly the same spirit in circumstances where the temporal interests of his family were concerned. This is all the more to be admired in him, because nepotism was an hereditary failing in the Borgia family. As has been stated already, it marred the otherwise brilliant and successful reign of Calixtus III., and was one great cause of the odium incurred by Alexander VI. Charles V. heard so much about Francis' wonderful detachment and disinterestedness in regard to his children, that he determined to test these virtues for himself. Accordingly he sent for the Saint to come and see him. He began by an elaborate eulogy of Francis' sons and daughters. Seeing that this produced no effect, he proceeded to say the Admiral of Arragon, Don Sancho de Cardona, was incessantly bringing complaints against Don Charles, Duke of Gandia, on the ground that the latter kept wrongful and forcible possession of certain estates and villages which ought to belong to himself. "Now, Father Francis," continued His Majesty, "I want you to tell me quite frankly what you think of your son's conduct, and to advise me as to what course I ought to adopt in the matter." "Sire," replied the Saint, "it is impossible for me to say who is in the right. I entreat your Majesty to see that full justice is done to Don Sancho, and if there is any favour to be shown,

let it be shown to him rather than to Don Charles, for I think that he needs it more."

Pope Pius IV. was equally edified on an occasion in which it was necessary to procure a dispensation in order to enable Don Alvarez, the third son of our Saint, to contract a brilliant marriage on which his heart was greatly set. The Pope found out by chance that Don Alvarez was Francis' son, and the first time he saw the latter he said to him: "How is it possible, Father, that you have never said a single word to me about this affair, when you know what a pleasure it always is to me to do anything for you and yours?"

"Holy Father," answered the Saint, "I must confess that I have been importuned by a great number of persons to request your Holiness to grant this dispensation. But I could not make up my mind to do so, because I felt certain that if this marriage was for the glory of God, and the real good of the persons most closely concerned, your Holiness would grant the dispensation, without any interference on my part. And now I say, that if you judge otherwise, far from urging you to grant it, I entreat you not to do so. For I have more at heart the interest of the Holy See, than the temporal advantage of my children." The Pope then requested Francis to state his own private opinion in the matter. He, however, firmly but respectfully declined to do so. The dispensation was finally granted, Pius IV. saying, to quote his own words, "I feel bound to take under my protection, for the love of God, the children of a father who has left them for the love of God."

Yet, careful as Francis was to avoid the dangerous addies of over-strong affection, he was equally careful to avoid the hard rocks of indifference and insensibility.

Never, under the pretence of perfecting himself in detachment, did he give his relatives reason to complain of unkindness or neglect. He was always ready to comfort them in their sorrows, to rejoice with them in their joys, to counsel them in their difficulties. He welcomed them warmly when they visited him, and when now and again he made a brief sojourn under their roofs, he showed himself full of interest in their affairs, and of pleasure at finding himself in their midst. Their unanimous testimony is that they found him more tender and sympathizing, more consoling and compassionate, more wise and judicious in the advice he gave, than he ever could have been had he remained in the world.

Here we will for the present close our account of his virtues as a Religious. We shall have more to say on the subject as we trace the history of his life, and show the different points of his character which circumstances successively serve to bring out, more especially in regard to the thaumaturgical powers which he exercised during the latter portion of his wonderful career. If we have in this respect here and there allowed ourselves to anticipate, we have done so in order to heighten the effect of the portrait we are engaged in painting. Well may we apply to this great servant of God, the words uttered by St. Bernard in regard to the holy Bishop Malachy, when he said: *Magnum miraculum, quod ipse fecit, ipse fuit.*

Francis was frequently heard to say that "if it were as easy to make trial of the religious life before embracing it, as it is to taste wine before drinking it, every noble on the earth would be anxious to enter it. And every man, however happy and prosperous he might be, however fortunate his outward lot, would

cheerfully and eagerly renounce all the joys of this life, in order to become possessed, by means of a religious profession, of a felicity more complete and a more stable and enduring happiness. But as no one can make experience of what it really is without entering upon it, many persons are repelled from the thought of it by the austerities and humiliations it presents to the outside beholder. Such persons forget that those who sow in tears, reap in joy those pure delights with which God is wont to favour holy souls, who serve Him with diligence and fidelity."

No Saint, perhaps, ever gave up more for God than did St. Francis Borgia. Rather is it a question whether any one ever gave up so much. And God, Who never allows Himself to be outdone in generosity, proportioned His gifts to the perfect self-sacrifice and complete holocaust of himself which Francis had made. His renunciation of all the best things which this life has to offer, his total detachment from them, was rewarded by the ineffable joy of which he speaks. Never was there so able a recruiting-sergeant as he proved in regard to the spiritual army commanded by St. Ignatius. His example did far more than his words, he did his work all the more successfully because he did it unconsciously. When his friends came to visit him at Oñate, they were received with all his old warmth of affection. His beaming smile, the unaffected and overflowing happiness which was manifest to all, did the rest. The list of persons distinguished by their talents and virtues, the extent of their possessions, or their high rank, whom he attracted to the Society of Jesus, is too long to be enumerated here; in fact it is nothing short of miraculous. We will give a brief sketch of two of the most remarkable of these vocations,

beginning with that of Father Bustamante, because he was at a subsequent period intimately associated with Francis, being his Socius in many of his journeys.

Don Bartholomew Bustamante was a virtuous ecclesiastic, a learned theologian, an eloquent preacher. For a series of years he filled the arduous and responsible post of Secretary to His Eminence Cardinal John de Tavora, in whose service he had accumulated a considerable fortune, and had been initiated into many State secrets. But far above any worldly advantages he could derive from his position, were the benefits which accrued to his soul from daily contact with a man of such eminent sanctity and purity of mind as Cardinal Tavora. This clever and accomplished statesman was a model of Christian piety, and had a sincere contempt for the world, which had nevertheless laid all its best gifts at his feet. Charles V. not only esteemed but loved him. He admitted him to his close intimacy, and used when alone with him always to call him "Father." He was frequently heard to say that if he thanked God from his heart for the vast realm of which He had deigned to place the sceptre in his hand, he thanked Him none the less sincerely for having given him so wise and faithful a Minister to aid him in the difficult duty of ruling his Empire aright. He successively appointed Cardinal Tavora Archbishop of Toledo, Grand Inquisitor, President of Castille, Chief Minister of State, superintendent of the education of the Prince, his son, and at one time Regent of all the Spanish possessions during his absence. Undazzled by the sun of royal favour, Cardinal Tavora preserved his simplicity and humility. His secretary followed in his footsteps, and gave universal edification

by the manner in which he refused several valuable benefices which were pressed upon his acceptance.

After the death of Cardinal Tavora, Don Bustamante gave himself up entirely to the service of God, and endeavoured to promote the salvation of his fellow-men with the same singleness of purpose which he had formerly employed in aiding his chief to steer the bark of the State. Erelong a secret voice began to whisper in the depths of his soul, that he might serve his Divine Master more faithfully still. With many tears he daily besought our Lord to mark out for him with distinctness the way in which he ought to walk. Not long afterwards, while saying Mass in the Cathedral of Toledo, he repeated this prayer with more fervour than ever whilst holding the Sacred Host in his hands. He instantly became conscious of an over-mastering impulse which urged him to seek out the late Duke of Gandia, and do exactly what he was doing.

Up to that time Don Bustamante had not learned many particulars concerning the manner of life followed by Father Francis, although he had heard of his vocation to the Society of Jesus. From a merely human and superficial point of view, such a vocation seemed most unsuitable for Don Bustamante. He was at this time close upon sixty, and had all his life been accustomed to live in comfort, not to say elegance and ease. Remarkable as he had always been for the mature deliberation with which he reflected upon any step before taking it, he was upon this occasion so forcibly impelled by the Spirit of God, that he made up his mind on the spot, without allowing himself time to think. In fact, he set out for Oñate the very same day. He found the neighbourhood of the place perfumed with the sweet fragrance of Francis' virtues, and when

at length he rang the bell of the house itself and asked to see him, he found the Saint carrying a load of stones, and working like a common day-labourer at the building which was going on. Don Bustamante related to him the manner in which the will of God had been made known to his soul, and having obtained the favour of admission into the Novitiate, he forthwith broke up his establishments and dismissed his servants, in the hope, as he himself expressed it, that he might have the honour of becoming a faithful servant in the house of God.

This pious hope was abundantly fulfilled. He became far more distinguished by the Divine wisdom which appeared in all his actions, than he had formerly been by the human wisdom with which he had brought to a successful issue many delicate negotiations in the different Courts of Europe. He was the means of rendering no small service to God and to His Church, after his entrance into the Society. Father Francis often said that he could never have accomplished his various undertakings without the aid of this faithful coadjutor, whose name will appear more than once in these pages.

Our second instance shall be of a different character. Don Antony de Cordova was distantly related to the House of Borgia. He bore the name of Cordova, in compliance with the Spanish custom, in virtue of which the younger sons of great houses take the name of their mother, provided it be sufficiently illustrious. The talents and virtues of the youthful Don Antony were worthy of his noble birth. After having completed his studies at the University of Salamanca, he was elected Rector, a distinction only conferred on persons of rare merit. In fact, by the time he was twenty-three, he

had acquired a reputation which won for him the good graces of the Emperor, who regarded him with much favour, and requested for him from the Pope a Cardinal's hat. His Holiness nominated Don Antony to this dignity shortly afterwards, to the great joy of his mother and of his numerous relatives, as well as of a wide circle of friends and acquaintances.

He himself, however, saw the matter in a far different light, and he did not consider it to be his duty, in an affair of so much importance, to comply with the wishes of his brothers, nor listen to the voice of family ambition. He desired disinterested counsel and advice, and having heard a great deal about the wisdom of St. Ignatius, he resolved to apply to him. In a letter bearing date March 31, 1552, he gave the Saint an account of himself, his position, and his difficulties. This account combines childlike simplicity with manly prudence. It states, in the clearest manner, the reasons which induced him to dread, and those which led him to desire, the proposed dignity. In conclusion, Don Antony implores St. Ignatius to pronounce his verdict in decided terms, and with the least possible delay, assuring him of his resolution to follow it, and to lend his ear to no other adviser.

It cannot appear surprising that the answer to this letter was looked for with almost uncontrollable impatience. The feast of Pentecost was near at hand, and the Cardinal's hat was to be conferred on occasion of the festival. At this juncture, a visitor who chanced to call upon Don Antony, gave him a detailed account of the manner in which Father Francis had left the world, and of the life he was leading at Oñate. Fired by such an example, the young nobleman could resist no longer. That very evening he set out for Oñate,

and after a conversation with Francis, determined to renounce at once and for ever all worldly honours, and to enter the Society of Jesus.

Even amid the galaxy of eminent men which at that time distinguished it, he shone with no ordinary lustre. His virtue and sanctity are mentioned in terms of the highest admiration by Father Louis of Granada, in his biography of Father John of Avila. This holy priest had rendered no small service to Don Antony, who had for a considerable period been under his direction. Among his printed letters is one addressed to "Father Antony de Cordova," in which the writer congratulates him upon his vocation, and exhorts him to thank God for it with all the more fervour whenever he reflects on the tremendous dangers to which his rank and position would have exposed him in the world, more especially the danger of pride.

Don Sancho de Castille and Don Pedro de Navarre may also be ranked in the number of those whom the odour of Francis' virtue attracted to Oñate. They too owed their vocation, under God, in the first instance to Father John of Avila, who entertained so great an admiration for St. Ignatius and his followers, that he took a peculiar delight in training souls for the Society. He used to term himself the Precursor, saying that he filled the same office in regard to St. Ignatius as St. John Baptist did in regard to Jesus Christ. Two other subjects of rare merit who left his school of perfection to enter that of Father Francis, cannot be passed by without a brief mention. The first was Don James de Guzman, son of the Count of Baylen. His sanctity is very specially spoken of in the Life of Father John of Avila, to which we have just alluded. The second was Don Caspar Loart, who subsequently

distinguished himself by his writings. Both these holy men possessed a truly apostolic spirit, and were widely known throughout the diocese of Calahorra on account of their liberal almsgiving and the zeal with which they furthered every good work. After their entrance into the Society, they rendered eminent service to the cause of God.

The Emperor had not forgotten his friend and favourite. On the contrary, the accounts he received from time to time of Francis' wonderful sanctity and of the mortified life he was leading, increased the esteem and affection he had cherished for him during so many years. He thought that he should render a signal service to the Church, by honouring one so richly deserving of honour, and he therefore desired to procure Francis' elevation to the Cardinalate. The autograph letter he wrote to Pope Julius III. on the subject gave much pleasure to His Holiness, whose wishes were already tending in the same direction, and he therefore determined to gratify Charles V. as soon as possible. All the members of the Sacred College expressed their agreement with the project of the Sovereign Pontiff and the proposal of the Emperor. Strict orders were issued to all parties concerned to keep the coming nomination a profound secret, especially from St. Ignatius.

By whom, or through what agency, whether human or Divine, it was first whispered into the watchful ear of the Saint, we are not told. What we are told is, that no sooner did he hear of it, than he summoned up all the energy of his indomitable will, and all the resources of his keen and far-seeing intelligence, to frustrate and overthrow it. No easy task lay before him, but in his veins there ran the blood of a long line

of warrior ancestors, and he showed himself equal to the occasion. His first step was to seek an audience of the Pope. "Holy Father," he said with respectful deference, "God has seen fit to call Father Francis to a life altogether different from that in which you propose to see him engaged, and He has been pleased to make manifest to all that it is by this contempt of the world that He wishes His servant to glorify Him. Hence it would be an injury to the Church to deprive her of so striking an example of Christian humility. A severe blow would, moreover, be inflicted upon the Society if ideas of worldly ambition, from which God in His mercy had hitherto preserved its members, were allowed to enter it." God endowed the words of the Saint with so much power and force, that the Supreme Pontiff could not resist them, but at once avowed to St. Ignatius that his reasons were unanswerable. He went on to add, that he much regretted his inability to act in accordance with them, as the affair was already far advanced, and he had, moreover, pledged his word to the Emperor, whom he was most unwilling to displease. But the Saint was not daunted for a moment. He well knew what Francis would wish, and in fact, ever since he had heard of the intended elevation, he had not ceased to entreat our Lord rather to withdraw from this life so valuable a member of His Society, than to permit that he should be forced to quit the lowly state which Divine grace had led him to embrace. This knowledge enabled him to point out to the Pope a way of escaping the dilemma. "If," he said, "I may presume to make a suggestion to your Holiness, I have thought of a plan, by adopting which you can keep your word, without causing annoyance to the Emperor

and the Cardinals, and equally without injuring the Society of Jesus, or distressing Father Francis. Suppose your Holiness were to offer the Cardinal's hat to him, and even press him to accept it, without however laying upon him your strict command to do so?"

The Pope highly approved this diplomatic counsel, and promised St. Ignatius that he would act upon it. And so he did. The same courier who brought to Francis the Brief of Julius III., which showed him the danger which had recently threatened him, brought also a letter which showed him in how prudent and skilful a manner his saintly General had delivered him from it. This letter was not written by St. Ignatius himself, but by Father Polanco, who was at that time acting as his secretary. If Francis was grieved to see that the world had not, as he wished, entirely forgotten him, he was at the same time rejoiced to receive this fresh mark of Divine favour and approval, and to have a fresh offering to present to God. He replied to the Pope's Brief without delay. "I entreat your Holiness," he says in his letter, "to accept my sincere and humble thanks for the honour you so graciously think of bestowing upon me. May I beg you, Holy Father, to confer upon me a still greater mark of your Holiness' favour, by permitting me to spend the remainder of my days in the state to which I am entirely persuaded that God has called me. Grant me further, Holy Father, to die in the same poverty in which Jesus Christ died, for I assure your Holiness that in no other way can I find peace or rest."

Francis' desires were not altogether gratified. Two or three years later, we shall find the question of the Cardinalate revived. For the moment, however, his

fears were put to sleep, and he resolved to endeavour, more diligently than ever, to bury himself in the obscurity he loved so well. Amid the quiet solitudes of his present abode, he could taste to the full the joy of a soul which loves God above all things, and is able to preserve an unbroken union with Him. Just however, as he felt himself secure of leading, for some years at least, the life of his choice, a call came which obliged him to leave it in virtue of that obedience to which, for the sake of the same love of God, he had bound himself. Towards the end of 1552, he received from St. Ignatius a letter which ran as follows :

You must bear in mind that our Lord did not call you to enter His Society, in order that you might lead the life of a hermit and seek your own satisfaction, of how elevated and pure soever a nature. Your vocation compels you to seek to promote the salvation of others, in order thus to imitate the Son of God, Who left the bosom of His Father, in order that He might redeem our souls, that He might give them food, and peace, and life, by means of His own weariness, sufferings, and death. Therefore I exhort and command you to follow so great an Example, so illustrious a Leader, to quit Oñate in order to visit and seek out many persons who are desirous of serving God, and of modelling their households according to the counsel you may give them. You ought to feel persuaded that these journeys will be all the more pleasing to God, because, as I am well aware, they will be anything but pleasing to your natural man. And I have reason to believe that their result cannot fail to be satisfactory.

Such are the only motives put forward by St. Ignatius. Yet it seems probable that the thoughtful care in regard

to the health and well-being of his subjects which was so prominent a feature of his character, may have influenced him not a little in writing this letter. He knew how great a strain the uniform and monotonous routine of life at Oñate must be upon one accustomed, as was Francis, to continual variety and constant change of scene, companionship, and surroundings. Be this as it may, one thing at least is certain, which is that no more distasteful command could have been laid upon him. Nevertheless his obedience was prompt and uncomplaining. As soon as possible after the receipt of St. Ignatius' letter, he quitted his beloved solitude, unable however, as he crossed the threshold of the hermitage, to stifle more than one profound sigh, or to repress many a bitter tear.

CHAPTER XII.

HIS LIFE AT ONATE (concluded).

IN the present chapter we propose to accompany Francis in the principal of those journeys which he, as we have just seen, undertook at the command of St. Ignatius. They were not performed consecutively, but at greater or less intervals, as circumstances demanded. Our account of them will bring St. Francis' history down to the close of 1554, in which year St. Ignatius made him Provincial of Spain and the Indies, and his life entered upon an altogether fresh phase.

The first of these expeditions originated in the following manner. Don Bernard de Cardenas, Duke of Magneda and Viceroy of Navarre, was a member of one of the best families of Spain. His virtue and personal qualities corresponded to his exalted position. In former days he had been one of Francis' closest and dearest friends, and he not unnaturally thought that this fact gave him a special claim upon the Saint, after the latter had embraced the religious state. Gladly would Don Bernard have travelled to Oñate in order once more to see and converse with the beloved companions of his earlier life. But the commands of the Emperor were peremptory. He permitted none of his viceroys to quit the province over which they held

sway, so long as the term of their viceroyalty lasted, and to this rule there was no exception. Especially was this the case in regard to those who ruled frontier provinces, such as Navarre. Seeing no other alternative, Don Bernard despatched to Oñate one of the gentlemen of his Court with the following letter :

Reverend and dear Father Francis,—If I am venturing to request the favour of a visit from you, I trust you will believe my assurance that I am actuated in so doing neither by the longing I have to renew the friendship which was my delight in former days, nor by any foolish curiosity to behold for myself the rare spectacle of a man like your Reverence, living as you are at present doing. I do indeed consider your friendship to be a greater honour to me now than it ever was before, but my sole motive in requesting you to give me a fresh proof of it in coming to visit me, is the hope that I may thus be enabled to carry out the design with which God has inspired me by following your advice and regulating my daily life and that of my household according to your counsels. You know that it is not possible for me to quit Navarre, but I will come as far as the frontier to meet you. I earnestly hope that your charity and zeal will induce you to undertake this journey, and to come as far as Pampeluna. I shall look with eager anxiety for the answer sent me by the bearer of these lines.

Francis wrote back to say that he hoped to see the Viceroy very soon, but that he begged him not to come to meet him, as it was impossible for him to fix any definite time for his visit. No sooner had the Duke's messenger been despatched with this letter than Francis

prepared to set out for Pampeluna in the hope of arriving there unexpectedly, and thus escaping the demonstrations with which he was certain that he should otherwise be received. This plan proved successful. But he could not avoid the honours and attentions paid him by the Viceroy, whose delight on receiving his old friend beneath his roof knew literally no bounds. He compelled Francis to occupy a splendid suite of rooms close to his own private apartments, and appointed several of his servants to wait upon him, begging him to have his meals served apart whenever he might prefer to do so. So often as the Saint went out, his host made a point of accompanying him; in fact, there was no thoughtful and delicate attention which he omitted to show him, no mark of attention or respect which he forgot to pay him.

Francis was deeply grateful for the kindness thus showered upon him, although his humility caused him to feel unworthy of it. It was a great consolation to him to behold the fruits of justice and holiness, which God caused to result from his stay with the Duke. Not only did he instruct and set in order the ducal household, but he stirred up many of the inhabitants of Pampeluna to seek after perfection according to their state of life. He also preached several times in the Cathedral, which on each of these occasions was thronged to the doors.

As to Don Bernard, it is not easy to describe the fervent desires to serve God more faithfully than he had hitherto done which were kindled within his soul by the burning words of his friend. He found time to spend several hours of each day with Francis, conferring with him upon the affairs of his soul, and entreating him to teach him the duties belonging to his rank and

position of command. These lessons the Duke drank in with avidity, and he would not suffer Francis to depart until he had written down a set of rules by which he might steer his conduct. These directions he carefully preserved and faithfully carried out, and it is recorded by contemporary historians that the good they effected was both widespread and permanent. Their influence was indeed felt, more or less strongly, throughout the whole province of Navarre. The Saint prolonged his visit as long as he considered necessary for the spiritual needs of the Viceroy. He then took an affectionate leave of him, and gladly bent his steps once more in the direction of Oñate.

He quitted his beloved retreat on another occasion to spend two or three months in evangelizing the provinces of Castille and Andalusia. He seems to have been able to suit himself as perfectly to the middle and lower classes, as to the members of the aristocracy in which he was born. It would be impossible to follow him in every detail of this apostolic journey, which may be compared to a series of missions. We are told that in every place where he paused, a very large number of conversions were the result. In his mouth the Word of God was "living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword."¹ The example of his life lent to his words additional power and force. Again and again there were among his hearers persons who had led hitherto a life which appeared irreproachable, and was so, if judged by the maxims of the world, but which they now felt to be blameworthy, not to say un-Christian. Numbers of such individuals expressed their determination to begin to serve God in an altogether different manner. The only reason they

¹ Hebrews iv. 12.

gave for their resolution was that the virtues of Father Francis, his austerities, his humility, his abnegation of self, deprived them of all excuse of their own cowardly half-heartedness, and would, if they failed to profit by them, procure for them a verdict of condemnation from the Judge of all men in the day of final account.

It will readily be understood how great an amount of fatigue these journeys entailed upon the Saint. He was, moreover, in the course of them frequently exposed to no slight personal risk. In the following instance, he escaped all harm, and was the means of miraculously preserving his companion, Father Bustamante. No special date is given in regard to the occurrence.

The road which the travellers were following lay through a rugged and mountainous district. At the end of a narrow defile, the bridle-path skirted the brink of a tremendous precipice, at the foot of which flowed a stream of water. Francis was riding on first, absorbed in meditation. He passed the dangerous place, and was already on a wider part of the road, when the mule Father Bustamante, who was a short distance behind, was riding, all at once lost its footing, and slipped over the edge of the precipice. The rocks were steep and destitute of vegetation, so that the animal struggled in vain to recover its footing, and at last rolled over and over until it reached a small plateau, where it lay stunned and motionless, with Father Bustamante underneath it. He had partially lost consciousness, but ceased not to invoke the names of Jesus and Mary. At the time of the accident, he had been reciting the Rosary, and he still held his beads firmly clasped between his bruised fingers. Francis' attention was called to the critical position of his companion by the loud cries of some peasants who were tending their

goats upon the mountains, and having witnessed the accident, came running up to proffer their assistance. The Saint raised his eyes to heaven, and said in a voice of tender piety and devotion: "May Jesus help thee, may the Mother of Mercy deliver thee!" Scarcely had he uttered these words than the mule, by dint of a desperate effort, regained its feet, and stood up, appearing quite unhurt. Father Bustamante, released from the weight of the animal, arose from the ground as if nothing had occurred, and looked calmly around him, rosary in hand. Moreover, he perceived a winding path, safe and smooth, which led from the ledge of rock where he stood to the path from which he had fallen. He remounted his mule, and was soon by the side of Father Francis, both the rider and his beast being entirely unharmed.

Father Bustamante was a devout servant of Mary, and he always attributed his marvellous deliverance from what seemed certain death, in the first place to her intercession, since he had invoked her in the moment of peril, and had not ceased to grasp her rosary in his hand. In the second place, he attributed his escape to the prayer of Father Francis, who had besought our Lord and His Blessed Mother to aid him in his need.

Our next anecdote is of a totally different character. Upon one occasion, the Saint was travelling in the company of a Jesuit Father who had a great reputation as a preacher. His name is not mentioned, but we are told that his sonorous voice, clear delivery, and eloquent words, attracted many to hear him. One evening when the whole party was resting in an inn, this Father met with an accident, by which two of his front teeth were knocked out of his upper

jaw. He was much vexed at this, because the loss of these teeth must necessarily render his articulation indistinct, and thus prove a hindrance to his usefulness in the pulpit. Francis, whose kindness of heart enabled him to feel, not only for great sorrows, but for the lesser misfortunes of those around him, was sorry for his companion, trifling as the affair might have appeared to some. Taking up the teeth in his hand, he asked to be allowed to inspect the place from which they had been forced, and which had not ceased to bleed freely. Without any apparent difficulty, he slipped them back into their sockets, and from that time forth they remained so firmly fixed there, that neither decay nor old age had any power to loosen them.

A third incident, which occurred about this time during the course of Francis' travels, may be given here. He happened to pass through the town of Atienza, where his name was well known, and he was consequently received with great respect. In a village at some distance from that town there lived a young lady who had been a cripple from her earliest infancy. She had heard much of the sanctity of Francis, his wonderful insight in regard to Divine things, the wise counsels he imparted to those who went to him for spiritual advice, and hearing that he had now come into the neighbourhood, she keenly regretted her inability to go to him. However, she sent a letter to him, informing him that the infirmity with which she was afflicted prevented her from presenting herself before him to seek the consolation she so much needed, and begging him to visit her at her own house. Francis, always kind and indulgent to the suffering, complied with her request. Kneeling down by the couch on

which for years she had lain prostrate, he lifted up his heart to Heaven in fervent prayer, while tears flowed from his eyes. Laying his hand upon the head of the girl, he repeated the Gospel for the Second Sunday in Advent.¹ Before he had finished, before he had removed his hand from her head, the young lady felt within herself that health and strength had come to her. With a cry of delight, she rose up from her recumbent posture in the sight of her friends and of the persons who had accompanied the Saint to her house. With perfect ease she stood upright before them, transformed in an instant from a bent and helpless cripple into a tall and graceful woman, free from any trace of her life-long infirmity. Nor was this all. St. Francis had, at the same time, obtained for her the health of the soul, so that in after years she resisted the allurements of the world and served God with her whole heart. The church which stands in the town of Atienza, and is dedicated to St. Francis Borgia, was erected in memory of this miraculous cure.

These scattered details we will now leave, in order to give an account of the longest, and perhaps the most important among the journeys which he undertook during this period of his life. The marvellous story of his renunciation of the world and entrance into the Society, and of the manner in which he was spending his days at Oñate, spread, not only throughout the length and breadth of Spain, but throughout Portugal also. It deeply touched and interested all the members of the Court, more especially the Infant Don Louis, brother of King John III. That this should be so is by no means surprising when we remember of how long standing was the friendship between Father

¹ St. Matt. xi. 2—10.

Francis and Don Louis. It had begun nearly twenty years before, when, in 1535, the Prince paid a visit to the Court of the Emperor Charles V., in order to see his sister the Empress, and subsequently to accompany his brother-in-law during his African campaign. Francis, then Marquess of Lombay, was chosen to be in attendance upon the Prince, and the two were thus much thrown together. Don Louis, who was pious as well as clever and courageous, soon formed a great affection for Francis, whose character he thoroughly appreciated, and for whose virtue he entertained a profound veneration. He kept up a correspondence with him, and sent him presents from time to time. When he heard of his religious vocation, and later on of his ordination, he wrote a warm letter of congratulation. From that day forward he made a practice of consulting him on many subjects, and his letters bear witness to his own virtue, as well as to the exalted opinion he entertained of the sanctity of Father Francis. We will quote a portion of one of these epistles, and give also the answer of the Saint. It seems probable that the project referred to was the establishment of the first Jesuit house in Portugal. But on this point we have no certain information.

Reverend Father,—It is only a short time since I last wrote to you. Therefore you must consider this letter as a sort of postscript, which I send in order to say over again how delighted I shall be if you find that what I wish can be accomplished without difficulty. I wish it, not only because I am convinced that it is a good work and one which will prove to be for the profit of many souls, but also because it is so great a pleasure to me to please you. Ever since our friendship

first began, I have had the sincerest regard and affection for your Reverence, and for every member of your noble house, by severing your connection with which you have rendered it a thousand times more illustrious than it ever was before. If I were not anxious to please you for so many other reasons, I should ardently desire to do so because it is now clear to every observer, that nothing can please you unless it is also pleasing to God. May He be praised for ever! His manner of dealing with His servants is wonderful indeed, and His mercy knows no limits. Your gratitude to Him, Reverend Father, ought also to know no bounds, for your conversion has been the means of doing more good than you can possibly imagine. As far as I am myself concerned, I can assure you that I often seem to hear you exhorting me to virtue, as if you were actually present with me. Happy indeed is the servant of God who can quit the turmoil of the world, and find true interior peace by devoting all the affections of his heart and all the powers of his mind to the service of God, not heeding the criticisms of his fellow-men, who, when most they flattered and caressed him, did but lay snares for his virtue. You, Reverend Father, have left all in order to follow this holy will, in accomplishment of which true happiness is alone to be found in this world. Its perfect fulfilment will be our joy and our reward in that better life to which we aspire.

Wherefore I beg you with all my heart, to remember me in a very special manner in your prayers and Holy Sacrifices, entreating our Lord to make known to me His will, and to give me grace to do no other will, but to live and die in the fulfilment of it, in such a place and manner as He shall judge most likely to promote

His glory. I cannot conclude these lines, without expressing the hope that you will never forget the great pleasure it always affords me to be of service to you in whatever way you may like to make use of me.

The following is Francis' answer :

May it please your Serene Highness, I pray the Holy Spirit, Who is called the Father of the poor and recompenses the charity shown to them, to reward your Highness for the kindness you show me, in deigning to remember so unworthy a sinner, and to give me proofs of your good-will, by writing me letters with the royal hand which has won so many and such splendid victories. It is especially kind to allow me to take part in an undertaking which originates so entirely with yourself, and which places under such immense obligations all who have the happiness of serving God in the Society of Jesus. I have been of late increasingly conscious that the letters written by your Highness are dictated by the Spirit of God, and I cannot express the joy this gives me. Much as I have always valued your friendship and favour, I value them now more than ever. I trust that God will graciously hear and answer the prayers I unceasingly offer up on your behalf, and that He will be pleased to increase your humility, rather than your earthly glory and greatness, in order that you may one day attain a truer glory, and a more exalted greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven. "Blessed is He Who," as the Psalmist says, "taketh away the spirit of princes."¹ And He has bestowed upon your Highness very special marks of His mercy and goodness, by taking from you that spirit of pride

¹ Psalm lxxv. 12.

and self-sufficiency, which characterizes too many princes, causing them to forget what they owe to themselves, and what they owe to God. He has imparted to you on the contrary, that "perfect spirit" in which the Prophet-King so ardently desired to be strengthened. Who can adequately express the privilege it is, not to possess this "spirit of princes," but to be strengthened in this "perfect spirit"? Who can measure the wide difference which separates them? The one is a spirit of strife and contention, the other of peace and charity; the one enervates and depresses, the other strengthens and consoles; the first is merely human, the second wholly and altogether Divine. Well indeed would it be, if the care and time which are spent in studying the spirit of the world, and learning its maxims, were employed in searching into, and striving to acquire, that Spirit which is from above, according to the counsel of the Apostle St. John, who says: "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, if they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."¹

Were this advice followed, how many persons would be disabused of their errors, how many who are miserably blind would be cured at once. Unhappily the greater part of mankind pay little heed to this subject, and talk in a vague manner about what they know nothing of. Every one allows himself to be guided by his own impulses, which are utterly unreliable, and lead him to certain destruction. Reason, faith, and the commands of God urge us to strive to empty ourselves of our own spirit, in order that we may be filled only with His "perfect spirit," which appears vain and illusory in the eyes of the world. Nevertheless

¹ 1 St. John iv. 1.

a day will come when many will find out their mistake when it is too late, and confess in these last hours that self-love has, alas! led them as far from the Kingdom of God, as His perfect Spirit would have led them near to it, had they but submitted to His guidance.

Wherefore, most noble Prince, I humbly thank our Lord, that your Highness is filled with the Spirit of God, which overcomes and expels our natural pride and self-love, as the holy King had experienced when he said: "I waited for him that hath saved me from pusillanimity of spirit, and a storm."¹ It is this Divine Spirit which enables us to cry, "Abba, Father," as St. Paul says, "because we have received the spirit of adoption of sons."² We must be careful to follow the advice of the same Apostle: "Extinguish not the spirit."³ I trust that, by the mercy of God, this spirit will prevail more and more in the soul of your Highness, so that at length you may be able to adopt the words of another holy Prince, "I was exercised and I swept my spirit."⁴ Then shall you rise yet higher, and exclaim, with the Blessed Mother of our Lord: "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."⁵

Would to God that I had myself attained this happy state, and that I was changed within as truly as I am without. I know that it ought to be thus with me, since the mercy and goodness of God has called me to be among the number of His servants. Being by His grace stripped of all earthly possessions and having nothing in the world which I can offer to your Highness, in return for all you have given me, I venture to hope that you will accept my good wishes,

¹ Psalm liv. 9.² Romans viii. 15.³ 1 Thess. v. 19.⁴ Psalm lxxvi. 7.⁵ St. Luke i. 47.

and receive this expression of my heartfelt gratitude, since God Himself has deigned to accept it, and I know that your Highness desires to unite your will with that of our Sovereign Lord and Master. I entreat His infinite goodness to preserve the person of your Highness, and to bestow upon you one day far more glory in Heaven than He has already given you greatness upon earth.

FRANCIS.

This letter stirred up in the heart of the Prince to whom it was addressed, a yet more fervent love of God, and it was about this period that he first began seriously to entertain the idea of imitating his beloved friend, and entering the Society of Jesus.

The numerous and remarkable conversions which Francis was the means of effecting, procured for him ere-long a wider renown than that which he had formerly enjoyed on account of his high rank and elevated position at the Imperial Court. King John III. of Portugal, and his consort, Queen Catherine, expressed a strong desire to see and converse with him. In so doing, they were actuated by no vain curiosity, but by a spirit of true piety, and by the wish to draw down upon themselves and their Court the abundant showers of grace, by which God so evidently blessed the footsteps of His servant, wherever he went. The weighty obligations under which the Society lay, in regard to the princes who had been its founders and earliest friends and patrons in Portugal, rendered a refusal quite out of the question. The visit proved a trying one for Francis. Not only did both the King and Queen each send a nobleman of high rank to greet him when he crossed the frontier, and escort him to Lisbon, but the Bishop of Lisbon, the Papal Nuncio, and a

considerable number of dukes, marquesses, and other great lords, rode out to meet him as he drew near to the capital, and accompanied him when he made his entry there. Nor is this all. The manner in which he was received by the King and Queen, when at length he reached the Palace, is something yet more unprecedented. When he appeared in the doorway of the audience-chamber, they both rose and advanced towards him. The King even uncovered his head, a mark of honour he had never been known to pay to any duke, nor to any grandee of either Spain or Portugal. Their Majesties then ordered a seat to be offered him, and several times begged that he would not remain standing. By so doing, they desired to express their belief that virtue is the truest of all greatness, and their conviction that it is more honourable to despise "the treasure of the Egyptians" than to possess it. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the humble Religious, who had not been able to avoid accepting the honours which had previously been shown him, refused this last, and preserved the standing posture which subjects at that time invariably maintained in the presence of the Sovereign, until the conclusion of the interview.

Francis' sojourn at the Court of Portugal proved to be indeed a time of benediction for all its members. Both the King and his son made a point of never missing one of his sermons, and the monarch had frequent interviews with him in private, in order to ask his advice, not only in regard to the affairs of his soul, but in regard also to all his plans and projects for furthering the spiritual welfare of his subjects, and spreading the Kingdom of Christ in heathen lands. Queen Catherine showed herself not a whit behind

her royal husband in the diligence with which she listened to Francis, and the anxiety she displayed to profit by his teaching. The Princess Joanna and the ladies of the Court followed this example, and a marvellous change was wrought in them. Their whole tone and spirit underwent a complete transformation, and the effect of it appeared more especially in their style of conversation which became graver and less frivolous. Everything which could offend against charity was banished from it, and no anecdotes, allusions, or expressions were allowed which could call a blush to the cheek of the most modest.

The reader will wonder that, in speaking of Francis' reception at the Court of Portugal, we have as yet made no mention of Don Louis, the King's brother, of whom so much has already been said. No one was so rejoiced as he to welcome Francis, no one profited so much by "the Divine conversations" of the Saint, as his enthusiastic friend was wont to term them. The Prince had for several years been leading a life which was more or less penitential, with a view to expiating the sins and irregularities of his youth. They had been numerous, and weighed heavily upon his enlightened conscience, whenever his memory recurred to them. Since he had heard of the manner in which Father Francis had left the world, he had increased the length and frequency of his religious observances. The presence of the Saint in Lisbon, and his ardent exhortations, now put the crowning stone to the edifice of Don Louis' conversion. He resolved to follow the counsel of the Prince of the Apostles, who bids us "trust perfectly in the grace which is offered us through the revelation of Jesus Christ."¹ He deter-

¹ 1 St. Peter i. 13.

mined to lead a holier life, and one more consistent with the inspirations of the Spirit of God.

In fact, he earnestly desired to enter the Society, and wrote a long and touching letter to St. Ignatius on the subject of his wishes. But the Saint agreed with Francis in the opinion that the somewhat advanced age of Don Louis, and still more, his delicate health, rendered so total a change in his manner of life quite out of the question. St. Ignatius expressed the belief that by remaining in the world, and setting a good example to the whole nation, and also by continuing to aid with his advice the King, his brother, he would do far more to promote the glory of God, than he could effect by attempting to embrace the religious life, an effort, moreover, which would probably prove futile. Bitterly disappointed though he was, Don Louis humbly acquiesced in this decision. Since he could no longer hope to be a Jesuit, he determined, from that day forward, to live with the utmost simplicity possible for him. He dismissed all the chief officers of his household, and cut down his staff of servants, so as to leave only the number which a private individual would require. He sold his splendid collection of gems, his gallery of pictures, and all his most costly furniture, in order to provide pensions for his old and faithful retainers, and also to pay some debts which he had not as yet discharged. This done, he took a vow of chastity, of poverty as far as was consistent with his state of life, and of perpetual obedience to the commandments of God. He attained a very high degree of perfection, his gentleness, modesty, and humility edified all who approached him, while his liberality was so great that he was commonly called "the father of the poor, the

refuge of the sorrowful." Nothing, in a word, could be more truly admirable than the manner in which he spent the closing years of his life, or the heroic and saintly patience with which he endured the severe physical sufferings which were his portion. He regarded the lingering and painful complaint which at length brought him to the grave, as a mark of special favour from the hand of God, because it gave him an opportunity of expiating his sins. When he lay upon his death-bed, one of his attendants expressed an earnest wish that he could alleviate the agonizing pain his beloved master was enduring. "No, no," replied the courageous Prince, "this is my last opportunity of meriting. Do not wish to deprive me of it." But we must linger no longer over the history of Don Louis, interesting and attractive though it be. We have devoted so much space to him, because his sanctity was, under God, entirely the work of Francis, and was owing solely to his influence.

An account of a miracle performed by the Saint, shortly after his return from his visit to Lisbon, may fitly bring the present chapter to a close. Among his friends at Valladolid, was a lady of great virtue who had an only son, the heir, moreover, to large estates. This child when scarcely more than a year old, fell into a decline. Day by day it appeared to fade away, until all hope of preserving its life was given up. One morning when the mother on rising went to the bed whereon the cherished infant lay, she perceived that the waning spark of life was almost extinct. Overwhelmed with grief, she sent for Francis, more in the hope that he would comfort her in her grief, than with any expectation that he would revive the flickering flame, and recall the dead to life. He came at once;

but before he could reach the house, the child drew its last breath, and the relatives standing around said, on hearing his knock: "It is no use for Father Francis to come now, for the child's soul has already departed." When the Saint entered the room he went up to the bed, and taking one of the little hands of the dead child in his own, he remarked that it was yet warm, and, in order to render the miracle that he was about to perform less apparent, endeavoured to persuade the bystanders that the infant was not really dead. Then kneeling down upon the ground, he fixed his eyes upon a crucifix; all who were present beheld his countenance glowing with a celestial flame, and their hopes began to revive, even before any change took place in the condition of the child. In a few moments it opened its eyes with a merry smile, as if it had only feigned death in sport, and was looking round with a roguish laugh at the trick it had played, and the fright it had given to the weeping relatives who stood around. Then, as the child sat up and moved its arms, joy took the place of grief, and all exclaimed: "A miracle, a miracle!"

Francis rose from his knees, and addressing with the greatest kindness the mother of the boy he had just restored to life, "Give thanks," he said, "to God, Who in His great mercy has been pleased to leave this child with us for the present." But to check the elation of her joy, he went on to speak of the selfishness of thus imploring Heaven to restore to earth one of so tender an age, whose innocence was as yet unspotted, when he was just entering upon the enjoyment of eternal happiness; turning adrift, as it were, once more on the stormy sea, the mariner who had already brought his bark into port. Then the mother, a woman full of faith,

whose heart was still glowing with gratitude for the favour she had received, answered: "Far be it from me, Father, to mar the happiness of my beloved child, or sacrifice his eternal interests by my foolish fondness. I am content to resign him entirely to God, Who has now given him to me a second time." Francis rejoiced to hear her express sentiments of such generous resignation: "The will of God," he replied, "is to leave your son with you now: and be assured that having sent him back to the world, He will enable him to escape its perils. For I tell you frankly, if you ask my opinion, that I can read upon his countenance a certain stamp, a superscription, which is of happy augury, a sure pledge of his eternal bliss." Then without adding a word, he turned away and left the house. The narrator of this miracle, who survived St. Francis by many years, bore witness to the fulfilment of the prophecy. The child grew up to manhood, led a pious life, and died a holy death; his confessors asserting with confidence that he had preserved his baptismal innocence unstained, and that no doubt could be entertained as to his eternal salvation.

CHAPTER XIII.

HE IS MADE COMMISSARY GENERAL.

THE office of Commissary General, to which St. Ignatius, as we shall see, appointed Francis, does not now exist. It signifies more than Visitor, as implying larger powers. Yet it is not in any way synonymous with Provincial, for the rapid growth of the Society necessitated about this time the division of Spain into five Provinces, each of which had its own Provincial. Hitherto Father Araoz, of whom mention has more than once been made in these pages, had governed the whole country, but now that the number of houses had increased, the burden became too heavy for his shoulders, or indeed, for the shoulders of any one man to bear.

The letter in which St. Ignatius formally appointed Francis Commissary General in Spain and the Indies, came upon him as an unexpected blow. No time did he lose in forwarding an energetic protest, in which he set forth the reasons which, as he thought, proved to demonstration his unfitness for the office. He hoped that the decision might be rescinded at head-quarters, but when St. Ignatius' answer came, it did but confirm his previous resolution, and enforce obedience. We will quote the answer, as it speaks for itself in regard to the duties of the Commissary General.

It is the will of God that you should undertake this office, and you must therefore bow your head beneath

the yoke of the Lord, and edify, by the example of your own obedience, those over whom you will be placed. You will have to see to the completion of such houses as are already begun, and to arrange about the foundation of others wherever you consider a suitable opening offers itself, in order that by this means the glory of God may be promoted, and a large number of persons led to serve Him more perfectly. It will also be your duty to visit in turn, as far as you are able, those houses which are already established, in order that you may look into everything, and see for yourself how matters are going on. It will be well if you take occasion, when paying such visits, to have personal interviews with every member of the community, in order that each one may be consoled and encouraged according to his need. I also wish you to make, from time to time, some stay in whatever city the Court may happen to be residing, for the double purpose of furthering the interests of the Society, and of seeking to make conversions among the members of the aristocracy, since God has shown, by so many and such evident signs, that it is His good pleasure to make use of you in this peculiarly difficult and delicate work.

Francis thus found himself placed in a position of great authority and responsibility. Although he was by no means independent of the General, he had a liberty of action which he had never known, since he finally left the world. The first use he made of his comparative freedom was to greatly increase his penances and mortifications.

Among the marvellous gifts of St. Ignatius, none is more striking than his genius for command. Scarcely ever has the world seen a ruler so vigilant, so watchful,

so alert, so certain to hear everything, know everything, find out everything necessary for the government of his kingdom, the welfare of his subjects, and the maintenance of his own absolute authority. Only for a very short time was Francis left to continue his new course of self-imposed austerities. Erelong St. Ignatius heard of it, and as promptly put an end to it, expressing marked displeasure at this resumption of a mode of life which had already proved so injurious to his health, and which he had been forbidden to pursue. St. Ignatius went still further, and appointed a Superior, who was to have complete control over Francis in all things which concerned his person. At the same time St. Ignatius gave the most convincing proof of the high esteem in which he held him, and the implicit confidence he placed in him, by leaving altogether in his hands the management of the affairs of the Society in Spain, merely sending him from time to time sundry hints and suggestions, which he was to carry out or not, as he should deem advisable. In these letters, which were counsels rather than commands, St. Ignatius constantly warned him not to rely upon the wisdom and advice of men, but to follow in all things the inspirations of the Holy Spirit of God.

It was on October 3rd, 1554, that Francis finally left Oñate, and entered upon his new and arduous sphere of duty. In relating the history of the eight years which elapsed until, in 1562, he was nominated Vicar General, we shall begin with some details respecting his method of government. We shall thus have an opportunity of exhibiting his character in a new light, and bringing his eminent sanctity into still brighter relief. Apart from this, he moreover possessed in an eminent degree that tact and insight

into character without which no one can rule well. He never mistook his man and knew how to make himself both loved and feared. Tender and charitable as he invariably was in regard to faults which originated in ignorance, weakness of character, or want of intelligence, ready as he ever showed himself to make every allowance for those whom he governed, he was inflexible when occasion required, and his reprimands, when he deemed it necessary that they should be really severe, were of a nature to be never forgotten by the offenders. Such cases were, however, of exceptional occurrence. His sternest rebukes were reserved for Superiors whom he deemed wanting in charity and consideration for those under their charge. He deposed the Rector of one of the principal colleges of the Society in Spain, because he noticed that he habitually gave his commands in a manner which savoured somewhat of haughtiness, that he was unduly rigorous in regard to small faults, and that he was apt to administer reproofs after a hot and hasty fashion. To several Fathers who in various places held positions of command, he gave counsellors, whom they were obliged to consult before taking any step of importance. This he did, because he considered the Fathers referred to wanting in judgment and sound common-sense.

He sent upon one occasion for the Rector of a certain house, obliging him to undertake a long and tedious journey, for the express purpose of receiving, immediately upon his arrival, a cutting and elaborate reproof, on account of the vehement and irascible manner in which he was wont to rebuke his own inferiors. No sooner had he entered Francis' presence, than the latter, without vouchsafing the culprit any greeting, or softening, by a few preliminary words, the

flavour of the bitter medicine he was about to administer, began to reproach him in a tone and manner which were an exact reproduction of that which he was only too prone to employ. After continuing for some time in this strain, Francis desired him to leave the room, and set out directly on his return journey, as the object for which he had come was now accomplished. Overwhelmed with confusion at having been thus taken to task, the offender turned in silence to the door, without attempting to utter a word of self-justification, or even of expostulation. Touched by the humility and contrition shown in his attitude and bearing, Francis stepped up to him, and taking his hand with the utmost kindness of manner dismissed him with these words: "If I have appeared harsh and severe in what I have felt it to be my duty to say to you, and if you have found the nauseous draught difficult to swallow, try and profit by the lessons you have received. Remember, my dear Father, how much suffering you must inflict on those under you day by day, and year by year, if I have given you all this pain by speaking to you in the same manner upon a single occasion, and for a comparatively short time." The sequel justified Francis' method of proceeding. The Father whom he had thus rated (if we may be pardoned so familiar an expression) became an example of gentleness, charity, kindness, and patience. He was subsequently raised to responsible posts in the Society, and filled them in a manner which commanded the affection and admiration of all who knew him.

Singularity was another evil against which Francis set his face with peculiar determination. The reader will remember that he had himself had a tendency in

this direction, when first he entered the Society, and that he had been at the outset effectually checked by St. Ignatius. Aware of the value of the lesson he had been taught, he spared no pains to teach it in his turn wherever he went. A story which closely borders on the ludicrous, is told of a certain lay-brother, whose zeal exceeded his discretion. He appeared in the refectory at the hour of dinner stripped to the waist. Kneeling down in the middle of the room he began to discipline himself with immense energy. When questioned as to the motive of such abnormal behaviour, he replied that he desired to mortify himself and thus follow the example of the saints, and especially of Father Francis Borgia, of whom he had lately heard so much. Now Francis had the art, an invaluable one for a ruler, of always being in any given place exactly when he chanced to be most wanted there. He had arrived at the house about an hour previously, and was present in the refectory while the strange scene just described was being enacted. After requesting the Rector to set the Brother a severe penance, he addressed to him the following reproof: "The examples of the saints are always to be admired, but not always to be imitated. True virtue does not consist in doing everything to which we feel repugnance, in order to conquer that repugnance. For there are cases in which the feeling is produced by virtue, as a good fruit by a good tree." The culprit was then bidden to retire, but his worst punishment was the discovery which he subsequently made, that Father Francis, whose example he had cited in defence of his own conduct, but whom he did not know by sight, had been present when he uttered the rash words, and was none other than the Commissary General who had reproved him.

Francis usually made a point of showing some extra and special mark of kindness to any one whom he had seriously rebuked. He exhorted Superiors to do the same, or at least to be careful to avoid evincing any coldness or distance of manner and address on such occasions, so as to attract the attention of other members of the community, and lower perhaps the offender in the opinion of all. Francis never rebuked in public if he could avoid doing so. Slight everyday failings he would check after some such fashion as this: "My dear Brother," he would say, "God has sanctified us by His grace. How then could you do what you have just done? How could you say what you have just said?" In cases where he detected a secret attachment to some grave fault, he used to speak openly on the subject to the person concerned, and tell him plainly of the necessity there was for him to break off his habitual failing and do penance for it. He did all this in so kind a manner, and with so many expressions of affectionate regard, that he is said never once to have failed in obtaining the result he desired. "My dear Brother," he would say, "I am only too well aware that it is on account of my own faults and shortcomings, that God has permitted you to succumb to this temptation. Since I am thus a partaker in your guilt, it is only right that I should share your punishment. Let us do penance together, in order to satisfy the just anger of God." He would then state the prayers and mortifications he intended to undertake, requiring the guilty individual to do the same. But Francis' performances always exceeded his promises. He had, moreover, the grace of entirely forgetting a fault as soon as he had rebuked it.

In every point he faithfully imitated, in regard to

those over whom he was placed, the Good Shepherd Who had confided to him the government of His flock, and to Whom he knew that he would have to render a strict account. He had devoted much time and thought to a minute study of the character of our Lord, as depicted in Holy Scripture under the character of a Shepherd, and he had drawn out a list of twenty-four necessary qualifications, one of which he every day, as the hours went round, entreated God to bestow upon him. He especially prayed that, in regard to his beloved flock, he might be endowed with gentleness, tenderness, and charity of heart, in proportion to the extent of the authority with which he was invested.

Never was a prayer more fully heard, more graciously and entirely granted. Francis' gentleness and charity attracted every one to him as irresistibly as the magnet draws the loadstone. No one found the slightest difficulty in opening to him the recesses of his heart, and tales of misery and sin, long concealed and carefully screened from view, were unhesitatingly poured into his kind and merciful ear, and listened to with fatherly compassion and concern. He could sympathize with every weakness, he could understand every need of the soul, and all who sought his presence, bowed down though they might be beneath a load of sin and sorrow, were certain to go away cheered, consoled, and fortified. Frequently was he compared to the sun, for he shed warmth and brightness wherever he went. Although his likes and dislikes were in reality very strong, as is always the case with persons of decided character, he never allowed himself to evince the least aversion for any one, however great the defects and objectionable qualities his keen eye might have detected in the individual. "Alas! alas!" he used to say on such

occasions, "how much more deplorable are the failings and shortcomings I can discover in myself, in spite of all the favours and graces which Almighty God has been pleased to bestow upon me." One of his favourite maxims was, that "a true servant of Jesus Christ ought not to possess only one head, two eyes, and two hands, but he ought to consider the head, eyes, and in fact, all the members of his fellow-Christians to belong to him equally with his own. From this point of view, he ought to feel for their sufferings as if they were his own, and strive to alleviate them with more care and tenderness than he would if he were himself called upon to endure them." How completely he practised what he preached may be gathered from the fact that he was said to resemble the Prophet Elias, who in order to restore life to the son of the widow, "stretched and measured himself upon the child three times, and cried to the Lord."¹ Most careful was he to check in others any shortcoming in this respect. He would remind those in whom he noticed a lack of sympathy and consideration in regard to their weak and suffering brethren, of the terrible companionship in which the Apostle St. Paul, himself so affectionate and sympathetic, places those who are "without affection, without peace, slanderers, unmerciful, without kindness."²

In giving his orders to those whom he had a right to command, he seemed anxious rather to do their will than compel them to follow his. "Do you think," he would say, "that you feel equal to filling this office? Do you really feel able to make this journey? I am afraid you will have not a little to endure if you go on this mission, but is it not an undertaking worthy of your courage? Does not the charity of Jesus Christ

¹ 3 Kings xvii. 21.

² 2 Timothy iii. 3.

and the love of the Cross inspire you with a wish to perform this painful and humiliating duty? I was thinking of entrusting to you the management of this delicate affair, but before making up my mind I want to know what your own ideas are upon the subject." To inquiries thus worded, a reply other than he wished was seldom given. A haughty and despotic autocrat could never hope to compass his ends so completely as St. Francis did. He fired generous souls with enthusiasm, and led them on to accomplish great and noble deeds, while those who might, if less skilfully handled, have been tempted to show the white feather, were ashamed to prove themselves unworthy of the expectations their leader had formed of them.

We are describing Francis' government of those over whom he held sway, in virtue of his office as Commissary General. It was, as a matter of course, his duty to devote the principal part of his time and attention to his brethren in the Society. They held the first place in his heart. But let no one imagine that the exercise of his charity was in any way restricted to them. His wide and tender embrace included all who needed him, all whom he could help, all whose burden of sin and sorrow he could lighten or remove. All such he likewise regarded as his brethren, and there is not among the saints of God one who could more fitly have taken into his mouth the words of the Divine Friend and Physician of erring and suffering humanity: "Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you."¹

We have already more than once had occasion to enlarge upon Francis' kindness to the sick. He never ceased to exercise it in a practical manner throughout

¹ St. Matt. xi. 28.

the whole of his life, nor did he allow his pressing and important occupations to hinder him in the discharge of a duty so dear to his heart. Even after he was General, he used to go every Friday, in honour of the Passion of our Lord, and every Saturday in honour of our Lady, to the hospital of any place in which he was staying. This he did, unless absolutely prevented by circumstances. He would move from bed to bed, from ward to ward, cheering and consoling all. It was his delight to render to the patients all those services which are most repugnant to nature. He fed them, washed them, cleansed and bound up their wounds, dressed the most loathsome and offensive sores.

It is not necessary to remind the reader how munificent were the gifts by means of which, while living in the world, he delighted to provide for their needs. Nor is it difficult to understand how trying, after he had resigned all his possessions, he found it to have nothing in the shape of alms wherewith to relieve them. But God rewarded the generosity of the Saint who had left all things for His sake, by endowing him with the power of healing diseases, and thus bestowing upon the sick that priceless gift of health without which it is not possible for any one to enjoy life. The following incident may be suitably related here.

Whilst visiting the hospital of Madrid, Francis paused by the bedside of a poor woman who had been lying there for more than three months. She was suffering from a wound in the leg, which had resisted all attempts to cure it, and now presented an appearance which led the surgeons to fear that mortification would soon set in. In fact, they had already fixed the hour for amputating the limb as the sole means of saving the patient's life. Terrified at this prospect,

and acting perhaps under a Divine inspiration, the poor creature told her sad tale to Francis, imploring him to help her. She was not destined to be disappointed. He gently stroked with his hand the suffering limb, then blessed it, and said, "Do not be afraid, my good sister. All that afflicts you will soon pass away, for it is the will of God that you should be perfectly cured." A few minutes later, a piece of carious bone, which had caused all the mischief, came from the wound, so that when the doctor made his next round, he found the diseased leg to be sound and healthy. Struck with astonishment, he declared the faith and charity of Father Francis to be indeed more efficacious remedies than any which he or his colleagues could employ. This miracle was everywhere spoken of, to the great annoyance of the Saint. In regard to miracles which he performed for the benefit of members of the Society, he was usually careful to enjoin secrecy during his lifetime, so that the greater number were not known until after his death.

As might be expected, they were very numerous. For if his tenderness and kindness to the sick in general was so great, it was greater still where those were concerned whom he regarded as his brethren and sons in Jesus Christ. He used to thank God for his own weak health and physical sufferings because they enabled him to enter more fully into the sufferings of others. "No one," he often was heard to say, "who habitually enjoys good health, can really sympathize with the sick and ailing." In whatever house he was staying, he was assiduous in visiting the infirmary. He sat up at night with the invalids, waited on them hand and foot, bore with all their peevishness, humoured all their whims, and spared neither time, pains, nor

money, in procuring for them everything they might fancy. Any neglect on the part of an infirmarian was certain to be detected, and equally certain to be rebuked. Nor did he ever allow the poverty of a house to be alleged as an excuse for not providing the sick with a sufficiently generous and suitable diet. "Make them your first consideration," was his invariable rule.

He cured in the following singular fashion a Father of the Society whom he visited while the latter was suffering from an intermittent fever, which had reduced him to the last extremity. "How are you feeling now, my dear Father?" the Saint inquired, on entering the sick-room. "I feel," was the answer, "as a man must feel who is expecting another attack of fever, since it is the will of God that I should suffer thus, in expiation of my sins." "But why do you expect the fever fit?" answered the Saint, with a mysterious smile which must have given a clue to his thoughts, for the patient exclaimed, "Then forbid it to come, Father Francis, forbid it to come! If you will only do this, I feel certain it will not return again." "In the name of God, I command thee, fever, to torment no more this faithful servant of Christ," the Saint immediately said. The sick man became directly conscious that he was thoroughly cured, he rose from his bed, dressed himself without assistance, and went down to the chapel in order to thank God for his recovery. Nor is this all, for during the remainder of his life he not only experienced no attack of the intermittent fever to which he had been liable from his childhood, but enjoyed stronger health than he had ever done before, since he was perfectly free from the chronic weakness which had been the result of his frequent illnesses.

Father Vasquez, who was one of the earliest biographers of St. Francis, his confessor for nine years, and also his companion in many of his journeys, has recorded in his memoirs the subjoined instance, in which he personally experienced the power the Saint had with God. Whilst travelling in the neighbourhood of Placentia, the two Fathers were suddenly overtaken by the darkness, when at a great distance from any human habitation, so that they found themselves obliged to sleep in the open air. The locality was exceedingly damp, on account of several springs of water which had their source there. In the morning, Father Vasquez was suffering acutely from rheumatism in his shoulders, and, indeed, all over his body, so that it became almost impossible for him to move. Grieved at witnessing his painful condition, Francis entreated God to heal him. In order to conceal his own share in the cure, he told his companion to bathe in one of the streams of water, although they were celebrated for their intense coldness. "Not without considerable reluctance," Father Vasquez naïvely tells us, "I did as I was bid. On stepping out of my bath, I found myself quite free from pain. However, I was convinced that I owed my cure altogether to the faith of Father Francis, and not in the least to my immersion in the water."

It is now time to speak of the foundations made by the Commissary General, in compliance with the wish expressed by St. Ignatius, who did not hesitate to designate him "the Father and Founder of the Society in Spain and Portugal." During the first years of his government, he established houses and colleges at Valladolid, Medina, San Lucar, Burgos, Granada, Valentia, Murcia, Seville, Placentia, and various other places. To give an account of each of these would

manifestly be impossible. The limits of the present volume forbid us to do so, and we are besides engaged in writing a biography of St. Francis Borgia, not a history of the Society of Jesus. The details, moreover, must inevitably possess a certain sameness. In each case there were difficulties of one kind or another to be overcome before success could be finally achieved, in each there was need of patience, tact, and diplomacy. Rather, therefore, than enter upon generalities, we will tell the story of one of the foundations which possesses exceptional interest, both on account of the circumstances connected with the purchase of the piece of land upon which the house and College were built, and also because St. Francis' presence in the city brought about the conversion of its Bishop. This latter was, as Ribadeneira tells us, regarded rather as a great noble than as a pious priest.¹ Yet many excuses may be found for him. He had obtained his bishopric, while still quite a young man, through the influence of his uncle, Don Bernard de Carvajal. Having been thus called upon to govern a portion of the Kingdom of Christ, without possessing any fitness for so high an office, it is not surprising if, as the years rolled by, he grew increasingly remiss in his discharge of its duties. On the other hand, he became more and more bent on maintaining the reputation of his family by the splendour of his establishment and the princely magnificence of the hospitalities he dispensed. In order to do this, he not only spent the whole of his private fortune, but the revenues of the Church, as far as it was in his power to divert them for such purposes from their proper channels.

¹ "Era tenido en aquel tiempo el Obispo, mas por cavallero magnanimò que por devoto sacerdote." (Ribadeneira, lib. ii. cap. xii.)

Matters went on after this fashion for about thirty years. At last the Chapter of the Cathedral, feeling that so deplorable a state of things must be put a stop to, and finding no other way of redress open to them, thought to bring an action against the Bishop, in order to compel him to employ for its original purposes a certain sum which had been in former times left to provide for the expenses attendant upon the giving of missions in various parts of the diocese. Incensed at this threat, yet fully aware that he had not right on his side, his lordship at once gave way. But he resolved to discharge the duty incumbent upon him in the manner least agreeable to his canons, by employing the Jesuits, against whom a strong prejudice prevailed among several members of the Chapter. Accordingly, he wrote to Father Francis, who, being fully aware of the condition of the diocese, and of the importance of the task proposed to him, went himself to Placentia, taking with him six of his ablest missionaries. The Bishop, who was always remarkable for the finished courtesy of his manners, received Francis and his companions with great politeness, and insisted upon lodging them in his palace, where they were treated with all possible kindness and attention. Francis was deeply grieved at the manner of life led by his host, and resolved to entreat God to convert him. He desired the Fathers who had accompanied him to unite their prayers to his, at the same time redoubling his austerities. After he had, for a whole month, implored light and grace from Heaven for the Bishop, with many sighs and tears, he came one morning out of the chapel where he had been saying Mass, with a glowing face and sparkling eyes. He hastened to seek out the other Fathers, and joyfully

exclaimed, "Let us give thanks to God, my dear Fathers, for He has mercifully deigned to hear our prayers, and to touch with His grace the heart of our hospitable entertainer."

Scarcely had the Saint finished his breakfast, before a servant of the Bishop knocked at the door, asking how soon his master could be admitted to an interview. A few minutes later, he was sitting beside his guest, expressing his profound regret for the harm he had done during his protracted episcopate, not only by his own bad example, but by his neglect of the priests and people under his charge. By Francis' advice he made a retreat, and afterwards a general confession. He at once set himself to carry out the resolutions he had formed, and to make a thorough change in his manner of life. Not only in Placentia, but in many towns throughout the diocese, he caused a notice to be posted up, to the effect that every one whom he had in any way wronged, or who had just cause of complaint either against himself, or any of his retainers, should fearlessly state their case to certain members of the legal profession whom he appointed for the purpose, and to whose hands he entrusted large sums of money, in order that pecuniary restitution might be made. His next step was to materially reduce his household, and select for his chaplains six priests of acknowledged virtue and piety, who were to take their meals with him at a frugally appointed table, one of them reading, meanwhile, a portion of Holy Scripture and some passages from the writings of the Fathers of the Church. Francis spent much time in settling the various unpleasant complications which had arisen between the Bishop and his canons, besides other important personages belonging to the diocese.

The six missionaries were sent forth to preach everywhere, and teach the people who had been so long neglected, the Bishop providing them not only with ample means for their own maintenance, but with money to be given to the poor. He bitterly regretted the manner in which he had spent all his fortune upon himself, and still more his culpable sequestration of Church property. In order to atone, as far as he could, for his past misdeeds, he employed both his episcopal revenues and his private means, to the utmost possible extent, for charitable purposes. Three hundred poor persons dined every day in his palace, and on great festivals the number reached a thousand. He made a point of presiding on these occasions, and at the close of the repast, delivered a short address. He lived to a great age, and persevered until his death in the good resolutions he had formed. He became, in fact, a model Bishop, full of zeal for the welfare of his flock, and full also of Christian modesty and charity.

It was only natural that he should desire to found in Placentia a College of the Society, as a mark of the gratitude he felt to Francis for the inestimable benefits he had received through his instrumentality. This proposal, when it became known, was everywhere received with favour. The transformation wrought in their Bishop had turned the tide of feeling among the inhabitants of Placentia, from the highest to the lowest, and the Jesuits were now regarded with universal favour. The first question to be settled was, where should the College be built? In connection with the purchase of a suitable site, a very curious circumstance occurred, as has already been hinted. We will now proceed to relate it.

It had already been arranged that the College and

chapel should be dedicated to *Maria Santissima*, and when application was made to a wealthy landowner, who possessed a considerable tract of country close to the walls of Placentia, no one imagined that he would do otherwise than gladly accede to the proposal made to him, that he should sell a piece of ground sufficient for the purpose required. He was a pious man, devout to our Lady, and the Bishop's solicitor, when calling upon him, explained that the future College was to be placed under her especial protection. Great, therefore, was the surprise of the man of law when, in the course of a few days, he received a positive and curt refusal. The landowner repudiated the proposal which had been made to him, and declared, in the most decided terms, that he would have nothing to do with the College. This proceeding was entirely owing to the evil influence exercised over him by his wife, who was by no means an estimable person. Both husband and wife, however, experienced before many weeks were passed, the effects of having provoked the anger of the Queen of Heaven. "For," as one of St. Francis' biographers remarks, "she who delights to be invoked by her loving children under the title of *Mater Amabilis*, and who is so beautifully described in the Canticle of Canticles as coming forth 'as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun,' can also show herself, as the quotation continues, 'terrible as an army set in array.'"¹

Shortly after the occurrence narrated above, the gentleman and his wife set out on a journey to the Pyrenees, in order to pay a visit to some friends. They had not proceeded far, before the lady was suddenly attacked by a very painful illness. She

¹ Cant. vi. 9.

entirely lost her breath and the power of speech. Her groans were distressing, and she appeared to be on the point of dying from suffocation. Medical aid was of no avail, and her death was hourly looked for. In the midst of his alarm and grief, it all at once occurred to her husband, that this misfortune might be owing to the want of devotion to our Lady he had shown, in refusing to sell a portion of his land, when it was wanted for so pious an object. He instantly ordered a horse to be saddled, and leaving the patient, notwithstanding her critical condition, he rode with the utmost speed back to Placentia. He went straight to the Bishop, and humbly begged him to accept, as a gift, as much land as was needed for the site of the Jesuit College. He then narrated what had happened, and implored the episcopal blessing for the wife whom he had left almost in the agonies of death. Taking a fresh horse he returned with haste back to the inn. His wife greeted him, as he dismounted in the doorway, fresh and blooming as ever, restored to the perfect health she had hitherto enjoyed. She declared that she had begun to feel a great deal better as soon as her husband had started for Placentia, with the good intention of offering the piece of land to the Bishop.

But it is time to return to our Saint. Many of the houses he founded remained for a considerable period extremely poor. This in no way discouraged him, nor damped his zeal. It was, on the contrary, a subject to him of fervent rejoicing, not only because it furnished him with an opportunity of really practising that poverty which he so sincerely loved, but because he regarded all the needs, necessities, want, and suffering which attended the enterprise in its beginning, as certain earnest and tokens of the abundant blessings

God intended to pour down upon it at a future time. He used frequently to put this view of the case before some of the Fathers, whose faith was weaker than his own. And indeed, it may confidently be stated, that the extent of the privations occasionally endured by these early Jesuits will never be known, so heroically did they conceal or make light of them. It is very remarkable how, when the inhabitants of any house were reduced to the last extremity, the Commissary General would make his appearance, bringing with him not only strength and courage to suffer, but, through the power of his intercession with God, temporal succour as well. The following instance of this may be suitably introduced here.

One beautiful summer's day, in what year we are not told, Francis arrived, about noon, at the College of St. Andrew, in Valladolid. He was met by the intelligence that the only provisions in the house consisted of a small quantity of bread, and that the purse of the community was totally empty. According to his usual custom he repaired immediately to the chapel, and on coming out, desired the Brother whose business it was to ring the bell at once, as the dinner-hour had come. Every one repaired as usual to the refectory, where the table was laid. After saying grace, Francis desired the Rector, Father Francis Gonzalez, to distribute the two small loaves, which were the sole edibles visible, in equal parts among those present. Hardly had this been accomplished, when a loud ringing was heard at the outer door. When the porter opened it, he beheld an old man of majestic appearance, and also a young man of striking beauty. Both were simply clad, and singularly attractive in their demeanour. The younger of the two carried a large basket, containing bread,

meat, wine, fish, eggs, and other provisions, which he handed to the porter. At the same moment the old man stepped forward and placed a purse of money in the porter's hand. The latter naturally inquired the name of his benefactors. Whereupon the elder man made reply, that he begged the servants of Jesus Christ to accept these alms for the love of Him. The Rector, hearing the parleying that was going on, came to the door, but he could draw from the strangers no other answer than that which the porter had received. But with so deep a veneration did the mere sight of them inspire him, that he was fully persuaded that they were angels, who had assumed a human shape in order to bring aid to those who had made themselves poor for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Several similar stories are scattered here and there, especially during this part of St. Francis' life. We will now give one of a different type to the above. There is in it nothing which can be, strictly speaking, termed miraculous. It illustrates in a forcible manner the truth that those who trust God with implicit confidence, are never deserted by Him. During one of Francis' visits to Seville, the Rector of the house, Father John Suarez, came to his room one day with a very disconcerted face, and told him that there was no money in the house, and only some pieces of cold meat and some bread for dinner. This was no small misfortune, as several persons of high rank had announced their intention of dining with the community, in order afterwards to be shown over the house. For one moment Francis remained silent, then turning to Father Suarez, he said, with perfect composure of voice and countenance: "My dear Father, it is just time for making the Particular Examen. Let us try

to make it as well as we can, and afterwards see about dinner. All will come right, I assure you." Shortly afterwards the guests began to arrive, and were greeted by Francis with his habitual cordiality. He had passed the door of the empty refectory on his way to the parlour, yet, as we learn from the testimony of an eye-witness, no one could detect the least sign of uneasiness or anxiety. He conversed with his friends, as they gathered round him, in a cheerful and light-hearted way. In order to estimate Francis' conduct aright, let us remember, that though we have grown accustomed to see him clothed in the garb of poverty, and surrounded by the insignia of poverty, he was yet the same Francis who, when Viceroy of Cataluna, had entertained princes in his banqueting-hall, while

Five-and-twenty squires of name,
Waited, duteous, on them all.

Hospitality had always been an instinct in members of the house of Borgia, and mortify himself as he may, no man can divest himself of his individuality, his identity, his personality. Thus, humanly speaking, it must have been very painful to the Saint to think of offering to his guests so miserable and insufficient a repast, especially as he was anxious, for the sake of the Society, to make a good impression on the strangers, several of whom had ridden a very long distance in order to be present.

About a quarter of an hour before dinner-time, the door-bell of the house rang a loud peal. When the porter opened it, he found outside one of the head-servants belonging to the household of a lady of rank and wealth, who lived close at hand. This servant was accompanied by several inferior domestics,

whose daily work it was to lay the dinner-table, and then be in attendance during the meal. There also stood before the door a large covered cart. The head-servant stepped forward, and handed a letter to the porter, begging him to carry it instantly to the Rector, and to say it came from his mistress, and must be opened without delay. In it she begged his Reverence to accept from her a dinner, sufficient for all the members of the house, and also for the guests, who were, she had been told, expected on that day. She added that it gave her great pleasure thus to show the gratitude she felt for the benefits she had received from the teaching and example of the Jesuit Fathers. Immediately the servants began to arrange the tables in the refectory, for not only had the lady sent abundance of the choicest viands, the rarest fruits, and the costliest wines, but she had also sent linen, plate, &c., to correspond with the nature of the meal. Such a dinner-table is rarely seen in a religious house, and the Rector's feelings of gratitude may easily be imagined.

Francis was fond of telling this story, as his own part in it was not to be seen on the surface. He used especially to tell it in order to cheer and encourage the novices, in the numerous Novitiates which he founded, and which were, as has been already said, frequently very poor in their early days. In the next chapter we shall turn our attention to them, as they form an important feature in the work achieved by Francis during the period he filled the office of Commissary General.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

ST. FRANCIS BORGIA was the first who established in the Society Novitiates, as we now understand the term. In accomplishing this he had much to contend with, especially as such houses could not be self-supporting, at least in their commencement, in the same way as those were to which a College was attached. He considered this part of his work to be of paramount importance, and no history of his life could be complete without some account of the manner in which he not only founded, but superintended the Novitiates, and the influence he exercised over the novices. Many owed to him their vocation, many more their perseverance in that vocation, for his marvellous discernment taught him how to distinguish between the temporary cloud of depression and disgust, from which none can altogether be exempt, and which caused even the holy Prophet Elias to suffer so acutely, and a real unfitness for the religious life.

St. Francis was no less remarkable for prudence than for discernment. He spared no opportunity of impressing upon Novice Masters the truth of the proverb belonging to his country, "Measure seven times and cut once." He showed inflexible firmness in dismissing any novice who, after having spent a certain time in

a Novitiate, showed no sign of improvement, especially in regard to the virtues of humility and obedience. He turned a deaf ear to all the remonstrances of those Fathers who sometimes begged him to keep subjects whose high rank and vast fortune would, as they imagined, render them ornaments of the Society, but who gave evidence from time to time of a haughty and overbearing spirit, and expected to be preferred to their humbler companions.

Inexorable as the Saint was when occasion required, he never sent away any novice who could possibly be made into a good Jesuit, and he showed the utmost charity and patience in regard to those whose faults and foibles he saw to be capable of cure. One youthful nobleman who had a true vocation was held back by the horror he felt at the idea of doing without a valet. To dress and undress himself seemed an absolute impossibility. Francis promised that one of the Religious, who had been a valet when in the world, should perform for him the services to which he had from his cradle been accustomed. Matters were arranged accordingly, but after a few weeks the novice became terribly ashamed of being the only person in the house thus waited on. He begged his attendant to discontinue his services. Another month or two elapsed, and he asked to be allowed to assist the lay-brothers, and he soon took delight in performing the lowest and most menial offices. The spirit he thus acquired distinguished him throughout his life, and after he was ordained and had become a Professed Father of the Society, he edified every one who came into contact with him by his lowliness, self-abnegation, and desire to wait upon his brethren whenever opportunity offered.

Another young man, after passing some weeks in a Novitiate, requested permission to leave, because he could not bear to be forbidden to put on fresh linen each morning, and also because he could not tolerate the bare, small rooms in which the novices slept. He declared himself to be half-suffocated, and added that he really must have a room to himself. Francis discerned the virtues and capabilities of this unpromising subject, and saw through the devices by means of which the enemy of souls was striving to lead him back to the world after he had courageously left it. "You shall have fresh linen every day," he said at once, "and also a spacious room all to yourself. I will see myself that it is properly fitted up and furnished." The novice, delighted at the preference so graciously granted him, hastened to rejoin his companions. But a short enjoyment had he of his exceptional privileges. Before many days had passed over his head, he became as ashamed of his fresh linen and large room, as he had been proud of them. He sought out the Novice Master, and begged that in future he might wear the poorest attire to be found in the house, and be lodged in the most uncomfortable dormitory.

The mere sight of Francis was enough to cheer the downcast and console the afflicted. When he arrived in any house, he used to make a point of seeing each novice separately, and he carried a key which could unlock every heart. Afterwards he would gather them all together, and address them somewhat after the following fashion: "Think, my dearest children (*hijos de mi alma*), of the inestimable benefit you have received from the hand of the Lord, Who has drawn you from the darkness and servitude of Egypt, caused you to pass safely between the threatening waters, and sus-

tained you, during your journey through this desert, with Bread from Heaven. Remember the shortness of this life, and the everlasting duration of the reward which is promised you. Remember what toil and trouble the children of this world undergo in the pursuit of their vain pleasures and amusements, what weariness of heart they experience, what jealousy, what envy, what disappointed ambition. Such reflections as these will make your own hardships seem easy, and your privations of no account. Above all, 'raise your eyes to Heaven and behold the crowns of the saints. See in how great glory they now triumph, who appeared contemptible before to this world, and as it were even unworthy of life.'¹ Lamentable indeed would it be if, having been freed from the snares of the enemy, you should once again be held fast by them."²

No one was ever more thoroughly convinced than St. Francis of the necessity for careful vigilance. In his case, *l'œil du maître* was indeed everywhere. He made a point of inspecting each portion of a house, not hesitating, when Commissary General, and later on, when General, to visit the kitchens. If he discovered that the novice on duty as cook was unacquainted with his person, he used to take part in the work going on, in order to see that it was properly performed, and that the Rule was duly observed even in the minutest particulars. Many instances of this have been recorded, but as there exists a certain similarity amongst them, we will select the following, which may be taken as an example of the rest.

One day when he arrived at Simancas, he went straight down into the kitchen, where a novice who

¹ *Imitation*, bk. iii. c. xlvii.

² Ribadeneira, lib. ii. cap. xi.

had but recently been received, was acting as cook. This latter, who had never seen Francis, thought that he was a priest who, like himself, had just been admitted into the Novitiate. "You are the cook for to-day, are you not?" inquired the Saint. Upon being answered in the affirmative, he went on: "Very well, Brother, I have come to help you, please tell me what I am to do." "What can you do best?" inquired the novice. "I cannot do anything really well," replied the Commissary General, "but perhaps what I do least badly is sweeping, and cleaning pots and pans." "Then you have come just at the right moment," answered the delighted novice, "you can sweep out the scullery, and clean the saucepans used for last night's supper." Francis set to work forthwith, and continued his labours until his Socius, having searched for him all over the house, discovered him at last, and begged him to desist. He came too late, however, for Francis, with characteristic energy, had already completed his task.

Of all the Novitiates founded by Francis, Simancas was his favourite. He was always ready to own this, and used playfully to remark that if the old saying which tells us that the name of the place or person dearest to us while on earth would be found graven on our heart after death, then Simancas would certainly be inscribed upon his. For this decided preference several reasons have been assigned. One was the manner in which the house came into the possession of the Society, as has been already related; another, its peaceful and retired situation; a third, the fact that it remained very poor for some time after it was established. Indeed, so real was the poverty experienced within its walls that St. Francis more

than once worked a miracle, in order to relieve the pressing needs of its inmates. But these stories closely resemble those related at the end of the foregoing chapter, and will not therefore be related here.

He sometimes sent the novices out to beg from house to house, with a wallet on their back. This was done in order to have wherewith to help the poor and needy, the provisions and money thus collected being never applied to the use of any members of the Society. Many prisoners and other wretched outcasts received not only temporal relief, but spiritual help at the hands of "Father Francis' novices," as they used to be called. He ordered that they should always be accompanied by one of the older and more experienced Fathers, lest their untried zeal should betray them into any unwise action. The rude and rough treatment which they not unfrequently experienced, he regarded as a means of training them in self-control, patience, and humility.

Francis was very strict in regard to the management of novices. "Every Novice Master," he said on more than one occasion, "ought to notice any signs of laxity or negligence in a novice, for it is a maxim of universal application, that a careless and tepid novice will never make a good Religious. The noviceship is a precious season indeed, a day of salvation which ought to be made the most of. It is a bad symptom, if a novice is eager for his time of probation to come to an end, and shows that he has but little advanced in virtue. For it is not possible that he can have duly profited by the tests and trials to which he has been subjected, if he gives proof that he has not comprehended their value and necessity."

Among all the virtues upon which St. Francis laid

such stress in regard to novices, devotion to the Blessed Mother of God stands out most prominently. He considered this devotion an infallible mark of predestination in the Society. Those novices, on the contrary, who were wanting in this respect, he viewed with no hopeful eyes. He found in one house several such, and gave orders that they should be watched with the utmost care, as he feared that they possessed no real vocation. The event fully justified his opinion. Two or three fell into grave faults, and were sent away; the rest left of their own accord.

St. Francis had throughout his whole life, as the reader has doubtless already perceived, cherished the tenderest affection for the Queen of Angels, and some manuscripts which were found after his death prove this even more plainly. "In all that I try to do for Jesus Christ, in all that I ask of Him," he says in one of these pages, "I invariably look, in a certain sense, to Mary also. The confidence I feel in the Divine Mediator, Who experienced all our sorrows, and knows how to feel true compassion for all our weaknesses, rests partly on my trust in the Divine Mediatrix. I am entirely persuaded that, in honouring the Mother, I honour also the Son. With St. Bernard and St. Anselm, and many other Fathers of the Church, I believe that there is no surer means to obtain from our Lord all that we ask of Him, than to resort to the intercession of her whom He has made the channel of His gifts and graces, by choosing to become through her means a partaker of our human nature. Let us, above all, invoke her with filial love and trust *in hora mortis nostræ*, remembering the words of St. Anselm: 'It is by Mary that we shall enter into the glory of Him Who by her has descended into the valley of our misery.' Remember

also what St. Thomas Aquinas tells us: 'The great King has made her the Queen of mercy, as He is Himself the King of justice.' I wish that every one could know and love her, and I wish that I had the power of spreading this knowledge and this love throughout the whole world."

Thus Francis wrote. It may be safely said that no one ever did more to teach and to diffuse devotion to Mary. By sermons, by familiar instructions, by personal exhortations, in courts and cottages, among princes and peasants, the same lesson was ever on the lips of him whom his biographers describe under the title of *Siervo de Maria*. But perhaps the means by which he did most to promote the object he had so deeply at heart was the establishment of confraternities of the Blessed Virgin. Associations which have for their end the honour of Mary, are, under various designations, to be everywhere met with in the present day, but in the time when St. Francis lived, they were far less widely diffused. As far as Spain is concerned, he seems to have been their first author and originator.

Another means by which the Saint strove to spread devotion to our Immaculate Mother was by distributing pictures of her. He could not do this to any great extent until he was General of the Society, but the relation of what he then did may find a suitable place here. Knowing that in the Church of Sta. Maria Maggiore at Rome, a picture of our Lady, piously believed to have been painted by the hand of St. Luke himself, was carefully preserved, Francis greatly desired to have a copy of it made. He had no small difficulties to encounter before his wish could be carried out. The guardians of the treasure feared to diminish its value by allowing it to be copied, and also to deprive

their church of its chief attraction. However, he never rested until he had carried his point. He applied to St. Charles Borromeo, and through his influence permission was given to Francis to have a copy made of the picture. He commissioned one of the best painters in Rome to do this, and subsequently caused the picture to be placed in the chapel where he said Mass every day. At a later period he ordered several copies to be taken from it, and sent them as presents to various kings and royal personages, as also to some of the houses of the Society. An especial interest attaches, as will be related further on, to the copy which he gave to Blessed Ignatius d'Azevedo, when that courageous Missioner was on the point of setting out for the West Indies. In closing this part of our subject, we may quote the words of Cardinal Cien-Fuegos in regard to St. Francis' devotion to our Blessed Lady.

"So habitually had he recourse to this unfailing fountain of grace, that never did he enter upon any undertaking, set out on any journey, or find himself in any danger without raising his eyes to that gentle star, and gaining celestial strength from his upward gaze. So affectionate, so steadfast was his confidence in her, that however perplexing might be the circumstances in which he was placed, however severe the trials which had assailed him, no shadow of doubt ever clouded his soul. On the contrary, the more impossible anything seemed, the more did he expect to receive it from the hands of his sovereign protectress. There was not a single shrine of our Lady throughout Europe, at which Francis, at some period of his life, had not offered a lamp with heartfelt devotion. Not long before his death, in spite of the entreaties of the Supreme Pontiff, he had himself carried in a litter to

Loretto, "for," he said, "I have received from the Queen of Heaven so many and such signal favours, that even if I had to crawl thither on my hands and knees, it behoves me, before I die, to go once more to her shrine, in order to hang up there an *ex voto* in token of my gratitude."¹

We have spoken of St. Francis' method of government of the foundations he established, of his Novitiates, and of his devotion to the Blessed Virgin. There now remains for us to narrate the external events which marked the period (1554—1565) during which he was Commissary General.

Almost at the outset of this epoch of his life, efforts were again made to induce him to accept a Cardinal's hat. If the pressure brought to bear upon him was greater than it had been on a former occasion, his resistance was proportionately firm and invincible. The Prince of Spain, whom his father the Emperor Charles V. had recently declared King of Naples, urged Julius III., who was still the reigning Pontiff, to exert his authority in the matter. He knew that the Pope's wishes were more decided even than his own. No door of escape seemed open to St. Francis, and yet his humility enabled him to avoid the peril which appeared so imminent. He paid a visit to the Papal Nuncio, and represented the case to him in such a light as partly to bring him over to his own views. The Nuncio was also deeply moved at the sight of the distress which the idea of the projected dignity caused to the humble servant of God. He wrote with his own hand a letter to the Pope, in which he implored His Holiness to abandon his resolution in regard to Francis. "I am certain," he said in conclusion, "that the eleva-

¹ Cien-Fuegos, p. 504, c. iv. 4.

tion of Father Francis can never be as beneficial to the Church as his humility and his incessant labours on her behalf are at present. He will never be persuaded to accept the Cardinalate of his own free-will, and if your Holiness, by the exercise of your supreme authority, obliges him to do so, I fear that the sorrow and affliction he will feel, will seriously injure his already delicate health, and may even deprive ere long the Sacred College of the rare example of virtue which your Holiness is desirous of placing before its members."

Francis, on his part, left no stone unturned in order to bring the King of Naples to his own way of thinking. For this purpose he made use of the influence he possessed over the Infanta Joanna, sister of the King, who owed a great deal to his advice and direction. She was delighted to do anything to please Father Francis, whom she held in high esteem. In her answer to his letter, she expresses the great pleasure it gives her to write as he requests her, adding with charming *naïveté*, "I do this, not only on account of the affectionate regard I have for your Reverence, but because I think it is really more for your good that you should remain in your present condition. I am conscious that self-love plays no inconsiderable part in my compliance with your wishes. For if you were created Cardinal, you would no longer be able to render me the same services as heretofore, nor to take the same heed of my progress in the path of perfection." Joanna was as good as her word. She wrote letter after letter to her brother Philip, and gave him no peace until he consented not only to take no more steps in the affair himself, but also to try and induce his father, the Emperor, to do the same.

St. Ignatius, meanwhile, had to recommence the efforts he had, as the reader will remember, made before on a similar occasion. So perfectly did he succeed, that His Holiness pledged his word never to compel Father Francis to become a Cardinal. Thus was the affair happily set at rest, to the unspeakable relief and thankfulness of the Saint.

In the spring of 1555, he was summoned to the death-bed of the Emperor's mother, the Queen Dowager Joanna. It was at the entreaty of the Infanta Joanna, of whom we have just been speaking, that he repaired to Tordesillas, where her grandmother was lying in a critical condition. Before we give an account of his visit, and of the marvellous results which accrued therefrom, we must devote a brief space to some particulars respecting this unhappy Queen.

She was a daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, and everything combined to smile upon her cradle. As she grew up, the promise of her childhood was more than fulfilled. Her exterior was pleasing, her character happily constituted, and her intellectual gifts were of the highest order. She had been thoroughly educated, was a proficient in several languages, and spoke Latin with such ease and fluency that she habitually made use of that language when conversing with the ambassadors she had to receive. She was married to Philip, Archduke of Austria, and subsequently King of Spain. The possessions of this Prince, united to the vast estates of which she was the heiress, together formed the splendid Empire of her son, Charles V. The marriage was in every respect a happy one. Her husband's tastes and ideas were in complete harmony with her own, and, as she possessed a most affectionate heart, as well as a keen and culti-

vated mind, the illustrious couple were an example to all the married people about their Court.

Thus Joanna stood upon the pinnacle of earthly felicity, but *tout sommet attire la foudre*, and so it proved in her case. On the return voyage from the Netherlands, where matters of State had compelled her to make a prolonged stay, her husband remaining in Spain meanwhile, the vessel encountered a storm so violent that it was on the point of foundering, and the captain announced to Joanna that no hope remained. The high-spirited Princess rose at once to the occasion, went on deck, and encouraged the captain and the crew, exhorting them to hope in God, and do their duty to the last. She then descended to her cabin, and called her waiting-women around her, bidding them dress her in her richest apparel, and put on all her diamonds. Finally, she asked for her coronet, "For," she said, "if I am to meet death, I will meet him as becomes a Queen." Scarcely was her toilet completed, when the sea suddenly became calmer, the storm abated, and the ship was able to proceed on her way. Not one of the crew had been injured, much less lost. "It seemed," as an old writer somewhat fancifully remarks, "that the undaunted courage of this truly royal lady had scared away the king of terrors himself." Alas! how gladly would Joanna have gone down with the ship that she helped to save, could she have foreseen the terrible afflictions which the future held in store for her.

She was met, on landing at Corunna, by the news that her beloved husband, to a meeting with whom she was eagerly looking forward, had died in the course of the preceding August. Brave woman though she was, she completely broke down under this heavy and

unexpected blow. She took no interest in anything, but became absorbed in grief, mourning for the happy days that were past for ever, and repeating over and over again the words of the great Florentine, who knew so well how to lay his finger on the bitterest of the many sorrows which, woven together, form the web of human life.

Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria.

At last, though she had known so well how to rule others, Joanna lost all control over herself, and her excessive sorrow deprived her entirely of reason. Hers was no gentle melancholy, but a wild fury, in the fiercest paroxysms of which she uttered screams and cries which froze the very souls of the attendants who waited on her in the place where she was confined. We are nowhere told that she had been a pious woman in her days of prosperity, and she now exhibited the utmost horror and repulsion to anything which bore, however indirectly, upon the subject of religion. Any priest, who in her quieter moods ventured to approach and remind her that nothing happens but by the will of God, and that to His supreme will all His creatures must bow, was driven from her presence with expressions unfit for these pages.

It was in the autumn of 1505, or the spring of 1506, that this unhappy Queen fell into so deplorable a condition. For fifty years she continued in it, without intermission or mitigation. In the beginning of 1555, after spending this melancholy half-century in perfect bodily health, she was attacked by a dangerous illness, and before long the physicians gave up all hope of her recovery. She had become quiet and manage-

able, but did not show the least sign of returning reason. It was under these circumstances that, as we have already said, the Infanta Joanna entreated St. Francis to proceed, with the least possible delay, to Tordesillas, where her unhappy grandmother had lived a raving lunatic during these long years.

On his arrival, Francis was taken straight to the royal bedside. Long practice in visiting the sick enabled him to perceive at a glance that death was not far off. He saw also that no spark of reason illumined the darkness of the sufferer's mind, and that he had before him a case in which no human efforts could avail. According to his invariable habit in such cases, he went to the chapel of the palace, and spent several hours in prayer. On returning to the sick-room he found the Queen apparently asleep. Standing by her bed, he began to exhort her to trust in the mercy of God, and to make acts of hope, faith, and charity. To the astonishment of every one, she opened her eyes at the first sound of his voice, and gazed calmly around her, as if awaking from a deep and peaceful slumber. The expression of her eyes had totally changed since he saw her last, and the light of reason had been kindled there. He began to recite the Apostles' Creed, and the Queen not only repeated it after him with perfect correctness, but she interwove with it the Nicene Creed, whenever the latter could amplify or add to the former. It was obvious to all present that any one who could thus judiciously combine the two Creeds must be in possession of both memory and understanding. Feeling that time was precious, Francis made a sign to the attendants to withdraw, and then, in a gentle and persuasive voice, asked the patient whether it would not be well for her to make her

preparation for death, as she was seriously ill. The proposal was received with gratitude. With many tears she bewailed, not the loss of the beloved husband of her youth, but her sins against Almighty God, and especially her refusal to submit to His will, the fury to which she had given way, and the terrible blasphemies she had uttered, during her fifty years of widowhood.

Francis gathered that there had been more of malice than of madness in her violent conduct and blasphemous language. His extreme reverence for the Most Blessed Sacrament, of which we have spoken before, and his fear of administering It to any one who was unfit to receive It, caused him to send to Salamanca, and request Father Soto, who belonged to the Order of St. Dominic and was one of the first theologians of his day, to come over at once to Tordesillas. The summons was quickly responded to, and after a long and careful consideration of the subject, it was agreed that the Holy Viaticum should at once be administered to the royal sufferer. But no sooner did St. Francis, holding in his hand the Sacred Host, commence the usual formula, and pronounce the words *Ecce Agnus Dei*, &c., than Joanna was seized with a violent fit of nausea, so that all idea of communicating her had to be abandoned. Several times did Francis repeat the attempt, and each time the same result followed, although in the interval no sign of nausea had appeared. At last he desisted altogether, and the dying Queen humbly acquiesced in this great privation, saying that she was not permitted to take into her mouth the Body of Christ, because of the impious expressions her lips had uttered against His Divine Majesty. She asked for a crucifix, and kissed it with much devotion. She also tenderly embraced a statue of our Blessed Lady, repeating,

Refugium peccatorum, ora pro me! The light of reason, so happily rekindled by means of St. Francis' prayers, burnt clear and steady to the very end. Joanna received with the utmost devotion the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. Shortly afterwards she lost the power of speech, yet the next morning, on being reminded that the day was Good Friday, she exclaimed, *Jesu Christo crucificado sea conmigo*—"May Jesus Christ the Crucified be with me," and then with one gentle sigh, her afflicted soul departed from the prison of the body.

It can surprise no one to learn that the story of Joanna's death greatly increased St. Francis' renown for wisdom and sanctity. On his return to Valladolid he found an accumulation of business matters awaiting his attention. These would have more than sufficed to occupy his time, even had he not been, in addition, beset by throngs of visitors, the greater number of whom sought rather the furtherance of their temporal interests than the benefit of their souls. He much regretted the time he lost in conversing with the former class, although his charity rendered him reluctant to refuse himself to them. Over and over again was he heard to say: "Alas, among all those who seek an interview with me, how few come from Jerusalem, and how many from Egypt!" In speaking thus he alluded to St. Antony the hermit, who when travellers sought him out in the desert, and begged to be allowed an interview with him, used to ask his disciple Macarius whether the strangers came from Jerusalem or from Egypt. In this way he used to distinguish those who had in view their spiritual and eternal interests, from such as were prompted by motives of mere worldliness or curiosity.

This state of affairs could not go on for any length of time. St. Francis felt that he owed himself to the Society in the first place, and these incessant interruptions and conflicting claims, together with the grief he felt at being frequently compelled to cut short the hours he had set apart for meditation, began to tell seriously upon his health. In the course of a few months, increasing bodily infirmities rendered it necessary that he should, by the advice of his physicians, leave Valladolid. This he rejoiced to do, and withdrew to Simancas, the Novitiate of which frequent mention has been made in the course of this narrative. This quiet spot was his favourite retreat, and here he appears to have enjoyed an interval of comparative repose.

“Such peaceful seasons God frequently permits His servants to enjoy, in order thus to fortify them, and prepare them for the trials and combats which are in store for them.” This was the case with Francis, as will soon appear. Meanwhile we will give a brief quotation, which refers to this period of his life.

“Words are inadequate to depict the holy joy with which he took his way to that sacred retreat, there to renew and rekindle the spirit of his vocation, in the midst of the youthful spirits who were glowing with their first fervour. He used to say, in his humility, that he gained no small profit from their example. How much did not the novices gain from the perfection of every virtue which they perceived in him, and from the eloquent addresses by which he incited them to correspond to the grace they had received from God. He urged them to prove themselves valiant warriors in the spiritual army they had entered, and to remember how vast was their debt to the great and good Sovereign

Who had permitted them to enlist in the ranks of His soldiers. His humility was to them a perpetual source of shame and confusion. Among all the servile occupations he had practised at Oñate, there was not one which he did not now resume. Every office which the world regards as mean and degrading, he strove to render to those about him, so that the Commissary General might have been taken, by a superficial observer, to be one of the lowest in the house. It would not be possible to recount all the favours and benefits he obtained from Heaven, both for himself and others, during this time of peace and quietness, nor how greatly, as he was frequently heard to say, his health, both of body and soul, profited thereby."¹

On the 31st of July, 1556, St. Ignatius died. We have seen how truly he was loved by Francis, how deeply he was revered, how close was the bond of friendship which united these eminent servants of God. Hence Francis could not but bitterly grieve at his loss, but he mourned for him as the saints mourn for one another, knowing, as the Apostle tells us, "That them who have slept through Jesus, will God bring with him. And so shall we be always with the Lord."² Immediately upon hearing of St. Ignatius' death, Francis began to invoke him, and from that time forward he habitually regarded him as one of his patrons and protectors in Heaven. He found another source of consolation strictly personal to himself. The changes which were certain to follow upon the death of the General, led him to indulge the hope of being ere long removed from his position of command. Great was his disappointment when he found himself confirmed

¹ Verjus, p. 232.

² 1 Thess. iv. 13, 16.

in it by the unanimous voice of all the Fathers who were then assembled in Rome. Father Laynez in particular, who was on this occasion declared Vicar General, gave it as his decided opinion that nothing was more desirable for the Society than the confirmation of Father Francis in the authority he then held, and, if possible, the increase and amplification of that authority.

Various reasons prevented Francis from proceeding to Rome. His weak health was put forward as the motive of his refusal, but there were many others. The tone of the letters he received from the Vicar General, Father Laynez, and the high esteem in which, as Francis could not but perceive, he was held by him, led him to entertain, in the secret of his soul, a fear that he might be made General. He also dreaded a revival of the question of the Cardinalate, as St. Ignatius was no more, and the present Pope, Paul IV., had been, when himself a Cardinal, among the foremost advocates of his admission to the Sacred College, some years ago. He felt, moreover, that his presence in Spain was absolutely necessary to the welfare of the Society. His keen eye had long since detected the clouds which were gathering on the horizon, and when, as we shall see in the next chapter, the storm burst forth in all its fury, it did not find him unprepared.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONCLUDED.

THE enemies of our Lord have always hated, and will always hate, with a special virulence the Society which is called after His ever-blessed Name. This Society had just lost a General who was not only a Saint, but its Founder, a man of singular perspicacity, rare prudence, and consummate talent as a ruler.

The Church at large was, moreover, passing through a season of no common trial. Had not her children known her to be founded upon the rock of Peter, and relied upon the Divine assurance that "the gates of Hell shall not prevail against her,"¹ they might well have trembled for her future. Heresy was in the air, and every wind that blew wafted its deadly germs hither and thither over the continent of Europe. It was altogether a strange, stormy, stirring time, full of great saints and grievous sinners, of heroic virtue and degrading vice, a time when the spirits of good and the spirits of evil seemed struggling together for the souls of men with even more intensity of purpose and eagerness of desire than usual.

In the soil of noble Catholic Spain the poisonous plant of heresy has never succeeded in taking root. As a nation, she has always been

Faithful found
Amidst innumerable faithless

¹ St. Matt. xvi. 18.

Yet it is not possible to deny that, at the period of which we are writing, there were to be found among her sons not a few who failed in perfect loyalty and unwavering allegiance to the Church to which they never ceased openly to belong. Thus half-hearted Catholics lent an ear to the whispers of heretics from other lands, who, incensed at seeing the good the Jesuits were doing, and the influence they had won, resolved to leave no stone unturned in order to do away with these "pretended Religious and their new-fangled doctrines." From France and Germany in particular, came accusations without number in regard to both the faith and morals of the Jesuits. These calumnies, being boldly and incessantly repeated, came at last to be implicitly believed by a large number of persons. They would, however, soon have died out and been forgotten, had not two preachers, both of them remarkable for eloquence and power of persuasion, permitted themselves to promulgate these libels from the pulpit. They went so far as to express themselves thus: "The Jesuits are allied with the Mohammedans, and the Sultan could devise no surer method of undermining the Christian religion, and gradually subjugating the whole of Europe to his sway, than that afforded him by the establishment of the so-called Society of Jesus. The followers of Ignatius of Loyola are the precursors of Antichrist. There were, it is true, Gnostics in the Church during her early days, but none so dangerous as these Jesuits, none who threatened her with such speedy and total destruction." The commands of their ecclesiastical Superiors soon silenced them, and the attacks thus uttered were generously and completely answered by friends of the Jesuits belonging to various Religious Orders, as well as by men of piety and ability

among the secular clergy. Yet, in spite of all these efforts, the harm which had been done was incalculable. For alas! out of a thousand persons who drink in calumny with avidity, small indeed is the proportion of those who trouble themselves to listen to a refutation of it.

It would be a mere waste of space were we to attempt to describe the grief and distress caused to St. Francis by all which we have been relating. Meanwhile he pursued the even tenour of his way, performing with the utmost diligence and zeal the duties pertaining to his important and responsible position, and relying with simple faith on the protection of Heaven in this dangerous crisis. But "all these were the beginnings of sorrows."¹ Like so many of the saints, Francis was destined to experience, not only the attacks of open enemies, but those infinitely more painful wounds in regard to which the King of Saints, when asked, "What are these wounds in the midst of Thy hands?" replied, "With these I was wounded in the house of them that loved Me."² Little did St. Francis apprehend the quarter from which this new danger, so menacing, not only to the Society at large, but to himself in particular, was to come. In order to explain the manner in which it arose, we must retrace our steps for a few moments.

We have already mentioned two ecclesiastics who made themselves remarkable by the manner in which they vilified the Jesuits from the pulpit. When silenced by the voice of authority, one of them was content to hold his peace for the future. His colleague, the famous theologian Father Melchior Canus, was unable to remain quiet. He was intimately acquainted with

¹ St. Matt. xxiv. 8.

² Zach. xiii. 6.

Father John Regla, of the Order of St. Jerome, who was confessor to the Emperor. Father Canus collected all the hostile statements which had been circulated to the detriment of the Jesuits. These he sent to his friend, Father Regla, entreating him to enlighten his Imperial penitent as to the real character of the men he patronized. Charles V. had already divested himself of his crown, and was at the time absent from Spain, with the full intention of retiring on his return to the Monastery of St. Just, which belonged to the Hieronymites. Father Regla had accompanied him on his travels, and during the homeward journey he acquitted himself of the task entrusted to him by his friend. By the time the ex-Emperor reached St. Just, he expressed himself determined to force Francis to quit a Society which was so unworthy of him, and then to exert his influence to the utmost to bring about, first the expulsion of Jesuits from Spain, and then the suppression of the Society.

Scarcely had the doors of the monastery closed behind him, than he despatched a letter to Francis, urging him to come and see him. "I can, it is true, no longer command you as your Sovereign, but I can entreat an old and affectionate friend, and also as a fellow-religious." The entire epistle was couched in the most friendly terms, and even Francis' keen and practised intelligence failed to read between the lines the real reason which led Charles V. so earnestly to desire his presence.

But he was not to remain unwarned. Scarcely had he started on his journey when he was met by a courier whom his faithful friend, the Princess Joanna, had entrusted with an autograph letter, in which she explained to him the real nature of the situation at

considerable length. She concludes as follows: "I feel certain, Reverend Father, that I am acting for the best in giving you this painful piece of news, in order that you may have time to consider carefully the whole subject, before you reach St. Just. It is from the Emperor's own lips I have heard all which I tell you. Your Reverence may therefore be assured that I have not lent an ear to idle reports or groundless rumours. I am persuaded that, while you remember all which you owe to your Society, you will not forget the ties which bind you to His Majesty. I shall not cease to beseech Eternal Wisdom to make known to you the right path in this difficult complication of circumstances, and to enable you to please your Prince without displeasing your God."

The blow was as severe as it was unexpected, and the quarter from which it came rendered it doubly painful. For a brief space Francis' serenity was ruffled. He felt himself "suddenly assailed by a crowd of troublous and disquieting thoughts, although not for a moment did a single idea present itself to his mind unworthy of his vocation and of the solemn promises he had made to God." But the saints, who maintain an habitual sense of the presence of God, and live in constant union with Him, cannot long lose their mental equilibrium, after even the severest shock. By the time St. Francis dismounted at the gate of St. Just, he was able to greet the porter with his usual cheerful smile, because he felt certain that, since the Holy Spirit of God had drawn him into the Society of Jesus, the same Divine Spirit would not fail to inspire him with the right words when the time to speak should come. Charles, however, was far too great a proficient in the art of diplomacy to allow the slightest

suspicion of his ultimate purpose to be perceptible at the outset.

Upon his first entrance into the monastery, he had given strict orders, that no one who came to visit him should be allowed to sleep within its walls. To this rule he made an exception in favour of Father Francis, and we are told that no other exception was ever allowed. He caused a room close to his own to be prepared for his guest, and, with admirable taste, had it furnished with religious simplicity, knowing how pleasing this would be to him. Father Francis, before entering the cell of the monarch, attempted to kneel down, according to custom, and kiss his hand. But Charles withdrew it, and raising Francis from his humble position, clasped him in his arms, embracing him in a manner which showed that time had in no wise diminished the warmth of the affection he felt for him. He next insisted that the Saint should be seated, and put on his biretta. The conversation turned naturally upon old times, and the changes which had passed over them both. The Emperor then asked Father Francis' advice upon various personal matters. Among other things he inquired of him whether he might be permitted to undress before going to bed. "For," he said, "I regret to say that the state of my health prevents me from practising many austerities I would fain perform, and your Reverence will understand that this renders me all the more reluctant to permit myself the indulgence of undressing. Yet I must own that I cannot get any sleep if I lie down in my clothes." "The many nights," replied Francis, "which your Majesty formerly spent under arms in your tent, without so much as closing your eyes, have rendered you unable to sleep without undressing. But be not

discouraged on this account. Give thanks rather to God, for you have rendered Him better service by passing the night in your armour during the campaigns you fought in Africa and in Germany for the defence of the faith and of Holy Church, than a whole community of Religious could render Him, if they were all to sleep in hair-shirts."

After the conversation had lasted some three or four hours, the Emperor began to grow impatient, and thought it was time to introduce the thin edge of the wedge. This he did by asking with well-feigned simplicity various questions respecting the manner of life led by the Fathers of the Society. He professed to know nothing at all about them, except what common report had taught him. He next recounted all the accusations he had heard, repeating in detail the very worst calumnies. Then, growing warmer as he went on, he ended by forgetting his dignity altogether, and broke out into a violent tirade against the Society and its Founder. Francis listened to the Emperor's excited—we had almost said passionate—language, with unruffled calmness and in absolute silence. When his turn came to speak, he made no reference whatever to all that he had just heard, but respectfully begged His Majesty to remember the long journey he had undertaken at his command, the lateness of the hour, and his extreme fatigue. With evident reluctance Charles allowed him to withdraw, appointing a very early hour for seeing him on the morrow.

The Saint spent almost the whole night in prayer, imploring God to aid and sustain him. For he felt that the importance of the interview which awaited him could scarcely be over-rated, since upon it must depend the welfare and extension of the Society in Spain.

He was punctual to the rendezvous which Charles had fixed, and fearing that the latter should launch into a repetition of yesterday's conversation, he deemed it advisable to be himself the first to speak. With that persuasive eloquence which was one of his many natural gifts, he began by giving a detailed history of his own vocation. He told how, after being attracted to one Order after another, he had at last become firmly convinced that our Lord was calling him to join the Society of Jesus. Nor did he hesitate to lay bare to his listener the secrets of his soul. He proceeded in the first place to give a complete and lengthy account of the Rules of that Society, "which," he concluded with a burst of irrepressible enthusiasm, "some persons think fit to stigmatize as a mystery of iniquity, because they are ignorant alike of its spirit, and of the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our battle-cry is, *Ad majorem Dei gloriam! Ad majorem Dei gloriam!* Our one and only desire is to extend, by every means in our power, the dominion of the King of kings, *cujus regni non erit finis*. As far as I am personally concerned, I can never sufficiently thank our Lord for having called me to the Society, and, had I a thousand lives, I would gladly part with them all, as an expression of my gratitude for so great a benefit."

Tears filled Francis' eyes when he ceased to speak, and the Emperor, who had listened throughout with the closest attention, was also deeply moved. After a pause of some minutes' duration, he expressed himself much pleased with all he had just heard, as far as Francis was personally concerned. "But," he added, "I think you would have done far better if you had entered some of the ancient Orders of the Church, rather than this newly-established Society, which, if I

must speak plainly, does not seem to be generally approved of, and in regard to which many strange rumours are afloat."

With the utmost patience, Francis refuted each calumny in turn, and he further begged the Emperor not to be content with his witness alone, but to question separately Father Bustamante, whom he had brought with him to St. Just, and whose virtue and learning were of so eminent an order, that he had been admitted into the Novitiate at the advanced age of sixty. This second conference lasted as long as the first. At its close, the Emperor expressed himself thoroughly satisfied in every respect, and told Francis that he was resolved to do all he possibly could to protect and favour the Fathers of the Society, not only for the sake of his old friendship with Francis, but from a wish to obey the dictates of his conscience, and to be pleasing to Almighty God. As the Commissary General and his faithful companion rode away from St. Just, after a stay of three or four days, the gratitude which filled their hearts may be better imagined than described. The result is not difficult to anticipate. Erelong the news of the favour with which St. Francis had been treated by Charles spread throughout Spain. The voice of the slanderer ceased to be heard, especially as signal marks of royal favour were shown to the Jesuits whenever opportunity offered. And so at last the storm abated, and peace reigned once more.

All this anxiety and responsibility told heavily upon the physique of the Saint, and brought out the feverish tendency which had been latent in his constitution from his earliest years. In the course of a journey which he undertook during the summer of 1557, he fell

dangerously ill at Evora. Violent attacks of fever alternated with long intervals of coma, and in a few days the physicians gave up all hope of saving their patient's life. The Fathers of the College mourned for him as if he were already dead. One morning while several of them were weeping around the bed upon which he lay, in a state of apparently complete unconsciousness, he suddenly opened his eyes, and to their utter surprise addressed them as follows: "My dear Fathers, of what use are all these tears and sighs? Would they retain me in the world, if it were the will of God to deliver me from this exile? Alas! my day's work is not yet done, I have much further to go, and many more trials to endure. I am not yet ripe for Heaven, not fit to appear in the presence of the Eternal King. In the name of God I assure you all that, in four days, we shall be able to continue our journey to Lisbon." Incredible as this prediction appeared at the time, it was nevertheless verified to the letter. Francis experienced no return of fever, and on the fifth day was so far recovered as to be fit to travel. The long journey had been undertaken at the pressing request of the Emperor, who wished the Saint to visit and console his sister, the Queen of Portugal, who had recently lost her husband, King John III. As soon as she heard of Francis' arrival, she sent to beg him to take up his abode, until his strength should be entirely recruited, in a royal palace called Xobregas, situated on the banks of the Tagus, in a spot where the air was specially bracing and refreshing. He reluctantly consented, and during his convalescence the Queen caused him to be cared for and waited upon as if he had been her brother. When he again felt tolerably well, he grew impatient to leave the palace and return

to Lisbon, where he could stay in a house of the Society. At length there came a day when he declared that an interior voice was urging him to quit his present place of sojourn. This he accordingly did. The very same night there broke forth a storm so furious, that the Tagus overflowed its banks, and the vessels which were riding at anchor there, broke their cables and were dashed to pieces, by striking against one another. Nor is this all. The swollen waters washed away a portion of the palace of Xobregas, and entirely destroyed the wing of the building in which St. Francis and his companions had dwelt. This is an instance of the spirit of foreknowledge which he possessed, and in regard to which we shall have more to tell hereafter.

Having done his best to comfort and sustain the widowed Queen, he took occasion to visit all the houses within a moderate distance of the capital. He hoped to proceed to Rome. Father Laynez earnestly desired his presence there, as the election of a General had not yet taken place, owing to the threatening aspect of the political horizon both at home and abroad. Now the sky had cleared once more, and the time for this important step seemed to have come at last. Again Francis was compelled to stay at home, and even to keep his bed for some time, owing to an attack of gout in its most dangerous form.

The reason why Providence had thus detained him in Spain soon became evident. The heretics of Germany succeeded in arousing a fresh storm of invective against the Fathers of the Society, accusing them of promulgating the very same errors which the miserable followers of Luther and Calvin were themselves busily spreading. The whirlwind blew fiercely, but it was of short duration. Don Ferdinand de

Valdez, Archbishop of Seville and Inquisitor General, published a pastoral letter, in which he not only bore unequivocal testimony to the sanctity of Father Francis, but spoke in not less decided language of the purity of morals and soundness of doctrine to be found in all the Fathers of the Society. The Archbishop did not stop here. In order to leave no possible room for suspicion of any kind, he kept Father Francis with him in Seville for several months, and associated him with himself in his duties as head of the Inquisition, desiring all those who were officially connected with the tribunal, to refer their doubts and difficulties to the Saint. Don Valdez also, when making out the list of preachers for the coming year, took care that nearly all the discourses delivered in his Cathedral should be pronounced by Jesuits.

Not long afterwards Francis was once more summoned to St. Just. This visit was a very different one from the former. The Emperor, who had a strong presentiment that his end was approaching, desired both to see his beloved friend again before departing from this world, and also to have the aid of his wisdom and experience in making preparation for his last tremendous journey. Francis did all he could for his Imperial friend, and when at last the two took an affectionate leave of one another, each felt this parting to be their last.

And so it proved. In the early part of September in the same year (1558) Charles, who had been long ailing, grew rapidly worse, until it became apparent that his end was approaching. He was assisted by the Archbishop of Toledo, a Dominican, named Don Bartholomew Carranza, who had recently been appointed to the see. El Cesar, as Cardinal Cien-

Fuegos constantly terms Charles V., received the last sacraments with piety and fervour. Shortly afterwards he lapsed into a state of semi-consciousness, during which he exclaimed in tones of pathetic tenderness and regret: "Where is the holy Father Francis de Borgia? Oh, how deeply I feel the absence of Father Francis from my bedside at this hour!" These lamentations continued so long, that it was resolved to send a courier, with orders to ride night and day to Valladolid, where Francis then was, in order if possible to bring him to St. Just in time to soothe the last moments of the dying Emperor, from whom this resolution was, of course, carefully concealed. About two o'clock in the afternoon of September 21st, the feast of St. Matthew the Apostle, the royal sufferer awoke from his lethargy and, sitting up in bed, requested that the crucifix which his beloved wife, the Empress Isabella, had used at her death, should be placed in his right hand, and a lighted candle in his left. Three times he tenderly kissed the Saviour's feet, saying each time he did so: "Jesus! Jesus! O my dearest Jesus!" Then sinking back upon the pillows, he once more breathed forth the Holy Name, and with one gentle sigh, rendered up his soul to his Creator. The courier bearing the news of his decease met Francis on his way to St. Just. The latter at once retraced his steps to Valladolid. As he had not been able to attend Charles on his death-bed, he desired to give public testimony to his gratitude and esteem for the departed, by preaching his funeral oration.

This he did on the 29th of September, the feast of the glorious Archangel St. Michael, in the presence of the Court. The discourse was delivered in the largest church of Valladolid, a magnificent Gothic

edifice dedicated to St. Benedict.¹ The grand building was crowded to the doors when the preacher ascended the pulpit in order to pronounce a panegyric, which has been designated by contemporary writers as a truly splendid piece of Christian oratory. We may say in regard to it what St. Paulinus said of the sermon he preached in honour of the Emperor Theodosius, that its object was not so much "to praise a great ruler, as to set forth the virtues of a great servant of God who was more glorious on account of his faith and humility, than of the majesty of his person and the brilliance of his conquests."²

St. Francis took for his text the following words of Holy Scripture: "Lo, I have gone far off, flying away: and I abode in the wilderness. I waited for Him that hath saved me."³ He began by praising the wisdom and courage the Emperor had shown by conquering himself, and leaving the world before it left him. He went on to show that the most splendid of his triumphs, and the most successful of his victories had been to lay his Imperial diadem at the feet of Jesus Christ, in order to be certain of receiving from His hand one day an eternal and incorruptible crown, to be worn for ever and ever in Paradise. In the next place he successively dwelt upon the Christian virtues which had adorned the character of the deceased Prince. This part of the sermon deeply touched his hearers, because the preacher illustrated each point by incidents drawn from his own observation. But the

¹ There was no Cathedral at that time, the city not having as yet been converted into a bishopric. The church in which St. Francis preached on this occasion, has, since the Revolution in Spain, been converted into a military storehouse, the altars, pictures, and other decorations, having been removed to the museum of the place.

² St. Paulinus, Epist. 9.

³ Psalm liv. 8, 9.

greatest impression of all was made when Francis stated that he had himself been assured, by the royal lips now sealed in death, that, ever since his twenty-first year, he had never failed to devote a fixed portion of each day to mental prayer, a practice which, Francis added, is necessary for every one, and extremely difficult for the monarch of a vast realm. The eloquent discourse concluded with a description of the eminently Christian death which had closed Charles' life, and of the manner in which he had expired literally *in osculo Domini*.

A most distasteful task now awaited St. Francis. Charles had, during his last illness, appointed him one of his executors, without in any way consulting him in the matter. At first he refused point blank to have anything whatever to do with it, and his reluctance could not be overcome until the Princess who was just then Regent of Spain, in the absence of her brother Philip, wrote to Father Laynez, the recently elected General of the Society. The command of the latter obliged Francis to turn his attention to the business of the will. But he took as small a share as possible in it. This probably is the reason why several of the biographers of Charles V. have altogether omitted the fact that St. Francis Borgia was one of his executors.

In 1559 we find the Saint at Evora, on a visit to a house which had been established there. Here he was attacked by an illness, which, if it did not actually endanger his life, like that from which he had last suffered, was more tedious and distressing. It appears to have been an intermittent fever, and when at last the malady left him, his weakness was so extreme that his convalescence extended over several months. During this period of enforced repose he beguiled the weary

hours by exercising that musical gift, of which mention has been made when narrating the history of his earlier years. He set to music the whole of Psalm cxviii., which begins *Beati immaculati*, and was a special favourite with him. Also he played and sang, to harmonies of his own composing, several of the hymns which Holy Church addresses to our Lady. The Antiphon *Regina cæli lætare* was remarkable above all the rest for the sweetness and solemnity of the melody he attached to the words.

It was whilst on his way to Lisbon that this illness struck him down. As soon as he was well enough to be carried in a litter, the Queen Regent of Spain sent her best physicians, a commodious litter, and a train of attendants to Evora, in the hope that he might thus be enabled to set out the sooner on his way. However, he summarily dismissed the whole company, desiring that the Queen might be thanked for these courteous attentions. At the same time he ventured to inform Her Majesty that he did not intend to set out for Lisbon until he was strong enough to travel as a poor Religious should. He reached that capital at the end of the year, and was received with the greatest joy; such acclamations of welcome meeting him on his arrival, that one would have imagined this visit to be the first he had ever paid to Lisbon.

In fact, notwithstanding the national prejudices to which we have alluded on a previous occasion, he had thoroughly won the hearts of the Portuguese, who loved him with no less fervour than did his own countrymen. This feeling the common people expressed after their own simple fashion. "Father Francis is too good for a Spaniard," they would say, "he is so holy and so kind that he might pass for a Portuguese." Nor can

we wonder at this general enthusiasm, when we read the account of his stay at Lisbon, and especially of the lengthened sojourn he made at Oporto, after having visited the other houses of the Society throughout Portugal. "Here he preached nearly every day, in one place or another. Many persons desired to receive the Bread of Life from his hands. To these, whilst he held in his hands the Sacred Body of our Lord, he would address words so touching, so elevating, as deeply to move every heart. Those who were already striving to serve God, determined to try and serve Him better, whilst every day witnessed the marvellous conversions of those who had been steeped to the lips in sin. The Saint was the refuge and consolation of the whole population of the city. He visited the sick, assisted the dying, reconciled enemies, and it is scarcely too much to say that there was not one afflicted creature to whom he did not bring succour and relief. But what most of all delighted the townspeople was the manner in which he instructed their children. On Sundays and festivals he was to be seen traversing the principal thoroughfares of the city, bell in hand, just as he did when a novice, endeavouring to collect the children in order to teach and explain to them the catechism. As many as two thousand would frequently follow him, besides a very large number of adults, so that no church being sufficiently capacious to contain so vast an assembly, Francis was compelled to address his audience in one of the public squares."¹

No more striking proof of the sway which he exercised over his fellow-men, can be found than the manner in which he calmed the excited populace during a total eclipse of the sun which took place in August,

¹ Verjus, pp. 294, 296.

1560, while he was still at Oporto. The darkness was so intense as literally to change day into night, so that the stars could clearly be seen as at midnight. Thinking that the Last Judgment and the end of the world were close at hand, terrified crowds rushed into the Jesuit Church, where Father Francis was saying Mass, in order to implore his prayers. This they did not hesitate to do aloud, while he calmly proceeded with the Holy Sacrifice. As soon as it had come to an end, he ascended the pulpit, and the mere sight of his quiet, dignified gestures, together with the fact that he betrayed neither fear nor agitation, quieted his hearers, so that he was able to make his voice distinctly audible. He began with a brief matter-of-fact explanation of eclipses and their cause, showing that they resulted from certain laws of nature in regard to the motion of the various planets and constellations. Having soothed and calmed his audience, he went on to speak of a far more terrible eclipse, namely, mortal sin. "This," he said, "withdraws from us not the sight of the natural sun, but that of the glorious Sun of Justice Who has created all things, and Whose light and warmth are more necessary to us than the beams of any lesser luminary can be." He then described with such force and vividness the awful consequences of mortal sin, that his hearers forgot their imaginary danger, and became filled with a salutary fear, dreading to lose their souls. Almost incredible was the number of general confessions which followed upon this sermon. Indeed it is said to have made a marked difference in the lives of not a few dwellers in Oporto. If the Saint effected so much good during his stay, it is equally true that he greatly enjoyed it. It was a period of rest from his official duties as Commissary General, and he began to

hope that he might ere long be relieved from those duties altogether. Four hours of each day were devoted to mental prayer, and he preserved a continual sense of union with God. "Never," he tells us, "had such peace and joy been my portion, since first I embraced the religious life."

But "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution."¹ No sooner did St. Francis put forth from this quiet haven, than he was assailed by a furious storm. It arose in the following manner. The reader will remember that, when Duke of Gandia, he wrote several works of a religious nature, from which we have given a few extracts. These works, after their publication in his own country, became very popular. Unluckily certain booksellers, both in Belgium and Spain, finding how quickly these books sold, and desiring to extend their own profits, bound up with St. Francis' writings several small pamphlets by obscure authors, whose names they suppressed, entitling the volume thus enlarged, *Works of the Duke of Gandia*. Now of these authors more than one had been unsound in his theology, and thus the enemies of the Saint were enabled to bring against him a plausible accusation of heresy. Several unfortunate coincidences occurred at this juncture, and served to give a colouring to these charges. One or two prelates, who were undoubtedly guilty, had been closely bound to Francis by ties of friendship. A relation of his, without consulting the King, or telling the Saint of his intention, contracted a marriage extremely displeasing to the Sovereign. Francis' friends begged him to clear himself, as he could readily have done, but he absolutely refused to do this, lest he should cause the blame,

¹ 2 Timothy iii. 12.

which now rested upon himself, to be transferred to the shoulders of the real culprits. He persevered in his determination, deeply painful as such a position could not but be to one, every fibre of whose nature was instinct with loyal love for Holy Church. This patient endurance was represented as a fresh proof of guilt, and Francis' enemies grew bolder and more unscrupulous day by day. Erelong they directed their attacks against the Society at large, and against all who were connected with Francis, either by relationship or by intimate friendship.

It will naturally be asked by the reader, why the officers of the Inquisition did "not peremptorily silence all this clamour, and drive back to their haunts these unclean birds of night? Truth compels us to own, that in the critical period of which we are writing, when heresy was everywhere in the air, the Inquisitors in their honest zeal, and laudable anxiety to preserve their native land from its baleful influences, sometimes went a little too far. At this time the dread of heresy caused everything to be subjected to a rigorous inspection. The Inquisitors occasionally preferred, where they could not ascertain the exact truth, to condemn the innocent, rather than pardon the guilty, or allow the smallest error in matters of faith to be passed over and left unpunished."¹ It is not for us to condemn them. Rather let us remember that if now and then they were too severe, their authority was exercised from no selfish motive or personal dislike, but solely from a desire to preserve intact the doctrine and teaching of the Church.

While St. Francis was being thus persecuted at home, great honours were being prepared for him

¹ Verjus, p. 298.

abroad. Father Laynez, the General, desired to have him at Rome, in order that he should form one of the four Fathers, or Assistants, whose advice was sought in matters regarding the government of the Society. The Cardinal of Funara, a near relation and intimate friend of Francis, who enjoyed much credit at the Papal Court, was likewise extremely anxious to see him, as he wished for his council in respect to various important matters. In fact, he had already written several letters to the Saint, entreating him to undertake the journey. The reigning Pope, Pius IV., intended sending him to the Council of Trent, and he therefore sent a Brief, couched in the most laudatory and even flattering terms. His Holiness assured Francis that in the extreme perils which beset the Church of God, all the wisdom and experience of her faithful children was needed, and that he expected much benefit to the Holy See from Francis' presence at Rome.

The latter immediately replied, thanking the Pope for his kindness, and at the same time narrating the history of the charges brought against him by the officials of the Inquisition. Not one word of blame was expressed, not one was even to be read between the lines. On the contrary, the care with which the Inquisition strove to preserve the faith in its integrity was highly praised. "I think it only right," ran the concluding words of the letter, "before complying with the commands of your Holiness, to let you see what manner of man you are summoning to take part in your counsels." The answer to this was a second Brief, ordering Francis to start for Rome at the earliest possible date. He could not any longer resist, but ere his preparations for the journey were completed, he was again struck down by serious sickness.

The amount of physical and mental exertion he had undergone since, in 1554, he had been appointed Commissary General, would have been enough to break down a frame more robust than his. Nature appeared at last determined to take her revenge. One after another he lost the use of his limbs, besides suffering terrible pain from what is now termed neuralgia. The physicians began to fear that total and permanent paralysis would soon set in. Yet, strange to say, a malady of an opposite nature appeared, and diverted, as it were, the existing complaint into a new channel. The nervous affections disappeared entirely, and the patient was afflicted by ulcerous sores in various parts of his body. Finally, the malignant humour settled in the thumb of the right hand, so that it was not possible to bend it, on account of the swelling, inflammation, and purulent discharge. The surgeons were of opinion that amputation must soon become inevitable. Francis smilingly called it *Digitus Dei*, because he hoped that he might be thus rendered incapable of writing. He rejoiced in his sufferings, and thanked God for them, trusting to be finally and for ever relieved from all command and responsibility, and permitted to spend the rest of his days in some quiet retreat, in the practice of humility, according to his constant wish and prayer, ever since he had entered the Society.

Those who were with him at this period, testify that never had they seen him in so serene and joyous a frame of mind. He seemed to have almost recovered the buoyant spirits of his youthful days. His burden of care and anxiety was laid aside, he was thankful for the past, sanguine as to the future. It may at first sight appear strange that, possessing as he undoubtedly

did, gifts of foreknowledge, he should, upon this occasion, have not even a presentiment of what awaited him. But there is no doubt that if God, in His mercy, had not thus left the future a blank in the eyes of His servant, Francis could never have recovered from the state of prostration in which such severe and varied forms of disease could not but leave him. He could not have borne to behold the burden of care and anxiety which was to be laid upon his shoulders, to know that he was ultimately to be raised to a position of high command and grave responsibility. As it was, the ulcerous humours disappeared, and a decided change for the better ere long set in. His recovery was more rapid than could have been hoped, and as soon as he felt himself strong enough, he prepared to set out on his journey to Rome. Well might he have adopted as his own the words of the great Apostle St. Paul, "And now behold I go to Jerusalem, not knowing the things which shall befall me there."¹

¹ Acts xx. 22.

CHAPTER XVI.

HE IS NOMINATED VICAR GENERAL.

To us who, after the lapse of more than three centuries, look back upon the career of St. Francis Borgia, there is something akin to pathos in the simple joy and heart-felt gladness with which he turned his face towards the Eternal City. He embarked, in the first instance, on board a vessel bound for Bayonne, but scarcely had the ship left the port, than the wind became dead against her. After struggling to make way for about a day and a night, she was forced to make for the harbour she had just quitted. Francis determined to lose no more time, but to travel overland, passing through France on his way to Italy.

This resolution caused no little distress to his friends, who feared lest, before he crossed the frontier of Spain, his enemies might do him some bodily harm. He, however, absolutely refused to alter his purpose. The result proved the wisdom of his decision. Not only was he preserved from every kind of violence, according to the words of Holy Scripture: "The Lord will protect them that walk in simplicity, keeping the paths of justice,"¹ but no accident befell him. On the contrary, he himself, at the close of this journey, declared it to be the pleasantest and most prosperous he had ever undertaken.

¹ Prov. ii. 7, 8.

In compliance with the command of the General, and the expressed wish of the Holy Father, Francis travelled by short stages, so as to avoid any great fatigue. He had no letters to receive and answer, no business of any kind to transact. The rest effected an incalculable amount of good, in regard to both mind and body, the change of scene amused and interested him. Indeed, this thorough and prolonged holiday fully recruited his enfeebled forces, so that when, on the 7th of September, 1561, he arrived in Rome, he was able to declare that he had never felt better in all his life.

The reception he met with was a warm one indeed. The Pope immediately sent one of his private chamberlains to make known the pleasure with which His Holiness had heard of Francis' arrival, and to beg him to accept the hospitality of the Vatican. As on a former occasion, he humbly begged to be excused. Two days afterwards, however, he was received by the Pope in private audience, on which occasion the Holy Father expressed himself in terms so gracious, and even flattering, that it was impossible for Francis not to perceive the real meaning of all the hints which were made. During several subsequent audiences, His Holiness spoke even more plainly of the immense esteem he felt for Francis, and of the unequalled example he had set the great ones of the earth. The Pope's manner, and the tone of his voice, said even more than his words, so that Francis felt certain that ere long a Cardinal's hat would once more be offered him. He therefore deemed it better to avoid a refusal, by speaking openly and firmly upon the subject. The Pope saw that the Saint's mind was made up, and he had the tact and wisdom not to press his point with a

pertinacity which could not but have been painful to the object of it.

It is not necessary to speak of the joy with which Francis was welcomed by all his brethren then in Rome, and of the delight they felt at having him in their midst. They witnessed the wonderful graces with which God had endowed him, and by means of which the Society had extended its limits in so marvellous a manner.

The General, Father Laynez, was then in France. He had appointed Father Salmeron Vicar General in his absence, and had placed the government of the Society in his hands. Shortly afterwards, however, Father Salmeron was commanded by the Sovereign Pontiff to attend the Council of Trent, then about to open, in order that he might be consulted as a theologian, whilst Father Laynez, amongst the Generals of Religious Orders, would have a vote in the decisions of the Council. Under these unlooked-for circumstances, Father Francis was appointed Vicar General, the whole burden of ruling the Society devolving during their absence upon his shoulders. He did all he could to escape this fresh responsibility, but was finally obliged to accept it, the commands of the General being so positive and even peremptory, that no dutiful subject could have done otherwise than obey them.

Francis at once commenced a visitation of all the houses of the Society in Rome and its vicinity. His frequent and fervent exhortations inspired all who heard them with holy zeal and increased ardour in the service of God. In the course of these addresses, he used to mention four things, by which principally he hoped that the spirit of the Society might be maintained in all its pristine vigour and energy.

1. By prayer, frequent use of the sacraments, and careful examination of conscience.
2. By bitter persecutions, which through malice, or mistaken zeal, would be stirred up against the Society.
3. By blind obedience to the Holy See, and to the Superiors of the Society, both which virtues St. Ignatius had brought to so high a degree of perfection.
4. By tender love for that great Queen, without whose favour no ship can reach port, even though a prosperous wind may fill its sails.

The reasons he gave were these :

The 1st unites the soul to God.

The 2nd detaches her from earth, and obliges her to be constantly on the watch and ready to repel the attacks of her numerous foes.

The 3rd maintains throughout the whole body, an unbroken union with its head.

The 4th is a mark of predestination and an unfailing means of securing happiness both in this world and in that which is to come.

His assiduous care for his brethren did not lead him to forget the spiritual interests of his fellow-countrymen. He frequently preached in the Church of St. James, in the Via del Monserrato, the one usually attended by Spaniards resident in Rome. They thronged to hear him, but they were not alone in their desire to listen to his almost inspired utterances. The ambassadors from various Courts, members of the Roman aristocracy, helped to swell the congregations, which generally included at least six or seven Cardinals, St. Charles Borromeo being almost invariably among

the number. Many of his hearers understood him but imperfectly, since he preached in Castilian. Yet they affirmed that they profited none the less from his sermons. They used to say that it was worth while going, if only to hear him give out the text and pronounce the blessing. His appearance was a discourse in itself, a lesson upon humility, contempt of this world and holy zeal which could not fail deeply to impress those who could remember the majestic Viceroy of Cataluna and the princely Duke of Gandia.

Shortly after his arrival in Rome, St. Francis sent, by the hands of one of his sons-in-law, the Marquess of Denia, a present to the King of Spain. This gift consisted of a small cross, fashioned from the wood of the true Cross, and was accompanied by the following note: "I beg your Majesty to accept from a great sinner that most precious of relics which served to redeem all sinners. I trust that you will enrich with it the splendid Church of the Escorial, which your Majesty is at present engaged in erecting to the glory of God and of the holy martyr, St. Laurence.¹ May I further venture to express a hope that this cross may help you to bear that one which already rests upon your shoulders, for without the blessed Cross of the Saviour it would be impossible for you to sustain the heavy weight of the engrossing responsibilities which are inseparable from the due fulfilment of the claims belonging to your exalted position and the government of your vast domains."

Both the letter and present gave the monarch

¹ The Escorial was at once a palace, a mausoleum, and a monastery occupied by the monks of St. Jerome. The ground-plan represented the gridiron of St. Laurence. The church above referred to contained forty chapels.

no small pleasure. He replied in the subjoined autograph epistle :

“Your kind gift is precious to me not on account of its own intrinsic value alone, but also because it is sent me by one who has himself so perfectly learnt the lessons which the Cross of Jesus Christ is designed to teach us. I earnestly entreat you, my dear Father, to obtain for me by your prayers, grace to learn these lessons aright. I am, alas, at present only too ignorant of them. Though you have had the goodness to send me all necessary authentications, I wish you to append your signature to the rest. That signature alone would suffice, for never could I for one instant doubt the genuineness of a relic which a person of such eminent sanctity had sent to me.”

We may here remark that from this period, Francis' reputation as a Saint increased both in its extent and in the implicit belief accorded to it. For a long time he had been constantly spoken of as *el Beato*, and we gather from his various biographers that not many among the saints of God were so openly recognized as such during their life-time.

The violent prejudices which the enemies of the Society had stirred up in Spain against Francis, disappeared about this time as if by magic, and the current of public opinion in that country turned in an opposite direction. The Grand Inquisitor praised him in no measured terms, and declared that he had no intention of including his works in the condemnatory sentence he had felt compelled to pass upon the minor treatises with which they unfortunately happened to be bound up.

Thus all was quiet in Spain, but the storm-laden clouds were soon blown over to Italy, where the

accusations put forward assumed a more violent and improbable shape. Numerous atrocious calumnies and malicious libels were propagated everywhere. This time, however, the servants of Satan overshot their mark, and the very extravagance of their accusations became the cause of their complete refutation. The Cardinals pronounced a unanimous opinion in favour of the accused Fathers, and the Pope acquiesced

entirely in their verdict, that he took every opportunity of showing unequivocal marks of the honour and esteem with which he regarded the sons of St. Ignatius. His Holiness went still further, and desired that the ringleaders in the assault which had been made upon them should be cited before the public tribunals, and punished as they deserved. Only the earnest entreaties of Father Francis and Father Laynez were able to induce him to give up the project.

The enemy of souls, seeing himself to be thus defeated and driven back all along the line, changed his tactics, and with his fatal fertility of resource, drew up a fresh plan of attack. Desiring to lessen the usefulness of the Saint, and the prestige which attached to his name, he strove with all his might to instil into his mind thoughts of pride, and to render the virtue of humility contemptible in his eyes. Furious at the failure of his emissaries on previous occasions, this time he resolved to do the work in person. Sometimes when the Saint was engaged in the meditations during which he pondered his own nothingness and abased himself in the dust before God, the evil spirit tried to disturb him by making a deafening noise in his room, and by overturning every piece of furniture which it contained. Again, he would show himself to the Saint under the most grotesque and repulsive forms,

mocking at his humility by peals of derisive laughter. Francis conquered all these temptations, by making acts of the very same virtue. Occasionally he used to chase away the enemy by telling him that it was no surprising thing that he should thus persist in occupying his room and seeking his society, since in former times they had, alas, so often united together in opposing the will of God, and had rebelled against the same Master.

One day when the Saint was making his meditation, and was engaged in humbling himself before all creatures, he heard a voice which said with the utmost distinctness, "Why do you not also humble yourself before me?" Instantly recognizing the voice to be that of the father of lies, Francis replied, "I will do as you request, unhappy spirit, and it is right that I should do so, because I have offended my God many more times than you have, who yet for a single crime are condemned to suffer eternal torments." On another occasion, when the Saint was waiting upon the sick in the hospital of Madrid, the devil appeared to him in human shape, and said in tones of indignation, "What are you doing here? To think that a person of your high position and eminent sanctity should demean yourself by washing and feeding these wretched outcasts of humanity!" Francis recognized his flatterer, and caused him to disappear at once by addressing him as follows: "It is rather for me to express surprise that, being so proud as you are, you should condescend to assume a form which ill becomes you, and come into a place like this in order to speak to so unworthy an individual and so great a sinner as myself."

The more St. Francis was praised, honoured, and beloved, the greater became his shame and confusion.

To some one who was tactless enough to tell him that he was the light of the world, the benefactor of mankind, with many other flattering expressions, he replied as follows, with every sign of the deepest pain and repugnance: "When any one speaks to me after this fashion, and calls me a Saint, I feel such language to be the supremest of all the calamities which my manifold transgressions have brought upon me. Instead of being punished in this life, I am loaded with eulogies. How dangerous and how deceitful are the praises of men, and how much reason I have to dread the judgments of God after my death, since those of the world have been so favourable to me during my lifetime, and Holy Scripture constantly assures us that these two judgments are diametrically opposed the one to the other."

His ready tongue enabled him often to turn circumstances which spoke in his praise into a contrary channel. This he did in a very amusing manner. One day when he was walking with another Father along the streets of Valladolid, he noticed that a crowd of people had come out to see him, and were following his steps. Turning to his companion, he said with a merry smile: "Is it not droll that all these good folks should have the curiosity to stare at me, just as if I were an elephant, or a wild beast led by a chain? And indeed," he continued, in a graver strain, "what animal in all the world could have been fiercer and more untamed than I should have been, had not God, in His infinite mercy, seen fit to place upon me the chain of a religious dress and of the holy vows of Religion?"

A shameless impostor took upon himself to personate St. Francis, and by this means acquired a temporary

notoriety in certain remote parts of Spain which the Saint had never visited. The criminal was condemned to the galleys, and soon afterwards the story reached the ears of Francis. He expressed no small astonishment that any man could be found so utterly foolish as to imagine that he could acquire a reputation for virtue and sanctity, by assuming the name of so great a sinner as himself. "If this wretched creature," he concluded, "deserves the galleys for having merely taken the name of a sinner for a brief space of time, what punishment do not I deserve, who not only bear the name of a sinner, but perform the actions of one?"

Among his many gifts, St. Francis Borgia possessed that of exercising great power over evil spirits. One special instance is recorded, in which several Bishops and persons eminent for sanctity having altogether failed, by the use of the exorcisms prescribed by the Church, to deliver an unhappy man from the demon which had tormented him for years, Francis was requested to pray for the afflicted creature. He could not refuse, and at the close of his prayer he laid his hand on the head of the possessed, pronouncing at the same time the words of our Lord: *In nomine meo dæmonia ejicient*—"In My Name shall they cast out devils." Forthwith the devil departed, to the astonishment of the bystanders, who could not help giving expression to their admiration for Francis' virtue, which imparted such efficacy to his prayers. "How can you wonder," he replied, "that the devil should fly before me? *Two of a trade never agree!* Alas for me! during many years my business was the same as his, for I too was a tempter of souls, giving a bad example, and leading many to their ruin." This story got wind, and was again and again mentioned to the

Saint, much to his annoyance. On one occasion, when some persons of very high rank were commenting upon it in his presence, he said, with heightened colour, "And if after all, this occurrence really took place, is it so very surprising that the devil should do my will for once, when I performed his will so long?"

We have spoken of the power exercised by St. Francis over evil spirits; we will now introduce some instances of the wonderful gift of foreknowledge with which God was pleased to endow him. A lady who was well known to him, had been married many years without obtaining the blessing of children. At length a son was born to her, and as the heir to a great name and vast possessions, the child was the object of more than ordinary care and affection. When scarcely a year old, however, he was attacked by a disease which in the course of one or two days brought him to the verge of the grave. In fact, his last agony seemed to have begun and his death was hourly expected. In the midst of her bitter grief, his afflicted mother bethought her of sending for St. Francis, who had for some time been her confessor. Meanwhile the child expired, at least to all appearances, so that when the Saint arrived, he found him motionless, pulseless, entirely lifeless. Not heeding the lamentations of those present, who loudly bewailed the loss which had fallen upon the family, Francis stepped up to the bed, knelt down, and engaged in prayer, keeping his eyes fixed all the time on the little boy's face. After a while he arose, and said to the mother of the child, "Give thanks to God, madam; He will not take your treasure from you." At these words the child sat up, opened his eyes, and, to the joy of the whole household, recovered his breath in the space of a few hours.

But our story does not end here. Some days afterwards the Saint paid a second visit to the house of the child's mother, and took occasion to enlarge on the injury which is too often done to children of tender age, by obtaining a prolongation of their life. "They incur," he said, "the risk of losing a glorious and eternal life in Paradise, in exchange for the miseries of an earthly pilgrimage." The lady, who was a truly pious person, was so deeply touched by these words, that she began to repent of having been so persistent in her prayers for the recovery of her son. "Father," she exclaimed, "I see that I have been in the wrong. It was selfish of me to prefer my own wishes to the good of my child's soul. Though he is my only one, and the sole source of joy and consolation I possess in this world, I yet offer him with all my heart to Him Who gave him to me. Beg of God, my dear Father, that He may take him at once to Paradise, if he is not destined to make a good use of his recovered strength." "Leave Almighty God to do as He pleases," answered the Saint. "His will is to leave your son with you for the present. Since He has thus vouchsafed to make it known to us, doubt not that He will not permit him to lose his soul, but will call him away from this world, before he meets any risk of losing the crown prepared for him in Heaven." The prediction was accomplished to the letter. As the young nobleman grew in years, he grew in every kind of virtue, so that the brightest hopes were entertained as to his future. These were, however, speedily cut short. When he was about seventeen, he died a holy and happy death, his confessors giving it as their unanimous testimony, that he had never lost his baptismal innocence.

We will give two instances, in which Francis' spirit

of foreknowledge was exercised in regard to novices of the Society. They are related without any date, and may suitably be referred to this period of his life.

A young nobleman who entered the Novitiate, loudly declaring that he was determined to remain all his life in the Society, was so repelled by the air of poverty he met with everywhere, and by the self-denial he was called upon to practise, that after a few days he begged permission to leave. To the general surprise, Francis gave him the permission he desired, without raising any difficulty whatever. The Novice Master, who had seen how cordially Francis had welcomed the young man so short a time before, ventured to expostulate with him upon the too great facility with which he had allowed him to depart. "Put your mind at ease, my dear Father," was the reply, "his hour is not yet come. Leave him to himself, he will return in due time in a more courageous mood, and will set one of the most striking examples of Christian generosity which has ever been seen." Several years went by, and the incident was well-nigh forgotten. But in due time, the nobleman above referred to wrote to St. Francis, entreating readmission. He had inherited, not only the extensive possessions to which he was the natural heir, but a large fortune which had unexpectedly fallen into his hands through the death of a distant relative. Under these circumstances he desired to renounce everything, in order to practise holy poverty. He re-entered the Society, and not only remained in it, but became a model of virtue, especially in regard to the practice of poverty.

Our next illustration is of a widely different order. A gentleman who had attained a high position in the army, gave up all his prospects in order to enter the

Society. Francis received him with joy, for he appeared made to be a Jesuit. In fact, he passed successfully through his novitiate, and persevered for several years in his vocation, being a great favourite with his Superiors. But certain members of his family, who had opposed his entrance into the Society from the outset with all their might, brought so much pressure to bear upon him, that his fervour in the service of God gradually grew cold, and he finally yielded to their importunities. Without even apprising the Rector of the house in which he was stationed of his intentions, he suddenly left it, and returned to the world. Francis was deeply grieved when he heard of the occurrence, and his sorrow was all the more poignant, because the supernatural vision which he possessed, enabled him to foresee the dreadful misfortunes which were in store for the unhappy ex-Jesuit. He wrote him a letter full of fatherly tenderness, in which he besought him to remember the ardour of his first vocation, to cast himself upon the mercy of God, which never fails to be extended to the sinner who repents and does penance. "But," the letter went on, "if you refuse the offer which is made you of re-entering the Society, I must warn you that you will ere long bitterly repent the step you have taken. You will experience the rigour of God's justice. Nor will you find in the world the honours and pleasures which your false friends have depicted in such glowing terms. Before many more months have passed over your head, you will meet with great humiliations and be afflicted by distressing diseases. You will feel the difference between the friendship of God and that of men, for the very relatives who have induced you, from motives of self-interest, to quit the House of God, will chase you

from their castles, load you with indignities, and be your most cruel persecutors."

Before a year had elapsed these prophetic words were fulfilled to the letter. The unhappy officer, overwhelmed by the weight of his afflictions, showed to every one who approached him the Saint's letter, as being the words of a true prophet, which were completely fulfilled in his person. He sought an interview with the Saint, who had just been elected General, and throwing himself at his feet, with many tears and expressions of humility and self-abasement, entreated his forgiveness, and the permission to enter once more that spiritual army from which he had been so base a deserter. Francis treated him with the utmost gentleness and kindness, soothed his grief without excusing his faults, and told him that he might hope ere long to receive permission once more to join the Society.

The unfortunate young man was not destined to receive this favour. Two or three weeks after his interview with the General, he died from the effects of a painful disease from which he was suffering, but from which he might have rallied, had not his heart been broken by sorrow and remorse.

Besides the spirit of prophecy, St. Francis possessed the power of reading the thoughts of others. A Father of the Society who was remarkable for sanctity, was harassed and tormented by grievous doubts concerning his own salvation and the doctrine of predestination. He spoke to no one of his interior sufferings, but, knowing the wonderful favours which St. Francis often obtained from God by saying Mass on three consecutive days, in honour of the Three Persons of the Most Blessed Trinity, he requested him to say Mass in this way for him. Francis willingly agreed, and as soon as

he had offered the Holy Sacrifice on the third day, he went to the room of the Father in question. "Give thanks to God for His goodness," he said, whilst tenderly embracing him, "He has predestined you to eternal life. Live in joy and gladness all your remaining years, striving to testify your gratitude to so good a Master." The Father was astounded to perceive that St. Francis had thus penetrated the secrets of his soul, all the more because he felt himself at that moment completely free from his previous disquietude, and full of confidence in the mercy of God. He died six or seven years later, and God was pleased to make known by visible signs, that he was enjoying the ineffable bliss of Paradise, as if to verify the Saint's prediction. The latter always entertained a feeling of great respect for the Father, whose predestination to eternal glory God had thus revealed to him.

He cured the Duke de l'Infantado of a far worse evil than that which afflicted the pious Religious whose story we have just told. The Duke having reason to be displeased with his only son, the Marquess of Saldanho, refused to see him, and whenever he met him by chance, made use of violent and angry language in his regard, declaring that he hated him from the bottom of his heart, and would never forgive him. Several persons of weight endeavoured to put an end to this deplorable family scandal, but their efforts were vain. St. Francis Borgia did all he could in order to induce the Duke to be reconciled with his son, who was quite ready to acknowledge himself in the wrong, and ask his father's pardon. But the Saint failed as completely as the rest had done; the more earnestly he exhorted the nobleman to do what was evidently his duty, the more irritated the latter grew, until at last he worked

himself into a furious passion. Then the Saint became conscious that this reconciliation must be the sole work of that great Mediator, Who so graciously deigns to reconcile us with our Heavenly Father. He therefore withdrew, with quiet dignity, from the presence of the Duke, and went straight to a church where he occupied himself with praying for him.

The Duke, meanwhile, was suddenly seized with a violent fever. His temperature hourly increased, so that by the time night came, the physicians feared that the next day must be his last. They announced this to their patient, who at once owned the true cause of his sufferings, and confessed that God was punishing him for the unforgiving spirit he had shown, and also for the disrespectful manner in which he had treated the Saint. He sent for the latter, humbly implored his pardon, and begged him to ask of God that his life might be spared. Francis promised to say Mass as early as he could on the following morning for this intention, and while he was still at the altar, the Duke felt that he was restored to health. He lost no time in doing all that he had promised to do while the fear of death was upon him, and during the remainder of his life he was frequently heard to say that he was far more grateful to the Saint for his sickness, than for his cure.

“ Thus did God not only perfect, by means of infused and supernatural light, the wisdom and prudence of His servant, bestowing upon him a marvellous gift of prophecy. He furthermore recompensed during his life-time, the ardent love he had for his Creator, and the intimate union with Him to which he had attained. Most graciously did He make it evident that this love was a mutual one, and this union one in which He took

delight. He blessed all his undertakings, heard and granted all his prayers, refusing him nothing, and setting the seal to his virtue by means of a great number of miracles." The manner in which the biographer, from whom the above quotation is taken, speaks of the pleasure our Lord deigned to say that He found in uniting Himself with the soul of His servant, cannot but recall the honour conferred upon the great Carmelite Saint by her Divine Spouse when He not only designated her as "Teresa of Jesus," but furthermore spoke of Himself as "Jesus of Teresa." But we shall have more to say upon this subject when we come to speak of the special predilection felt by St. Francis Borgia for the ancient and illustrious Order of Carmel. It is now time to return to the thread of our history.

Father Laynez, the General of the Society returned from Trent to Rome in December, 1564. He was much pleased to see how greatly the Society had prospered under the rule of Father Francis, and he appointed him one of the four Fathers specially set apart to assist him in the government of the Society, assigning to him the care of all matters which concerned the houses which had been founded in Spain, Portugal, and their dependencies.

This arrangement lasted but a short time. Towards the close of December Father Laynez became seriously ill. On the feast of the Circumcision, January 1, 1565, he dined for the last time in the refectory with his brethren, and on the feast of the Epiphany, which was one of his favourite feasts, by means of an almost incredible effort, he contrived to say Mass. On leaving the sacristy, he met St. Francis, whom he dearly loved. "Help me back to my room, dear Father Francis," he said, "I shall never again stand at the altar of God."

He took to his bed, from which he arose no more, and on the 19th of January he rendered up his soul to God.

It is now customary in the Society, that every General shall leave a sealed paper, to be opened after his death, containing the name of the individual whom he wishes to fill the office of Vicar General, until such time as a new General can be chosen. But in these early days this practice had not been introduced. Yet when Father Laynez lay upon his death-bed, he left no doubt as to his wishes in the mind of any of those present. To prove this, we will give the following extract from Father Ribadeneira. "Father Francis Borgia was present in the sick-room amongst the other Fathers: on him Father Laynez fixed his eyes, gazing intently upon him with a most affectionate expression, and one which was full of confidence. It was as if he meant in this manner to intimate that he would be of great account in the Society, since he was to succeed himself, and become its chief ruler."¹

Very shortly after the decease of Father Laynez, Francis was chosen Vicar General for the second time, by the unanimous vote of all the Professed Fathers who were in Rome, and who had witnessed for themselves, not only his wonderful aptitude for business matters, but the wisdom and charity which were evinced in all his decisions. He was equally unable to refuse the second time as he had been the first, but the hope that he should soon be altogether freed from the burden of office, cheered and encouraged him.

With his accustomed promptitude he wrote to all whose duty it was to arrange about sending to Rome those who were to give their vote in the election of a

¹ *Vida del P. M. Diego Laynez.* Por el Padre Ribadeneira, cap. xiv. p. 285. Madrid, 1594.

new General. He enjoined upon each Provincial to hasten as much as possible in his Province the meeting in which the deputies who were to proceed to Rome should be chosen. Erelong he began to dread lest this eagerness which had been dictated by his humility might possibly have the opposite effect from that which he intended, and that, instead of being freed from the office of Vicar General, he might have to bear upon his shoulders, for the remainder of his life, the burden of the Generalate. Again and again he thought over every possible means of averting the danger which he could not but feel to be threatening him. At one time he decided to call together the electors, and represent to them his total inability to fill aright the important post of General. He fancied he could easily persuade them of a fact, the truth of which he felt so deeply. Yet before thus speaking publicly of his apprehensions he deemed it best to confer privately with two Fathers who were completely in his confidence, and for whom he entertained no small esteem. The two to whom Francis thus gave the preference were Father Ribadeneira and Father Salmeron. He unburdened his heart to them in the following words :

“It is perfectly plain, my dear Fathers, that it would be nothing short of ridiculous to imagine that any one could entertain the idea of electing me General. I am destitute of all the requisite qualifications, and in the Assembly which is about to meet, there will be found many holy and gifted men, who are as suited for the post in question, as I am unsuited for it.

“Yet I cannot but fear lest God, in order to punish me for my sins, should permit a certain blindness to fall upon those Fathers, as was the case with those who nominated me Vicar General. I am afraid that

the sensation which I am conscious that my retirement from the world made upon every one, may dazzle their eyes, and suggest to them the idea of loading me with a burden, to bear which I now declare, in the presence of God, that I possess neither the requisite health and physical strength, nor the necessary virtue and mental power. You know me well, both of you, and you must be aware how unfit I am for the close application and incessant attention to business which are required by a General. And in all sincerity I assure you that I do not possess any talent for government. I am sure you will believe what I say, and grant me the favour I now ask of you, namely, that you should act as real friends, and tell me plainly whether you think that it would be advisable for me, before the election comes on, to throw myself at the feet of the electors, and implore them to dismiss from their minds all idea of making a choice which would be so discreditable to their powers of discernment, so prejudicial to myself, and what is worst of all, so detrimental to the interests of our Society and to the glory of God which it is our one aim to promote."

Francis now ceased to speak. The two Fathers to whom he had thus opened his heart, and who were warmly attached to him, remained silent for several minutes, exchanging meanwhile glances full of meaning. They could not openly oppose his plan, and therefore requested him to leave them a little time to consider the matter and to lay it before God in prayer. On the morrow they went to see him, and in order to console him, and prevent him from carrying out the plan dictated by his humility, they told him it was a pity he should thus torment himself about an idea which might not occur to any one else. They added,

that if he showed himself too anxious to prevent his election, his over-solicitude might suggest the idea of electing him to some who would otherwise never have thought of it. They further assured him that the best and wisest thing he could do, was to remain quiet and tranquil, leaving the Holy Spirit of God to act as He should see fit. If, they concluded, he were really elected, it would then be time to represent his unfitness for the post, and lay before the Assembly the reasons which appeared to him so unanswerable. Francis accepted the decision of his friends, and succeeded in persuading himself, that among all the holy and learned men now gathered together in Rome, there could be none so unenlightened or so ill-intentioned as to vote for any one so imperfect and in every way so utterly unsuitable as himself. But his hopes proved to be vain delusions. The strong repugnance he manifested did but convince the Fathers of the Society of his fitness to be their General. In like manner St. Jerome, when speaking of the elevation to the episcopate of a holy man of his own day, says : "His refusal proved him to be worthy of the dignity he refused, and he was all the more capable of commanding others, because he judged himself totally incapable of so doing. For he who regards himself as fit to be a Superior, shows that he ought never to be anything but an inferior."

CHAPTER XVII.

HE IS ELECTED GENERAL.

THE day fixed for the election was the feast of the Visitation, July 2, 1565.

When the electors were all assembled, St. Francis addressed to them a most touching and beautiful discourse, in which he earnestly exhorted them to choose him whom the Spirit of Divine Wisdom had already chosen, and to be guided by no other light than that of His holy inspirations. The election followed immediately, and Francis was chosen General by the almost unanimous votes of those present, who were filled with such joy and interior consolation as to leave them no doubt that in the choice they had just made, they had fulfilled the will of God.

The new General appeared unconscious of all which was passing around him. The shock which the recent declaration had given him seemed to have paralyzed him altogether. Equally filled with grief and surprise, he remained rooted to his place, his expressive features saying all that his tongue refused to utter. Nor when at last he roused himself, and glanced round the room, did he see anything calculated to console him. The unlimited satisfaction he read upon every countenance, caused the words of expostulation he had intended to utter, to die upon his lips. Immediately perceiving

how useless it would be to attempt to induce the assembled Fathers to rescind, or even to reconsider the result at which they had arrived, he recovered the calm self possession habitual to him. Moving a few steps forward, he said: "It is evident that Jesus Christ has condescended to take into His own hands the government of our Society, since He has seen fit to make use for this purpose of so unworthy and incapable an instrument. God has given me the grace of desiring constantly to bear His Cross. But I never had the courage to ask Him to lay upon my shoulders so heavy a one as that which I am now called upon to bear, and to carry which I am so very far from possessing the requisite strength."

But if Father Francis, in his humility, was persuaded that he was absolutely unsuited to fill the important post to which he had just been elected, every one else thought differently. His intimate friends could not venture to do otherwise than condole with him, but the Fathers of the Society received on all hands nothing but congratulations. "You have indeed chosen a ruler worthy to command you," every one said to them, "and now that you have a saint for your General, God will not fail to pour down upon you His richest benedictions." Some of the letters received on this occasion are couched in very strong language indeed, and speak in almost ecstatic terms of the joy felt by the writers at the event of which they had just heard, than which they considered that nothing could possibly have happened more advantageous to the interests of Holy Church, as well as to those of the Society of Jesus.

Similar sentiments were expressed by the Supreme Pontiff, when he received some of the Fathers in

private audience, in order to hear from them a formal account of the election. He greeted them warmly and assured them how large a share he took in their rejoicing. "For indeed," His Holiness went on to say, "We are quite persuaded that you could have taken no step more likely to promote the good of the Church at large, and of your Society in particular. Nothing could impart to Us greater satisfaction, and We shall be ever ready to protect and aid you, as a mark of Our entire approval of your choice and of Our unbounded esteem for your new General, who has ever shown himself so loyal and so valiant a supporter of the Chair of Peter."

During the few days which the Fathers who had come to Rome in order to assist at the election had still to spend in the Eternal City, Francis diligently applied himself to exhorting and encouraging them, according as their varied circumstances might demand. He strove, by every means in his power, to maintain in them that spirit of fervour, of charity, of patience, of simplicity, and of Christian humility, of which his saintly predecessors had set so striking an example. On the eve of their departure, he gathered them together, and delivered a discourse in which he entreated them to be faithful to their Constitutions, obedient in all things to their Superiors, to follow the admirable example of virtue set them by so many of their brethren in Religion and always to keep alive the fervour which zeal for souls ought to kindle in their breasts, especially in the perilous days through which they were passing, when the Church of Christ was beset by so many and such bitter enemies. "As for myself," he concluded, "you are answerable to God for having placed me in my present position. You

have entrusted me with the care of the Society, in spite of my weakness and incapacity. I therefore entreat you to regard me as a beast of burden upon whom you have placed too heavy a load. In point of fact, I cannot bear this load, unless you constantly aid and sustain me by your prayers, your example, your advice, and finally by your reproofs, for which I can assure you I shall always be most grateful. If you should perceive me to be sinking under my load through weakness and incapacity to drag it any further, I entreat you to remove it at once and without scruple from my shoulders. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to obey the lowest among you all, for the remainder of my life, and I trust that you will no longer permit me to rule over you from the moment when you first perceive such rule to be beneficial neither to the Society nor to the Church of God, which it is our glorious vocation to defend."

This discourse, and still more the manner in which it was delivered, deeply moved all who were present. But what followed touched them more profoundly. The General desired every one to remain where he was. He then prostrated himself before each Father in turn, and kissed his feet, as being the feet of an apostle whose calling it was to carry everywhere the Gospel of peace.

We have traced the progress of St. Francis for nearly fifty-five years. We have watched him climb the steep and rugged sides of that mount of perfection respecting which the mystical writers of his country have told us such wonderful and beautiful things. We have watched him pass through the purgative way, the illuminative way. Now we behold him at length in the unitive way, standing, as far as is granted to

mortals to stand, on the very summit of the mountain whence the promised land may be dimly descried. Already we can say of him: "He shall dwell on high, the fortifications of rocks shall be his highness; bread is given him, his waters are sure." Only seven short years are to elapse before the verse which follows the above shall be equally applicable to him: "His eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall see the land far off." ¹

Before entering upon a history of the external events which marked the Generalate of St. Francis, and in which he, as a matter of course, took a prominent part, we will give some personal details concerning him which will show what manner of man he was, when thus called to fill so important a post. We will speak of his virtues and spiritual gifts, of his special devotions, of his friends, and of the wonderful powers bestowed on him by God. Much has already been said, much yet remains to be told.

His soul being free from all love of creatures, and from all self-love, could not fail to be filled with the love of God, and in a state of perfect union with Him. He loved God for the sake of loving Him, and desired nothing more, which, as St. Bernard says, is the mark of a true Saint. "He loves to speak to Him, and to speak of Him; to realize His presence, and strive to please Him; to love whatever He loves, and to take a deep interest in all which concerns His interests and the promotion of His glory."

This frame of mind and heart was so habitual in the case of St. Francis, that everything tended to promote his union with God, and led his thoughts to Him. In every matter of business which was laid

¹ Isaias xxxiii. 16, 17.

before him, he promptly asked counsel of His Heavenly Friend; whenever any person occurred to his mind, immediately he besought for the objects of his thoughts, any grace or blessing which might be specially necessary at that time; he never heard of any private misfortune or public calamity without beseeching from God such succour and aid as might be necessary. Constant as was his union with God, he renewed it in a special manner each hour of the day, and after his death there was found among his private papers a statement to the effect that he never could sleep towards the end of his life for two consecutive hours, since his love for God caused him to awake with a frequency which enabled him to renew his acts of union every hour. It has been also gathered from these journals, that he used to give a strict account to his Creator for all the graces bestowed upon him, and to divide his practices of devotion and acts of the love of God into twenty-four, so that there should not remain one single hour in which he did not call to mind some mystery of Divine love, thank God for this love, ask from Him some fresh grace, or renew the offering of his whole self to Him.

When the five hours set apart for his meditation came to an end, it was with no small difficulty that he returned to ordinary life and the converse of men. Sometimes he would ask Brother Mark who, as the reader will remember, was appointed to watch over him in regard to all things which concerned his health, to allow him to continue a little longer those communings with his Creator in which he found such supreme delight. While thus engaged, he was deaf to any noise which might be made in his room, nor did he hear anything which was said to him, however

loud might be the voice in which he was addressed. Once when travelling in a carriage drawn by four horses, the animals took fright and ran away. The carriage was dashed to pieces, all its occupants being thrown to the ground. St. Francis was the sole exception. He remained placidly where he was, keeping his seat amid the universal confusion, for so absolutely engrossed was he in communion with God, that he was unaware of what was going on around him. He noticed neither the perilous position in which the whole party was placed, the jolting of the carriage, nor the shrieks and screams of his terrified companions.

During the process of his canonization, several Fathers deposed to having seen his face shining with celestial light while he was engaged in meditation. Sometimes he was surrounded with rays of glory which emanated from his whole person, and sometimes he was raised a considerable distance from the ground. "It was," remarks one of the Fathers referred to, "as if God wished to show by external signs the greatness of the graces and favours wherewith he inundated the soul of His faithful servant."

We may here remark that, in making choice among his subjects of men who were to fill important posts in the Order, St. Francis invariably selected those who were much given to prayer and meditation. He inculcated upon those whom he sent on missions, never, if they could possibly help it, to allow occupations of whatever kind to entrench upon the time set apart for these holy exercises.

After what has just been said, it can surprise no one to hear that St. Francis avoided with the utmost care all which could possibly tend, we will not say to

extinguish the love of God which glowed within his heart, but to cause it to burn with a less clear and steady flame. His horror of the least sin cannot be described in words. By means of papers which were discovered after his decease, as well as by the testimony of his confessors, we learn that it was his habit, morning by morning, to entreat God to remove him from this life, and even to leave him to drop into Hell, rather than to allow him to commit any sin. He went to confession quite regularly twice a day, both morning and evening. Not content with this, he had recourse to the Sacrament of Penance, whenever he was aware of the slightest imperfection which seemed to him to dim the purity of his conscience and lessen the entireness of his union with God. Keeping constantly before his mental vision the terrible nature of the judgments of God, before Whose searching gaze no man is free from sin, the Saint discovered, day by day, fresh subjects for shame and self-abasement, while those who heard his confessions found in all that he said, fresh reasons to admire his virtue and sanctity. We will quote the testimony of Father Denys Vasquez, who was his confessor for upwards of nine years, first in Spain, and subsequently in Rome.

"I can," says Father Vasquez, "solemnly affirm that during all these nine years, I never remarked in the confessions of Father Francis anything really worthy of blame. In saying this, I refer to such ordinary failings as almost every one commits many times a day; a hasty expression, for instance, a word of complaint, a laugh raised at the expense of a companion, a little boastfulness or complaining, an incident related to the disadvantage of a friend. I do not of course mean to assert that he was free from sin, but

the extreme delicacy of his conscience, and the manner in which he tested his every thought and action, by subjecting them to a most rigid examination, enabled him to detect, by means of that heavenly light which shone so brightly in his soul, the least commencements of imperfection, the slightest possible deviation from the right path."

Not satisfied with this strict scrutiny, performed several times a day, St. Francis, after he was elected General, frequently made retreats of several days. He used to say that he was like a tree which deteriorated as it grew older, and that it was necessary to lop off all the withered and useless branches, and replace them by fresh and healthy grafts from the Tree of Life and the Cross of the Saviour. These retreats usually lasted nine days, in honour of the nine months during which the Eternal Word was hidden in the chaste womb of the Blessed Virgin. While thus in retreat, Francis never attended to any business matters nor allowed himself to be interrupted in any way. He would have greatly liked to extend these periods of retirement as he used in the earlier portions of his career, to thirty-three days, in honour of the thirty-three years our Lord spent upon earth. St. Ignatius and Father Laynez occasionally gave him leave to gratify his wishes in this respect, but when he found that he must relinquish the desire, so dear to his heart, of spending his last years in obscurity, he abandoned also the plan of making these long retreats. He knew that, as General of the Society, he owed himself to it as well as to the needs of the Church at large.

No Saint ever surpassed him in his love of mortification. He sought out opportunities for suffering, with as much eagerness as most persons display in

striving to avoid them. He welcomed with greater joy those which were sent him by Providence than those which were of his own seeking. "For," to quote his words, "if it is difficult to bear aright the crosses we have fashioned for ourselves, still more difficult is it to carry in a proper spirit those which are laid upon us through no will of our own. I have sometimes seen the very persons who have been most anxious to practise sufferings and mortifications of their own choosing, bear with the greatest impatience those which came upon them through the justice of God or the injustice of their fellow-men." St. Francis welcomed suffering as a gift from Heaven, not only with resignation, but with joy and gladness. Earnestly did he give thanks to God for His mercy in giving him so many opportunities of expiating his sins in this life. Few have ever been called to endure more physical suffering from long and severe illnesses, as well as from chronic weak health and infirmities of every kind, proceeding from poverty of constitution. When seriously ill he used to chew the bitter pills administered to him, and would sip the most nauseous medicines drop by drop, in order, as he expressed it, to atone for the manner in which he had formerly indulged his appetite, and also to call to remembrance the gall which the Saviour drank when hanging on the Cross.

Aut pati, aut mori, was his constant cry, as well as that of the heroic Saint of Carmel. Often was he heard to say that when he should cease to suffer and thus expiate his own sins as well as those of others, he hoped it would please God to take him out of this life. The incident we are about to relate will show how sincere was this thirst for suffering, and also how fully God answered his prayer, giving him at the same time

strength to endure trials which some have compared to those of holy Job.

Mention has frequently been made of Father Bustamante, who was the companion of Francis for many years, and entertained the highest opinion of his sanctity. The holy old man one day begged the Saint to ask God to give him the same amount of suffering as he was accustomed to desire for himself. Francis promised to do as he wished, and the result of his petition was not long in making itself apparent. Father Bustamante was suddenly attacked with a burning fever. At the same time he had to endure a headache of such unparalleled severity, that he compared its effect to that of sharp nails which seemed to be driven into his head in all directions. In fact the torture he endured almost deprived him of reason, and he confessed he could never have imagined anything like it. He humbly owned that God designed to show him that he had more courage than strength, and that he had been guilty of great presumption in asking to suffer as the saints can do. Francis consoled and soothed him with the utmost sweetness and kindness, assuring him that God would never try him beyond his powers of endurance. He then prayed that the sick man might recover. The latter at once regained his usual health, without any remaining traces of fever or pain. He was very fond of telling the story, and used to accuse himself bitterly for having dared to measure his liliputian powers with the splendid strength of a giant.

But it was not physical suffering of this nature alone which St. Francis coveted. He used to put pebbles in his stockings and shoes when about to walk. He would linger, when passing over an expanse of

snow and ice in the winter, or when exposed to the scorching sun in the summer. He never attempted to sleep more than four hours, and during this brief time he can have had but scanty rest, for he took good care that his bed should be uncomfortable and his posture uneasy. He did exactly the same when staying in houses where a luxurious bed had been prepared for him. No sooner had his host taken leave of him for the night, and left him alone, than he drew out a single mattress, and placed it on the floor in the centre of the apartment. He then lay down to sleep upon it, and so adroitly did he replace it in the morning, that the ruse was well concealed. We have already spoken of the extreme severity of his fasts. By means of them he weakened his digestion, completely ruined his health, which was always delicate, and finally endangered his life. The doctors then insisted upon his abandoning the practice at once and for ever. During several years he obeyed them, although with reluctance. At length some indiscreet person was foolish enough to relate in his hearing that Pope St. Pius V., who was considerably his senior, and the preservation of whose life was necessary to the Church, kept the fasts of the Church with great strictness. After Francis heard this, he turned a deaf ear to every remonstrance, and fasted not only during Lent and on all days of obligation, but the whole of Advent also, and at several other times for his own private devotion. When courtesy compelled him to dine at the table of persons of high rank, with whom he happened to be staying, he made it his invariable habit to partake of the dishes which least suited his appetite.

He was none the less pleased when these opportunities of mortification were not of his own choosing. A somewhat humorous instance of this may be given.

He was staying at one of the Novitiates of the Society, where a novice who was ignorant of the very elements of the art had been appointed cook, much to his own mortification and that of his fellow-novices. When he heard that the General had arrived, he naturally desired to prepare some more than usually toothsome dish. He served up a dish composed of various kinds of vegetables mingled together and which he imagined would prove extremely nice. And so it would have been, if the unlucky cook had not made a mistake in the choice of the ingredients and substituted some very bitter herb, only suitable to be used in small quantities, as seasoning, for the vegetable of which he ought properly to have made use. The General helped himself, and ate his portion with much apparent relish. Not so the other Fathers, who contented themselves with swallowing a mouthful as best they could, and then sent their plates away. The poor novice, full of shame and confusion, hastened to ask pardon for his carelessness. Francis only smiled and said: "My dear Brother, I can truly assure you that I have never eaten anything more to my taste, or more suited to what I really am. May our Lord reward you for your charity! No one has ever pleased my palate as you have done, nor treated me in a manner so befitting my deserts."

Nor, when he made use of such expressions, was there anything in them which savoured of exaggeration. He really desired to receive from creatures what he believed himself worthy to receive at the hands of the Creator. Often did he quote the words of the Prophet: "I will bear the wrath of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him."¹ In this spirit he endured with

¹ Micah vii. 9.

joy those myriad vexations and annoyances which most persons have to bear, and which seem insupportable to those who do not know, as he used to say, how to make a good use of them, by adopting as their own the words of holy Job: "I have sinned, and indeed I have offended, and I have not received what I have deserved."¹ "Nothing," he would repeat, "ought to seem unendurable to those who have deserved Hell. It is my senses and the members of my body which have crucified Jesus Christ. The greatest and heaviest of my crosses is that I have not a heavier cross. I am like a man who has had the misfortune to kill or seriously injure the person in the world whom he loved the best. Would not the very sight of the sword with which he had performed so fatal an action be abhorrent to him? Would not his impulse be to trample it under foot, and cast it as far as possible away from him? In like manner my body, corrupted by sin, having crucified my Lord, no chastisement is too severe for it, no punishment too rigorous."

In the course of his last interview with his sister, who was Abbess of the Convent of Poor Clares at Madrid, he urged upon her the practice of penance and mortification, concluding his exhortation with these words: "The religious state obliges every one who embraces it, to die to himself by means of penance every hour of the day. If, that is, he wishes to enter the ranks of those in regard to whom St. Paul says: 'For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.'² As to myself, I thank God with all my heart that I am in this state of perpetual death to self, and that I can say with the same Apostle: 'I die dai'y.'³

¹ Job xxxiii. 27.

² Coloss. iii. 3.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 31.

I dread Purgatory, not because of the sufferings to be endured there, but because these sufferings gain no merit. If they served, as do the penances and mortifications which are borne in this life, to bring us more grace, I should ardently desire to go to Purgatory, and even beseech God to send me there."

Of St. Francis' love for the Blessed Sacrament, and for the Cross upon which the Son of God expired for our sake, we have in a former place spoken in detail. But besides this sacrifice which he was wont to term, according to the Scripture expression, "the evening sacrifice," he honoured also with great tenderness the sacrifice which the same gracious Saviour made of His life as soon as He had received it. This St. Francis termed "the morning sacrifice," and the various pious practices and devotions which he invented in order to adore our Lord while He was yet in the chaste womb of His Immaculate Mother, as well as when He lay in the crib, or in her sacred arms, are equally touching and original.

The affectionate love and filial devotion which he cherished for the Queen of Heaven, date from his earliest years, and the particulars concerning it have already been given. His love for the saints of God was likewise shown in his childhood, and his manner of proving it was by honouring their virtues. He selected a different one for each day of the octave, in regard to those saints in whose case an octave is kept. Sometimes, as his private papers revealed after his death, he chose twenty-four, one for each hour of the day. Following in all things the spirit and teaching of the Church, he honoured most those saints to whom she has decreed the most signal honours. Yet he had in Heaven his own special friends and protectors, to whom

he addressed himself with peculiar confidence, and whose feasts he kept in his own way. Sometimes he would kneel down and utter a brief prayer a hundred times in the day, according to the practice of certain saints of the early Church. He paid homage of this nature not only to St. Philip, St. James, St. Luke, St. Jerome, but also to a Saint of later date, St. Francis of Assisi. Moreover, he was accustomed to invoke besides many holy persons whom he had known and tenderly loved during their lifetime, and whose blessedness God had revealed to him after their death. He celebrated with great devotion the feast of St. Ignatius, and entreated his beloved director to obtain for him from God a prudence similar to that which he had possessed. He asked of Father Laynez, on each anniversary of his death, gentleness and charity in the government of the Society, while from the Blessed Peter Faber he besought the spirit of tender devotion, and the gift of holy tears, which that saintly man had possessed in so eminent a degree.

St. Francis honoured also the pictures of the saints. In order in some measure to atone for the injuries they received at the hands of the impious and sacrilegious heretics, who were so numerous in those days, he sent great numbers of pictures, illustrative of their lives and virtues, not only into those countries most grievously infected with error, but into those which yet remained loyal to the See of Peter, in order to excite and sustain the devotion of the faithful. With this end in view, he established several printing-presses in the Novitiate of St. Andrew at Rome. It was his wish that the novices, by printing pictures of the saints for subsequent distribution, should usefully employ their hours of manual labour.

He honoured, further, the glorious luminaries which shine so brightly in the firmament of the Church Triumphant. This he did by the great value he attached to their relics, and by the immense respect he showed them, following in this the practice of the early Church. He used to say that gold and precious stones could never be put to so good a use as when they were employed in the fabrication of magnificent reliquaries, in order to do honour to the mortal remains of the friends of God. While holding in his hand one of these relics, he would gaze at it with an expression of profound respect and deep affection. Tears were often seen to run down his cheeks, while he apostrophized it as follows: "The day will surely dawn, when, after having been left on earth for our sakes, in order to be a solace to us amid the miseries of this exile and a pledge of the blessedness upon which our hopes are centred, you shall shine more brightly than the sun. Thus shall you form part of the glory of those holy souls, who when on earth shared with you in the sorrows and sufferings which are the portion of all true followers of Christ."

The pious Infanta, sister to King Philip, of whom mention has already been frequently made in the course of this biography, witnessed on several occasions these tender outpourings of Francis' heart. She was thus induced to make it her habit to send him a portion of any relic which happened to be given her. One day she received a piece of the skin of St. Bartholomew, and at once requested Father Francis to honour her with a visit. When he arrived he divided the relic with every demonstration of respect. To the astonishment of the Princess, as well as of all who were present, the piece of skin, which was as dry as parchment, became soft and moist, while a great drop of blood slowly oozed

from it, and stained the linen in which it had been wrapped.¹ This piece of linen was sent to the Convent of Poor Clares at Madrid, where it was preserved with the utmost care, as being both a precious relic, and an irrefragable witness to the faith and love of St. Francis. The incident occurred while he was still residing in Spain.

While he thus honoured and loved the saints of God, who have already received their crowns, and are enjoying the ineffable bliss of the Beatific Vision, he was very far from forgetting the souls who have not as yet been admitted to this blessedness, but are expiating their sins and shortcomings amid the fierce flames of Purgatory. He was deeply affected whenever he meditated upon the sufferings of these holy souls. He bore constantly in mind that, though they were now victims of the justice of God, they were very dear to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and would soon see His face in Heaven. St. Francis offered his prayers and mortifications in order to make satisfaction for them. These his works of expiation were so meritorious in the sight of God, that He frequently permitted holy souls to appear to him, in order to entreat his aid, and subsequently to come and thank him when they had been delivered from their torments by means of his intercession. This fact, and many others of a similar nature, were related by the Saint himself to one of the Fathers of the Society. He mentioned them with extreme reluctance, for he sometimes remarked, that it ill became him to intercede for the souls in Purgatory, through whose evil example so many had formerly fallen into Hell.

He had the happiness of seeing the soul of the Blessed Peter Faber ascend to Heaven. Among the

¹ St. Bartholomew suffered martyrdom by being flayed alive.

souls who owed to St. Francis their speedy admission to Heaven, and who afterwards appeared to him in order to express their gratitude, we may mention the case of Don John Henry, Marquess of Alcañize, who was his son-in-law. The Marquess fell ill at Valladolid, while the Marchioness happened to be staying on a visit at Toro, where her father, St. Francis, was just then residing. She did not imagine her husband to be at all dangerously ill, but she asked the Saint to say Mass for him. The next morning he did as she requested. As soon as he left the sacristy, he beckoned her to follow him out of the church, and taking her into a room apart, he said, "My dear child, at the very moment I began to offer the Holy Sacrifice your husband breathed his last. But do not grieve for him, for as I finished my Mass, it pleased Almighty God to reveal to me that he is already in possession of the joy prepared for him in Heaven." The Marchioness, amid her deep grief, was much comforted by the tidings thus imparted to her of the eternal happiness of her beloved husband. A day or two later on, she learned that his death had taken place in exact accordance with what Francis had told her.

The intimate union of this illustrious Saint with God not only taught him to honour the Church Triumphant, and to sympathize with the Church Suffering, it bound him, also, in close bonds of love and friendship with the Church Militant. His friends were taken from all ranks and all classes of society, and belonged to all nations. They comprised crowned kings and simple peasants, princesses and humble Religious, men of acute and cultivated intellect, and unlearned country-folk, whose beads were their only book. God made use of him to enlighten many of these and lead them to

travel far on the road of perfection. Others again became his directors, and in union with the grace of God, helped to make him what he was. From his childhood, as he himself records in one of his diaries with expressions of fervent thanksgiving, he was most fortunate in his confessors. Without mentioning those who guided him in very early life, we may record the names of Father Thomas Guzman, the Dominican, whose penitent Francis was while Viceroy of Cataluna. The Blessed Father John Texeda, the Franciscan, remained with the Saint for many years, and lived in one of the Jesuit colleges, as if he had been a member of the Society. Among Jesuits, we may mention St. Ignatius, Father Laynez, Blessed Peter Faber, Father Andrew Oviedo, and Father Jerome Nadal.

It would be impossible to recount the names of all the illustrious persons whom St. Francis received into the Society, and who were, at a later period, its glory and crown. We may, however, pause to record that he received into the novitiate Father Balthazar Alvarez, so celebrated as the guide of St. Teresa. While at Rome he received two Polish noblemen, for whom he, at first sight, felt a singular affection. Of these two one was St. Stanislaus Kostka, and the other Father Stanislaus de Varzevitz, who relinquished a rich bishopric and the favour of his king, in order to enter the Society. Later on he returned to Poland and was instrumental in destroying heresy and keeping alive the faith of his countrymen.

St. Teresa used to say that she regarded the fact of having had St. Francis Borgia during a considerable period for her director, as one of the chief blessings of her life. She turned to him in her doubts and difficulties, and left, as one of St. Francis' biographers

assures us, among her manuscripts many testimonies to his eminent sanctity. From what we can learn, these papers appear unfortunately never to have been printed. But it is no difficult matter for us, who have accompanied St. Francis thus far along his road of life, to understand the love and reverence he felt for the Carmelite Order. Did ever any one possess more thoroughly the spirit of its Founder, the holy Prophet Elias, when he exclaimed, "With zeal I have been zealous for the Lord God of hosts"?¹ Who ever understood more completely than he did the dignity and beauty of suffering, its expiatory value, and the privilege it is to be permitted to fill up, in one's own flesh, "those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ for His Body, which is the Church."² He knew how to re-echo, from his inmost soul, the heroic answer of St. John of the Cross, who, when asked by our Lord what reward he should bestow upon him, generously replied, *Domine, contemni et pati pro te!* To suffer and be despised for the sake of Jesus Christ, was the object of St. Francis' most ardent desires.

From the time when he resolved to strive after perfection, humility was the first virtue he set himself to attain. It was frequently remarked of him that he was even more gentle and unassuming in his manner after he was elected General than he was before. "No mistake," he would sometimes say, "can be much more fatal than to imagine that humility is not a virtue to be practised by Superiors. If it is necessary for everybody, it is very specially necessary for them, since, as St. Bernard tells us, 'He who would command as a Christian, must command in a spirit of humility.'" All the letters written by Francis to the Fathers of

¹ 3 Kings xix. 10.² Coloss. i. 24.

the Society, breathe this spirit in every line. If he exhorted any one to the practice of a particular virtue, he was certain to accuse himself of failing in it. When he had to utter words of warning in regard to a special fault he invariably confessed himself to be guilty of it, and expressed the shame he felt, sinner as he was, at being compelled to employ the time he ought to spend in correcting his own short-comings, in rebuking those of others. Every command he issued was accompanied by a reference to his own incapacity and unworthiness. In his manner of doing all this, there was such evident sincerity, humility, and religious simplicity, that his wishes had more effect than if they had been formulated in language of the most positive command, or couched in terms of the most elaborate eloquence.

He strove to imitate St. Ignatius who in the following words, exhorts all Superiors belonging to the Society to model their method of rule by that of our Lord. "Never," he says "try and govern your inferiors by assuming a haughty and dominant bearing but make yourselves a model to your flock by setting them an example of every virtue. Strive to lead them to perfection by the exercise of gentleness and charity rather than by a severe and frigid manner, or by perplexing them with too many and too minute commands and regulations."

The following story proves how careful St Francis Borgia was, not only to enjoin humility upon others but to practise it himself. While travelling in Spain with Father Antony of Cordova and Father Bustamante, he on one occasion was obliged to pause for the night in a village where there was but a single inn, which offered moreover the most limited accommodation, there being only one room fit to sleep in. This room

had already been engaged by a wealthy trader, who had left his portmanteau there, and had gone out for a walk, in order to see the surrounding country. As soon as the Saint arrived, having no idea that the room was already appropriated, he went straight there, and began his evening devotions, according to his invariable custom.

Meanwhile the trader returned, and took into his head the idea that the kneeling figure in the middle of his room was that of some hypocritical priest, who was endeavouring to obtain the use of the apartment by an appearance of extreme piety and saintliness. Whereupon he flew into a violent passion, and poured forth torrents of abuse, couched in language which was not too delicate. He wound up his tirade by threatening to lay the stout walking-stick he carried in his hand upon the shoulders of the intruder, in order to get rid of him.

Almost any one would have been disturbed, if not seriously alarmed. But St. Francis, whose dignity and self-possession never deserted him, listened to the furious man without rising from his knees, or moving a muscle of his face. When at last there came a lull in the storm of passion, he turned round and said, in a very gentle, quiet voice: "I humbly ask your pardon for my extreme thoughtlessness in not inquiring whether this room was already engaged. Believe me, I would rather have given it up to you if I had taken it in the first instance, than deprived you of it, as I have done. As for the blows with which you threaten me, I am quite willing to receive them, since I have richly deserved them by my sins."

Deaf to these apologies, the trader began to rave as before. Several persons came hurrying in, among

them two or three who knew the names of the Saint and his companions. They repeated them to the infuriated traveller, whose rage was replaced by extreme confusion when he found that he had been insulting the former Duke of Gandia. He threw himself on the floor at the feet of the Saint, and in the most submissive manner begged him to forgive the rudeness and violence he had displayed towards a Duke. Francis raised him up and bade him be seated. He then admonished him as follows: "This time your angry words are of no consequence, being addressed to a man who deserves to be even worse treated. But you must try and learn to practise a little more self-control, and not give way, after this fashion, to outbursts of violence, even though you know yourself to be in the right. You are liable to make sad mistakes in thus allowing your passionate temper to get the better of you, while you can never make a mistake if you try to profit by any opportunities which may offer themselves of suffering for the sake of Jesus Christ."

The next incident we will narrate is almost too well known to need a mention here. Yet a biography of St. Francis could scarcely be deemed complete without it. He lodged one night with Father Bustamante in a wayside hostelry, where there was no room fit for travellers to sleep in. The Fathers were therefore compelled to lie down in their clothes, side by side, on the bare boards of a small attic. Father Bustamante suffered from chronic asthma, accompanied by frequent and profuse expectoration. All the night through he unconsciously spat upon his companion, sometimes even on his face. Francis endured this disagreeable with joy, remembering how the adorable

countenance of our Blessed Lord was spit upon. When the morning dawned, and Father Bustamante perceived what he had done, he was filled with shame and regret. Francis consoled him in the kindest manner, and assured him that in all the house no place could be found more suitable to his purpose.

St. Francis patience was shown, not only by the manner in which he endured suffering, but also by the spirit in which he accepted calumny and detraction. When he was General, he never allowed even the most atrocious libels to be answered, without necessity absolutely required it. "For," he used to say, "few trouble themselves to read the refutation in comparison with those who have drunk in the abuse. Moreover, the less importance we attach to these falsehoods, the sooner will they die out and be forgotten."

Not unfrequently did the enemies of the Society make him the object of personal insults. On one occasion a Religious, who was held in no small reputation for virtue and sanctity, was preaching before a large and select audience.¹ He had got about half-way through his sermon when, happening to look round, he saw the Saint seated within the rails of the sanctuary. Leaving the subject of his discourse, he launched out into a violent invective against him, saying that he had committed an actual crime by entering the Society, since, had he remained in the world, he might, by his influence and authority, have prevented the commission of many sins. Francis heard this harangue without even a change of countenance. Only once or twice he raised his hand with that gesture of command he knew so well how to assume, in order to prevent some

¹ The biographers of the Saint do not tell us the name and nationality of this man, nor his Religious Order.

intimate friends of his, who were seated in the body of the church, from dragging the preacher out of the pulpit and thrusting him into the street.

When at length the preacher descended the pulpit stairs, a crowd of persons pressed forward in order to follow him into the sacristy, and reproach him as he deserved. Francis left his seat and waived them all back. Taking the hand of the preacher, he requested him to come and dine with him. He ordered the repast to be served in a private room apart, and when it was finished, he addressed his companion in these words: "Reverend Father, I sincerely thank you for the reproof you have seen fit to administer to me, for I am sure you spoke as you did with a good intention. But as regards my religious vocation, I am not at all sure that I should not have done more harm than good in the world, had I remained there. Besides, I felt myself obliged to obey the voice of Jesus Christ. Remember how He blamed the young man who wanted to bury his father before following Him, and I did not think it right to wait until I was old and good-for-nothing before giving myself to Him. As it was, I waited too long, and I should have been guilty of grievous infidelity to grace, had I deferred to a still more remote period the execution of my design.

"If, however, Reverend Father, I have been unfortunate enough to displease or scandalize you in any way, I humbly ask your forgiveness, in the name of a God of mercy. For it can in no manner promote His glory or the interests of His service, that there should be coldness and dissension between persons who have the privilege of being consecrated to Him, and profess to be His servants in a very special sense. On the contrary, I consider such a state of things to

be both unseemly and unbecoming in the highest degree."

St. Francis then threw himself at the preacher's feet, and attempted to kiss them. But the latter had already repented of his indiscretion, and had been deeply touched by the patience, gentleness, and charity of the Saint. This example of humility so impressed him that he prostrated himself before Francis, humbly entreating his forgiveness. He became from that day a most zealous defender of the Society of Jesus, as well as of its General.

No one can be surprised at the patience displayed by St. Francis, who has witnessed the perfection of his humility. St. Jerome tells us in one of his epistles, that patience and humility invariably walk hand in hand. Francis established the custom of reciting, on certain days, prayers for the enemies of the Society. On one occasion when its members were for a time very unpopular, two Fathers who had been out for a walk sought for him on their return in order to tell him that they had been pelted with stones as they were passing along the streets of the town whose name we are not told. "My dear Fathers," was the tranquil reply, "why did you not pick up these stones and bring them home with you? They would have been so useful in laying the foundations of a new house, which happens to be very much wanted. Remember that Jesuits ought to be far less afraid of having too many enemies than of having none at all. No tempest is so dangerous as a prolonged calm."

When the Society had achieved some marked success, or became the object of popular favour, St. Francis redoubled his vigilance and his prayers, fearing to discover at such times some relaxation of the Rule,

or to hear that some grave fault had been committed by one of his Religious. A state of universal peace and tranquillity filled him with apprehension, while a fresh outbreak of persecution filled him with joy. He went so far as to say, on more than one occasion, that if ever he was permitted to enter Heaven, he hoped, when looking down from that abode of bliss, one day to see the Society treated by the world as Jesus Christ and His Apostles were treated. Does not its suppression prove him to have been a prophet indeed? He was intimately persuaded that such sentiments as these were necessary for every Jesuit. When he proposed to any of the Fathers the acceptance of a fresh post, he never put forward mere human motives, as do some Superiors who are themselves wanting in courage, or else distrust the virtue of their inferiors. On the contrary, he strove to stir up within them a holy zeal, by depicting the difficulties they would have to contend with, the trials they would encounter, the crosses they would have to carry for love of Jesus Christ, in Whose Cross he desired that they should find all joy, strength, and sweetness.

We cannot more suitably close our present chapter than by quoting two of the letters written by him whilst General. The first was addressed to the Fathers who had been sent out to Guiana. It runs thus: "Always bear in mind that he who does not habitually meditate on the mysteries of the Passion, and cherish within his heart a real love of his crucified Saviour, will be quite certain, sooner or later, to prove himself unequal to the toils and hardships inseparable from his vocation. If Moses' rod killed the Egyptians, may we not rest assured that the Cross of Jesus Christ will no less destroy the evil desires and unruly passions which

lurk within our hearts? If these children of Egypt still abide within us, it is, alas! only too certain that we have not yet bound ourselves to the Cross. For who can fail to experience a fulness of peace and joy, if he lives beneath the shadow even of this blessed Cross? If our efforts are crowned with success, we owe it to this Cross. If, on the contrary, we meet with nothing but trials and privations, through it we shall be enabled to bear them with patience, nay, more, to find in them subjects for rejoicing. Who shall dare to attack those who cling to the Cross of Christ? 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?'¹ I write to you in this strain, in order that you may thoroughly comprehend the folly of aiming too directly at success. For an over-eager desire to carry out our plans, is very likely to end in total failure. We must follow circumstances, not try to lead them, and take matters into our own hands. Haste and want of moderation have been the ruin of many a good cause. We are, on the contrary, likely to succeed if we act with prudence and moderation, remembering the wise proverb: *Chi va piano va sano; chi va sano va lontano*—'He goes safely who goes slowly; and he who goes slowly goes far.'

"Above all, let us constantly place our hope in the mercy of God. Thus shall we edify all around us, and receive an abundance of grace. Do not indulge too great anxiety as to the supply of your temporal wants. Practise true evangelical poverty, and Jesus Christ will take you under His special protection, and provide you with all you really need, according to the words of the Psalmist: 'To Thee is the poor man left; Thou wilt be a helper to the orphan.'"²

¹ Romans viii. 35.

² Psalm ix. 14.

The second letter was written two or three years before the death of the General. Its object is to cheer and strengthen the Fathers of the Society belonging to the French Province amid the sufferings and persecutions they had to undergo at the hands of the heretics, who were at that epoch very numerous in the unhappy country of France.

“Circumcision of the heart,” writes the Saint, “has superseded under the new dispensation the circumcision of the body commanded by the Old Law. The latter was obligatory, and the former is equally binding on all persons without exception who desire to renounce themselves to take up their cross and to follow Jesus Christ. He who fails to practise this self-abnegation and interior mortification, can never be counted among the true sons of the Society of Jesus. Such an one shows that as yet he has failed to comprehend how severe a chastisement self-will has deserved, since it has dared to offend its Creator. It must be trodden under foot, and the opposite of what it dictates must be done. From the heart in which an uncircumcised will and an unmortified spirit hold sway, there never fail eventually to arise dark and dense clouds which effectually obscure the Sun of Justice, and deprive the soul of light and grace.”

After continuing for a time in this strain, St. Francis goes on to speak of the Society. “Although this vine of the Lord,” he says, “has already, as holy David says, ‘stretched forth its boughs unto the sea, and its branches unto the river,’¹ although it has already both put forth leaves and blossoms, nay more, has borne many goodly fruits, yet I desire that it should grow, and produce wine in greater abundance, since this

¹ Psalm lxxix. 12.

is the object for which vines are planted. For this purpose it is necessary that the grapes should be placed in the wine-press, and that they should be crushed.

“Perhaps, my dear brethren, we have not enough of this spirit. We do not sufficiently relish insults and affronts, we do not desire with sufficient eagerness to be trodden under foot, to be crushed, to be despised, in order that we may yield forth this wine of joy and true spiritual consolation. Let us call to mind the pathetic lament of our Lord Jesus Christ: ‘I have trodden the wine-press alone, and there is not a man with Me.’¹ Is there a heart among us, in which these words awaken no echo? Is there a man among us so cowardly and so base, as to draw back, and refuse to be crushed beneath the feet of his fellow-men, when he sees the Saviour crushed and wounded, when he beholds Him pouring forth for us that wine which is beyond all price? He says in regard to it: ‘This is My Blood, which shall be shed for many. Amen, I say to you, that I will drink no more of this fruit of the vine until that day when I shall drink it new, in the Kingdom of God.’²

“In conclusion, I exhort you all, dear brethren and Fathers, to bear always in mind our fourth vow, that of obedience to the Holy See. Ill indeed would it become those who have the privilege of belonging to the Society of Jesus, to lend an ear to any suggestion, however specious, which might tend to render their loyalty to the Vicar of Christ less perfect and whole-hearted, or their submission to the Church of Christ less absolute and unquestioning. You are surrounded by heretics and by teachers of heresy. I therefore

¹ Isaias lxiii. 3.

² St. Mark xiv. 24, 25.

feel it to be my duty to warn you against the attacks of the enemy. 'Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.'¹ 'Dearly beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits if they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.'"²

¹ St. Matt. viii. 15.

² 1 St. John iv. 1.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HIS GENERALATE.

THE most convincing proofs which can be brought forward as to the prudence of St. Francis Borgia, are those which he himself furnished, by the manner in which he governed the Society. Many of his most distinguished contemporaries said in regard to him, as St. Paul did when writing to the Church of Corinth and speaking of Apollo, that though St. Ignatius had founded, St. Francis had watered and cultivated in such a manner, that God aiding with His blessing this prudent care, the Society had by its means been increased and brought to perfection. We have already seen, and shall see yet more plainly, how the new General carried out and completed the idea conceived by St. Ignatius, and gave the Society its distinctive form. He separated, in the clearest manner, the different parts of which it is composed, while at the same time he united these various parts in a harmonious whole, and established that spirit of fraternal charity which has ever been, and is in our own day, one of its distinguished characteristics, and the secret of the great things it has achieved *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*. St. Francis had been a soldier, and he used to say that he had learnt a great deal whilst serving under arms. "Self-forgetfulness, union, and absolute

devotion to our cause," he would often repeat, "are indispensable to success, whether we fight against a temporal or a spiritual foe."

"But," as it has been well said, "his prudence consisted chiefly in mistrusting his prudence, and having constant recourse to a higher wisdom than his own." Never did he decide any affair of importance, without laying it before God by means of earnest prayer. He always remembered that he would have to render a strict account of all his actions as ruler of the Society, and he strove to follow the counsel of its illustrious Founder, and do that which he would wish to have done when his time should come to die. He divided all the Provinces of the Society into the number of seven, and commended one more specially to God on each day of the week. He often said the Mass of the Most Blessed Trinity on nine successive days for all his subjects, in order that they might possess a spirit of zeal and holy fervour. He commended more particularly the Professed Houses to God the Father, the Colleges to God the Son, and the Novitiates to God the Holy Ghost.

A hundred ingenious methods did he invent for asking our Lord to bestow upon him grace to acquit himself aright of the weighty and important office to which he had been appointed. Several times a day he besought God either to grant him light and courage to do this, or else to remove him at once from his post, for he would have preferred to die, rather than to be left on earth, if he failed to do his duty.

As the reward of these prayers, there grew up within his soul a sure belief that our Lord would hear and grant them, and that He would either place the government of the Society in more capable hands

or else aid and strengthen His unworthy servant, for the sake of His own glory.

In this hope St. Francis was not disappointed. Besides all those gifts of nature and of grace which God lavished upon him with so liberal a hand, he was, as we have already seen, endowed with supernatural wisdom, and especially with a remarkable spirit of prophecy. Several instances of this have been given, but we must add a few more, taken mainly from the processes for his canonization. During his last illness he predicted that Brother Mark, who, as the reader knows, was given authority over him in order that he might lessen his corporal austerities, and who was present at his death, would have the privilege of serving God in the West Indies. The good Brother had never entertained any wish of the kind. He was, moreover, quite beyond the age when people were accustomed to undertake long voyages. Yet, shortly after the decease of our Saint, a strong desire to go out to the Indies sprang up within his mind, and he obtained permission to do so from Father Everard Mercurian, who succeeded Francis in the government of the Society.

One of the most remarkable predictions uttered by St. Francis, was spoken in regard to one of his nieces. He went to pay a brief visit to his sister Doña Margaret who had married Don Frederick of Portugal, a nobleman held in high esteem at the Spanish Court. She was the mother of one son and three daughters. Her son and two elder daughters had been brought up in a manner suitable to their rank, and to the position they were destined to fill in the great world. The youngest daughter, who was remarkably unattractive and for whom her parents entertained little or no

affection, was intended for a nun, and with this view, had separate apartments assigned her, and was scarcely allowed to see any one except her governess, who imparted to her such instruction as her limited capacity rendered her able to receive. This visit of the Saint was made the occasion of a brilliant gathering, a large number of relatives and friends having been invited to meet him. Shortly after his arrival, his sister presented to him, with maternal pride and pleasure, her only son, a strikingly handsome and pleasing young man, named Francis after his uncle. Next came the turn of the two elder daughters, who were both tall, good-looking, and attractive in every respect. The Saint greeted them all three in the kindest manner, and bestowed upon them his blessing. Then turning to his sister, he said, "Are these all the children God has given you?" "No," she replied, with some embarrassment, "I have another daughter. But really, I scarcely reckon her as belonging to my family, for she is good for nothing but a nun, and I intend to make her one." Francis showed the greatest curiosity to see this, his youngest niece, and her mother therefore summoned a servant, and desired that Doña Anna (for that was her name) should be sent to the reception-room. A few minutes went by and there shuffled down the long hall, a poor plain little Cinderella, blinking her dull eyes, as a bat would if suddenly brought out into the full blaze of a summer's sun. She was clad moreover in a shabby, ill-fitting Franciscan habit, for it was into this Order her mother intended she should enter. Her short stature and awkward gait completed the unfavourable impression she could not fail to make. The Saint's kind heart was full of pity, he took the hand of the neglected child, and drew her

to him. His sweet and gentle manner soon set her completely at her ease, and she ere long found herself talking to him with perfect freedom.

Before his departure he asked for a private interview with his sister, and with a ring of sternness in his voice, addressed her as follows: "Margaret, you have done extremely wrong in destining your child to a state of life for which she has not the least vocation. You have dared to exercise a right which belongs to God alone. Anna will never be a nun, but she will be heiress to all the vast possessions of your house, and will fill one of the highest positions in the land. She is nothing to you now, but she will soon be everything, and the frigid indifference with which you now treat her, will give place to an utterly opposite feeling."

Not long afterwards the two elder and beloved daughters of the family, named respectively Julia and Angela, died of fever within little more than a week of one another. Their only brother Francis followed them to the grave in the course of the same year, and ere two more years had passed, their father, Don Frederick, was laid to rest beside his children. Thus was the Saint's prophecy fulfilled. Of the charming and accomplished family group there remained only the disconsolate mother and her youngest daughter Anna, for whom she was now bent on finding a splendid alliance. Her search was not a long one. Was there ever a woman whom the possession of a vast fortune did not render attractive? In spite of all her disadvantages, Anna was married to one of the first members of the Spanish aristocracy, her husband being Duke of Postrena and Francavilla, Prince of Melita and eldest son of the Prince of Eboli. Her eldest son not only succeeded to his father's possessions, but acquired

by the alliance he formed, still larger estates. Before the end of his life he held so many duchies, that at the Court of France, where he resided for some time in the quality of ambassador, the appellation of *Duc-Duc* was added to his other titles, in order to distinguish him from his peers.

St. Francis frequently announced to persons their approaching decease, even in his earlier life. One day, when dining with his children, who were at that time all grown up, he warned them to be always ready to render an account of their actions to the Sovereign Judge of mankind. "My dear children," he concluded, "I speak thus because one of you will soon die, and die very suddenly." Shortly afterwards his daughter, the Countess of Lerma, expired without a moment's warning, whilst apparently in perfect health. In fact she was in her dressing-room surrounded by her waiting-women who were attiring her for a royal banquet.

Not less surprising is the manner in which St. Francis foretold the recovery of his second daughter, the Marchioness of Alcañize. She was lying at the point of death, having already received the last rites of the Church. The Saint was about to pronounce the final absolution. He was grieved to see her in this state, because he knew how necessary she was to her only daughter, at that time a mere child. Yet he could not but rejoice to see her so well prepared for her tremendous journey. She had entirely lost the power of speech, and every one present imagined her to be on the point of expiring, when suddenly she turned to Francis, and said, in an accent of piteous entreaty, yet with perfect distinctness: "Father, in a few moments I shall be no more, unless you entreat our Lord to have mercy on me, and grant me the recovery of my

health." At the same instant Francis felt inwardly inspired to do as the dying woman requested. "I will comply with your wish, my daughter," he answered, "and I firmly believe that God will hear my prayer. But it will be only on condition that you promise to lead a less worldly life, and not to read any more of the novels and romances of an equivocal tendency, over which you have been accustomed to waste so much precious time." The Marchioness under her present circumstances readily promised to do this, although, when in health, she had over and over again refused the requests of her father in this respect. He knelt down beside the bed, and when his prayer was ended, he said to the invalid: "Put your trust in the mercy of God, my child, and remember to adhere faithfully to the promise you have just made. Your illness will not prove fatal. In fact, I shall die before you, though you will not survive me very long." Everything happened as the Saint predicted. The Marchioness quickly recovered, and lived for several years. She found a suitable husband for her daughter, and died a holy death about two years after the Saint, her father.

Francis was, upon one occasion, travelling in Spain on business connected with the founding of a new house. He was accompanied by two gentlemen, who were great friends of his, as well as by their respective suites. The party paused for the night in a country inn, and the Saint, according to his habit, retired at once to a room apart, in order to engage in converse with God. The rest lingered downstairs, for the night was chilly, and the warmth of the fire very acceptable to the travellers. Suddenly, to their great surprise, the door was hastily opened, and Francis stood in their

midst, exclaiming, in a loud voice: "Leave this house instantly, or you will be lost." They all rushed forth into the village street, though they were totally unable to imagine the nature of the danger against which Francis was so anxious to warn them. They had not long to wait. After the lapse of a few minutes, the portion of the house which they had been occupying, fell in with a tremendous crash. Had it not been for the foreknowledge of the Saint, they must inevitably have been crushed to death amid the ruins.

His prophetic powers, however, were not confined to subjects which wore a gloomy colouring. For instance, during the period he was residing at Oñate, an heir was born to his eldest son, Don Charles, Duke of Gandia. A messenger was immediately despatched on horseback, to carry the joyful tidings to Francis. But this proceeding was quite superfluous, as he had already become aware through a supernatural enlightenment, of the birth of the child. The messenger had been one of Francis' servants, while he was living in the world, and his surprise may be better imagined than described, when his old master greeted him with the words: "And how is little Francis getting on?" The new-born baby had received this name in honour of his saintly grandfather. The courier, however, was deeply annoyed, for he imagined that some one had been beforehand with him, and had ridden harder than he had done, with a view to obtaining the reward usually given to the bearer of such joyful news. With the respectful familiarity which an ancient family retainer knows how to assume, he made his complaint to Francis. The latter was greatly amused. He consoled the servant as best he could, assuring him that no one had arrived before him with the tidings,

and that, as he could not, in virtue of the state of holy poverty he had embraced, bestow upon him any pecuniary recompense, he would say three *Paters* and three *Aves* for him. He added that he would not forget to request his son, Don Charles, to bestow upon him the gratuity he had so well deserved.

Thus did God not only perfect the prudence of His faithful follower, by bestowing upon him supernatural light and a wondrous gift of prophecy. It was his good pleasure also to reward during his lifetime his ardent love for his Creator and perfect union with Him by blessing all his enterprises, granting all his prayers, refusing him nothing which he asked, and crowning his virtue by means of a great number of miracles, many of which have been related, as occasion offered, in the course of the present history.

St. Francis Borgia has already presented us with one remarkable paradox, in that he entered the Society before he left the world. His life is marked by another uncommon feature, namely, that the most wonderful and singular among the miracles he performed, were worked after his death. This fact was an answer to the prayers in which he constantly besought our Lord to grant that the greatest miracles he should work, should consist in the conversion of sinners. This wish was dictated chiefly by his deep sense of the horror of sin, and the value of an immortal soul. In a secondary degree it may have arisen from his abiding desire to remain obscure, and from his sensitive—we had almost said morbid—dislike to be talked about. A third reason may be found in his dread of pride, and his consciousness of the danger which cannot but beset the thaumaturgist. He felt in his secret soul, what the eloquent Father Segneri has so well expressed in his

panegyric on St. John Baptist, when he says: "To work miracles affords no certain proof of being numbered among the elect. Alas! how great is the number of those who were for a long time illustrious on account of their splendid miracles, yet went astray, fell into sin, and after all were lost." We need not give ourselves the trouble to look through the annals of the Church, in order to find these sad examples. Do we not know that in the Last Day many will come to Christ and say: "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and cast out devils in Thy name, and done many miracles in Thy name?"¹ In spite of all this they will hear the answer, *Nescio vos*—"I know you not."

Be this as it may, we are told that many large volumes would not suffice to record all the wonderful cures he worked after his death, and the graces and spiritual favours which were granted to those who honoured him and invoked him with confidence. Not only was his grave made glorious by the marvellous manner in which diseases of every kind were healed there; the same effects were produced by the smallest portion of his relics, an almost invisible particle of one of his bones, a tiny fragment of one of the poor threadbare habits he had worn while yet on earth. Nay more, a letter written by his hand, his mere autograph, pictures and statues which represented him, were equally the means by which his power was exercised.

Great indeed was the number of those sinners, whom while still in this world, the force of his exhortations, the gentleness of his persuasions, and the beauty of his examples, led to abandon their evil and corrupt ways, and walk in the path of justice. But

¹ St. Matt. vii. 22.

there can be nothing more wonderful than the manner in which he has continued this work, and carried it on in a yet more efficacious manner after his death. Many persons who visited his grave, felt themselves imbued with a desire to devote their lives to the practice of penance. Others formed a similar resolution, after having by chance, as it were, glanced at his portrait. Some again were delivered from spiritual trials and interior sorrows, and restored to peace of mind by him who placed so much importance upon the possession of interior tranquillity, if the soul is to make any real progress in the path of perfection, and whose motto had ever been, *Non in commotione Dominus*.

But we must not allow ourselves to anticipate. In drawing a portrait of St. Francis Borgia, such as he was when elected General, we cannot but remember that his history has to be carried forward, and that many events of interest yet remain to be recorded. And besides, the posthumous miracles recorded of St. Francis, must, however interesting, be relegated to a later chapter.

The zeal he displayed after his election to the supreme command, extended to every kind of good work, and to all the needs of the Church. As a matter of course, his first care was for the Society, and the results of his indefatigable efforts on its behalf soon began to appear. He strove to extend its limits, to render it more perfect in itself, and to discover additional means of making it useful to the public. The Roman houses were the first to experience the blessing which never failed to rest on every enterprise undertaken by the Saint. The Roman College, which owed its commencement and establishment to him, owed further to him during the earlier years of his Generalate,

the erection of a church, which the Fathers of the house helped to build with their own hands, under his guidance and direction.

To his cultivated intelligence and matured judgment the Roman College owed its celebrity. He took care that the pursuit of human learning should be carried on there with no less assiduity and perfection than the pursuit of virtue. He appointed the most able professors, greatly increased the number of subjects to be studied, reserving the direction and superintendence of the curriculum of study to himself. Thus a fresh field was opened for the display of his talents as a ruler. Almost all establishments of a similar nature throughout the world have subsequently been shaped after the model initiated by St. Francis Borgia. During the first year he took it in hand, this College was critically inspected by more than one experienced and keen-sighted professor from other nations. These visitors looked into everything and examined everything. They were present at the lectures, and have left on record that they never grew weary of admiring and praising the learning of the teachers and their skilful manner of imparting instruction. They spoke in terms no less eulogistic of the perfect order and strict discipline which reigned throughout the entire establishment.

But if the graver occupations of the Jesuit College were thus skilfully arranged and judiciously executed, the manner in which both masters and pupils employed the days and hours set apart for recreation is still more uncommon and still more worthy of praise. The time destined for amusement was spent in teaching the catechism to children in the streets and public squares, in visiting and consoling the sick in the hospitals, and

the prisoners in the gaols, besides other practices of charity and humility. It will readily be believed that the newly-chosen General was the very soul and main-spring of all these pious works, and that it rejoiced his heart to see the zeal and readiness with which his brethren and children of the Society embraced them.

He also enlarged and improved the College of the Society which was intended for Germans, which St. Ignatius had founded. It did so much for the preservation of the faith in all the countries of Northern Europe, that in course of time the Sovereign Pontiffs established seminaries of a similar nature for all those nations in whose midst heresy had unfortunately obtained a footing. In the bosom of these institutions, many zealous priests were taught and trained, through whose self-denying exertions the light of faith was kept alive in countries where it must otherwise have been extinguished. Of these generous missionaries many were called upon to lay down their lives for the truth. English Catholics will do well to remember the debt of gratitude they owe in this way to St. Francis Borgia. If the indebtedness is somewhat indirect, it is not on this account any the less real.

The insufficient size of the church attached to the Professed House at Rome, was a subject of regret to the General. He had, as the reader will remember, contributed largely to its erection. But the congregation had long since outgrown it, and many persons were every Sunday compelled to go away for want of room. Cardinal Alexander Farnese, who was united to Francis by links of tender affection and sincere admiration, now came to the rescue. Through his princely liberality a new and magnificent building was constructed, known throughout the world as the *Gesù*.

But among all the houses of the Society, none was dearer to the heart of the General than that which served as a nursery-ground where young plants were to be trained and cultivated, in order that they might in due time adorn the garden of the Lord. We refer to the Novitiate of St. Andrew on the Quirinal, which Francis set on foot as soon as he possibly could after his election to the Generalate. The house itself was the gift of the Bishop of Tivoli, while the Duchess Jane of Arragon, who was a distant connection of Francis, provided it with a modest endowment, sufficient to ensure it against collapse. She would gladly have given more than she could prevail upon him to accept, but remembering the humble commencements of Oñate and Simancas, as well as other Novitiates, he declined her liberal offers. It was his desire that worldly goods should be wanting at St. Andrew's, and that, as he said, spiritual blessings and the riches of the grace of Jesus Christ should abound in their stead. Not long had he to wait for the fulfilment of his wish. Ere many weeks had elapsed, the great number of promising subjects who day by day besought Father Francis to receive them, clearly proved that he had indeed been inspired by the Holy Spirit of God to make the foundation.

St. Stanislaus Kostka was trained within its walls. Claude Aquaviva, brother of the Duke of Atri, and Private Chamberlain to the Pope, was a great favourite of His Holiness, who intended to bestow upon him the highest dignities and most confidential appointments at the Papal Court. Attracted by the beauty of sanctity, as he beheld it in the person of St. Francis, he turned his back on the brilliant future which awaited him in the world of politics, and entered the Jesuit

Novitiate. He was of no small service to the Society, for his mental powers, and above all, his soundness of judgment, equalled his sanctity, as he proved during the thirty-seven years of his Generalate. His nephew, Blessed Rudolph Aquaviva, a son of the Duke of Atri, was a young man of rare promise. Attracted by the example of his uncle, he too despised all the flattering promises which the world whispered in his ear, and refused to listen to the remonstrances and entreaties of his affectionate relatives, in order to enter the Novitiate. There he rapidly grew in sanctity, and acquired the zeal for souls which enabled him many years later to undertake such stupendous missionary labours in the States of the Mogul, and subsequently in India, where God granted him the supreme honour of gaining a place in "the white-robed army of martyrs."

These are but a few out of innumerable instances which might be cited. St. Francis established a Novitiate in every Province where the Society possessed any considerable number of houses. He also enforced a stricter observance of the Rule as regards holy poverty, in certain places where he judged it to have become somewhat relaxed. Another of his main efforts was directed to the founding in every Province a seminary or college, in which those who were intended to take Holy Orders might study theology, and where the younger Religious might be trained in every necessary branch of science, and formed to fill aright the posts for which they were destined. "So that it may be truly said that the Society owes to St. Francis Borgia its characteristic form and true perfection. For if St. Ignatius drew out the design of the edifice and laid the foundations, Father Laynez built the walls, and St. Francis, who was his successor, roofed it in,

and completed all the interior arrangements, thus putting the crowning stone to the great work, the plan of which God had revealed to St. Ignatius.'¹

Pope Pius IV., the reigning Pontiff, strengthened in every way St. Francis' hands, watching over the Society with truly paternal care, and granting to it, day by day, fresh favours and privileges, in order to increase its usefulness. He died towards the close of 1565, but the Chair of Peter did not long remain without an occupant. Early in 1566, Cardinal Alessandrino succeeded to the tiara. He chose this name because the place of his birth was close to the city of Alexandria. He took the name his predecessor had borne, and became the illustrious Pope St. Pius V., who was famous alike for the greatness of his soul, the strength of his will, the wisdom of his actions, and the marvellous sanctity of his private life. We shall often have to speak of this saintly Pontiff in relating what remains for us to tell of the history of St. Francis, because these two were so closely associated in their mutual efforts to promote the glory of God and the good of His Church.

Yet in the beginning, appearances seemed to point in an opposite and very unpropitious direction. Many of those persons who attribute to others the evil qualities they themselves possess, imagined the newly elected Pope to be capable of that petty jealousy which so diametrically differs from the true spirit of the Gospel. They thought that because he was reckoned among the sons of St. Dominic, it was to be expected as a matter of course that he would be alienated from the Jesuits as a body, and still more from the able General who was their head. The enemies of the

¹ Verjus, p. 334.

Society first believed that this collision must inevitably occur, they next persuaded themselves that it had already happened, and finally they spread the news abroad as a positive fact. Hence the air became full of rumours to the effect that the new Pope intended to reverse all that his predecessors had done in favour of the Society, and either to suppress it entirely, or make radical changes in its form and constitutions.

Before long it became manifest that the opposite of all this was the truth. Never was there a Pontiff who knew better how to value the Jesuits. For their saintly General he felt a true affection, as well as the highest esteem. In proof of this we can do no more than quote His Holiness' own words, which he addressed to a Cardinal who was an intimate friend of Francis, and had solicited a private audience in order to speak of the reports to which we have just referred. They were rife in Rome, and would, if allowed to spread, soon pervade the whole of Christendom. Shocked and amazed, St. Pius V. exclaimed with animation: "May God preserve us from so terrible a sin! We clearly perceive that our Lord is pleased to make use of the Fathers of the Society in order to do a great work in His Church. While they continue their present mode of action, we shall assuredly not desire to interfere with them, but rather to aid and support them, so that they may have liberty to serve our Lord as faithfully as they have hitherto done."

But St. Pius V. did not content himself with mere words, however cordial and encouraging. His energetic nature prompted him to give a public proof of the sentiments he entertained for Father Francis. He did not wait until the latter should come, according to custom, to offer his homage, and that of his brethren

in Religion, to the newly-elected Successor of Peter. When, after his coronation in St. Peter's, he had been, according to custom, borne to the Church of St. John Lateran, in order to take possession with every possible accessory of pomp and splendour, the procession had to pass the Professed House of the Jesuits on its return to the Vatican. To the extreme surprise of all his suite, the Pope gave orders that a pause should be made before the house, and commanded the bearers of the *sedile* to deposit it on the ground, for the sole and express purpose of enabling him to pay a visit to Father Francis. The Head of the Church clasped the General of the Society in his arms, embracing him in a most affectionate manner in the sight of all the beholders. Accompanying him into the house, His Holiness remained in close conversation for about a quarter of an hour, renewing the promises he had already made, and giving every gracious assurance of still greater favours to come. This unprecedented and unconventional act on the part of St. Pius V., whose noble soul abhorred the petty meanness in which the detractor and calumniator in all ages take delight, effectually closed the mouths of slanderers, and put an end to the false reports which had been in circulation.

He more than fulfilled his promises, he outdid them all. For, finding in St. Francis Borgia not only a congenial and beloved friend, but a Saint, and a man endowed with great intellectual gifts and rare acuteness of judgment, he constantly consulted him and asked his opinion on matters of the highest importance and most confidential nature. We are not engaged in writing a history of the glorious Pontificate of St. Pius V., rich as it was in blessings to the Church. Our space forbids us to do more than give a brief

account of those undertakings in which St. Francis bore an active and prominent part, or which were carried out under his direction.

Perceiving the necessity for a radical change in the life and manners of many of those who were about his person, or filling high offices in his Court, the Pope requested St. Francis to appoint certain of the Fathers to preach before himself, the Cardinals, and Prelates. He insisted that these preachers should speak with the utmost freedom, and be hampered by no considerations whatever in addressing their audience and exhorting them to fulfil their various duties in a different spirit from that which had actuated them hitherto. Father Salmeron was appointed in the first place to this delicate and responsible office, which he continued to fill for some time. His successor was Father Tolet, whose name will appear again in the following chapter.

St. Pius V. further asked that some of the Society might undertake the spiritual care of the Pontifical Guards down to the lowest soldiers in his army, and the change effected by their zeal was marvellous. Several of the Fathers also effected an immense amount of good in the capacity of army and navy chaplains whenever His Holiness saw fit to send a detachment of his troops to defend the faith against infidels and heretics. He was of opinion that these chaplains contributed not a little to the splendid success achieved at the battles of Lepanto, Jarnac, Montcontour, and many others, also to the triumph gained over the Moors inhabiting the province of Granada, who had revolted against the Most Catholic King. The exhortations of the Fathers roused and stimulated the courage of the soldiers by setting before them supernatural motives for their actions.

But St. Pius V. had yet more work for the Jesuits to do. He had deeply at heart the conversion of unhappy women who had strayed from the paths of virtue, and whose influence and example exercised so prejudicial an effect over the other classes of the community. At his request Father Francis appointed certain of the Fathers to preach sermons especially suited for them, in a church set apart on particular days for their use by order of His Holiness. The poor creatures flocked thither, and the charity of the preachers was rewarded by a large number of conversions. Many of them at a subsequent period imitated St. Mary Magdalene in her spirit of penance we had almost said in her practice of virtue. Great was the joy of St. Francis Borgia, who had himself filled the pulpit whenever his other duties permitted him to do so, and who had shown unwearied patience in instructing some of the penitents, who at the outset proved to be unmanageable and obstinate.

But difficult and trying as women of this class proverbially are to deal with, the hardness of heart and blind prejudice of the Jews presented obstacles far more insuperable. Nevertheless the zeal and tact of the Holy Father had succeeded in conquering the fierce hatred to Christianity which formerly reigned in the breast of a very talented son of Abraham. This conversion of one of their chief Rabbis led to the adoption of the Christian faith by several others. The Pope put into the hands of the Jesuits the superintendence of the house at Rome which he had established for the instruction of catechumens belonging, not to the Jewish people alone, but to all other infidel tribes. In a word, he addressed himself to St. Francis in every public need. In one of the early years of his Pontificate an opportunity occurred of doing this, which was, as the

reader will readily believe, most congenial to the charity of the saintly General.

A dangerous malady broke out in Rome. It appeared suddenly, mysteriously, in the midst of the panic-struck inhabitants. No one could tell whence it came, no one knew how to treat it, in fact, all remedies appeared useless. Eminently contagious, it carried off whole households. As soon as one member fell sick, another was attacked, and as its earliest symptoms consisted in a sort of faintness and the gradual loss of all the senses, numbers died without the sacraments, for there was no one in the house able to fetch a priest. Like a trumpet-call in the ear of a fearless warrior, so did this appeal from the Pope sound in the ear of Francis, who happened just then to be absent from Rome. With the utmost speed he hastened thither and showed himself equal to the emergency. He divided the city into numerous districts, confiding the care of each to Fathers whom he selected for the task. Wherever the disease raged most fiercely, wherever the dwellings of the poor were most crowded with the sick and the dying, there was St. Francis to be found, bringing them not only spiritual assistance, but temporal relief. He collected large sums from his friends, and contributed himself as much as the resources of the Society would permit. Many members of the laity were stirred up to follow his example, and take a personal share in tending the sick, regardless of danger. The Holy Father was deeply touched by the charity thus shown to the sick and suffering members of his flock, and publicly declared that if the visitation continued, he should not hesitate to order the church plate to be sold, and the proceeds applied to the relief of the poor. But before such a crisis as this was reached,

the fell disease vanished as mysteriously and as suddenly as it had made its appearance. What did not vanish, however, was the gratitude felt by St. Pius V. to St. Francis and his fearless band. He promised to turn to the Jesuits in similar emergencies, should they arise, and he kept his word on many occasions, the history of which our space forbids us to relate.

While speaking of the services rendered by the Jesuits in the cause of religion and philanthropy, we must not omit those of another kind which the Pope asked of them. It was they who worked at various reforms in chronology which were just then necessary. They translated into every known language the Catechism of the Council of Trent, in order that every pastor might be able to refer to it. To them was confided the task of revising the new edition of the Bible, then in course of completion, and in which the Supreme Pontiff greatly interested himself, employing the talents of many learned men whose labours he personally superintended.

Several Fathers were sent to Scotland to accompany the Nuncio of His Holiness. They did much good there, although heresy and rebellion, which stalked hand in hand throughout the length and breadth of the land, frustrated the success of the legation from a political point of view, and defeated the plans of Queen Mary, who had just then not long returned from France, for the good of her people. The Jesuits penetrated many a mountain glen, and ascended many a lonely hillside in order to comfort and succour the children of the Church. They also travelled south, journeying alone to avoid suspicion, and effected an immense amount of good in England also.

It was entirely against the wishes of St. Francis,

that St. Pius V. appointed Fathers of the Society of all nations to fill the confessionals of St. Peter's as the Penitentiaries of the Basilica, and to examine candidates who were proposed for Holy Orders, and for various benefices. But the entreaties of the General prevailed against the proposal made by His Holiness of sending Fathers to the Indies in the character of legates *a latere*, invested with powers to act in every way as they should judge best for the welfare of the churches newly planted there. Francis by his representations induced the Pope to send Bishops instead, with some Jesuit Fathers to assist them in their labours, without in any way sharing their authority. By his watchful care Francis prevented his subjects from being raised to various ecclesiastical dignities, to which not the Pope alone, but many sovereign princes, desired to raise them, for the profit of the nations over whom they ruled.

In truth, the spread of the Society during the time it was governed by St. Francis Borgia, seems almost miraculous. How he can have contrived to get through all the work he accomplished, is no less surprising. For, let it be remembered, he never shortened, much less omitted, any portion of his private devotions, or failed to be present at the religious exercises of the house in which he was residing. Moreover, he was perforce obliged to spend much time in travelling, and it was during one of the earliest journeys he made whilst General, that the following characteristic incident occurred.

As he was one day, during a stay he was making in Madrid, going out on some errand of business or charity, a gentleman stopped him and told a piteous tale. He had formerly been in easy circumstances, but

had lost, through unforeseen reverses, the bulk of his fortune. His poverty was now so great that he knew not how to provide himself with clothing. Francis had, as the reader already knows, always felt a special tenderness for persons reduced in this way to want. He now turned to his Socius, and bade him go up to his room and bring down a new and warmly-lined cloak, which a nobleman who knew him intimately had prevailed upon him to accept as an alms, the weather being unusually cold and his state of health very delicate. He gave the cloak to the poor gentleman, with many gracious apologies for not being able to give him more on account of his own state of poverty. Sometimes he would give away the money which was to furnish payment for travelling expenses, and when his companion ventured upon some gentle remonstrance, he would say with the firmest assurance: "Do not be anxious, my dear Father, God will provide for us." And so it always proved. On one occasion he literally took the shirt off his back in order that he might bestow it upon some half-naked beggar.

In France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal the number of new houses founded under the Generalate of St. Francis was, as we have said, very great. Nor was he content with multiplying them in countries where the Society had already gained a footing; he was the means of establishing it in many countries where a Jesuit had scarcely ever been seen before. His brother, Don Peter Louis Borgia, whom the King had sent to Africa in the capacity of Viceroy and Commander-in-chief of the Spanish forces, begged the Saint to allow him to have several Fathers in order that he might make a foundation. His request was granted, and his pious undertaking issued in the conversion of many

Moors, as well as in the strengthening of the faith of many Christians. Don Bartholomew of Torrez, upon his appointment to the bishopric of the Canary Isles, refused to accept the post offered him, except on condition he was permitted to take with him some Fathers in order that he might make a foundation in the largest of the isles. His piety and learning were equalled by his humility, for in a letter which he wrote to St. Francis two or three years after his arrival at the Canaries we find him saying: "In truth I derive more benefit for my flock from the example of one of your Fathers, than could possibly accrue to them from the rule of thirty Bishops such as I am." At Funchal, in the islands of the Azores, in Madeira, and many other places which were under the dominion of Portugal, Francis made foundations by request of the King. In Poland, Lithuania, and Germany, in Bavaria, and as far north as Sweden, the zeal of the General extended the work of the Society. And whilst the Society of Jesus under the wise rule of St. Francis thus grew and prospered, whilst the number of its members increased, its Colleges were multiplied and new houses were seen to rise on every side, it pleased Almighty God to give to the sons of St. Ignatius a more glorious triumph, and grant them a place in a better and a heavenly country, by affording them the privilege of shedding their blood for the faith of Christ.

At the request of Don Sebastian, the King of Portugal, St. Francis had sent out a band of missionaries to Brazil, and other neighbouring dependencies of the Portuguese crown, to preach the Gospel to the inhabitants of those lands. Somewhat later he commissioned Father Ignatius de Azevedo, a man of high birth and rare merit, to go out to Brazil to encourage his brethren

who were labouring there, and to report upon the state of religion and the prospects of the Mission. On his return to Rome, Father de Azevedo informed the General that the fields were white for the harvest, but labourers were wanting to gather in the sheaves; in a word, that multitudes of souls were lost for lack of priests to instruct and baptize them. On hearing this, Francis determined to despatch a considerable number of Fathers and Brothers to carry on the good work with Father de Azevedo, whom he nominated Provincial of Brazil, as their Superior. He authorized him to take from the different Spanish Provinces any Fathers who should express themselves desirous of joining this expedition; and since a sufficient number of trained Religious could not be spared without detriment to the work they had already undertaken in Europe, he furthermore bade him recruit his ranks by admitting as novices men who were willing to offer their lives for the spiritual conquest of Brazil. Acting in conformity with these orders, Father de Azevedo assembled a band of sixty-nine missionaries, with whom he set sail from Lisbon in June, 1570. Some of these were very young, but this Francis considered rather as an advantage than otherwise, since they would be able to accustom themselves more readily to the climate of the country, and to the manners and customs of the inhabitants, and would besides acquire the language with greater facility than older men. They sailed in three ships; the greater number, forty-four in all, of whom a large proportion were novices, being on board the *Santiago*, with Father de Azevedo; the rest were distributed on two other vessels. These ships, with an escort of four more, were bound for Brazil, under the command of a Portuguese knight, who being a good

Christian, rejoiced to make the voyage in the company of so many priests and Religious. The Rule, and all the exercises usual in the Society, were observed with the utmost exactitude, so that the three ships which conveyed the missionaries resembled so many houses of the Society. The hours of prayer were strictly adhered to, also the mid-day examen, the evening litanies, and the *Salve Regina*. The customary reading at meal-times was not omitted, and in their free time the Jesuits gave instruction to the sailors, to the soldiers, and other passengers, preached sermons, read aloud the Lives of the Saints, recited the Rosary, and distributed pictures or objects of devotion to all on board.

Thus everything went on well until the Island of Madeira was reached, and then it became necessary for Father de Azevedo and those who were with him to part company with the remainder of their brethren in Religion, since the *Santiago* had, for the sake of commerce, to call at the Island de la Palma, one of the group of the Canary Islands. Before separating from their companions, Father de Azevedo assembled the little band under his immediate charge, and told them that the portion of the voyage which now lay before them was beset with dangers, for he had reason to believe that there were a good many privateers cruising about in these waters, who would be likely to attack them, as their vessel would be alone. And as these freebooters were heretics, there was little mercy to be expected at their hands. He desired, therefore, that if any one amongst them did not feel himself prepared to face peril and even death for the religion of Jesus Christ, he should leave the ship and join his brethren who were proceeding straight to Brazil. Out of the forty-four whom he addressed, only four (and

these were novices, who ultimately left the Society) confessed they had not the courage to encounter the risks said to be in store for them, and asked that they might remain behind in Madeira. Their request was granted, and the *Santiago*, parting from the other ships, went on her way to the Canary Isles.

Father de Azevedo's predictions were speedily accomplished. Just as they sighted the port for which they were bound, there bore down upon them a squadron of five vessels, commanded by a French captain, a well-known freebooter in the service of the Queen of Navarre, and a bitter antagonist of Catholics. A large, well-equipped galleon opened fire upon the *Santiago*. After a short resistance she was grappled with and boarded. Father de Azevedo, holding in his hands a copy of the portrait of our Lady painted by St. Luke, the gift of St. Francis which he had brought from Rome, exhorted all his subjects to stand firm. They were all prepared to suffer martyrdom, and not one of the forty showed a sign of trepidation when the heretic captain, learning that there were Fathers of the Society amongst them, gave orders that they should all be put to death. "Away with these Papist dogs," he cried to his men, "who are going to spread their pestilential doctrines in Brazil; pitch them head foremost into the sea." Only a few days before, this self-same captain had spared the lives of two secular priests and some Franciscan Fathers, but his animosity to the Society of Jesus was so violent that he would give quarter to none of them. Father de Azevedo, addressing a few last words to his companions, had his head cleft in two; so tight was the grasp in which, even after death, he held the picture of our Lady, that the heretics, though they employed force, could not succeed in wrenching it from him. The

others were bound hand and foot and cast into the water. Only one escaped. The pirates, having need of a cook, spared the Brother who acted in this capacity for the sake of his services, and took him with them to France, where, by the providence of God, he was set free, and thus enabled to narrate the sad fate of his companions. But the number was made up, if in the place of this Brother we reckon the nephew of the commander of the *Santiago*, who had been so much edified by what he had seen of the Jesuits that he had expressed the desire to become one of them. During the voyage he had taken part in all their religious exercises, and although not as yet formally received into the Society, he had silently taken his place amongst them when they were sentenced to death, and putting on the habit of one of the martyred novices, was united with them in their glorious end.

The martyrdom of these Fathers and Brothers of the Society was known in Spain at the moment that it occurred, for the seraphic Mother St. Teresa, who had a near relative amongst their number, saw the whole band going up triumphant and glorious into Heaven, each bearing the martyr's palm. It was also known a few days later in the Portuguese colony at Bahia, where there was a house of the Society, for the lifeless body of Father de Azevedo, under the protection of our Blessed Lady, whose picture was still clasped in his hand, floating in the form of a cross on the surface of the water, was carried safely by the waves into the port, and being picked up by a passing vessel and brought ashore, was identified by his religious brethren. Singular to relate, no sooner was the body of the Martyr laid upon the deck of the little bark, than the firmly-clenched fingers relaxed their hold, and gave up into

the hands of the master and crew, who were good Catholics, the picture which all the efforts of the heretics had failed to force from their grasp.

When the tidings of the death of these brave warriors of the Cross, and of the somewhat similar fate which befell their companions on the voyage to Brazil, reached Francis, he was less afflicted by the loss the Society had sustained than rejoiced at the good example given by its members, and the knowledge that it had gained so many more glorious protectors in Heaven. He united himself in spirit to the generous sacrifice those saintly men had made, entreating our Lord to accept their blood as an offering to purchase graces for their brethren on earth. Moreover, he invoked their intercession on behalf of the infidels and of the heretics, opponents more bitter by far than the heathen themselves, that multitudes might be converted to the faith, and that the Kingdom of Christ might be extended throughout the whole world.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONCLUDED.

HOWEVER willingly and gladly borne, the burden of care and responsibility which rested upon the shoulders of St. Francis Borgia, could yet not long be borne without serious injury to his health. He struggled with his accustomed courage against his physical weakness as long as it was in any way possible. But he was compelled to give in at last. While he was striving to do everything for the perfection of the Society over which he had been called to rule, God was employing every means to render yet more perfect the virtue after which His faithful servant had striven for so many years.

In 1569, he was attacked by a dangerous fever, complicated with other diseases. He bore his severe and protracted sufferings with a patience and resignation worthy of his courage, and of the grace of Him Who gave him strength in his weakness. During this illness he received several very special spiritual favours from the Queen of Heaven, and he made a vow that he would undertake a pilgrimage to Loretto in order to render thanks to her for those favours. When he mentioned to the Fathers who were about him the vow he had made, they used every argument they could think of to deter him from setting out on the journey. They could not bear the thought of parting

with him, even when his sickness was at its worst; he had always given them courage and cheered them on in the path of virtue; in fact, they deemed his presence almost a necessity to them. Besides, the doctors told them plainly that the fatigue inseparable from this imprudent journey (for so they termed it) could not possibly be otherwise than fatal to their patient, who would not reach Loretto alive.

But St. Francis, whose steps were guided by an interior wisdom, compared with which all the opinions of the most learned physicians are but darkness and folly, showed himself absolutely determined to carry out, and that without delay, the resolution which he had made to fulfil his vow. In fact, he set at nought all the rules of the medical art, and began his journey. The result fully justified him in adopting this course of action. On the evening of the day during which he had quitted Rome, his temperature had diminished to a considerable extent, and his pulse was slower. This improvement steadily continued, so that by the time he reached the Holy House his recovery was well-nigh complete. He was conscious that he owed this favour entirely to the gracious kindness of her whom her children so constantly invoke as *Salus infirmorum*, and he thanked her for it accordingly, promising to be more zealous than ever in her service, and in the service of her Divine Son, during the remaining years which were granted him.

And he kept his word. All the Fathers who were brought into communication with him on his return to Rome, remarked the increase of his fervour and of his love for God. He was also more desirous than ever to withdraw, for a time at least, from intercourse with the world, and to leave Rome in order to avoid the constant

interruptions which beset him on all sides and to hold free converse with his God. The wishes of his physician entirely accorded with his own, for they were of opinion that were he to spend the hot season in Rome his newly-restored health would be seriously imperilled. He therefore consulted several of the Fathers, in whose advice he placed the greatest confidence, and yielding to their urgent entreaties, he passed the summer months at Tivoli. Being free from the visitors who made constant demands upon his time when he was in Rome, he had more leisure to receive, and to profit by, celestial visitations. He did not neglect any necessary business, or any of the duties which belonged to his position as General. But there remained to him far more leisure than was usual for him. He never forgot to labour at his own perfection, while providing for the needs of his brethren, and one of his occupations during this quiet summer at Tivoli was to make a thorough review of the whole of his past life, followed by a general confession. Shortly after his return to Rome he assembled the senior Fathers, and those who assisted him in the government of the Society, and prostrating himself on the ground before them, he implored them, in the name of their Master and Lord, to hide from him no deficiency they had remarked in him, but to tell him plainly of any faults and shortcomings they might have noticed, either personal to himself as a Religious, or regarding his position as General. Since his virtue and perfections afforded a constant subject of admiration to all the Fathers, they remained silent, not knowing what to say or do. The Saint burst into tears, and said: "Dear and charitable brethren, since a false delicacy and a mistaken sense of the respect you owe to me as

your General ties your tongues, I charge you to tell me in writing what you will not tell me by word of mouth, and to entreat God to give you the needful zeal and discrimination for the task I lay upon you.' From time to time he addressed the senior Fathers after this fashion. "But," as one of his biographers remarks, "he was too keen a self-critic to need criticism from outside.'

His health, which had been temporarily restored, soon began to flag again. His chronic infirmities increased upon him, he felt himself to be much older than his real age, and he imagined himself to be no longer fit for his duties. His cherished wish of spending his remaining years in solitude grew stronger than ever, and when the time came for convoking the triennial assembly of deputies, he laid all the reasons we have mentioned before them, and begged them to accept his resignation, and to convene a General Congregation, according to the Constitutions, to elect a new General. But the Fathers were so deeply impressed by his humility and holiness, that they realized more than ever the immeasurable privilege of being ruled by a Saint. Hence they made answer to St. Francis that they were as greatly opposed to his argument as he was to theirs. Moreover, they brought forward so many excellent and unanswerable reasons, calculated to induce him to give up his project, that if they failed to persuade him that it would be against his conscience to abandon his post (as they did not scruple to tell him in the plainest language), they at least made him see that it was hopeless to persist in his cherished project. God had other and far different designs for him. Instead of the privacy and retirement after which his soul so ardently thirsted, his little remaining life and

strength were to be consumed in many and long journeys, and weighty and responsible exertions for the good of Holy Church.

In the early part of 1571, Pope St. Pius V. was desirous of sending Legates to the principal Courts of Europe, in order to arrange certain delicate and important matters connected with the well-being of the Church. Cardinal Commendone, who had already achieved signal success in smoothing away difficulties in the northern countries of Europe, was chosen to revisit the same districts. The Holy Father selected Father Tolet, of the Society, who, as the reader will remember, had been in the habit of preaching before him, to accompany this Legation. As Legate to the Courts of France, Spain, and Portugal, His Holiness appointed Cardinal Alessandrino, his sister's son, and the only one of all his relatives whom he had deemed worthy of being raised to a high office in the Church. The Cardinal was to be accompanied by a considerable number of wise and learned Prelates, six of whom, at a subsequent period, wore a Cardinal's hat, whilst one was deemed worthy of the tiara. The Pope was extremely anxious that St. Francis Borgia should accompany his nephew and advise him in all things. In fact, His Holiness did not hesitate to say that the good or bad result of the Legation would turn upon the absence or presence of the Saint. Accordingly he was summoned to the Vatican. The Pope told him, that knowing how great was the favour he enjoyed at the Courts of Spain and Portugal, he could render no small service to the Holy See by proceeding thither. The only question, His Holiness went on to say, was whether Francis' health would bear the fatigue of these protracted journeys. At the same time he explained

the object of the Legation, and the importance of the designs it was intended to promote.

After humbly thanking the Sovereign Pontiff for the confidence he deigned to repose in him, Francis went on to say: "I shall always have sufficient health and strength to obey the commands of your Holiness, and I can know no greater joy, as the end of my life draws near, than to lay it down for love of Him Who first bestowed it upon me, and for the good of His Church." As soon as the General ceased speaking, Father Polanco, who had been present throughout the audience, stepped forward and ventured to represent to the Pope that the whole Society was deeply interested in the preservation of its beloved Head, and that it had every reason to dread the contemplated journey, since it seemed impossible that Father Francis, with his weak and broken health, could ever survive it. The evident emotion of the good Father deeply touched the Pontiff, who answered in the most gracious manner that no one could outdo him in love and esteem for their Father General, and in anxiety for his health. Then the holy Pope remained quite silent for a time, and it was evident he was balancing in his mind the alternatives which lay before him. On the one hand was the question of Francis' health, on the other the importance of the matters at issue. When at length he broke the silence, it was to speak as follows: "Since the affairs involved are so grave and weighty, and We consider the presence of Father Francis to be necessary to success, We accept his good-will and desire him to prepare for the journey. We will do all that lies in Our power to care for his health, and will give orders to the effect that nothing is to be left undone which can smooth away the difficulties of the journey for

him." St. Francis knew, better than any one else could do, what would be the result of this journey. But without a single syllable, or even a glance which could express unwillingness, he submitted to the command of the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

Pro Petri Sede had been his motto during a long series of years. He had frequently entreated our Lord that the honour of dying for the faith might fall to his lot. God was about to grant his petition, though in a way of which he had little dreamt. To those who ventured to express their admiration of his humility, his obedience, and his generous contempt of life, he replied: "I have always found that God has been mercifully pleased to make easy for me the most painful and difficult things, when I have undertaken them in a true spirit of obedience. However much suffering this journey may cause me, the consciousness that I am fulfilling the will of God and of His Vicar on earth, will cause me far greater joy." St. Francis next wound up all the business of the Order which had still to be settled in the Assembly of Deputies, and left Rome in the end of June, 1571, in the company of the Legate, after having received the blessing of the Holy Father, and taken an affectionate leave of all the Fathers belonging to the Professed House. None of them, we are told, could restrain their tears, and grown men were seen to sob like children as they witnessed the departure of their revered and beloved General on an expedition which would, as they believed, prove fatal to a life so precious to the Society.

St. Francis requested all those Fathers who had been to Rome as deputies from Spain and Portugal to return to their Province in his company. He hoped by thus surrounding himself by his religious brethren to

be able to keep up the religious life all the better. In fact, there was scarcely an hour of the day which was not dedicated to some exercise of piety.

It may easily be imagined with what delight the Saint was welcomed in Barcelona, for the memory of all the virtue and charity he had shown during his viceroyalty, still lived in the hearts and memories of those who had formerly been his subjects when he ruled the province of Cataluna. "But if they admired him then, how much more did they admire him now! His modesty, sweetness, and humility impressed them all the more vividly, because they never forgot his high birth, such qualities being but rarely found in persons of rank." Young and old, little and great, all were desirous of seeing and conversing with him.

An unhappy difference which had long subsisted between the canons of the Cathedral and the Government officials had hitherto defied all attempts at a peaceful settlement. Each party was absolutely certain of the justice of its own cause, yet both were willing to refer their claims to Father Francis, and accept his decision as final. In a brief space this troublesome and complicated dispute was arranged to the complete satisfaction of all who were concerned, through the wisdom of the Saint, who appeared amongst them as an angel of peace.

Every possible mark of honour was shown him during his sojourn at Cataluna, and not by the King alone and the grandees of the Court. It seemed as though God took special pleasure, if we may so speak, in making up to His servant for all the persecutions, slights, and accusations he had formerly undergone. Especially in regard to his writings was this the case. Their orthodoxy had been, as the reader will remember,

if not openly attacked, yet indirectly impeached. Now the Inquisitors themselves were loud in their praise. They caused them to be translated into Latin, and when they were ready for the press one of their number wrote a Preface, couched in highly eulogistic terms, both as regarded the sanctity of the author and the soundness of his doctrine.

If the Saint could not escape the honours paid him in Cataluna, still less could he avoid the reception which awaited him when he had crossed the frontier of Valencia. It was in this province that the principal estates of his brothers, children, and other near relatives were situated. They came in a body to meet him, the splendour of their surroundings marking the deep respect they felt for him. It melted the hearts of all beholders to see Don Charles, Duke of Gandia, his eldest son, and the Marquess of Lombay, his grandson, alight from their horses the moment they perceived him to be approaching. They knelt down and asked his blessing, bedewing his feet with the tears which joy and love caused to spring from their eyes. Indeed, one might have imagined that all the noblemen and gentlemen who accompanied his relatives were his children also, so great was the affectionate veneration they displayed towards him. But as soon as he could, he sent them all off to pay their respects to the Legate of His Holiness, while he continued his journey by a private road. He was accompanied by the Fathers whom he had brought with him, and who, like himself, were anxious to reach the Society's house at Valencia. He very naturally hoped that, so numerous and distinguished a company having gone forth to meet him, his arrival in the city itself would be unnoticed. He trusted to find in the house only his beloved brothers and

children in Jesus Christ. To his no small disappointment he not only found the doorway beset by a dense crowd, but the church was filled to the very doors by a throng of ladies of rank and fashion, all eager to obtain a glimpse of him as he passed down the aisle, in order, according to his invariable custom, to pay in the first place a visit to the Blessed Sacrament immediately upon his arrival. No sooner had he escaped to his own room than the Archbishop was announced, who had come to pay him a visit of ceremony, attended by his whole Chapter. This Prelate, who was also Patriarch of Antioch, was a worthy successor of St. Thomas of Villanova. St. Francis saw him frequently during his stay in Valencia, and found great delight in his society.

Though fatigued by the journey, and feeling very weak, the Saint could not resist the entreaties of the Archbishop that he would preach in the Cathedral. This sermon appears to have been his last; and if the circumstances which attended it were not so striking as those which marked his first, it appears to have produced no less lasting effects on the souls of the densely-crowded audience which assembled to hear him. The occasion was one never to be forgotten. The Papal Legate sang High Mass, and the Cathedral was filled to the doors, many persons having gone thither at a very early hour, in order to make sure of obtaining places. When the time came for the preacher to ascend the pulpit, it was found impossible to make a way for him to walk, and so he was carried to the foot of the steps, which he slowly ascended. There he stood for some minutes in perfect silence, surveying the vast sea of heads stretched out at his feet. Every eye was fixed on the former Duke of Gandia, every ear was bent to catch the first accents of his voice, and a wave of

emotion seemed to thrill the multitude. Francis took as the subject of his discourse the Gospel for the day, which chanced to be the story of the widow of Nain's son. He preached with wonderful eloquence of expression, and in spite of his physical weakness, age seemed to have quenched nothing of his fire, so that he appeared to be quite his old self. Yet he subsequently mentioned to his confessor, that he had not been able to open a single book bearing on his subject, nor to give even one hour to the preparation of the sermon. Nevertheless, so complete a master of Holy Scripture did he show himself to be, and of such marvellous acquaintance with the science of theology did he prove himself possessed, that the Archbishop, who was among his hearers, could not cease expressing his profound admiration both for the preacher, and also for his sermon, which was not only printed, but translated into various languages.

At Valencia, as at Barcelona, the Saint showed himself to be an angel of peace. He succeeded in putting an end to a painful and protracted dispute between the University and the Religious Orders. It had already lasted several years, and the exertions of the Count of Benavente, Viceroy of the province, and of the saintly Archbishop, had only caused the waves of strife to run higher, although their sole desire had been to pour oil on the troubled waters.

After a stay of less than a week, the Legate set out for Madrid. St. Francis resumed his journey at the same time, but travelled by quiet and sequestered roads, in order to avoid the ovations he must otherwise have inevitably received, and also to take up his quarters, whenever he could, in houses of the Society. His relations entreated him to pay a short visit to the

Castle of Gandia, but he turned a deaf ear to their entreaties. No doubt they woke an echo in the depths of his affectionate heart, for he deeply loved his ancestral home. But, as has been already related, when he rode forth for the last time, beneath its stately towers, he made a secret but firm resolution that his eyes should behold them no more. And looking upon him, if we can, for one brief moment, from a merely natural point of view, we must feel that Francis was not a man that could ever break his word, even to himself.

He took care to reach Madrid at the same time as the Legate, so as to be present with him at the first audience granted by the King. Philip received Francis with effusive delight, which formed a striking contrast to his habitual gravity of manner. He embraced the Saint, a mark of favour that he had never been known to show to even his most favoured friends and courtiers. It was only natural that those about the Court should imitate the example of their Sovereign. Francis was literally overwhelmed with expressions of respect and esteem, while all the members of the royal family, as well as of the highest nobility, made a point of calling upon him. Every moment he could possibly spare was devoted to visiting the houses of the Society, in order to console, advise, and instruct the Fathers. He arranged for the foundation of five or six new houses in Spain, and a still larger number in Mexico. The confidence and familiarity with which the King treated him he turned to the profit of the Society, and to the promotion of several enterprises which he had greatly at heart. Nor did he forget the business on which the Pope had sent him, but did much for the good of the Church and the edification of her children. Especially

did he suggest to Philip the means of remedying in several of the countries and provinces over which he ruled the chronic opposition that unfortunately existed between the Papal Nuncios and the Viceroy. Yet unhappily, friction between Church and State is a thing which must ever be expected, as long as time shall last.

When the Saint at length reached Lisbon, he found his presence to be still more needed there than it had been at Madrid. He was received with no less honour. The King of Portugal himself went to meet the Legate, accompanied by his whole Court. He lavished upon Father Francis marks of affectionate esteem and respect, while the members of the nobility vied with each other in showing him attentions of every kind. Queen Catherine, the King's grandmother, who had been Regent of the kingdom during his minority, and Cardinal Don Henry, his uncle, were more rejoiced to see him than any one else. He brought, as he had done elsewhere, the affairs with which the Holy See had charged him to a successful issue. But the most important work which came to his hand, as General of the Society, had regard to the painful position in which three eminent Jesuits, who were residing at the Court of Portugal, just then found themselves. It will be necessary to say a few words about each of them before mentioning the calumnies with which they were assailed.

Father Louis Gonçalez de Camara belonged to one of the first families of Portugal. He had studied in his youth at the University of Paris, and had there acquired a rare proficiency in every branch of learning, both sacred and profane. He was an accomplished linguist, being especially remarkable for his classical attainments, and for his knowledge of Greek and

Hebrew. During a stay which he made at Coimbra, he was so deeply impressed by a course of sermons delivered by the Blessed Peter Faber, that he shortly afterwards entered the Society. "On the foundation," as a biographer remarks of him, "of natural virtue and human learning, he erected an edifice of sanctity, wisdom, and prudence, truly marvellous to behold." The desire of his heart was to work for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Portuguese possessions in Africa. His wish was granted, but he was soon recalled to Portugal, as King John III., who held him in high esteem, had set his heart on having him for his confessor. But Father Gonçalves entreated with so much earnestness, after he had held the responsible post for a few months, to be allowed to resign it, that the King felt he ought not to persist, and gave him permission to withdraw. Joyfully did he turn his back on Lisbon, hoping to see no more of Court life, but to be free, for the remainder of his days, to live among his Religious brethren, according to the true spirit of his vocation. Within a very few years, he was successively raised to the highest offices in the Society, that of General being alone excepted. He was one of the four Fathers appointed to assist Father Laynez in the government of the Society, and was compelled by the command of Father Laynez, at that time General, and also of Father Francis Borgia, to undertake the education of King Sebastian during his minority. The father of that Prince, King John, had, while on his death-bed, earnestly recommended to his consort, Queen Catherine, that she would confide the difficult and responsible task to no one else. With extreme reluctance Father Gonçalves returned to Lisbon, and although King Sebastian, when he had attained his majority, strayed

far from the path in which the good Father had led him, he retained a strong affection for him, and used to say that he had been indeed a father to him, and that his feelings towards him must always be those of a grateful and loving son.

The second Jesuit of whom we must give a brief account, is Father Michael de Torres, confessor to Queen Catherine. Before entering the Jesuit Novitiate, he had been one of the most learned among the Professors at the University of Salamanca. Thence he was deputed to Rome, in order to treat with the reigning Pontiff, Paul III., upon an affair of importance. This journey took place about five or six years after St. Ignatius had founded the Society of Jesus. He admired all he saw and heard of it, and before returning to Spain resolved to offer himself as a novice. St. Ignatius had so great an esteem and affection for him, that he often called him the apple of his eye. His prudence, virtue, and talents were of so high an order that, as soon as his novitiate was ended, he was appointed to positions of trust and responsibility. Queen Catherine chose him for her confessor almost immediately after the death of her husband, and of the many virtuous actions she performed during her regency, the greater number were attributed to the salutary influence Father de Torres exercised over her. He took care, however, that his influence should be indirect rather than direct. He never interfered in politics, but strove to train his royal penitent in the love of Jesus Christ, and to teach her to live as a true Christian should.

As to Father Leo Henriquez, the third and last of this remarkable trio, he was, as his biographer quaintly tells us, "a man of very small stature, but possessed of

a very large amount of moral courage and intellectual gifts." Like Father Gonzalez, to whom he was distantly related, he was educated at the University of Paris. His vocation to the Society happened not long after he returned to his own country, and after occupying some very responsible posts, he was appointed confessor to Don Henry, the great-uncle of the King. We may just add that his holy life was ended, many years after he had retired from the Court, by a yet more holy death. The disease which carried him off was caught at the hospital, whilst attending a poor Frenchman who had contracted a peculiarly malignant type of typhus fever.

These three saintly men, having no other wish than to promote the glory of God and the welfare of the princely personages with whom they were brought into such close relations, lived in the palace in the apartments allotted to them, as far as they could in the same manner in which they would have lived in their own houses. They declined the attendance of more servants than was absolutely necessary to them, they refused to drive out in the carriage which was placed at their disposal. Their table was as frugally spread as it could be under the circumstances. Not only were they absolutely and perfectly disinterested as far as their relatives and connections were concerned, but they went still further and avoided making use of their influence in order to obtain favours and privileges for the Society and for their brethren in Religion. Indeed they were under strict orders not to interfere in any affair where it might be necessary to present petitions at Court in regard to certain houses or colleges, Fathers who had no connection with them being invariably chosen to act on such occasions. Nothing could be more judicious, prudent, and guarded than

the life led by the three Jesuits to whom we are now referring. Moreover, they were perfectly at accord among themselves, for, knowing that if union is strength, still more is weakness the result of disunion, each one made an invariable rule of consulting his brethren before taking any important step.

Yet all the wise and vigilant caution of these saintly men could not preserve them from the attacks of calumniators. Every unpopular step taken by the Government was set down to their account, while all the good they did was turned into evil by the misrepresentations of their enemies. Unfounded and atrocious libels were published concerning them in all the countries of Europe. Besides these personal accusations, they were said to be doing their utmost to prevent the King of Portugal from marrying, in order that they might, if possible, entice him to join the Society; and also to be endeavouring to create too rigid a rule as to right and wrong, erecting an unattainable standard of religion and morality, and then condemning the unhappy mortals who failed to come up to it.

The sole foundation for these unkind and malicious sayings, was that the Fathers had more than once felt it their duty to speak out respecting certain vices in which the young noblemen about the Court indulged without shame, and some crying scandals to which their conduct gave rise.

St. Francis Borgia had been greatly grieved, when at a distance, by the accounts he had received of the trials to which the Fathers were exposed. He was entirely convinced of their innocence, for they were all three men in whom he could place the most implicit confidence. Yet during his visit to Lisbon he made it

his principal occupation to sift the matter thoroughly. He had, as we have seen, ever since his conversion, felt, as far as he was himself personally concerned, the most intense repugnance to a life led within the precincts of a palace. Since he had been elected General, he had made it his constant endeavour to preserve his subjects from such a life, preferring rather to see them employed in the lowliest and most humble occupations. After a careful and searching investigation of every particular, Father Francis attached no blame to either of the Fathers in question, nor did he consider that they could have acted otherwise than they did. But he saw so clearly the difficulties of their position, and the impossibility of leading in the houses of the rich and the great the life that a Religious is bound to lead, that he used his utmost exertions in order to obtain for his subjects permission to withdraw from the Court. Queen Catherine saw the force of his arguments, and allowed Father de Torres to resign his post, deeply as she regretted him. "But," she remarked, "he has often impressed upon me the necessity of practising detachment, and it would be but a poor compliment to him were I to fail in carrying out his lessons now that the time to do so has come."

The King did not manifest an equal generosity in regard to Father Gonçalez. For him Francis could only obtain permission to leave the palace at intervals in order to spend part of the year with his brethren. But this partial concession paved the way for the total withdrawal of the good Father, to which the King was induced to give his consent in the course of the following year. The Cardinal Don Henry showed himself still more obdurate in regard to Father Leo Henriquez, and positively refused to part with him, saying that he

desired to be assisted in his last moments by this holy man. And so, in fact, he was.

Upon quitting Lisbon, the Legate returned to Madrid, and prepared to proceed to France. St. Francis foresaw that this journey would be a failure. He felt, moreover, that his presence could do no real good, and he was exceedingly anxious to return to Rome in order to spend the short term of life which yet remained to him in fulfilling the responsible duties attaching to his high office as General. The King of Spain readily placed a vessel at his disposal in order that he might go back to Italy, and he was on the point of embarking when fresh orders arrived from the Pope commanding him to accompany the Legate to the French Court. His Holiness still hoped it might be possible to bring about a marriage between the sister of King Charles IV. and the King of Portugal. He thought, moreover, that no one was so well able as Father Francis to strengthen the minds of the King of France and of his mother, Queen Catherine, against the wiles and snares of the heretics, whose numbers were increasing with such fatal rapidity.

The disappointment felt by the Saint was very great. His health, moreover, was failing him day by day, and his physical sufferings were considerable. Yet not only could those Fathers who were most frequently about him, and most closely in his confidence, detect no sign of regret, but he appeared glad to undertake this fresh journey.

He travelled through several provinces of France, exposed to the chills of an early winter. It was necessary to choose by-roads and to traverse mountain passes, because the more open and ordinary routes were held by the insurgents. Day by day St. Francis'

heart was pierced with grief as he everywhere beheld the traces of the impiety of the heretics, who some years before had thrown off the yoke of obedience to their King as well as to their God, and were spreading over their unhappy country murder, incendiarism, and sacrilege.

At last the travellers reached Blois, where the Court was just then staying. Francis was not less well received than he had been at Madrid and at Lisbon, yet his efforts met with but scant success, as indeed he had foreseen. The negotiations regarding the marriage of the King's sister, Margaret, with the King of Navarre were already so far advanced, that the idea of breaking them off in favour of the King of Portugal could not be entertained for a moment.

St. Francis did what he could. With his accustomed fearlessness he exhorted both Charles and Catherine to defend the altars of God, and not to follow the maxims of worldly policy. They listened to him with deference, and begged him to pray that God would restore peace to France. But there was about their words a false ring which Francis' ear was quick to detect. The plan already formed, and soon to be carried out, for the tragedy known as the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, was carefully concealed from him, and the desire for peace which was expressed, was equal only in the force of its pretended earnestness to the violence of the cruel measures which were in preparation. St. Francis felt that this unnatural calm which brooded over the land was but the herald of a coming storm. His prophetic eye foresaw the terrors of that storm, and the calamities which, following in its wake, were to bring the country over which it swept to the very verge of ruin.

He hinted to Queen Catherine, mother of the King, the nature and terrible extent of these misfortunes, with so much delicacy and tact, that, far from taking umbrage at his words, she was filled with deep veneration for him. Indeed, so persuaded was she of his eminent sanctity and of the power of his intercession with God, that she begged him to give her the rosary which hung at his belt. He could not well refuse the entreaties of so distinguished a Princess, and gave it to her. She ever after preserved it as a precious relic, for with all her faults she was far from being destitute of respect for holy things. Well would it have been for her, and for the people of France, had her piety been of a more practical character, and had she possessed more of that peace-loving spirit which St. Francis so strenuously strove to urge upon her. When at length the time came to bid her a final farewell, it was with a heavy heart that he took his departure from Blois.

CHAPTER XX.

HIS LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

THE health of St. Francis Borgia had been, as we have seen, extremely delicate even from his cradle. The austerities he had practised long before he became a Religious, the arduous and engrossing duties which had fallen to his share, or had been voluntarily undertaken by him, at an age when most men have scarcely begun life, had now fairly worn him out. His high moral sense, innate and refined consciousness of what was on all occasions right and fitting to be done, and his eager desire to fulfil to the letter all his obligations to both God and man, constituted, quite apart from his constant striving after perfection, a strain which his frail constitution was little able to bear.

He was a man of prompt decision and vigorous action, who did nothing by halves, and never spared himself. He won splendid distinction when fighting under Charles V.: he changed the whole face of the province when holding the Viceroyalty of Cataluna: when wearing the coronet of the Dukes of Gandia he exerted himself to the utmost for the benefit of his vassals and dependents, and did, moreover, good service to the Society of Jesus. Not only was he a man of action, but of deep feeling as well. Under his calm and tranquil exterior, there beat a warm and

sensitive heart, and every one knows that intense emotions wear the human frame as nothing else can do.

If to all this we add the penances and mortifications of his life at Oñate, the arduous and responsible posts he subsequently filled in the Society, can we wonder that when, at the age of fifty-five, he was elected its General, he was already an old man, prematurely aged, as far as his physical forces were concerned, by having so long borne "the burden of the day and the heats"? His fragile and emaciated frame seemed ill-fitted to bear the heavy burden which it pleased God to lay upon him. We have, however, seen that a high spirit and dauntless will, joined to determined resolution, can, when aided and supported by the grace of God, conquer and overcome bodily weakness.

The Saint's recovery from the severe illness which, as we have seen, disabled him for a considerable period in the course of the year 1569, was miraculous, but can scarcely be said to have been complete. It left permanent traces behind, and rendered him totally unfit to undertake the journey upon which he entered solely out of obedience to the Vicar of Jesus Christ. The latter portion of this journey was especially trying. The winter was abnormally severe, and Francis would not accept the attentions of those who tried to shelter him from the cold.

The last illness of St. Francis may properly be said to have begun on the feast of the Purification, February 2nd, 1572. Until that day he had borne up against the hardships and sorrows which continually weighed upon him. But the evening before, the party of travellers halted for the night in a spot whence could be clearly discerned a church which the profane hands of the heretics had converted into something very like

a ruin. The grief of Francis knew no bounds, and over and over again, with sighs and tears, he repeated the words of David: "O God, the heathen are come into Thy inheritance, they have defiled Thy holy Temple."¹ Then he gave utterance to the lament of the holy Prophet Elias: "The children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant; they have thrown down Thy altars, they have slain Thy Prophets with the sword."² Desirous of making reparation as far as possible for the insults directed against the altars of God, he resolved to offer the Holy Sacrifice the next morning on the one altar which the impiety of the evil-doers had allowed to remain intact.

The morning of our Lady's feast broke grey and cold, low clouds were drifting across the sky, and a snowflake which fell at intervals betokened the coming storm. Francis had all his life been peculiarly susceptible to draughts, and the winds which swept through the desolate sanctuary seemed, when taken in conjunction with all the other attendant circumstances, reason sufficient why he should desist from his purpose. His companions represented all this to him, entreating him, with affectionate respect, to remain indoors on such a day. Nothing they said could induce him to alter his intention, and he proceeded to the church. This appears to have been his last Mass, for from that day his weakness became so great, that he could not stand even for a few moments.

Touching indeed must the sight have been for those who witnessed it, and we are told that all present wept bitterly. As for the celebrant, tears literally streamed down his pale cheeks. His heart was wrung with grief at the sight which met him everywhere, and at the

¹ Psalm lxxviii. 1.

² 3 Kings xix. 10.

thought of the deplorable state of the realm of France, which had once formed so strong and reliable a buttress, to strengthen and sustain the walls of the Church. It was with much difficulty that he finished Mass, and as soon as he had reached the inn at which he had passed the night, he was seized with a violent shivering fit. To this succeeded an attack of the fever from which we have so often seen him suffer, and to which he had a constitutional tendency. It reduced his already weakened frame to such extreme debility, that it was obviously impossible to resume the journey.

In the course of a few days, he was removed by slow stages, and with great difficulty, to a small place called St. Jean de Maurienne, situated just across the boundary of Savoy. Here he became so much worse that a halt had to be made for some days, and his anxious companions feared that his end was close at hand. As soon as the Duke of Savoy heard that the Saint had entered his territory, and that he was dangerously ill, he sent his first physicians and several officers of his Court to attend upon the illustrious invalid, who seems to have rallied somewhat under their care. At any rate he was able before long to proceed to Turin, where it was considered desirable that he should make a prolonged stay. But the manner in which, according to the etiquette which had from time immemorial been observed at the Court of Savoy, he was treated by every one, was insupportable to him. He said that it caused him more pain than his illness, and that he preferred to run any risk, rather than remain longer in a place where so much honour was paid him from morning till night. When the Duke found that his entreaties were fruitless and that his guest was resolved to depart, he caused a barge to be

fitted up with every possible comfort, himself superintending the arrangements which he thought might make the journey easier for Francis.

The latter took a grateful leave of his host, and embarked on the Po. He descended the river as far as a small town situated on its banks, where he landed, as he wished to spend Holy Week and Easter in a peaceful retreat far from the noise and bustle of a great city. Every day the Holy Sacrifice was offered in his room, and he received Communion, according to his invariable custom during his frequent illnesses.

The day after Low Sunday he re-embarked on the same river, and reached Ferrara in four days. His nephew, Duke Alphonsus of Este, hastened to receive him, and to lavish upon him every affectionate care and attention. This Prince, who was renowned for his cultivated intellect, numerous accomplishments and noble qualities, waited upon Francis as affectionately as if he had been his own father. Indeed he seemed, sovereign though he was, to be jealous of every service rendered by his servants to the sick man. In order that no means might be left untried, Alphonsus implored him to leave the Jesuit house, which stood in the midst of the city, and to repair to a villa of his own, which occupied a cool and airy position. He thought the breeze from the hills might be refreshing to Francis, especially as his stay in Ferrara had lengthened itself out, and the summer heats would soon be coming on. The Saint felt that it would be ungrateful to refuse the kind offer, especially as all the Fathers begged him to accept it. They were deeply distressed to see him grow weaker day by day, in spite of all that the tenderest solicitude could do for him, united to every effort of the doctors. The Duke had summoned some

of the most skilful physicians of Italy, in order that they might hold a consultation upon the case. They gave, however, but little hope of saving their patient, to the extreme grief of the Duke.

Seeing that human skill was of no avail, he resolved to resort to supernatural means. He ordered that the Blessed Sacrament should be exposed in all the churches of Ferrara, and obtained prayers innumerable, in the hope that the Saint might yet be spared to the Society of Jesus, and to all the friends and relatives who loved him so well, and needed him so much. Far indeed was Francis from uniting in those prayers. He was aware that his days on earth were numbered, and that the time he so ardently desired was not far off, the time when God would call him to the enjoyment of His gracious presence for ever. During his illness he had often earnestly entreated our Lord to grant him the favour of dying either at Loretto or in Rome. It seemed as if his life had only been protracted, during these last months, which his excessive debility compelled him to spend at Ferrara, in order that this wish of his heart might be granted, and that he might, as he said, breathe his last in the same place where his two saintly predecessors had expired, surrounded by his brethren in Religion.

Feeling slightly better, he once more urged the Duke to detain him no longer, but to allow him to prosecute his journey. Thereupon the Duke sent for his physicians, and held a final consultation with them as to the state of the invalid. Reluctantly, but unanimously, they declared that his waning strength could not hold out much longer, as he did not possess sufficient recuperative power to make it possible to repair the ravages wrought by the fever from which he had suffered so long.

Alphonsus now felt that it behoved him to concur in his uncle's urgent wish to depart. With profound grief he therefore took leave of him, having literally forced him to accept everything that wealth could purchase or skill devise, in the shape of appliances intended to render the journey less arduous and distressing. Francis passed through Loretto, and had the consolation of offering to God the brief remainder of his life in the very place where, according to the common belief of Christians, the Saviour began His earthly existence. Feeling himself to be rapidly sinking, he gave orders that the litter in which he was travelling was not to pause either by day or night until Rome was reached. It was a delight indeed to him, when at length he beheld in the distance the outlines of the Eternal City. With tears of joy he exclaimed, in the words of Simeon: "Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word, in peace."¹

He added that the promise made to him by Heaven was fulfilled, since his life had been prolonged in a miraculous manner until he should reach Rome. Then he poured out his heart in thanksgiving, because it was granted him to lay down his life in the services of the Catholic Church, in religious obedience, and in the fulfilment of the fourth vow of the Society, thus leaving its members an example of unswerving obedience. Furthermore, he gave thanks to God for having permitted him to die in the humble habit of a simple Religious, and for having more than once preserved him from the forced acceptance of a Cardinal's hat, or of the Papal tiara with all its attendant splendours, which also had at one time at least seemed to threaten him.²

St. Luke ii. 29.

² See "vision of mitre," p. 119.

It is uncertain whether he was cognizant of the fact, that through being so long detained at Ferrara, he had escaped the highest dignity of the Church. In the present case, escape would have been exceedingly difficult, not to say impossible. Not a few of the most highly esteemed members of the Sacred College had determined in their own minds that he should be the next Pope. Cardinal Paleotto, who was distinguished alike for learning and virtue, was of this number, and had no misgivings as to the success of the design. He had spoken of his wishes to Don Thomas Borgia, a brother of the Saint, with whom he was on terms of confidential friendship, during the last illness of St. Pius V. He begged Don Thomas to invent some pretext for begging his brother to hasten his return to Rome, without giving him any idea of his real object in making the request. The Cardinal hoped and believed that St. Francis' presence at the approaching Conclave, would further not a little the attainment of his wishes. Nevertheless, these schemes were destined to frustration. Man proposes, but God disposes. He was preparing in Heaven for His faithful servant a diadem more glorious than even the Papal tiara itself.

Francis entered Rome by the Flaminian Gate. When he found himself opposite the portal of the Church of Our Lady del Popolo, he gave orders that the litter in which he was stretched should be set down. Calling to Don Thomas Borgia, he begged that the curtains might be drawn so that he might have a short space for recollection. He also asked that no one should be allowed to break the silence, or in any way disturb the repose of a frame so exhausted that it could scarcely be said to be yet living. "After taking these precautions against interruption, he devoutly folded his

hands, and passed half an hour in secret colloquies and loving intercourse with the Queen of Heaven, offering the sacrifice of his life to her who had, contrary to all human expectation, prolonged it up to that hour, in order that he might have the joy of laying it down at her feet."

All the Jesuits in the city, hearing that their beloved General was already within the walls, went in a body to meet him, and greet him with tears of affection and joy. They surrounded the litter, and kneeling down, drew the curtains aside, while Francis stretching wide his arms, seemed as if he would fold them all in one fond embrace. His soul was still so vigorous, that it imparted some measure of strength to his enfeebled frame, and he who a moment before had lain prostrate and apparently lifeless, was seen to raise himself up, and give signs of love and recognition to those who stood around. The countenance on which death had already set its seal, was lighted up with a joyous smile.

They were deeply distressed at seeing their beloved General so much worse than they had imagined. In fact the signs of approaching dissolution were only too plainly to be read upon his countenance. Yet in the midst of their grief, they thanked God with all their heart, that He had prolonged the life of the Saint until his desire of breathing his last in their midst could be accomplished, and they could have the consolation of ministering to him on his death-bed. Don Thomas was greatly alarmed at the effect this emotion might possibly have upon the invalid. Turning to the Fathers, he begged them to remember that the Father General was not only sick, but sick unto death, almost at his last gasp. so that his life hung on a thread. He

added that the least excitement would accelerate his end, and that if his subjects pressed too closely around him, he would expire in their arms.

It was considered dangerous to remove him from the couch whereon he lay, so when he reached the Professed House, some of the Fathers raised it on to their shoulders, and carried the Saint into the hallowed chamber where his predecessors, St. Ignatius and Father Laynez, had breathed their last.

St. Pius V. having died some time before Francis reached Rome, Cardinal Hugo Buoncompagno had been raised to the See of Peter, under the title of Gregory XIII. He was at Tivoli when the Saint arrived in Rome, and on hearing of his mortal sickness, he expressed the greatest concern, and remarked to those about him that the Church would lose in Father Francis one of her most loyal servants, and one of the strongest pillars which bore up her fabric, and preserved it intact in those troublous times. Troublous times indeed they were, and the Saint much regretted that the state of extreme exhaustion to which he was reduced, rendered it impossible for him to have an interview with His Holiness, in which to give an account of the important affairs with which the King of Spain had entrusted him, with a view to promoting the peace and unity of the Church, and smoothing away a certain friction which had unfortunately arisen between the civil and ecclesiastical powers. God granted in this, as in many other respects, the wishes of the Saint after his death, rather than during his lifetime. Francis therefore contented himself with sending the Rector of the house to beg His Holiness to grant him his blessing and a Plenary Indulgence for the hour of death. "For this," he

said, "is the only thing about which I can think in the state to which I am reduced."

He reached Rome on the 28th of September, and knew that after his arrival, he had only two days to live. Therefore when Cardinal Aldobrando, the Pope's nephew, together with some of the other Cardinals then in Rome, and many of the *corps diplomatique*, entreated to be admitted to his room, he sent down word to ask them to excuse him from granting them even a very short interview, since he felt it to be incumbent upon him to employ his few remaining hours on earth in attending to the affairs of his soul.

Shortly afterwards, at his own request, all the last rites of Holy Church were administered to him. He received them in a manner which surprised and touched all who were present. Not only were his mental faculties as perfect as when he was in health, but he showed a power of concentrating his thoughts, and of applying his mind, which is seldom met with in the case of dying persons. It seemed as if the joy which inundated his soul at the thought that at last his exile was almost ended, and he was about to behold face to face the Beloved of his heart, imparted a temporary strength to his exhausted frame. After receiving, with expressions of tender affection and gratitude, the Sacred Viaticum, he repeated with a clear and distinct voice all the responses in the prayers connected with the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and also with the recommendation of the departing soul.

After this, two or three of the Fathers who were nearest his bed, asked him to express his wishes as to the nomination of the Father who should rule the Society, until a new General could be elected. He refused to do this, following the example of St. Ignatius

and Father Laynez. As his reason for this refusal he said: "I have so many and such weighty matters of which I must give account to God, that I cannot give my mind to such an affair as this." Then he begged pardon, in terms of the utmost humility, for the bad example he imagined himself to have given, and for his shortcomings in regard to the Rules of the Society. The Fathers entreated him to bestow upon them a parting benediction. This he did, after which each in turn approached his bed, and took a final leave of him. There was not a dry eye in the room; every one asked to be remembered by the Saint, when he should have reached Heaven, and he promised that if God should be so gracious as to admit him to that happy place, he would assuredly remember all his brethren of the Society.

He then expressed a wish that the Fathers should withdraw and leave him alone with God. He made an exception in favour of Father Nadal, Father Hernandez, Brother Mark, who had so faithfully tended him in his last illness, and his own brother, Don Thomas Borgia. These four he requested to remain, and not leave him until he should have drawn his last breath, but he asked them not to speak to him for some time. One of the Fathers could not restrain himself from entreating the Saint to permit his likeness to be taken, for the consolation of his spiritual children, to whom his death would cause such extreme grief. Far, however, from granting the petition, Francis roused himself and expressed in such decided terms the annoyance the bare hint of such a proposal caused him, that no one ventured to allude further to it.

Perfect silence now reigned around the dying bed. Francis seemed to make a supreme effort to collect his

mental powers, and raise his heart with all the desires of his soul to Heaven. He accomplished this so perfectly, that he appeared to be in some mysterious manner taken out of himself and united altogether to God. No one could imagine his soul to have already quitted its earthly tenement, for the changing expression of his face showed what was passing within. Ever and anon it was lit up with ineffable joy, corresponding doubtless to the rapture which overflowed his heart. For several hours he remained in this ecstasy, during which he was permitted to behold the glory upon which he was so soon to enter, and to receive an absolute assurance of his eternal salvation.

All at once he recovered complete possession of his senses, and of the power of speech. Brother Mark, who was kneeling close to the bed, asked him whether there was anything he wanted, or which he thought might refresh him. But to this request, and to all similar ones, when repeated at intervals, Francis replied, with touching simplicity: *A Jesus quiero*—"I long for Jesus."

Presently Don Thomas approached him, tears trickling down his cheeks. The Saint consoled him in his habitually sweet and gentle manner. "I am full of joy," he said, "at the thought of quitting this world. For God, in His infinite goodness, has revealed to me that my lot in the next life will not be one to excite compassion. Those who truly love me ought not to weep at my death." After Don Thomas had kissed his hand, and received his blessing, the Saint foretold the destiny which was in store for him. "From the bottom of my heart," he said, "I entreat you to be a faithful minister of the Lord, and to devote yourself to the careful fulfilment of your duties, in

regard to that portion of the Church which He will confide to your care. He has preserved your life in order that you may employ it in ruling over an important diocese. Take heed that you correspond to your sacred vocation.”¹ Don Thomas next requested him to send his blessing to all his brothers, children, and grandchildren. “I will do so with pleasure,” was the answer, “but you must repeat their names to me one by one, for I feel that my memory is failing fast.” Francis then raised his eyes to heaven, and as each name was mentioned he asked of God, for every individual, some special virtue or favour, according to the state of life of the person in question. It need hardly be added, that in no case did these petitions remain unanswered, but every one received, in due time, exactly what the Saint had asked on his or her behalf. In regard to some few out of the number, who were at the time in circumstances of peculiar danger, difficulty, trial, or temptation, Francis further dictated to Don Thomas advice as to the conduct they ought to pursue, begging him to transmit these instructions to the persons concerned. Having thus fulfilled the duties of charity in regard to his near relatives, the Saint, whose memory appeared to have returned to him, remembered his old servants and former retainers, also all those who had so carefully tended and watched over him during his last illness. His grateful and affectionate heart prompted him to mention their names to Don Thomas, begging him to see that they should never want, and to make them all some little present, as he had himself nothing to give them.

¹ Don Thomas was, contrary to all expectation on his part, subsequently elected Bishop of Malaga, and afterwards Archbishop of Saragossa.

After this conversation with his brother, the Saint spoke no more of earthly things. He lay, for the most part, perfectly still, breathing forth, from time to time, the adorable name of Jesus, in accents of the tenderest affection. Of all the hymns of the Church, the beautiful one written by St. Bernard, *Jesu dulcis memoria*, had always been a special favourite with him. He now repeated at intervals one line or another of it. Now and again he was heard to whisper :

Expertus potest credere
Quid sit Jesum diligere.

As the evening of the 30th of September drew on, he lost the power of speech, and it became evident that the end could not be far off. His biographers tell us that he then entered on his agony, but a word like this seems scarcely applicable to a scene in which there was nothing that could be termed a struggle, nothing painful, repulsive, or distressing. The Saint lay perfectly still, and so beautiful was the expression which lit up his countenance, that the desire to possess a sketch of him again took hold of Don Thomas. Francis' eyes were open, and it was evident that his mind never wandered, even for a moment. It was not only the expression of his face that was so attractive during his last hours. Strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that he had regained, to a certain extent, his physical beauty. The extreme delicacy of his complexion had returned, since he had travelled in a shaded litter, instead of being exposed to wind and rain, as had been his wont, without even the protection of an umbrella. The extreme emaciation to which he had reduced himself, had moreover disappeared. Since the fever which attacked him on the 2nd of February had left him, his illness had been a gradual

decline of strength, without any more marked ailment. Every one knows that a malady of this nature often leaves its victims the power of partaking freely of nourishment, almost up to the very last. It had been thus with St. Francis, and the classic outline of his finely-cut features, as he lay on the pillow, completed the picture which his brother may be pardoned for desiring to perpetuate. With this view he stealthily introduced an artist into the chamber of death, who concealed himself behind two of the Fathers. These latter remained standing in order to enable the painter to obtain a view of his proposed subject, by looking between them. Scarcely had the first stroke been drawn, when the Saint became fully aware of what was going on. Unable as he was to speak, he raised his hand to forbid the distasteful proceeding, with an imperative gesture which was habitual to him, on occasions when it behoved him to command. Then, as if dreading lest even this should not suffice to put down his brother's pertinacity, he summoned up his little remaining strength, and to the utter amazement of all who were in the room, turned over on to his other side. By this supreme effort he rendered the continuation of the portrait impossible, and even Don Thomas now felt that his project must be abandoned. He therefore made a sign to the artist, who at once quitted the room.¹

¹ This incident affords a proof of the force of the Saint's will, which could thus assert itself, even in the hour of death, and increases the admiration we cannot but feel for the perfection with which he broke that will. During the whole of his religious life not one single instance can be found in which he swerved from the straight line of holy obedience. The constant struggle with self which this implies, in a man of Francis' naturally masterful and imperious character, probably helped to undermine his health, and thus shorten his life. "In breaking his will, he broke himself," as one of his biographers expresses it.

The Saint remained in the calm expectation of the happy moment when he should receive his crown. His possession of his mental faculties continued to be, up to the very last, as complete as when he was in his usual health. From time to time he drew a deep sigh, as if longing to depart. It was almost impossible to perceive which of these peaceful sighs was his last, or to mark the exact moment when he ceased to breathe, and departed from this miserable exile in order to enter upon the endless bliss of Paradise. He rendered up his soul to his Creator during the night between the last day of September and the first of October, a few minutes after midnight. His death occurred in the year 1572, so that he was within exactly twenty-eight days of completing his sixty-second year, having been born on the 28th of October, 1510.

Scarcely had he breathed his last, when all the Fathers belonging to the Professed House, actuated by one common impulse, fell on their knees in order to invoke him. Thus, in the midst of their deep grief, they proved how profound was their veneration for their beloved General, whom they justly regarded as a Saint. Don Thomas wept profusely, and only restrained his tears in order to address petitions to him whom he had for many years regarded as his spiritual father when on earth, and whom he desired to take henceforth for his patron in Heaven and his intercessor with God.

He had subsequently the indiscretion to approach the body of his deceased brother, in order to examine it, and see for himself the various marks left on almost every part of it, by the austerities and mortifications of the Saint. But when he attempted to unfasten the cassock in which the corpse had been clothed, his hand became paralyzed, and he found himself totally

unable to accomplish his purpose. Three times he repeated the effort, and each time with the same result, so that at last he abandoned it altogether. Whether the extreme modesty and purity for which the Saint had been remarkable throughout the whole of his life, still clung as it were to his mortal remains, in order to prevent them from being exposed to curious looks and unnecessary inspection, it is impossible to tell. Some writers incline rather to the opinion that, by means of this miraculous manifestation, God intended to signify the honour and respect which it was His will that men should pay, as long as time should endure, to the earthly tenement which had been the habitation of one of His most eminent servants. Be this as it may, the truth of the singular fact is beyond a doubt. Don Thomas himself, at a later period, when he had been raised to the archiepiscopal see of Saragossa, wrote a minute account of the miracle, in the course of a long history he compiled of the virtues of St. Francis, and the wonders worked by him. During the process of his beatification and canonization, this history was subjected to a searching examination, and was found to be in complete harmony with the depositions of all the other witnesses.

The obsequies of St. Francis Borgia were celebrated on the 1st of October, his mortal remains being interred in the church belonging to the Professed House of the Society. He was laid to rest beside his two predecessors in the office of General, namely, St. Ignatius and Father Laynez. Since he died of no infectious disease, it seems almost incredible that he should have been buried within twenty-four hours of his decease. Yet there is no room to misunderstand the plain and straightforward words which tell us that "the same

day, the 1st of October, they laid in the earth the corpse of St. Francis Borgia."¹

As far as can be gathered, the reason for this hasty burial is to be found in the extreme wish felt by the Fathers of the Professed House to get the funeral over as speedily as possible, because they well knew, that if the tidings of what was going forward should be bruited abroad, the crowds who would flock into the church, in order to do honour to the Saint, and also to gratify their own curiosity, would be extremely difficult to manage. Strange to say, they even seem to have indulged the hope that the fact of his death might remain concealed until the day was ended. Yet any one who knows the world is aware that it is extremely difficult to keep any matter secret, in which a multitude of persons take a deep interest. It is almost needless to say that some one or other, in one way or another, learnt what had happened. Mercury has wings, and in an incredibly brief space of time one half of the city of Rome seemed to be deserted. Immense indeed was the number of people of both sexes, and of every rank and age, which filled the streets leading to the Jesuit Church. The entire population appeared to be flocking thither, in the hope of gazing upon the sacred remains, which were regarded with a veneration proportioned to the rigour with which the Saint was known to have chastised his body during his lifetime. Cardinals, prelates, and noblemen of the highest rank stooped to kiss those feet, which had left such glorious footprints, and worn themselves out in the service of the Holy See. The respect thus shown to the Saint, did him all the more honour, because those who paid it

¹ The original runs as follows: "El mismo dia primero de Octubre dieron à la tierra el cadaver del Santo Borja." (Cien-Fuegos, lib. v. p. 464.)

had themselves been witnesses of the actions which rendered him worthy of it, and of the signal services he had performed in the cause of the Church. High-born ladies mingled in large numbers with the eager throng, and after kissing the Saint's feet, touched his hands with their medals and rosaries. All who were present conducted themselves in a most exemplary manner, awed perhaps into silence by the beautiful, calm expression which still rested on the marble features of their beloved Saint, who had, when alive, commanded their respect as well as gained their affection. It was universally remarked that the body of the Saint, after death, emitted a perfume surpassing in sweetness any known on earth.

Except the sound of many feet, coming and going, there was nothing to break the quiet which reigned inside the church. Those who wept, strove to weep silently, and it was not until they had gained the outside of the building, that they gave full vent to their feelings, and free expression to the words which craved for utterance. One great chorus of praise went up to Heaven, like a piece of mighty music. Every individual in the crowd had something to say in praise of the departed, whom some termed the Blessed Father Francis, while the larger number spoke of him unhesitatingly as St. Francis Borgia. Let us remember, moreover, that this enthusiastic assemblage was for the most part composed, not of his own countrymen, but of Italians, and this circumstance seems to bear unequivocal testimony to the fact we have mentioned earlier in these pages, namely that, loving all nations, St. Francis Borgia was beloved by all.

His body reposed in the church attached to the Professed House, receiving continual honour from the

faithful, until the 23rd February, 1617, when it was removed, as we shall see presently, to the Professed House of the Society in Madrid. It was there placed in a beautiful chapel, arranged expressly for its reception, and was the object of piety and devotion to both high and low. Upon the walls of this chapel used to be seen numerous pictures which bore testimony alike to the faith of those who placed them there, and to the power of St. Francis' intercession with God. Many splendid lamps, some made of silver and some of gold, are kept burning day and night before his shrine; these are offerings intended to express the gratitude of Princes, both of Church and State. Nay more, many a crowned head has bent in lowly supplication before the remains of him whose life was devoted to penance and mortification. Kings and Queens, as well as their subjects, have had their hearts filled with gratitude to St. Francis, and have exclaimed, as they quitted his tomb, *Mirabilis Deus in sanctis ejus !*

The city of Madrid, as well as the Court of Spain, had hitherto regarded St. Isidore as their special protector. Both now agreed to add to his name that of St. Francis Borgia. It is a singular thing that the two Saints, so unlike in every respect when on earth, should be thus joined together. God doubtless thereby designed to teach the great ones of this world to despise earthly honours, by considering to what a height of glory He was pleased to raise a humble son of toil, while they at the same time learn how good a use they may make of their riches by meditating on the example of the Duke of Gandia, who became poor for the love of Jesus crucified.

CHAPTER XXI.

POSTHUMOUS MIRACLES AND CANONIZATION.

POSTHUMOUS miracles wrought by the saints are, as a rule, very characteristic. With St. Francis Borgia this was eminently the case. No one who has read his Life can have failed to remark that, even before he dedicated himself in any special manner to the service of God, he was remarkable for extreme tenderness to the sick. Soon after his marriage we find him visiting the hospitals, and sending from his own table delicacies suited to tempt the palate of their suffering inmates. Grace completed the work which nature had begun. Until the close of his life he was everywhere known for the sympathetic kindness and tender charity he showed the sick. If any one made a remark upon this subject in his presence, he used to reply: "It would be strange indeed if I, who have had so much ill-health during my life, could not feel for those who are called upon to suffer in a similar manner." There is much truth in this, for, as a writer of our own day has well remarked: "It is not easy for those who have always enjoyed robust health to understand how heavy a cross is a long-continued sickness. It is not merely the physical pain, though this is often very hard to bear. It is the discomfort, the weariness, the languor, the depression that accompany sickness;

it is the restlessness, the inability to find repose, the loneliness of the long hours." All this St. Francis had experienced, not once, but many times, and hence arose, in part at least, his intense capacity for sympathy while he dwelt on earth. Well might he have adopted as his own the words of the Apostle: "Who is weak, and I am not weak?"¹

As the natural result of what has just been said, the greater part of his posthumous miracles were performed in order to cure the sick. The means employed were indeed various, when the end was identical. It is no easy task to make a selection, so large is the number which has been recorded for us. But we shall endeavour to relate those which were brought most prominently forward during the process of his canonization, as well as some others belonging to a more recent date.

There lived in Rome a young lady, Apollonia Cavalli by name. She was very pious, and showed much zeal in the service of God. Unfortunately her zeal lacked discretion. She was, moreover, prone to lean upon her own judgment, instead of asking advice from her confessor. Filled with an ardent desire to have some share in the sufferings and Cross of our Lord, on Good Friday, 1652, she caused a bar of iron to be heated red-hot, and applied it to her left breast. A large wound was thus formed, but her thirst for suffering was not slaked. Not content with the pain caused by the wound, she irritated it by the application of cantharides powder. She now had acute tortures to endure, and what was at first merely a large wound developed into a deep-seated ulcer. Yet Apollonia's courage never failed for a moment. For five years she

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 29.

bore in silence, with heroic patience, the pain she had brought upon herself, merely washing the ulcer several times a day. But the time came when concealment became impossible, so terrible was the effluvium emitted by the sore. She then told her pitiful tale to her mother, who called in the most skilful surgeons to be found in Rome. They at once declared that their skill was of no avail, and that all that they could do was to soothe their patient's pathway to the grave. They gave her various ointments, and advised her to have recourse to sleeping-draughts, in order that she might obtain some little rest at night, holding out not the slightest hope of cure, as there was every probability that mortification would ultimately set in.

A day or two after this, Apollonia, who, in spite of her suffering state, by dint of great efforts, still struggled to church, went to her confessor, Father Tartalini. When he had heard her story, he immediately said, "The best thing you can do is to apply to Father Nicholas Zucchi." Father Zucchi was a Jesuit, a man of marvellous prudence, whose advice was much sought after and who was held in high esteem throughout Rome. She found him in his confessional, and as soon as he had listened to what she had to say, a secret inspiration told him that St. Francis Borgia would cure her. He gave her a little picture of the Saint which he happened to have in his Breviary, and went into the house to fetch a small relic of him. He gave this also to Apollonia, exhorting her to have much faith, and to fear nothing. She went straight home, shut herself into her own room, and kneeling down with many tears she besought the Saint to have mercy on her. She was immediately conscious of a diminution of pain, when she applied the picture, and also the relic, to the

wound. That night she fell into a natural and peaceful slumber, during which St. Francis appeared to her, clothed in immortal beauty and radiant with heavenly glory. Stretching out his hand, he gently touched the wound, saying, "Go to Father Zucchi, my child, and tell him you are perfectly cured." When she awoke, she found that the ulcer had closed, the pain had altogether disappeared, and nothing remained but a large scar. In the course of three days this also vanished, the flesh which had been destroyed grew again, and Apollonia found herself perfectly sound and healthy in every part.

She had learnt to her cost the folly and uselessness of self-imposed penance. Feeling that it is necessary to seek the advice of prudent counsellors, and to act as they direct, she consulted Father Zucchi as to her wish of entering the Carmelite Convent of the strictest observance, which is situated on Monte Rotondo, not far from Rome. He approved of her desire, yet one great difficulty remained in her path. She had not the means requisite for her dowry. But St. Francis Borgia had not forgotten his practice of doing nothing by halves. In a most unexpected manner, she received in a short time from a wealthy lady, who desired to remain unknown, exactly the sum she needed.

She took at her own earnest request, the name of Sister Mary Deodata. Seeing that her wish to lead a life of penance was simple and sincere, God mercifully corrected her first misguided attempts, and led her to enter an Order of penance, where she made rapid progress in sanctity. Ten years later she was seized with an illness which brought her to the gates of the grave. The confessor of the convent felt himself impelled to anoint her with oil from the lamp which

burnt before the altar of St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi. She quickly recovered, and being thus the subject of a second miracle, which she was convinced she owed, no less than her first cure, to St. Francis Borgia, she made a formal deposition to this effect attested by witnesses. The fame of the miracles rapidly spread, and did much to forward the canonization of the great Saint who performed them.

Another miracle which had a great effect was worked in favour of the Duchess of Uzeda, who was well known in Court circles at Madrid. For several days she suffered the pains of childbirth in their cruellest shape, and the protracted tortures she endured reduced her to a state of such excessive weakness, that the doctors gave her over, and said there was no hope of saving either mother or child. Several relics had been applied to her without producing the slightest effect. At length a pious Religious, of what Order we are not told, who had a special devotion to St. Francis Borgia, heard that the Duchess of Uzeda lay dying. He went at once to her palace, and being admitted into the sick-room, he requested that all other relics might be removed. Then, kneeling down in the midst of the chamber, he proclaimed aloud that God intended that day to honour His servant. After praying for a brief space to St. Francis, he stepped up to the bed, and laid the relic on the breast of the sufferer, directing her to invoke him three times with faith and confidence. As she pronounced his name for the third time she was delivered of a little girl without the slightest pain, regaining at the same time her usual health and strength.

This unexpected restoration of their beloved mistress caused great joy to the ducal household. But their

rejoicing was not a little damped by the pitiable state of the newly-born infant. It was terribly discoloured, and appeared absolutely lifeless. When this was told to the Religious, he returned to the sick-room. Removing the relic from the mother, he laid it on the head of the child. Then he exhorted all present to have confidence in the Saint. "As to myself," he said, "I feel assured that having already performed so signal a miracle, he is both able and willing to work another." At the same moment the infant testified by its lusty cries that it was fully restored to life. The Marquess of Villasor, the father of the Duchess, was in the room at the time. He burst into tears of joy and wonder, exclaiming, "A miracle, a miracle!" All present echoed his words, and uniting with him, gave solemn thanks to God for the marvels they had witnessed.

The next day happened to be the first Sunday in Lent. The Religious who had brought the relic was a great preacher. His name was Father Peter Espijo, and he had been appointed to fill the pulpit of the Cathedral on that particular Sunday. The Court was present, and he took for the subject of his discourse the double miracle which had just been worked. As was to be expected, it greatly increased the devotion to St. Francis Borgia. In the afternoon of the same day, the baby who owed her life to him was baptized with all possible pomp and ceremonial. She had by this time become remarkably pretty, and every one admired her sweet delicate little face. She received the name of Frances, as a mark of gratitude to St. Francis, and grew up to be as good as she was beautiful.

Numerous miracles of a similar nature might be related. We will, however, give only one more of this kind. Queen Margaret, wife of King Philip III. of

Spain, was attacked by a severe fever soon after she had given birth to a son and heir. In her weakened condition, the fever soon reduced her to such an extremity, that the doctors in attendance announced to her husband that they had no hope of saving his wife. He went without delay to her bedside, and gently inquired whether she would not like to see her confessor. "You all consider me to be dying," she replied, "but I know what will cure me, although the doctors cannot do so." She had always been extremely pious, and cherished a special devotion to St. Francis Borgia. She now requested that a relic which she possessed might be brought to her. When this had been done, she took the reliquary into her hands, and recommended herself to the Saint with filial confidence, beseeching him to cure her, by commanding the fever to leave her in the name of God. She had frequently seen him work similar cures, during his lifetime. Her prayer was heard and answered. The fever left her in the course of a few hours, and never returned. Her perfect restoration to health filled Madrid with joy, and being at once thus publicly known, greatly increased the devotion to St. Francis.

We will now give one or two examples of a different nature. In the Convent of St. Peter, situated outside Toledo, there was a novice, who after she had been in the house a few months, fell a victim to a distressing cutaneous disorder. At first white patches appeared upon her skin. These gradually spread until she was covered from head to foot with scurf. Sores broke out, moreover, here and there upon her body, and she suffered distressing pains in her limbs, so that the doctor at last pronounced her to be attacked by a species of leprosy. "Yet the beauty of her character,

the amiability of her temper, and her many and great virtues, had so endeared her to her fellow-Religious, that in spite of her terrible disfigurement and repulsive appearance, they greatly desired her restoration to health, in order that they might keep her among them. But they knew not how to obtain it, since all ordinary means had been tried in vain, and even some which were not ordinary. One day a happy thought occurred to Mother Joanna of Jesus and Mary, who was at that time Mistress of Novices. She carried to the afflicted girl a picture she possessed of St. Francis Borgia, bearing his autograph at the foot. The invalid, delighted at this fresh hope, knelt down and venerated the picture. She then kissed it, and laid it by turns on her head, breast, and sides. Quite suddenly she found herself free from all her ailments. The sores closed, the leprous affection disappeared, the grievous pains in her side afflicted her no more. As the result of this miracle, there grew up, not only in the novice who was the object of it, but in the whole community, a great devotion to St. Francis Borgia. A solemn novena was made in his honour, as an expression of gratitude.”¹

A nun who belonged to the Benedictine Convent at Castelnuovo, not very far from Loretto, had for two or three years been completely paralyzed. Though scarcely more than twenty years of age, she had so utterly lost the power of motion, that it required the efforts of four persons to change her position. She suffered, moreover, acutely from neuralgia in different parts of her body, and became at last unable to obtain sleep. One night she thought herself dying, but remembered that a short time before, when she was

¹ Sgambata, S.J. c. xxvii. pp. 137, 138.

somewhat better, a Life of St. Francis Borgia had been read to her, and that she had taken him for one of her special protectors. In her extremity she had recourse to him with the utmost confidence, imploring him to obtain from God the restoration of her health. She also solemnly promised, that, if she were cured, she would employ her life in serving God with fidelity, and would strictly keep her vows. She confessed that she had not, in the past, been all that she ought to be, and declared her intention of amendment for the future.

Scarcely were these petitions concluded, when she distinctly heard a voice saying to her, "Get up, Justina, and go down to the choir to say Matins with your Sisters." Full of doubt and amazement she lay still for a few minutes, considering within herself whether she should make the attempt. A second time the voice sounded in her ears, and the accents were more peremptory. "Do you not hear me, Justina," it said. "Get up at once and go down to say Matins, you are completely cured." At the same moment she felt an inward conviction, that the voice was that of the Saint she had invoked. Her pains had entirely disappeared, her limbs were as supple as they had been before her affliction. Without delay she left her bed, dressed herself, and went down to the choir, where the other Religious were assembled. At first they were filled with horror, fancying that she was dead, and that it was her ghost which was appearing to them. When however they learnt the truth from her lips, they were filled with joy. The news spread throughout all the surrounding district, and the Cardinal of Ara Cœli, who was Bishop of the diocese, came to pay a visit to the convent in order to see the nun on whose behalf so great a miracle had been wrought. He had seen

her only a few days before, stretched prostrate in her bed, and he was filled with astonishment at the magnitude of the miracle, and gave glory to God, Who is thus wonderful in His saints. He subsequently sent for the doctors who had attended Justina, and several other persons who had been acquainted with the story of her illness and its cure. He then caused to be drawn up a formal process, which served to promote not a little the beatification of the Saint. As to Justina herself, we must add that she cherished throughout the whole of her life the most fervent gratitude to the Saint. Nor did she rest content with mere feelings alone. She lived to a great age, and all her companions in the convent bore testimony to the increasing fervour and greater sanctity which she displayed after her wonderful cure.

We have mentioned the apparition of St. Francis to Sister Mary Deodata. Her case was by no means a solitary one. It seemed as if God willed that those consoling visits to the sick and sorrowful, in which St. Francis had found one of his chief pleasures while he remained on earth, should continue to form part of his felicity when in Heaven. Many instances are recorded of his having appeared surrounded with glory, and instantaneously cured, by the mere fact of his presence, diseases deemed incurable. Of this number about seven or eight were found, on being subjected to the strictest examination, to be so absolutely authentic, the truth of them being confirmed by witnesses who were entirely above suspicion, so that the most sceptical could not impeach their veracity, or doubt the reality of the miracles to which they gave testimony. The story we are about to relate is remarkable, not only on account of the apparition of the Saint and the

marvellous cure he effected, but of the equally wonderful circumstances connected with his portrait.

A Spanish lady named Isabella Morales, who had never even seen a likeness of him, was afflicted with a cancer. This incurable disease soon brought her near to death, while it rendered the duty of attending upon her almost an impossibility, so terrible was the effluvium it emitted. Isabella had an uncle, who was a priest, and had a great devotion to St. Francis Borgia. One day when he came to see his dying niece, he told her to put her trust in this great Saint, and at the same time gave her a relic of him. She believed what she was told and did as she was desired. She placed the relic on her breast and invoked the Saint with her whole heart. This was all she could do, for she had lost the power of speech, owing to the ravages of the cancer, which was in her mouth and throat. She had not slept for forty days, owing to the agonizing pain she constantly endured, but she now fell into a refreshing slumber, during which the Saint appeared to her, and stroking her face with his slight, delicate fingers, healed her at once.

On awaking she found that she had regained the use of her tongue, and was besides completely cured. She enlarged with delight upon the beauty of the Saint, whose features had remained so deeply impressed upon her imagination that she said she would have his portrait painted from her description. A few days later she sent for an artist, and told him her story. He was a man of great piety, who had an intense love for the supernatural, and at once believed what she related to him. He said it would give him much pleasure to work at the likeness under her direction, but added, that as the success of the undertaking must

come from God alone, he must beg to be allowed to make a novena to St. Francis Borgia before commencing the proposed picture. Isabella consented willingly, and on the ninth day, after receiving Holy Communion, he proceeded to her house.

Can we wonder, as we read these details, that religious art was in the ages of faith so very different from what it is in our own day, when Protestantism has dealt it its death-blow?

The artist followed with punctilious exactitude the details given him. Scarcely had he completed the sketch of the face, when Isabella sprang from her seat, delighted with the perfect likeness she beheld upon the canvas. "There is my dear St. Francis," she exclaimed, "there is the Saint who cured me! Not another line shall be added to the portrait." The painter felt, as was natural, no small amount of annoyance at being thus unexpectedly forbidden to proceed with his work. He was a man of resolution, and determined not to be baffled. Therefore he sought ways and means of attaining his end. After the lapse of a few days, he called upon Isabella and asked her to allow him to take the sketch home with him, alleging as the reason for his request, that he was anxious to show it to several of his friends.

This was, as the reader will already have guessed, only a flimsy pretext. No sooner had he closed the door of his studio upon the portrait and placed it upon an easel, than he took palette and brushes in hand and set to work to finish it. But he could not get on. He changed his brushes several times, then he fancied his colours were at fault, and set his palette anew. After long and patient endeavours on his part no progress was made, the sketch remained a sketch still. Baffled and

disappointed, he renewed his efforts on the morrow, and for several days after that, but with no better success. Clearly perceiving at length that the sketch was in reality the work of a master, in whose hand he had been a mere tool, he ceased all his attempts to improve it, and took it back to Isabella Morales, in whose house it remained. We are told that many persons were brought to repent of their sins, and to enter the service of God, by the mere sight of it.

To another among the portraits of St. Francis Borgia, is attached a story too remarkable and curious to be passed over here, though it has nothing to do with healing the sick. It is a further instance of that gift of prophecy, in regard to the exercise of which several illustrations have been already given.

A Spanish gentleman named Don Sebastian de Moxisca bought an estate in New Granada, and settled there with all his family and household. As he was very pious he caused a small chapel or oratory to be erected in his grounds, and placed there a portrait of St. Francis Borgia, which he had had for some time in his possession and greatly valued, as he cherished a special devotion to the Saint. This devotion he took pains to spread, not only among his children and servants, but among the labourers on his estate, and, indeed, the whole population.

One day his children came hurrying to tell him that although the chapel was extremely dry, and the portrait was in a part of it where no moisture could possibly penetrate, large drops like perspiration incessantly exuded from the face and hands of the Saint. The house steward now made his appearance, and not only confirmed the children's story, but added that as often as he wiped off this miraculous sweat it immediately

commenced to flow again in still greater profusion. Don Sebastian lost no time in hastening to the chapel, where it was easy to convince himself of the truth of the wonderful story he had just heard. Beads of perspiration continued to appear in this manner for twenty-four days, although the position of the picture was frequently changed, and the back of the canvas on which it was painted remained as dry as it had ever been. The flow of moisture was so profuse, that although the face and hands were constantly wiped with linen cloths, the floor became extremely damp, and the linen cloths were literally saturated. As a matter of course they were carefully preserved, and at a subsequent period, numerous miracles were worked by their means.

Many learned priests and experienced Religious belonging to various Orders witnessed the miraculous sweat during the four-and-twenty days of its duration, as well as a large number of the laity. At the close of this period, the Archbishop of the diocese, Don Julian of Cortaçar, convoked his Chapter, and summoned to assist at it the Superiors of all the religious houses in the archdiocese. Thus the secular clergy, as well as the Augustinians, the Dominicans, the Franciscans, and the Jesuits, all united in declaring the picture to be miraculous, and assented that the proofs of this could not be plainer or more incontestable. A document to this effect was drawn up in due form, ready for transmission to Europe. Before, however, the time for despatching it arrived, the portrait, which had already established its claim to be miraculous, developed fresh and equally wonderful powers.

The face of the Saint was frequently seen to change colour, being sometimes quite pale and then again

flushing rosy red. Furthermore, a judge who came from a neighbouring city, and a Franciscan Father who had been among the number of those summoned by the Archbishop to assist at the drawing up of the process, chanced to be kneeling one day side by side in prayer before the picture. Simultaneously they noticed that the Saint moved his right hand, and appeared desirous of offering to them the crucifix he held in his fingers. They gazed in silence at each other, struck dumb with surprise. The wonder they had been the first to remark was subsequently witnessed by many persons, but not by all who came to pray before the portrait. The strangest part of the story is that, amongst all those who witnessed the movement of the hand there was not one whom some calamity did not shortly befall, who had not some heavy cross to bear, or else was soon summoned to quit this world.

These wonderful occurrences were much talked about, and could not fail to reach the ears of Don John Borgia, grandson of the Saint. He at that time held the office of Viceroy of the province of New Granada, and was also Commander-in-chief of the troops stationed there. He hastened to the oratory and knelt before the picture. Almost immediately St. Francis held the crucifix out to him, and when at length he left the chapel Don John declared to every one that his end was near at hand, and that it behoved him to make due preparation for it. Though he was in robust health at the time, he made a retreat without delay. After this he arranged all his worldly affairs in view of his decease, and then pursued the duties of his calling as he had always been wont to do. A week or two later, whilst still in the apparent enjoyment of perfect health, he suddenly expired, to the astonishment, not only of his family and

friends, but of the doctors who, after a careful examination of his body, could find no possible trace of disease, or of anything, in fact, which might, however remotely, have been the cause of his death.

These marvels induced the entire population of the province to follow the advice of the Archbishop and all the clergy, and place themselves under the special protection of St. Francis Borgia. Their devotion was rewarded by gifts and graces of no mean order.

“Such miracles, and many more, having been worked by means of the pictures and relics of the Saint, after his departure to a better life, and a great and general veneration having been thus excited in regard to him, the Fathers of the Society took it for a sign that God willed that His servant’s sanctity should be made known to all the world, that it should be, so to speak, placed upon a magnificent golden candlestick in the midst of His Holy Church. For, as the Angelic Doctor St. Thomas remarks, God does not work miracles by the intercession of any one after his death, except to prove his sanctity, and to make known His own sovereign desire, that the virtues of the departed should be regarded as models for the imitation of the children of the Church.”¹

In accordance, therefore, with the will of God which was manifested in so evident a manner, the Fathers petitioned the Papal Nuncio in Spain, Mgr. (afterwards Cardinal) Decio Caraffa, to direct an inquiry to be made into the virtues and miracles of the Servant of God, to furnish materials to be laid before the Head of the Church with a view to his canonization. Five tribunals were accordingly constituted, in Valencia, Madrid, Barcelona, Saragossa, and Recanati. Before

¹ Cepari, S.J., p. 228.

these tribunals a great multitude of witnesses, including personages of noble birth and high position, gave evidence to the merits of the Saint, and the wonders wrought through his instrumentality. Amongst those who bore testimony was the venerable Father Ribadeneira, who confirmed by oath all that he had already written in his *Life of Francis Borgia*. In the year 1615, these processes were carried to Rome, and laid by the Spanish Ambassador before His Holiness Paul V., together with letters from Philip III., King of Spain, from several grandees of his Court, Prelates and Chapters, cities and universities of the realm, entreating him to raise to the altars of the Church this illustrious Servant of God. The Pope committed the Cause to the Congregation of Sacred Rites; and on the 28th August of the same year, the Cardinals employed in the examination issued a decree attesting the orthodoxy of his teaching, the sanctity of his life, the authenticity of his miracles, and granting permission to proceed with the process of canonization. This decision was approved by the Holy Father, who immediately appointed three Apostolic Commissaries to carry on the Cause in Spain.

Meanwhile the relics of the Saint were translated from the ordinary burial-place of the Generals of the Society in Rome, and were carried to the Professed House, in the sacristy of which they were exposed in a gilded shrine for three days to the veneration of the faithful. On February 23, 1617, they were deposited in the Church of the Gesù, in the spot where the remains of St. Francis Xavier now repose. The King of Spain sent two thousand ducats to provide a golden balustrade to protect the niche wherein the coffin was placed, and four lamps were hung before it. But both

Philip III. and all his subjects, above all the numerous descendants and relatives of Francis Borgia, felt that the most fitting resting-place for the remains of the Saint was in his native country, of which he was so brilliant an ornament. His grandson, the Duke of Lerma, therefore earnestly entreated permission first from the Supreme Pontiff, and then from the Father General of the Society, for the removal of the sacred treasure to Madrid, promising that were his request granted, he would cause a new Professed House of the Society to be built at his expense in Madrid, besides a church, to be dedicated to the Blessed Francis Borgia. This permission was given, the charge of the sacred relics being confided to Cardinals Borgia and Zappata, with instructions to convey them to Spain. These Cardinals, proud to be honoured with such a commission, displayed the utmost zeal in acquitting themselves of it. They kept guard over the remains of the Saint with a vigilance equal to that which Francis himself had evinced when escorting the corpse of the Empress Isabella from Toledo to its final resting-place in Granada. They did even more than this. In every place where a halt was made, they caused it to be placed in the church, and commanded that the greatest honours should be paid to the body of the Saint.

When at length Madrid was reached, it was deposited first of all in the church attached to the Convent of the Incarnation, in order that the King and the whole Court might have an opportunity of venerating it in private. A few days later it was carried to the Church of St. Dominic, to which the public were admitted, before it was finally deposited in the chapel of the Professed House, in a niche in the wall on the Gospel side of the altar.

There it remained for about sixty years, until in 1680 it was removed to the place prepared for its reception in the splendid church erected according to his promise by the Duke of Lerma, in honour of his glorious ancestor. This last translation was attended with the utmost magnificence. A long procession, formed mainly of personages of high rank, accompanied the remains with every demonstration of affectionate veneration. Even greater honour was shown to them in Madrid than had been the case in Rome. It was not long before a considerable number of *ex votos* were to be seen beside the shrine of the Saint, bearing testimony to the gratitude of those who had invoked him with confidence and had received benefits through his intercession.

On the day of the removal of the body of the Saint from the Church of the Gesù in Rome, the Fathers of the Society and other ecclesiastics went thither in solemn procession, and whilst the *Te Deum* was sung, the coffin was opened for the identification of the relics, and for the abstraction of a portion of them (one arm of the Saint) which was to be preserved in the church. As soon as the lid was lifted off, a delicious perfume diffused itself around; the same aromatic fragrance was also perceived by Philip III. when, on the arrival of the body in Spain, he joyously went to venerate it in the Church of the Incarnation, where it was left for a few days. Many other persons who approached the coffin bore a similar testimony.

When the examination made by the special Congregation in Spain was concluded, and the result had been submitted to the usual scrutiny in Rome, in 1623 the verdict was given that the miracles and sanctity of Francis having been fully established, he was worthy

of beatification. On the 31st August of the following year a decree to this effect was passed in full Consistory by the Congregation of Sacred Rites, and ratified by Urban VIII., who then occupied the Chair of Peter. Permission was also given to the Fathers of the Society, and all ecclesiastics throughout the whole Church, to say the Office and Mass of the Saint, the day fixed for his commemoration being the 1st October, the anniversary of his passage from earth to the joys that awaited him in Heaven. The Bull of Beatification was published on the 24th November.

The tidings of this auspicious event were received with great rejoicings in Spain, and all other countries where Francis' name was held in veneration. It was celebrated with pomp and magnificence in all the European capitals, but principally in Madrid, in which city the solemnities organized in thanksgiving for the long-desired boon lasted eight days. All the nobles and ecclesiastics of high rank desired to take part in them, and walk in the triumphal procession, when the shrine containing the relics of the Saint was carried from the Church to the Professed House of the Jesuits. The stand upon which the shrine rested was made of silver; on the four corners were statuettes of St. Ignatius, St. Francis Xavier, St. Aloysius Gonzaga, and St. Stanislaus Kostka. Forty-six of the highest lords of the land, all of them grandsons or great-grandsons of the Saint, bore this in turn upon their shoulders, or supported the canopy, which was made of cloth of gold; while other noblemen and gentlemen deemed it an honour to walk by the side, holding the silken cords and coloured streamers wherewith the shrine was decorated. All the officials of the Court, and the municipal authorities wearing their robes of office, were

present, besides a vast concourse of citizens. On the Sunday within the octave, the procession wended its way to the Convent of the Poor Clares, in accordance with the wish expressed by the Princess Margaret of Austria, who was one of the Sisters, and by the Abbess, Sister Juana de la Cruz, niece to St. Francis, and inheritor of the spirit as well as of the name of the first saintly Abbess of the convent. The nuns were overjoyed to receive within the precincts of their house the mortal remains of one who during his lifetime had shown them so much affection; in testimony of the spiritual consolation this visit afforded them, the Princess presented to the church two wax tapers and a large cross of silver; the Abbess the figures of four angels of most beautiful and skilful workmanship.

It remained for Pope Clement X. to complete what his predecessors had commenced. This he did by proclaiming the canonization of St. Francis Borgia on April 12, 1671, to the great joy of all Christendom. The festival of this glorious Saint was observed in all the Jesuit churches of Rome, Paris, Lisbon, and Madrid with surpassing splendour. In Madrid more especially so majestic, and withal so full of devout solemnity, were the celebrations in his honour, that men were heard to declare that the like had never been witnessed before, and that from their beauty and grandeur the world might learn how exceeding great must be the glory wherewith the Most High had crowned His faithful servant in the courts of Heaven.

The following words were added to the Roman Martyrology for the 1st of October: "On this day the feast is kept, in Rome, of St. Francis Borgia, General of the Society of Jesus, a Saint illustrious alike for the austerity of his life, his marvellous gift of prayer, his

renunciation of the most brilliant worldly position, and his refusal to accept the loftiest ecclesiastical dignities.”¹

“There was,” as Cardinal Cien-Fuegos tells us, “scarcely a Catholic country in the whole world which the tidings did not reach, causing universal gladness, so that it seemed as if the skies were raining down joy upon the souls of the faithful.” Yet where the brightest light is, there is also the darkest shadow. Nothing can be perfect here on earth, and in this magnificent harmony of joy and praise there was not lacking a jarring and discordant note. The one melancholy exception deserves to be recorded, because it proves how jealous God is of the honour of His Saints, and how deeply He resents any affront offered to those whom He loves.

In one of the more remote cities of Spain, the name of which has not been handed down to us, a number of the inhabitants were gathered together. They had just received intelligence of the recent canonization of St. Francis Borgia, whose fame had reached them long since, and whose life was well known to them. With heartfelt pleasure they discussed the event, enlarged upon the virtues and miraculous powers of the Saint, and expressed their sincere devotion to him. An unhappy heretic, of German nationality, who had been hanging on the outskirts of the crowd, now stepped suddenly forward, exclaiming with sacrilegious audacity: “Upon my word, you seem to make very sure that this famous Duke of Gandia is in Heaven, in spite of all his absurd superstitions and imaginary miracles! Rather than believe that he is in reality

¹ The festival of St. Francis Borgia was finally fixed on the 10th of October, by Pope Innocent XI., in the year 1683.

gone there, I call upon God to send me down to Hell this very moment, body and soul." Scarcely had these blasphemous words passed his lips, when he was overtaken by the fate of Core, Dathan, and Abiron. "The earth broke asunder under his feet, and opening her mouth, devoured him, the ground closing upon him, so that he perished from among the people."¹ His impious wish was fulfilled in the sight of the awe-stricken and terrified beholders.

In drawing to a close the *Life of St. Francis Borgia*, we cannot but remark that the history is one by which every reader ought to profit. Deeds speak louder than words, and the present volume is full of examples of virtue so varied as to be applicable to every rank and state of life. "For," as Verjus well remarks, "if St. Francis Borgia, when sitting in high places, and discharging duties of the greatest importance, gave to the world an illustrious example of the use which those in elevated positions ought to make of their power and importance, he gave a no less striking instance of the contempt which the truly wise and enlightened among them may show for the best this world has to offer, and of the life that it behoves those to lead who have given up everything for Jesus Christ. He became a perfect Religious, after having been an accomplished courtier, a clever diplomatist, and an able Viceroy. By embracing the religious life, he attracted countless numbers to leave the world and enter Orders the most ancient and the most austere. By the manner of life he led amid the splendour of Courts, he sanctified many whose duties called them to live in that subtle and seductive atmosphere. *Il n'y eut jamais rien de médiocre dans sa conduite.* Never has

¹ Numbers xvii. 31—33.

there existed a more loyal and devoted subject, a braver and more dauntless warrior, a more polished and deferential courtier, a juster judge, a more vigilant and judicious ruler, a lord who was more generous to his vassals, a husband who watched more tenderly over the honour of his wife, a father who superintended with greater solicitude the education and training of his children, a master who was more liberal and thoughtful in regard to his servants. Nor, after he had changed his state of life, was there ever a Religious who was more careful in the observance of his vows, more rigorous in the performance of austerities and mortifications, a more zealous missionary, a priest more faithful to his sacerdotal office, a preacher more entirely filled with the spirit of the Apostles, a Superior more evidently under the guidance and direction of the Holy Ghost. His life teaches us from its commencement until its close that sanctity is within the reach of all, and may be practised in every rank, state, and condition of life."

The readers of this work may well say to themselves, what St. Gregory the Great said in regard to certain holy martyrs, who had despised earthly greatness, in the hope of attaining a high place in Heaven.¹

"These saints, at whose tomb we are standing, trod under foot the world in its most attractive form. There

¹ "Sancti isti, ad quorum tumbam consistimus, florentem mundum mentis despectu calcaverunt. Erat vita longa, salus continua, opulentia in rebus, fecunditas in propagine, tranquillitas in diuturna pace; et tamen cum in ipso floreret, jam in eorum cordibus mundus aruerat. Ecce jam mundus in seipso aruit, et adhuc in cordibus nostris floret. Ubique mors, ubique luctus, ubique desolatio, undique percutimur, undique amaritudinibus replemur; et tamen cœca mente carnalis concupiscentiæ ipsas ejus amaritudines amamus, fugientem sequimur, labenti inhæremus." (S. Gregorii Magni, Homilia xxviii. in die natali SS. Nerei et Achillei.)

lay before them the prospect of a long life, perfect health, abundant riches, a numerous family, undisturbed peace and tranquillity, yet, while its promise was most brilliant they offered it up on the altar of their hearts. Behold indeed they gave up the world, yet we continue to love it. Everywhere there is death, everywhere mourning, everywhere desolation. We are struck with blows, we are filled with bitterness, and yet through the blindness produced by our carnal concupiscence, we cling to the world we find so bitter, we follow it although it flees from us, and strive to grasp it although it perpetually eludes our touch."

LAUS DEO
VIRGINIQUE MATRI.

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