

STORIES OF THE SAINTS

For Children Young and Old

BY
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PREFACE

With the spread of Christ's teaching carried by the far-travelled Apostles, the minds of men and women were touched with a great faith, their thoughts were absorbed with visions of heaven and holy life on earth. Many gave up earthly desires and ways and devoted themselves to meditation on sacred things and to zealous missions and pilgrimages. In thought and feeling they lived in a region of their own, difficult now to conceive in its perfect unworldliness.

Their clear belief in a heaven to which they would surely pass stripped fear from their hearts, gave them a more than human endurance in hardship and persecution, and an unquenchable zeal in carrying their saving faith to distant lands and barbarous peoples.

They suffered torture, accidents of field and flood, with cheerful resolution. They had hard adventures, narrow escapes; they overcame by their undaunted spirit the opposition of men. They saw about themselves guardian angels, and at times seemed to be saved by the outstretched hand of Christ Himself. As a reward for successful sacrifice they saw His gracious Mother smile upon them in hours of meditation.

A great body of history and legend grew up around them. Stories and incidents grouped about the devout men who gave their lives and service to the cause of Christ. Who can say that many of the miraculous happenings related of these devout folk did not happen, as told and often recorded in their own time?

They surely testify to the childlike state of mind of the faithful believers of their day, and to the continuing spirit of faith of the days of the Apostles.

How much we have lost of that simple faith! But whatever our own state, we may rejoice in the lovely legends and see in these stories of the Saints a significance and a lesson, useful and stimulating in our own less believing lives and days.

We can appreciate and approve of the noble trust in God's power, shown by the narrators of these stories. They stretch in unbroken line from the time of Christ Himself down almost to our own day. Their records have been preserved in the hearts and writings of generation after generation; a fact that is a wonderful testimony to the everlasting goodness of the simple human soul. It is and has been ever ready to see and believe the loveliest and best in the words and deeds of the great examples of the spiritual life.

To understand their histories we must become as little children and look upon that wonderful phase of the world with unquestioning eyes; even with the prayer or wish that we may know its spirit and share something of its devotion and faith.

J. S. P.

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CHAPTER I

THE PALACE OF GONDOFORUS

The Apostle Thomas—he that doubted, and was convinced of the very presence of his beloved Master after His death, only when he had with his own hand touched the Wounded Side—was, after the Saviour's ascension, preaching in Caesaria, when Christ one day appeared to him, saying: "The King of the Indies—Gondoforus—purposes to build a palace which shall be more beautiful than any other upon earth, yea, even more rich than that of the ruler of Rome. He sends his provost, Abbanes, to seek out men skilled in building. Do thou go and build this palace."

Thomas answered (ah, Thomas, Thomas, doubting still!): "Oh, my Lord, send me whither Thou wilt, only send me not to the people of India!"

But Christ replied: "Nay, thither must thou go, for am I not here to guard thee, and am I not thy Keeper? Carry the Gospel to the heathen of India, and thereafter shalt thou come to Me by the crown of martyrdom."

So, with Abbanes, the provost, Thomas journeyed, and arrived after many adventures in the kingdom of Gondoforus.

The King received him with kindness, and made known to him the manner of palace he desired. Fair must it be indeed, fashioned of most costly materials. Then into Thomas's hands he confided the store of gold and precious stones with which the dwelling-place of kings was to be ornamented, and after many instructions, cautions, and words expressive of confidence and goodwill, Gondoforus departed for a distant province whither he must journey and where he must long remain.

For two years he was absent; he then returned, thinking to find his palace completed, or if not all complete, yet in such state that he might take pleasure in the sight of it, and picture in his mind how, in the end, it would appear.

At first with dismay, but soon with anger, he learned that of his palace not the least beginning had been made, not one stone had been laid upon another, not one beam hewn. Nor was this all: the treasure which he had left to be spent in its making was gone, all gone, for Thomas had given it, down to the last copper coin, to the sick and the poor, the needy, the hungry, and the distressed. Numberless men had the Apostle converted and baptized in those two years.

"Is this how thou dost carry out my commands, and how thou dost repay my trust?" questioned the King.

"Thus do I carry out the behests of my King, and even so do I fulfil His trust," replied Thomas.

In great wrath, Gondoforus bade his attendants cast Thomas into a dungeon, there to await his pleasure, for he purposed to devise for him, and for Abbanes as well, a death of long and carefully planned agony.

The King's brother, Gad, at this time became sick and died. Gondoforus grieved, for his brother was most dear to him. On the fourth day after Gad's death, as the King sat mourning beside him where he lay in state—suddenly the dead man arose upon his bed and was alive.

The King's joy was profound as he fell upon his brother's neck, but Gad, motioning him aside, said: "The man whom thou dost purpose to put to torture, to slay and to burn, is the friend of God, and the angels of God serve him. Send forthwith to release him, for black had been thy sin hadst thou done aught against him."

He then explained his meaning to the astounded King.

"When I had died, angels came to me and took me to Paradise. There they showed me a palace more wonderful than

any ever seen by mortal eyes. I approached it by a road of noble width bordered with gracious palms; in its centre stretched a limpid water-way whereon floated lotus-blossoms of many colours, and great white birds. Beside this pool wandered souls in bliss, singing heavenly chants, arrayed in garments of the hues of flowers, most delicate.

"When we had approached we mounted by gently gradual steps to the palace. Its walls arose like rosy mist from a terrace flagged with precious tiles. Those walls were more dazzling than alabaster, yea, more pure than the snow of the mountain-tops illumined by the first flush of dawn. And windows there were, some vast and open to the ineffable light of Heaven, and some screened with tracery subtle as tendrils of vines. The walls were crowned with domes iridescent as bubbles that form upon the sea's edge, and minarets lifted themselves into the air, light and slender like darts. Within, the floors were silver, reflecting all things as in a mirror; the walls were gold, wrought by artisans skilled beyond men of the earth. Everywhere gems burned with lustre unspeakable, radiant yet subdued, and fountains flowed cool and sweet to the ear . . .

"But enough, . . . what thou must know, my brother, is even this . . . that the accompanying angels showed me these wonders, saying: ' This is the palace built by Thomas for thy brother, King Gondoforus. He is not worthy to inhabit it, but thou mayest return to earth and buy it from him.'"

Having spoken, Gad hastened to the prison, released Thomas and Abbanes, and clad them in precious vestments.

The King then came, and in contrition fell at Thomas's feet, entreating his pardon, and Thomas said: "They that are rich in the treasure of Heaven have little care for the things of this earth. In the kingdom of Heaven are many mansions like that seen by thy brother, which have been there since the beginning. They that have faith, and they that do charity, may buy them. Thy riches, O King, may get thee such a palace, but they may not follow thee thither."

The King humbly answered "Since it pleases God that this one be mine, mine let it remain, and do thou now, most holy man, build another like unto it for my brother!"

CHAPTER II

ST MARY OF EGYPT

Abbot Zosimus knelt at prayer in the wilderness beyond Jordan. He had come from Palestine to dwell with a certain company of good men whose custom it was to spend the fast time of Lent in the solitude of the desert. He had left his companions twenty days before, when, each going his way, they had dispersed into the wilderness.

With hands upraised to heaven he now prayed earnestly against the pride which had once dwelt in his heart when he had fancied himself walking in the ways of perfection. He was praying for the greater humility which he had been learning of his late companions, when he thought he saw out of the corner of his eye something stirring, something that seemed like a shaggy, hairy animal, and that yet stood on two feet like a human being. He refrained, however, from turning his head, for he knew himself to be alone, as for twenty days he had seen no living thing in the sandy waste, and he believed that what he saw might well be some vision or snare sent by the Devil to tempt him from his meditation.

But the creature, whatever it might be, did not, exorcized by his renewed prayer, disappear, so, summoning his courage, he turned and looked at it fairly. Thereupon it fled, and he pursued. Then he saw that it was in truth a human being, but with skin burned black by exposure to the sun, and with white hair which hung long and heavy like a garment.

He was glad indeed, for he thought he might here have found a hermit, so he cried out: "Most reverend father, fly not from me; stay and grant me thy blessing!"

But still the creature eluded him, and finally, having crossed a dry watercourse which now stretched its stony width between them, it answered, addressing him by name, at which he greatly marvelled.

"Zosimus," said the voice, "wherefore followest thou me? Have mercy and cast thy mantle across to me that I may clothe myself and may then speak with thee unashamed, for I am a woman, and naked."

Quickly Zosimus cast over his cloak to her, and when she was wrapped in it, knelt down on his side of the water-course and begged that she would bless him, for he knew that she must be a holy woman, but she answered:

"It is for thee, my father, to give me benediction, for thou art a priest." Again he wondered that she should know, not only his name, but his office, and he asked the more humbly for her blessing.

So, each kneeling on his side of the dry bed of the stream, they prayed, and as she raised her hands heavenward Zosimus saw that her body was lifted a cubit and a half from the ground. He was in doubt then if she were woman or spirit, and conjured her to tell him of her life and how she had come to her present pass.

"Good father," she replied, "spare me the recital, for were I to recount the events of my life, thou wouldst flee away from me as from a venomous serpent, and thine ears would be made foul by my words."

But Zosimus was not thus to be satisfied, and he prevailed upon her at last to relate her story.

"I was born in Egypt. At the age of twelve I fled from my father's house, and found my way to Alexandria, the tempting and dissolute city, where I became a dancer and played upon musical instruments. And there—alas, my father!—I lived for seventeen years a life of pleasure—and of sin—and of shame.

"It happened one day that as I walked by the edge of the sea, I saw a ship about to set sail. I inquired whither it was bound, and upon being told that it was to bear a company of pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. whither they were going to worship the True Cross, I was seized with a desire to join them. No worthy desire, my father—my wish was but to corrupt them from their purpose, to tempt them, and thus lead them from their sacred goal. I addressed myself to some of the mariners standing on the shore, asking to be taken on the journey. 'But hast thou money to pay for thy passage?' asked one, and I answered, 'Kind sirs, I have nothing wherewith to pay you, save only myself—take me with you and I promise to reward you.' Upon this condition they let me embark.

"Having reached Jerusalem, I found the city in the midst of the celebration of the festival of the Exaltation of the Cross. With the pilgrims I proceeded to the church, moved solely by curiosity, but there, when I tried to enter, an invisible power barred my path. Again and again I sought to push my way over the threshold, and as often the barrier thrust me back.

"Then, of a sudden, the knowledge came to me that it was the blackness of my sins, the shame of my past, which excluded me from the portals of the sanctuary, and dropping on my knees before an image of the Virgin Mary which stood in the entrance of the church, I fell to weeping and beating my breast in penitence and sorrow. Long I knelt in prayer to the Holy Mother, that she intercede with her Son, and let me pass into the church to embrace His True Cross. Faithfully I promised thereafter to lead a life of atonement and chastity, if I might but be granted pardon and grace. When I had prayed, I crept again toward the door, this time upon my knees; lo, the barrier was removed! I entered, and devoutly worshipped at the foot of the Cross.

"Then I heard a voice which said: 'Pass over Jordan; there shalt thou find peace, and be saved.' A man, seeing me, gave me three pence, wherewith I bought three loaves of bread; these I brought with me into the wilderness, and they were my nourishment for many and many years.

"For seventeen years I was still haunted and tempted by remembrance of past days. As I lay upon the hard ground, visions of couches of ease and soft coverings came to my mind; as I ate of my bread, which with the flight of time became hard like the stones, I remembered choice viands to which I had been used; during the torrid noonday heat memories returned of dim shade under vine-draped colonnades, and draughts of cool wines; and as my garments rotted and fell from me and my skin was blackened by the sun, insistent memories assailed me of my former raiment, rich and fine, and of my own vanished beauty. But in the end all these desires fell from me through penance and prayer, and I seemed to live in the midst of a great light which gave me comfort and such spiritual sustenance that for thirty years I have needed no food."

When she had finished the recital of her story she besought Abbot Zosimus to say nothing concerning her to anyone, but to return the following Lent bringing with him the Sacrament, for since she had entered the desert, which was now forty-seven years, never had she partaken of that heavenly consolation.

The following year, accordingly, Zosimus went to fulfil his word. He journeyed bearing the Eucharist, and when he had come to the shore of Jordan he waited, for the woman had told him that there she would meet him.

She was not there, nor was she there by nightfall, but when the full moon had risen he saw her standing on the opposite shore, and he wondered how he should reach her. Then she, after making the sign of the Cross, came over to him, for the waters parted, and she walked dry footed.

He gave her the kiss of peace and administered to her the Sacraments, which when she had taken, she said, weeping: "Now, Lord God, let it please Thee to receive me, for mine eyes have seen my Saviour." But as she had for so long wept much, her eyes of flesh had in truth lost their sight.

She now begged that Zosimus would leave her again to her solitude, and that he would come again the following year and pray for her. This he promised, and she, again making the sign of the Cross upon the river, walked back as she had come.

When Zosimus returned the following year he found her lying dead where he had first seen her, folded in the poor remnants of his old cloak, her hands folded as if in prayer.

He wept in tenderness and pity, but dared not approach her, for he said to himself: "I would gladly bury this holy woman, yet I know not if it would displease her." Coming nearer, however, he saw these words traced in the sand: "O father Zosimus, bury here the body of the sinner, Mary. Pray for her soul, and give earth to earth, and dust to dust, for Christ's sake."

The Abbot would have followed this behest, but realized that his age was great and his strength small, and that furthermore he had nothing with which to delve.

Then, out of the desert, came a lion, sorrowful and gentle, who dug with his paws a grave in which Zosimus laid the body. When the sepulchre had been closed, the lion slowly departed, and Zosimus, returning to his abbey, glorified God who had shown mercy to so great a sinner and so true a penitent, and he told his brothers the story of St Mary of Egypt, who was born and lived many years in grievous sin, but being born again in repentance and in love of God had achieved holiness and heaven.

CHAPTER III

THE GENTLE GIANT

The Gentle Giant had gone to rest after his day's labour, a labour so light when measured by his strength as to awaken in him a sense of discontent. As he lay stretched under his shelter of boughs, his stature was twice that of any man reckoned of even more than ordinary height. He pondered, while sleep was on its way to claim him, upon the events of his recent years, and wondered what might be the outcome of his long quest.

Oforo was the giant's name, Oforo the Bearer, the carrier, for owing to his strength he was able to carry incredible burdens, able and willing as well. In youth he had argued with himself thus: "Had I, through the will of the gods, been born to the high places of this world, what power had been mine, with my size and mighty sinews! What a monarch I had made! But since the gods in their wisdom have decreed that I should fill a lowly station and serve rather than command, then will I serve none but the most powerful king in the world!"

And now as he lay, he called back to memory a procession of the images of his long search for the greatest of all kings. How once he had thought to have found him, and arriving at his court, had offered to be his servant, and how the King had been well pleased, for none other could boast a servant so strong and so obedient. But one day, as the King, in all his glory of fine raiment, gold, and jewels, sat in his vast hall listening to the song of a minstrel, Oforo saw him tremble and crouch down on his throne at the repeated name of Satan.

Oforo questioned why the King trembled and paled, and answer was made him: "Because Satan is more powerful than any ruler, and him the King fears!"

"Then Satan and none other will I serve," cried Oforo, "for before none but the greatest king in all the world will the Giant Oforo bow."

Without delay he set out in quest of Satan. He had not far to search. In a grim wilderness, as he sat at rest, he saw what seemed an endless train of people, stretching out of sight to the very horizon and beyond. With pennants flying and brilliant trappings they rode toward him at great speed, men and women gaily clad and of proud mien. At their head was one whose dread countenance struck awe even into the heart of Oforo, so sinister was his glance and haughty his bearing.

As one in high authority, and nowise intimidated by the giant's size, he addressed him: "Who art thou, and what doest thou here?"

Oforo answered: "I seek the greatest of all kings. Satan is his name, and him would I serve!"

The strange leader answered: "Then is thy search at an end, for I am he, and thou shalt serve me. I promise thee pleasure, and service neither difficult nor burdensome." He then bade Oforo ride by his side.

But they had not travelled far before they came to the meeting of two roads, where in the shadow of a tree there stood a cross, seeing which Satan cowered in his saddle, and raising an arm as if to ward off a blow, fled with all his following hosts into a thick forest, and regained the road only after making a wide circuit to avoid the cross-ways.

"Why is this?" cried Oforo. "What is this cross, and wherefore dost thou go so far to avoid it?" Satan made no answer but only frowned as his eyes dwelt on the distance ahead, as if in fear that something might again come in sight which he dreaded to see.

Oforo cried again: "Unless thou answerest me, I shall leave thee."

Reluctantly Satan spoke, with eyes still watchful: "I fear the cross, for on it died one Jesus Christ, and when I behold it I fly lest He should overcome me."

"Then must I leave thee," said the giant, "for I have vowed to serve none but the mightiest king, and since thou fearest Him, must Jesus Christ be more powerful than thou."

So he left Satan's train and wandered long alone in search of Christ. He wandered over mountain and plain, through dreary forests, and along far coasts, and the seasons passed like a painted pageant, but nowhere could he find Him.

At length, one day he came to a cave beside a wood, where lived an aged hermit, and as was his custom Oforo asked where he might find the greatest of all kings, Jesus Christ.

The hermit answered: "Thou art right to call Christ the greatest of all kings, for He is Ruler of Heaven as well as earth, and His Kingdom shall endure for all eternity, but thou shalt wander the whole world over and never find Him except through fasting and prayer."

"Fast will I not," said the giant, "for my strength is that with which I can best serve, and why should I waste it in fasting? Nor will I pray, for I know not how to pray, nor is prayer the part of the strong, but of the weak."

"There is yet another way to serve Him," said the hermit. "Hard by is a river, wide and deep and swift; often it is swollen with rains, and many are the travellers and pilgrims who must cross it; many also are they who are swept away by the current and lost in their efforts to reach the far shore. Do thou go and take up thy abode on the shore of that river and give help to those who must brave the waves. Carry the small and the weak upon thy broad shoulders and bear them safely across; thus shalt thou serve Christ."

Instantly Oforo consented, for the thought of service made him glad. He built a hut of branches on the brink of the river, he plucked up a palm-tree, which he smoothed and shaped

to be his staff, and by day and by night he carried men and women, the rich and the poor alike, over the river, so that none more were now lost.

Never did he weary of his good work. Yet this it was that now irked him as he lay tossing by night, for the task seemed so light that it was to him not labour at all, and he wondered sadly whether he were not wasting his glorious strength, losing precious time, and failing to achieve that service of the Great King for which he thirsted.

While he was recalling all the scenes of his search, his eyes, glancing out through the opening of his hut, rested upon the silver-bathed landscape, and the clear heavens with the full moon riding high, reflected in the smooth surface of the river; he heard the murmur of the water streaming over the pebbles of the shore, and the infinite beauty of the night seemed to reproach him for his trivial task, and for the waste of his power, which seemed to him equal to so much mightier effort. At last he fell into slumber, from which he was presently awakened by a voice calling: "Oforo, wilt thou bear me across the river?"

He sprang awake, and hastily arose to answer, but no one was there; all was silent and empty as before. When he had lain down again to sleep, again he heard the voice; Oforo, wilt thou not bear me over the river?"

Yet a third time, after he had returned to rest, came the gentle and insistent question: "Oforo, wilt thou not bear me on thy shoulders to-night?"

And there on the shore stood a child whose white garments gleamed in the moonlight.

"Truly will I," said Oforo, gladly, "and set thee down safely on the other side."

"Wilt thou, indeed?" asked the child.

"Yea, safely as though thou wert still in thy mother's arms!"

The child smiled as Oforo, lifting him, placed him upon his shoulder, a smile so endearing that the giant felt his heart melt in his breast for tenderness; his whole being was suffused with indescribable joy at the sense of giving aid to this small and tender being.



OFORO PLACED THE CHILD UPON HIS SHOULDERS.

Girding his garments high, he stepped into the water. Immediately a wild wind began to blow, the face of the moon was hidden, and the waves rolled up violently till the roar was as thunder. They hurled themselves against Oforo as though they sought to overwhelm him. Where the waters had been wont to reach only to his knees they now covered his thighs; they even dashed against his powerful breast, and rose ever higher. Moreover, the child whom he had raised to his shoulder as lightly as if he had been a little bird or a flower, now grew heavier and yet heavier.

Oforo, however, was undismayed—the crossing was difficult, but his belief in his strength was equal to any test. Thinking that the child might be afraid, he looked up at him over his shoulder, saying: "Fear not, little one; the tempest may rage, but I shall carry thee over safely, even as I promised!"

The young voice questioned: "Wilt thou, indeed, Oforo?" and the storm redoubled its fury, till the giant's heart began almost to fail him, for the child became so heavy upon his shoulder that it seemed that both must sink and be lost. This thought so rent him that he groaned in anguish. Again he turned to look at his burden, wondering that one so frail and delicate could weigh so cruelly. The face, luminous and visible to him in spite of the darkness, though grave, showed no fear, but only compassion for Oforo's distress. This gave courage to his now sinking spirit, and he steeled himself to renewed effort, though it seemed his bones must crumble like a great tower under the weight of his burden and the rage of the elements.

Slowly, painfully, haltingly, he advanced, and finally, after what seemed an eternity, he reached the shore and stumbled forth out of the water on to the bank.

Panting, he set his charge down, crying: "Who art thou? Whom have I borne this night? Had it been the whole world it could not have been more heavy!"

In the silence of the night which was once more so serene that Oforo could have believed the storm to have been but an evil dream, the child replied:

"I am He whom thou didst wish to serve. Now art thou in truth My good servant, for on thy shoulders hast thou borne this night not only the whole world, but Him who made it, who redeemed it, and who bears on His own shoulders all its sins. If in thy heart thou canst not believe, I will leave a sign of My power and of My love for thee. Drive thy staff into the earth, so—and see, it shall again bear leaves and fruit."

While Oforo's eyes were fixed upon his staff, which, but now set into the ground, was already covered with verdure glistening in a radiant light, the Child disappeared.

And thereafter the Gentle Giant was known by the name of Christoforo, whom we call St Christopher, for he had been the bearer of Christ.

CHAPTER IV

ST PATRICK

His parents were Christians and noble. They lived in Britain in what is now Dumbarton, during the second half of the fourth century. The father, a Roman citizen, Calpurnius by name, held the rank of decurion; the mother, Conchessa, a good and wise woman, was the sister of St Martin of Tours.

Though they were rich, Patrick was not brought up in luxury. He lived for the most part on a farm with his foster parents, who were simple folk of whom he was very fond.

He early began to work those wonders of which he performed a legion in his long life (for some do say he lived to be one hundred and twenty years old!).

One frosty winter's day, he brought, gathered in his little tunic, a hoard of icicles to his foster mother, thinking she would

take as great pleasure as he in the glittering things. But she received the offering coldly, saying: "Of what good is what thou hast brought me, child? Firewood wherewith to warm us had been better."

"Believe that it is in God's power to make icicles flame like firewood," answered Patrick, and setting the icicles on the fire, he breathed upon them and they blazed like dry twigs.

In those days the Picts and Scots made frequent incursions upon the British land, harassing the inhabitants of the coasts. In one of these invasions a band of marauders alighted from ships upon the shore near the farm where Patrick, now a lad of about sixteen years, was in company with some of his younger brothers and sisters. The sight of the warriors filled their beholders with terror. Panic-stricken they fled in all directions, but they were defenceless and escape was impossible. The pirates rushed upon them with shouts and, laying violent hands on them, carried them off to their ships, after setting fire to the plundered homestead.

They sailed away and went to Ireland. There Patrick was sold as a slave to Milcho, King of Dalaradia, and given the task of tending the swine which fed on acorns in a wood adjoining the fort of his master. Here, though the change from his former life was bitter, he acquired that experience of outdoor life which was to be of such service to him later, his knowledge of the Irish tongue and his love of the rude folk of Ireland, most especially of their children, for he loved Milcho's children, and they him. There were long hours of solitude and leisure which he could spend in thought and prayer. Day and night, in sun or snow, frost or rain, he prayed, and the love of God increased within him, so that he acquired the life-long habit of accepting whatever befell him, whether for good or evil, with his characteristic "Deo gratias!" "Thanks be to God!"

After six years of servitude, the Angel Victor, guardian of Ireland, who had been his friend, counsellor, and teacher in his bondage, and had helped him in many distresses, came to

him in a dream one night and said: "Soon shalt thou return to thy country, for, behold, thy ship is ready"; he then told him how to compass his escape, and at the appointed time Patrick fled, avoiding the pursuit of Milcho's servants.

He travelled on foot to the west coast, about two hundred miles, and there took ship. After many adventures and months of wandering, he reached home. His parents had died during his absence, but members of his family still remained who made him as welcome as a lost son returned, and entreated him to remain with them. He would gladly have stayed, but always he seemed to hear the voices of those whom he had left behind in Ireland calling to him to come back and lead them out of the captivity of idolatry into the light of the knowledge of Christ.

One night Victor of the Beautiful Countenance appeared to him again in his sleep, holding out an open letter. He could only read its title, "The Voice of the Irish," for emotion so overcame him that his eyes were blurred with tears. Then he heard the voice of the children of Fochlut Wood crying out to him beseechingly: "Return to us, holy youth; come once more and walk among us!" Victor explained that this was the voice of all the yet unborn children of Ireland, and Patrick's purpose became fixed to return one day to the shores of the western sea, when he should have prepared himself with knowledge and authority to carry salvation to them.

His first step toward this preparation was to go to seek counsel and instruction of his uncle, St Martin, Bishop of Tours. St Martin had founded a monastery at Marmoutier, and thither Patrick made his way. As he drew near to his destination, weary with many days' travel, he lay down to rest in the snow under the bare branches of a blackthorn-tree. When he awoke in the morning he found himself under a white canopy of full-blown blossoms, the air was balmy and sweet scented, while the country beyond was still frozen, stark, and wintry. You may yet see to this day St Patrick's blackthorn tree in blossom in bleak December.

He was warmly welcomed at Marmoutier, where he commenced a course of training which lasted until the death of the gentle St Martin, eight years later.

Meat was not allowed at the monastery except if one were ill, but it happened one day that Patrick received a piece from a sick brother who had no wish to eat it. He hid his treat in a jar, for he longed for meat after his long fast from it. He was awaiting the opportunity to eat it unseen of anyone when he suddenly came face to face with a strange apparition which had eyes both at the front and at the back of its head. Patrick asked the creature who and what it might be.

"I am a servant of God," it answered, "and with my eyes in front I see the apparent actions of men, but with the eyes at the back of my head I saw a certain monk concealing a piece of meat, that he might eat it in secret." Then the apparition vanished.

Patrick fell on his knees, smiting his breast, and entreating to be forgiven. He promised then and there never in his whole life to eat flesh, which promise he faithfully kept. His angel Victor came to him then and assured him that he was pardoned; in proof of it he bade him take the hidden meat and, in the presence of the assembled brotherhood, cast it into water; when he had done this, publicly confessing his guilt, the meat was suddenly changed into a quantity of fresh and shining fishes, which sufficed for all the brothers.

After the death of St Martin, Patrick stayed for fourteen years in Auxerre, where St Germanus was then bishop, and later in the Isle of Lerins, where St Vincent was among his companions.

Ever and always he heard the voices of the children from Fochlut Wood crying: "All we Irish beseech thee, holy Patrick, to come and free us. Free us from the wrath to come. O holy youth, come once more and walk among us!"

Finally, when the time was ripe, Victor said: "Go to Ireland, for thou shalt be the apostle of its people." So Patrick went to Rome to obtain from Pope Celestin sanction for his mission to Ireland. In Rome he was consecrated bishop and, while the consecration was going on, three choirs responded to each other, the choir of the people of heaven, the choir of the Roman clerics, and the choir of the children of the wood of Fochlut.

It was on his way to Rome that Patrick received his wonderful staff. As he sailed from France, he came to an island on which he saw a new house, and in it a newly wedded couple. But before the house was an old, old, old, old woman.

"Who is she?" asked Patrick.

"She is our great-granddaughter," said the young man, "she is old indeed, but you should see her mother—she is far older!"

"How is this?" asked Patrick.

"We have been here," explained the young man, "since the days of Christ, who once came and dwelt with us when He was among men. We made a feast for Him and He blessed us and our house, but the blessing did not descend to our children. So here we continue, unchanging, and here we shall be until the Judgment Day. Thy coming has been foretold us, for God saw that thou shouldst come to preach to the Gael, and Christ left a token with us, a bent staff to be given thee."

After making all things ready Patrick set sail for Ireland. There also his arrival with his train had been thrice foretold by the Druids, who knew that his coming should make an end of idolatry and heathenism. Their prophecy ran thus: "Adzehead will come over an angry sea, his garment head pierced, his staff head bent, his table to the east of his house, and all his household will answer, Amen, Amen. Adzeheads will come who will build cities, consecrate churches, and pinnacled music-houses with conical caps." All of which was easy to interpret: The adzehead

was the tonsured priest, the head-holed garment his chasuble, the head-bent staff his crozier, his altar was at the east end of the church, and the belfries were the conical capped music-houses.

Patrick and his followers landed on the eastern coast of Ireland. They were seen approaching by a swine-herd who, thinking them robbers, ran to warn his master, Dichu. Dichu hastened to the spot and set his dog upon the unarmed men who were about to land, but Patrick, facing, the fierce creature, chanted a verse of the Scriptures: "Deliver not unto the beasts, O Lord, the souls of them that confess Thee!" At these words the dog became friendly and lay at Patrick's feet. Dichu, seeing this, seeing also that these men were no robbers, hastened forward, greeting Patrick with kindness. He listened to the Saint's words, believed, and was baptized. He also gave him lodging in a barn close by. This barn was destined to be famous in the story of Ireland, for it was here that Patrick made his first church and said his first mass. The place was called after it 'The Barn,' which in Irish is Saball, from which the name was insensibly changed to Saul.

It was here that, preaching to some little children, he stooped and plucked a leaf of shamrock, to illustrate for them the doctrine of the Trinity, the Three in One, and the shamrock is to this day the symbol of St Patrick.

At this time Laeghaire was High King of Ireland, and dwelt in a castle on the Hill of Tara, overlooking the Magh Bregh, the Beautiful Plain. Opposite to it, about ten miles away, was another hill, the Hill of Slane. Here Patrick proposed to spend the first Easter Day after his arrival in Ireland.

Laeghaire had at this very season assembled all his sub-kings and nobles, his bards and Druids, for the great festival of Beltaine; he had commanded as a part of the ceremony that bonfires should be lighted in all the surrounding country on the night before the festival, but on pain of death none was to be kindled; in fact, every fire was to be extinguished, until the sacred flame should be seen shining on Tara's Hill.

What, then, was the astonishment of the people when they saw gleaming on the Hill of Slane the Paschal Fire which Patrick had caused to be kindled on Easter Even. The glow of it lighted all the valley—and Tara was as yet in darkness!

In anger Laeghaire called his Druids and bade them send to ask what meant that fire, and who had been so rash as to light it, breaking his commands. The druids answered: "We see the flame and know that unless it be stamped out on this very night it will never be quenched until Doomsday, and that he, moreover, who lighted it, shall become more powerful than all the kings of Ireland!"

With mounting fury Laeghaire declared that he himself would go and carry death to him who thus threatened his throne.

A loud clamour then arose from the castle as in haste men donned their armour. Late in the night many chariots, bearing the King and Queen, and with them their two magicians, Lochru and Lucat Mael, and all their train of nobles and soldiers, whirled across the plain lighted by the radiance of the fires, by whose glow the peaceful ceremony of Easter Even, preceding the celebration of the resurrection of Christ, was being performed by Patrick and his followers.

Arriving near the place, Laeghaire sent a messenger bidding Patrick appear before him. Soon Patrick was seen advancing with his clerics, a bright procession with vestments gleaming in the torchlight.

Here followed argument between King and Saint, but before many words had been spoken Lochru the druid, interrupting, violently attacked Patrick, his creed and his Church. Patrick, in a blaze of indignation, then exclaimed: "O Lord, who canst do all things, let this ungodly man who blasphemes Thee be lifted up, and let him forthwith die!" And Lochru, after being snatched up into the air by an invisible force, was dashed to death upon the stones on which he stood.

The incensed Laeghaire now ordered his men to fall upon Patrick, but the Saint stood before them unmoved; leaning on his wonderful staff he sang in a clear voice: "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered." And although by this time the sun of Easter Day had risen in glory, a sudden darkness spread over the sky, and the earth shook. Panic spread among the King's followers, the horses took fright, galloping wildly in all directions; men fell upon one another and were slain in the darkness; to the clash and clangour of arms was added the howling of a wind which dashed men and chariots violently across the valley. None was left on the scene of distraction but the King, his Queen, Angas, and one faithful servant. Interceding for her lord, the Queen approached Patrick, assured him that the King, now convinced of the power of Patrick's God, would kneel to Him and believe, and Laeghaire bade Patrick come to his castle on the morrow that he might in the presence of all confess his allegiance. The Saint gladly consented, and on the following day, with eight of his clerics and the boy Benignus, the first of his disciples in Ireland, proceeded to Tara. On his way he chanted the hymn which is called St Patrick's Breastplate. It is also called the Deer's Cry, for Laeghaire caused men to lie in ambush on Patrick's road to destroy him and his followers, but as these passed God enveloped them in darkness, so that all that the men in ambush saw was a wild deer and a fawn passing in the mist.

The hymn which Patrick sang is a brave and noble song and it goes something like this:

"I bind myself to-day to a strong strength, to a calling on the Trinity.

I believe in a Threeness, with confession of a Oneness in the Creator of the world.

"I bind myself to-day to the strength of Christ's birth and His baptism; to the strength of His crucifixion with His burial; to the strength of His resurrection with His ascension.

"In stability of earth, in steadfastness of rock I bind myself to-day, God's strength to pilot me;

"God's power to uphold me; God's wisdom to guide me; God's eye to look before me; God's ear to hear me.

"God's word to speak for me; God's hand to guard me; God's path to lie before me; God's shield to protect me; God's host to save me;

"Against snares of demons; against the begging of sins; against the asking of nature; against all my ill-wishers, near me and far from me, alone and in a crowd.

"So I have called on all these strengths to come between me and every fierce and merciless strength that may come between my body and my soul;

"Against incantations of false prophets; against black laws of heathens; against false laws of heretics; against craft of idolatry, against spells of women, and smiths and druids; against every knowledge forbidden to the souls of men;

"Christ for my protection to-day against poison, against burning, against drowning, against wounding; that a multitude of rewards may come to me.

"Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ under me, Christ over me, Christ to the right of me, Christ to the left of me, Christ in lying down, Christ in sitting; Christ in rising up; Christ in the heart of every one that thinks of me; Christ in the mouth of every one that speaks of me; Christ in every eye that sees me; Christ in every ear that hears me.

"I bind myself to-day to a strong strength, to a calling upon the Trinity; I believe in a Threeness with confession of a Oneness in the Creator of the world!"

Meanwhile in the banqueting hall at Tara Laeghaire sat with his assembled nobles rehearsing the humiliating events of the preceding night. At any moment he expected the tidings of

Patrick's death at the hands of his men in ambush, when suddenly in the midst of the feast the Saint stood before him. Consternation was painted upon the countenances of all present, until Lucat Mael, quickly recovering some semblance of composure, under guise of hospitable greeting, presented to Patrick a goblet of wine into which he had poured a drop of deadliest poison. But had not the Saint on his road prayed to be protected from all evil? He made the sign of the Cross over the cup—at which the poison was separated from the wine, and Patrick, after pouring it out, drank the now harmless draught in the name of Christ his Lord.

After the banquet Laeghaire commanded that the assembled company should descend to the Beautiful Plain below, and with the guests disposed at the sides of the King and Queen, and the King's men drawn up in battle array, all should witness a contest between Patrick and Lucat Mael.

Nothing loth, Patrick consented. When all was arranged Lucat Mael proposed that they should vie with each other in working miracles. Through rites and incantations he caused snow to fall even up to the men's Waists. The multitude wondered and applauded.

In no wise disconcerted, Patrick said: "Now cause the snow to depart."

"Nay," answered Lucat Mael, "that cannot I do until this time to-morrow."

Patrick, leaning on his wonderful staff, the Staff of Jesus, raising his right hand in benediction over the plain, in the name of the Holy Trinity, made the snow to vanish.

Then the wizard, working another incantation, called forth darkness to cover the bright face of the spring day. "Dispel the darkness," said Patrick.

"Nay, but I cannot until this hour to-morrow," confessed the magician again.

Again Patrick blessed the plain, darkness fled, and the sun shone.

Thus they continued; always Lucat Mael was vanquished, until finally the trial by fire was suggested, and Patrick agreed that a house should be built in which Lucat Mael, clad in Patrick's own chasuble, should be shut on the one side, and on the other his dear boy Benignus, clad in the magician's cloak; that fire should be set to the house, and that God should decide as to the deserts of each.

All this was done, but though Lucat Mael managed that his side of the house should be built of green wood and the other of wood dry as tinder, yet when the fire was applied the magician's side of the house was burned to ashes, and he with it, nothing remaining but Patrick's unscorched chasuble—while nothing would induce the other part of the house to burn. As to Benignus, although the magician's robe upon him was consumed, he himself who wore it came forth untouched by the flames.

Maddened by the failure and death of his best magician, Laeghaire now again attempted to fall upon Patrick and take his life, but Patrick gave him a final warning. "Unless thou now believest, and that quickly, thou shalt forthwith die, for God's anger will surely fall upon thee!"

In a manner of weary desperation, Laeghaire then admitted that he preferred to receive God rather than death. With his entire court, and thousands more besides, he submitted himself to baptism and promised to accord his permission and protection to the spreading of the Christian faith throughout his realm.

"Deo gratias!" cried Patrick.

This was the beginning of the Saint's great work. Year after year he laboured. Year after year he travelled, preaching and exhorting, founding monasteries and convents, erecting churches, baptizing thousands and tens of thousands,

consecrating priests, ordaining bishops, and performing countless miracles. All the while he had to fight the good fight against enemies both bitter and powerful who opposed and tried to thwart him at every step.

Not men alone had he to fight, but the rigour of the elements and of the seasons; ever he travelled on and on, climbing mountains, fording streams, crossing interminable bogs; scorched by the sun and chilled by snow, buffeted by wind and drenched by rain, but always full of a high courage and deep love. On he journeyed until he had made the sign of the Cross even upon the face of the entire island, for he spanned it from shore to shore, from east to west, and then again from north to south, so that all Ireland was won to God, and, as Victor had instructed him, he had conquered one more realm for Christ.

What wonders he performed by the might of that sign of the Cross of Christ he so loved! It is said he signed himself with it more than a hundred times daily and nightly. He traced it upon the waters—they were turned from foul to pure; he traced it in the air—demons fled and evil men were made powerless; he drew it on the ground—it opened and swallowed up magicians and their false gods; he drew it upon the sick—they were healed; upon the dead and they revived. With it, it is said that he drove all snakes and poisonous reptiles from Irish soil. In truth, all insidious heresies and heathenish rites and superstitions he did stamp out and drive from the land.

And ever his love for the land and the children of Ireland grew and deepened in his heart; with it also grew his determination to open wide for his flock the Gates of Heaven.

Now, it was Patrick's custom to spend the Lenten season in solitude, devoting his days and nights to intercession for the souls of those whom he had come to save. It happened one year that he spent his forty days of fasting and of prayer on the summit of the mountain—or, as the Irish called it, the Rick—of Cruaghan, looming on the shores of the Western Sea. Ceaselessly he prayed and kept his vigil, until, toward the end of

Lent, he was assailed by the powers of darkness in the shape of huge black birds, so numberless that they filled the earth and the air. Mercilessly they attacked him, and vainly Patrick tried to exorcise them with chants and psalms. They continued to torment him until in desperation he rang his holy bell, and ended by hurling it into their midst. Only then did they vanish, leaving Patrick exhausted, weeping so that his cowl was drenched with tears.

Then came Victor, accompanied by a flock of snow-white birds, singing heavenly songs to console him. Victor dried the Saint's tears (and his hood), and promised for his comfort that he should save by the prayers he had prayed as many souls as would fill the space as far as his eyes could reach to seaward.

But Patrick was not to be easily satisfied, and there ensued a spirited dialogue between the Angel and the Saint, as humorous and endearing as any comedy scene.

Somewhat cheered and revived by the Angel's promise, Patrick answered with a keen eye to striking a good bargain for his people.

"I have watched long and wept much. My eyes are dim and cannot now see far to seaward."

The Angel Victor: "Then shalt thou save as many souls as would fill the space as far as thou canst see to landward also."

Saint Patrick (with innocent surprise): "And is that all? Does God grant me nothing further for all I have suffered?"

The A. V. (soothingly): "Thou shalt save on every Saturday till Doomsday seven souls from the pains of Hell."

St P.: "Let also my twelve men who have laboured so faithfully with me be saved."

The A. V. (with a glad finality): "Thou shalt have them—and now get thee gone from the Rick!"

St P. (petulantly, if such a term may be used with reference to a holy Saint): "I will not get me gone, for I have

been sorely tormented, and even greater favours do I crave. Shall nothing further be given me?"

The A. V. (comfortably): "Yea, twelve souls shalt thou save from Hell's torments every Saturday and seven on Thursdays. And now get thee gone from the Rick"

St P. (encouraged by his success): "I will not get me gone, for I have been sore tormented, until I am blessed."

The A. V. (indulgently): "What further, then, wouldst thou demand?"

St P.: "That no pagan should dwell in Ireland, by consent or by force, as long as I abide in Heaven."

The Angel Victor: "Thou shalt have this."

St P.: "Does God grant me nothing further?"

The A. V.: "Yea—every man who shall sing thy hymn shall not suffer pain or torture."

St P. (tentatively): "The hymn is long—"

The A. V. (hastily): "Well, then, whoever shall sing it from 'Christus Ilium' to the end, whoever shall give anything in thy name, whoever shall do penance in Ireland, his soul shall not go to Hell. And now wilt thou get thee gone from the Rick!"

St P. (beginning to thoroughly enjoy this haggling): "I will not, for I have been sore tormented—is there naught else?"

The A. V. (patiently): "Yea, for every hair in thy chasuble shalt thou bring a man out of torment on the Judgment Day!"

St. P. (scornfully): "Nay—any Saint could do that—I will not take that."

The A. V. (meekly): "What, then, wilt thou take?"

St P. (with emphasis): "Not one—but seven souls for every hair in my chasuble."

The A. V. (eagerly): "This shalt thou have. And now get thee gone from the Rick."

St P. (emboldened by the flash of a sudden dazzling vision): "I will not get me gone."

The A. V. (at the end of all patience): "Then shalt thou be taken by force!"

St P. (now strong in a mighty determination): "I will not get me gone until I am blessed, save only if the High King of Heaven were to bid me begone!"

The A. V. (with sudden relenting): "What more wouldst thou have?"

St P. (gathering himself for a most unheard-of bold request, slowly, and with solemn, ringing emphasis): "On the great Day of Judgment, when shall be reared the twelve thrones on God's mountain, and the four rivers of fire shall flow round it, and the three peoples shall meet upon it, the people of Heaven and of Earth and of Hell, on that day, let me—let Patrick, be judge over the people of Ireland!"

The A. V. (aghast at such matchless daring, opening to their widest his sapphire eyes fringed with sable lashes, utters in a breathless whisper): "Nay, surely, such a favour can never be granted!"

St P. (soaring on the wings of his inspired audacity): "But unless it be granted never to the day of doom shall I leave this Rick, and furthermore when I die here will I leave a guardian."

In dismay Victor flew away to Heaven.

And Patrick all day stood praying and offering up his whole heart to God.

At night Victor again stood beside him, but Patrick, looking not at him, asked: "What answer gives the Maker of all Worlds to my humble petition?"

"Thy prayer is answered," said Victor, simply. "When the end is come thou shalt judge thy people in righteousness. Kneel, therefore, now, and bless thy land of Erin."

Patrick meekly knelt and blessed his land, saying: "Praise be to God who hears a sinner's prayers."

Then with a sigh of sweetest satisfaction and a deep twinkle in his eye: "Now, therefore, will I get me down from the Rick!"

So, when Patrick had journeyed and laboured for many years and had become an aged man, he longed to find rest for his last years in one spot where he might remain until he should die.

It was then he came to the stronghold of a chieftain called Daire. Of him he asked a place at the top of a certain hill, whereon to build a church.

Daire refused to give him room on the crest of the hill, as that would overlook his own fort, but he granted him a space on the level ground below.

Here Patrick for the time being made his cell and built a church.

One day, some of Daire's horses browsed upon Patrick's consecrated ground. For this desecration Patrick caused the death of the horses. Hearing of this Daire ordered his men to attack Patrick and drive him and his followers away. They were about to do so when Daire was seized with a sudden violent illness. In alarm his wife sent to Patrick, begging him to send her some holy water with which to heal her husband. Patrick complied and, as he gave it to the messengers, charged them sprinkle some of it also upon the dead horses, who were brought back to life, even as Daire was healed. (It would have been inconceivable that Patrick should let those good Irish horses remain dead!)

In thanks for this, then, Daire sent Patrick as a present a most splendid copper cauldron which he had received from overseas. It was a princely gift, and when the messengers had

returned from presenting it, it was only natural that Daire should question them, inquiring whether the Saint had seemed properly impressed with its beauty and value, as also with Daire's own generosity.

"What said the holy man when he received the cauldron?"

"He did but say, 'Gratzacham,' "said the messengers, repeating as far as they could remember Patrick's expression "Gratias agamus Domino"—"Let us give thanks to the Lord."

"Indeed, then, but that is small thanks for a gift so fine," said Daire. "Do ye return now and bid him straightway give me back my cauldron!"

"What said he when ye did take it away?" asked Daire of his messengers upon their return.

"He did say 'Gratzacham' even as before," said the servants.

"Now, that must be a good word of his," said Daire. "'Gratzacham' he said when he did take, and 'Gratzacham' when it was taken from him. And for that good word do ye go back and return the cauldron to him."

Nor was this all, for, impressed by the Saint's equanimity, by his courage and firmness of character, his meekness, his constancy, and by his invariable and unfailing thanks to God under good fortune and ill, Daire bestowed upon him the much-desired site for his church on the summit of the hill. There it was that Patrick established his own church, the glorious church of Armagh, where he remained until near the end of his clays.

There he would fain have laid him down after his long life of labour. It happened, however, that as his hour drew near he was at Saul. Feeling his end close upon him he started to travel back to Armagh; but Victor met him on the road and said: "Go back—go back—not at Armagh is it God's will that thou

shouldst die. Go back to Saul, for at Dichu's Barn where thou didst say thy first Mass on Irish soil shalt thou die."

"Deo Gratias," said Patrick, bowing as ever to the will of God.

There indeed he breathed his last, and for twelve days and nights attending watching angels made the air so bright that no candle needed to be burned beside him.

Where he was buried is not certain, though it is supposed he lies with Columbcille and Bridget at Downe, and it may be so. But wherever he rests he will doubtless arise on the Great Day of Judgment, and, as it was promised him, be judge over the people of Ireland, for he of all understood them, and if we understand we love, and if we love we shall deal justly according to the heart of God.

CHAPTER V

ST BRIDGET OF KILDARE

She lived in the infancy of Christianity in Ireland. She was born at sunrise, with the birth of the year; the first of February is her day. The dandelion, "the little notched flower of Bride," is her flower, earliest gold scattered upon earliest emerald, and the anemone also, delicate blossom growing on the edge of the snowdrift, while the linnet, "the little bird of Bride," sings its earliest song from scarce veiled twigs.

As the old verses say of her:

"She dips her fingers in the river and the ice melts." "She breathes upon the world and winter is gone." She seems the shining and fresh and white, the pure and bright emblem of new life.

She is fresh and white as her symbol, the milk which is the beginning of life.

Shining she is and pure and bright as that other symbol of her, fire, which is the sustainer of life.

They say that her mother was a slave girl, Brotseach by name, in the house of the Great Dubhtach. One day Brotseach was returning to the house with a pitcher of milk warm from the cow, when she was seized with labour and sank down on the threshold. She being delivered, the angels poured the milk over the new-born child. Such was Bridget's baptism.

"Happy is the child that is born neither in the house nor out of the house," St Maccaill has prophesied of her.

She was fed from the milk of a snow-white cow set apart for her by a Druid, and many wonders she performed in the multiplying of milk, and other things beside.

When she was living as a young girl in her father's house in Munster, five pieces of bacon were once given her to boil, some guests having come to visit. But a hungry dog came also. She gave him one of the pieces of bacon, and when he still seemed hungry, she gave him another. Yet when her father came, asking her for the five pieces of bacon, she gave them all to him and none was missing. But the guest who had seemed to sleep by the fireside had seen all, and when time came to eat, he refrained, for he knew himself unworthy, and the meat was given to the hungry and poor.

When she was still very young she was sent out to service on a farm, where she had charge of twelve cows. She used to divide the butter she made into twelve parts in honour of the twelve Apostles, but the thirteenth part she made bigger than the rest, and that part she gave to strangers and the poor, saying: "This is Christ's portion. In His name I feed the poor, for Christ is in the body of every poor man."

When the master of the twelve cows heard of this, he came to the farm to inquire into the matter, and his wife came with him. They brought a large jar into the dairy, where Bridget made them welcome, bathed their feet, and offered them food.

Then they gave her the jar to fill with butter, and she had only a churning and a half to put into it. But she went to her kitchen and, standing in the middle of it, she prayed this prayer:

"Oh, my High Prince Who can do all things, bless my kitchen, the kitchen of the White Lord, a kitchen where there is butter.

"My Friend is coming, the Son of Mary.

"The Prince of the World comes to this place! Oh, that there may be plenty with Him!"

Then she brought out one half of the churning, and the wife derided her. But Bridget said: "Put it in the jar and God will add something to it."

She returned again and again to the dairy and each time brought out half a churning, having each time repeated her prayer. And she could in the same way have gone on filling all the jars in Ireland with butter.

Bridget was beautiful, with long golden hair, and eyes deep and blue as the heavens, but she early determined that none but Christ should be her bridegroom, and as her beauty drew after her suitors seeking her favour, she prayed that her loveliness might be dimmed, so that she need no longer be evading their entreaties, but might in peace devote herself to her Lord. Her prayers were answered. Soon one of her eyes was afflicted with a swelling, and her smooth skin suffered from unsightly blemishes.

But Bridget (have no fear) was not so to go through life, for when she went to St Patrick to be ordained a nun, and he put over her white habit the snowy cloak and veil in which she was ever after to be arrayed—her beauty blossomed again in all its freshness, and the very wood of the steps on which she knelt before the Saint, though old and seasoned, burst forth again into life and leafy greenness, and so remained.

Once, when she had made her cell under the oak, which after many days grew to be the monastery of Kildare, the Seven

Bishops came to see her, and she had no food to give them. So she prayed, and angels came who bade her milk the cows for the third time that day. She milked them herself, and they gave so much that all the vessels in the place were filled and overflowed into a hollow near by and made the lake that is called the Lake of Milk to this day.

Another time she was minding her cow by the way-side, having no pasture land of her own. The rich man who owned the land bordering the road came by and asked: "How much land would it take to give grass enough to feed your cow?"

"As much as my cloak would cover," answered Bridget.

"I will give you that much," said the man.

When Bridget laid down her cloak it began to spread and spread and spread out for mile upon mile in all directions, and would have spread on to the very edge of the island, had not an old woman, passing by, cried out: "If that cloak goes on spreading, all the island will be free," and with that the cloak stopped, but Bridget owned that land through her lifetime, and it was she who established the right of free grazing.

Then is it a wonder if all Ireland loved her, her that was the friend of the poor and the sick, of lepers, paralytics, and lunatics; the friend and counsellor or great and wise men, bishops and kings; foundress of a great monastery, a great school, and the great city of Kildare; Bridget the milkmaid that blessed and preserved the flocks and herds; Bridget the Foster Mother of Christ, who blessed women in the hour of childbirth; Bridget the Flame, whose fire was for seven hundred years after her death preserved unspent in her church!

So all Ireland loved her, and does to this day, because she so loved Ireland that her very mantle tried to cover the whole land and make it free. One might say that the sunshine of Ireland loved Bridget and dwelt lovingly on her cloak, white like milk, and on her yellow locks, bright and golden like fire.

This was proved one day when, Abbess of Kildare though she was, she in all humility was out tending her flocks. St Brennain having come to see her, one of the Sisters went in haste to find her and bring her in to welcome him. As Bridget came, it rained till her cloak was drenched. But when she entered the sun was again shining, and came in by the window in a shaft of light. Hurriedly doffing her cloak, she threw it over the sunbeam, and—for the Irish sunbeam so loved Bridget—he held up her dripping mantle and dried it. Patiently he waited on, hour after hour, till she should come, take her cloak and let him be gone.

At last one of the Sisters went to her, saying: "My Mother, the hour grows late, and the sun has long been set. The sunbeam to whom thou didst entrust thy wet mantle tarries still, though now the garment is dry."

Bridget went swiftly to the hall and, seeing the belated sunbeam, cried: "Haste, haste, kind and gentle friend, the sun is far on its way, and unless thou go fast wilt thou never come up with him!"

Then she thanked him and, taking her cloak, put it upon her shoulders again, while he, smiling in farewell, vanished.

CHAPTER VI

ST ELFLEDA'S ALE

Near Glastonbury, in the tenth century, dwelt Elfleda, niece of King Athelstan of England. A widow, though still young and beautiful, and of royal blood, she spent her days in seclusion and solitude, devoting herself to prayer and charities. She lived in her castle with but two retainers, an aged man and his aged wife, in all the simplicity of a recluse, because giving as she did of her substance she had little left for more than her own barest needs. What then was her perturbation when in the late afternoon of an autumn day, as she returned from visits to the sick and needy of the far town, she was met by her servant with

the news that during her absence King Athelstan and his retinue had arrived at the gate and requested admittance and entertainment. They had spent the long day hunting in the neighbouring forest, and the King had bethought him that his niece Elfleda lived hard by, so to her roof he had unhesitatingly repaired, seeking rest and refreshment for himself and all his weary, hungry, thirsty crew.

"And what have ye done for the King's comfort?" asked Elfleda.

"Cedric has made a blaze in the hall, faggots we have in plenty by good fortune—I gathered them yesterday—and a few logs Cedric had hewn against the winter's need. Before the fire they are all seated or lying, they and their hounds, and they rest awaiting your coming and that of food and drink."

"And what have we to give them?"

"A few fowls, and there is a young porker which Cedric has killed and I am even now roasting, and a moiety of oaten bread we have."

"But to drink—what have we to give them to drink?"

"Ah—there indeed I am of small counsel; we have scarce a drop of aught but water, and none but the dogs will swallow that, as we well know. There is one little keg of Cedric's ale in the vault, but there is small use in setting that before them, for it is well-nigh dry. Alas—what's to be done!"

"Bid Cedric take up the little keg and set it in the hall," said Elfleda.

"But, honoured mistress, there would not be enough to fill all their horns once, even though the little barrel were full," wailed the woman, "and, as it is, I doubt if it would fill the King's tankard!"

"Bid him bring it, none the less, and let none know I am returned."

Leaving the mystified servant to carry out her bidding, Elfleda repaired to her oratory. Falling on her knees before the image of the Blessed Virgin, her patron and protector, she prayed with a lively faith, much fervour, and some haste.

"Oh, Holy Mother of God, whose Son did once furnish wine for the wedding at Cana, thou dost see my plight. What shall I do? It grows late, Athelstan and his men have waited long and must have ale. Time presses.

"Thou Queen of Heaven, who canst do all things, come to the aid of thy most humble handmaiden, who asks thee for ale!

"Gracious Lady, dispenser of all good gifts, give me ale!

"Friend of the needy and protector of the distressed, who wast thyself once a housewife, intercede for me that I may have ale!

"Spotless, immaculate, and glorious Virgin, let me have ale—and yet more ale—abundance of ale!"

Meanwhile, in the hall below, according to his lady's bidding, Cedric had brought in the small, light cask, and set it down unobtrusively in an ill-lighted corner, hoping against hope that it might escape detection, at least for a while. He soon knew his hopes to have been vain. Like falcons on their quarry the apparently drowsy retinue of the King pounced upon the cask. Its small size gave them a moment's pause; then, with the thought that a little was better than no ale at all, or that undoubtedly more casks would presently be forthcoming, they fell to.

A brimming tankard was filled for the King, but when the next was about to be drawn a feeble dribble was the sole reply to their tapping.

Consternation first, then dismay, and lastly a very lively discontent filled the atmosphere; growls and low curses grew in number and volume till Cedric thought it well to seek refuge beyond the massive hall door, when of a sudden out gushed the

ale, foaming, bubbling, and gurgling from the spout, and, oh, ale—such ale, such blessed, mellow, spicy ale!

Throughout that night it never ran dry—and Athelstan and his hard-drinking, deep-drinking crew had all that even they could wish for.

CHAPTER VII

THE SAINTLY FRIENDS OF ASSISI

Chiara, born at the end of the twelfth century, of Favorino and Ortolana Sciffo, was she who was destined to become the St Clare of Assisi, without whom the story of St Francis would have been incomplete.

Before the birth of the child, Ortolana, weeping at the foot of the Crucifix, was praying to be granted a safe deliverance, when she heard a voice saying: "Woman, doubt not. The daughter whom thou shalt bear shall by her doctrine illumine the world—"So the name of Chiara, the light, the clear, the limpid and bright, was given to the child.

She was from childhood devout, and though born to luxury and abundance, often gave to the poor in secret what she might well herself have eaten. From childhood also she vowed to be the bride of none other than Christ, in which purpose she later received encouragement from St Francis, whom she often saw and consulted.

It was when she had come to her eighteenth year that he bade her definitely to relinquish the world, setting Palm Sunday for her departure from the house of her father to the house of God.

She went as usual to Mass that day with her family, apparelled in rich garments, but forbore to go up to the altar to receive the palm at the hands of the Bishop—seeing which

humility the Bishop bore the palm to her himself, which added to Clare's sense of dedication upon that day.

That night she with her own hands removed the stones and wood which filled a doorway, blocked up the previous year according to the Italian custom after the passing through it of the dead body of one of the inmates of the house. She symbolized her own passing from the world by creeping through the door of the dead.

Silently she stole away wrapped in a dark veil and cloak, and fled to the valley below Assisi, to the little church of the Porziuncola, where St Francis dwelt with his Brotherhood. Arriving, she fell upon her knees before the altar, and putting off her rich silks and jewels, cast them upon the floor. Francis himself cut off her long hair, and drew over her the penitential garb of sackcloth girded with a knotted rope. Then he took her to a nearby convent of Benedictine nuns, until he should himself have prepared a place where she might remain.

Not without a struggle did she obtain the peace of the religious, for family and friends made every effort to bring her back to the life of the world. Roughly they tried to drag her from her seclusion. She clung to the altar, and finally, taking off the veil, showed her shorn head, crying: "I am the bride of Christ and vowed to His service!"

Her devoted younger sister, Agnes, followed her to the convent only two weeks later, and when her incensed uncle with twelve armed men went to take her by force, they dragged her away so violently that the mountain path was reddened with blood. Suddenly she became as one made of lead, so that the soldiers could no longer by any means move her, seeing which they fled in alarm, and Clare took her joyfully back to the convent.

For many years after, while Clare presided over her convent of St Damien, St Clare and St Francis were on rare and high occasions seen together in loving, friendly, and holy intercourse; she, of the wide and candid forehead, almond eyes,

and small chin, with her gray habit and black veil, the "Seraphic Mother" of the Order of which St Francis had made her the head, the Poor Ladies, or Poor Clares, the Second Order of Franciscans; he, in his brown habit, head of the Franciscan Brotherhood, the little Bedesman of Christ, small and slender, with dark, thick hair, short beard, straight brows and nose, glowing eyes, and gleaming teeth, and a voice keen, fiery, and persuasive.

Both were wedded to the Lady Poverty, both vowed to abstinence, to chastity, and to the service of Christ.

So zealous was she in following the rules of the Order, so relentlessly did she practise austerities, that it seemed human flesh could not endure them, and St Francis himself was compelled to admonish her. He was obliged to command her to sleep on a sack filled with straw, and not upon the bare ground with her head on a stone; likewise he forbade her the three days' fast, but charged her to eat at least once a day!

St Francis and St Clare walked together on one occasion to Spello, where there was a convent of Camaldolese nuns who wished to be taken under the Franciscan rule.

On their homeward way they stopped at an inn for food, and the innkeeper (for it is well-known that not always do mortals recognize saintly and angelic guests) muttered that it was a scandalous thing that men and women should go wandering about the country in company, under the cloak of religion!

Troubled by the implied accusation, Francis left the inn in deep distress. On the return journey he bade Clare follow the upper path on the side of the hill, while he should follow the lower in the valley. Puzzled but obedient (for the innkeeper's words had failed to reach her ears), Clare asked when they should meet again.

Francis, somewhat abashed, not knowing how to reply, answered, "When the roses bloom on Mount Subasio."

They were then in the depths of winter but, as Clare walked, the snow melted beneath her feet, and the rose-bushes by the wayside burst into blossom. Quickly she gathered some, dropped them into her up-gathered robe, then, running down into the valley, joyously rejoined Francis and showed him what her garment held. And he, seeing in that token innocence justified, walked beside her in peace back to Assisi.

Perhaps the most notable among the wonders that Clare worked was in her older age, long after the death of her dear friend, when sick and broken she had lain for many months upon a bed of pain, borne with incredible patience and uncomplaining sweetness.

At that time the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa sent certain mercenaries whom people called indiscriminately Paynims and Saracens to destroy the town of Assisi. They came to the very gates of St Damien's, and were even swarming up over the walls, when Clare, being warned of the danger by one of the Sisters, bade them bring to her the casket of silver and ivory enclosing the pyx containing the Body of our Lord. Rising from her bed she went to a window whence she could be seen of the enemy. (When you go to Assisi you shall see that window.) Then, pronouncing exhortations and prayers, she held the pyx high above her head. Unaccountably moved to fear, the enemy suddenly threw down their arms, retreated, scattered, and fled, and St Clare saved not only her convent but the town of Assisi itself.

Still, this event cannot equal in charm the Heavenly Feast of St Clare and St Francis.

Loving friends though they had long been, it seems that they had never sat down at meat together, and this, such a meal being among the friendliest of the acts of friendly intercourse, might be thought strange. Clare greatly wished that they should together partake of earthly food, even as she had often been refreshed by heavenly food from Francis, her spiritual father.

At last St Francis consented, and it was agreed that Clare should come one night from her convent to the Porziuncola, and that there they should break bread together.

On the appointed night the people of Assisi and all the country around were startled at the sight of what seemed a conflagration in the valley where the Porziuncola stands. From all sides the people hastened thither, fearing that the little church must be in flames, with all the forest near it.

As they approached, they saw that the trees, though not afire, were illumined by a brilliant light issuing from the Porziuncola itself. Not the trees alone, but the very sky above was made bright with the flood of glory that arose from the tiny structure.

Hesitatingly, yet drawn by irresistible curiosity, the throng drew near and peered in at the windows and door, their faces bathed with the glow of what was within.

What was within was merely Francis and Clare seated, or maybe kneeling upon the earth, and between them the food that they had come to eat together. Did it lie neglected and forgotten? It seems probable, for they were deep in converse, in a communion so exalted and uplifting, so warming to the heart and moving to the soul, so angelic and sublime, that the radiance of it filled the air and reached up to the heavens.

CHAPTER VIII

ST JOHN GUALBERT'S CRUCIFIX

When you go to Florence and to the Church of the Holy Trinity, you will see it; they will show it to you, the Crucifix of St John Gualbert, he who founded the monastery up among the hills in the remote umbrageous valley—the Vallombrosa, and another at San Salvi, where you may see Andrea del Sarto's beautiful fresco of the Last Supper, San Giovanni Gualberto,

who made so brave a battle against the sin of simony in the Church of his day, and in whose behalf one of his monks, afterward named Peter Igneus, successfully underwent the trial by fire.

You will see that crucifix of which this is the story.

The voice of bells was rising in chorus from the steeples of Florence in the valley below; voices high and silver sweet sounded in pulsing, rhythmic syncopation with voices deep and sombre. All arose into the golden air of sunset.

Up the road leading to the church of San Miniato ran Giovanni Gualberto, his crimson cloak trailing unheeded in his haste; his eyes staring unseeing before him. Like one smitten with ague, he trembled from the gallant plume in his jewelled cap down to his embroidered shoes. The sheath of his dagger hung empty at his side—the dagger he had so lately drawn, with purpose of burying it in his enemy's heart, but which he had thrown from him, and left lying in the grass by the roadside.

He hastened on without pause until he came to the open door of the church. Within, all was dark but for the few tapers lighted on the chief altar. Never was Good Friday a day of illumination or of brilliant celebration. The church was vast and tenebrous. Near the high altar knelt the faithful in silent prayer.

Gualberto, entering, turned into the chapel nearest to the door, and falling upon the steps before the little altar bowed his head between his outstretched arms. A long time he lay without will or power to formulate a prayer; only the necessity to seek the peace and the stillness of sanctuary had brought him thither. He lay motionless and silent, while footfalls came and went in the aisles of the church. Then all was quiet. Gian Gualberto, raising himself to his knees, looked up at the crucifix above him. The face of the Christ was visible to him, illumined by the glow of one faint light hanging high in a silver lamp; the head was thrown back and the heavenward-gazing eyes were full of sorrow and pain.

Gian Gualberto looked at the tortured visage of his Saviour, looked long in silent pleading; and finally he prayed:

"Oh, God, my Heavenly Father—forgive!—forgive, that on this day the grief and wrath of my earthly father, and the grief and tears of my mother, added themselves to my own, and filled my heart with hunger for revenge!

"Oh, God, my Brother—forgive!—forgive, that wrath and grief for the shed blood of my earthly brother filled my heart with lust for the blood of his slayer!

"Father and Brother, forgive, that in arrogance and hatred I thought it mine to seek vengeance for the murder of my brother, my Ugo—best beloved of my heart, Ugo—light of my eyes!

"Forgive that I purposed to slake my thirst with the blood of his adversary. Thou knowest my intent to have spent my days in the clamour of battle, in the pomp of war. Here and now I renounce that purpose, as I forswear the life of this world, and vow myself to Thy service and worship alone—if Thou wilt but forgive!

"And, oh, my Father and my Brother, accept the thanks that from this day shall never cease to rise to Thee, that it was on this day of days, the day of Thy passion and death, that I met my adversary in the road upon this hillside, met him face to face, came upon him unprepared, unarmed, and unaccompanied, met him at a moment when he was all at my mercy, when I with dagger drawn might with ease have dispatched him.

"My God and My Saviour, my heart cries out its thanks to Thee, that he then, seeing his doom upon him, tried not to defend himself, but falling on his knees in the road before me, and spreading wide his arms as if they had been stretched upon a cross, adjured me in Thy name to spare him.

"Oh, Christ, my Redeemer! How did the memory of Thee then come upon me and blot out all other thought! How arose the vision of Thee before my eyes, hanging upon Thy Cross, and

how echoed in my ears Thy words, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!'

"Father—forgive! I knew not what I did!

"Brother! I thank Thee that Thou didst save me from the crime with which I was in the act of blackening and damning my soul!

"I give Thee thanks that Thou didst cause me to throw from me my drawn weapon and, embracing my enemy, utter the words of pardon.

"I give Thee thanks that in Thy great mercy Thou didst cause me to show mercy.

"Wilt Thou not now show mercy to me a sinner, because I too, though but a sinner, was merciful?

"Give me a sign, O Gracious Master, that Thou dost deign to accept the gift of my unworthy life!"

Gian Gualberto lifted supplicating hands; tears filled his eyes and bathed his cheeks, but through them, as he gazed upward, his glance met that of Eyes above him. The Eyes of Him upon the Cross, which had lately been raised in anguish, were now bent upon him in pitying and gravely pensive scrutiny.

For a long space Gian Gualberto and his Saviour looked deep into each other's souls, and then the Head above slowly bowed in majestic and gracious assent.

CHAPTER IX

ST URSULA AND THE ELEVEN THOUSAND VIRGINS

In the middle of the fifth century lived and reigned in Brittany a King, Theonotus by name, with his Queen, Daria. They had one daughter who was not only more beautiful than the day, and more gentle than the dove, but wiser than the serpent. For it appears that she knew all the things that were in those days to be known. Not only was she deeply versed in philosophy, in theology, in poetry, and in history from the very days of Adam down to her own, but she could read the stars, and knew the courses of the winds. She was, in short, the marvel of the age, and the fame of her learning, virtue, and beauty spread far and wide. It was, then, not to be wondered at that many suitors asked for her hand, but her parents being Christians had consented to Ursula dedicating herself to Christ, and taking vows of perpetual chastity; hence all offers of marriage were under one pretext or another declined.

Queen Daria died when her daughter was fifteen years old, and Ursula thereafter devoted herself to her father, aiding him, by her sound counsel and her charming presence, in the dispensing of justice, and in the duties of the court.

When Agrippinus, the King of England, heard of the renown of the princess of Brittany he eagerly desired her as a wife to his son Conon, who was as shining a pattern of manly qualities as Ursula of maidenly virtues. He therefore sent ambassadors to Theonotus, and to these he promised rich rewards should they return to him with a favourable answer, but menaced them with punishment should they meet with a refusal.

Theonotus's quandary may be divined. How dare he offend the powerful King of England by denying him the hand

of Ursula for his son? On the other hand, how break the vows made by his daughter to be the bride of Christ alone?

As the King sat in his chamber in dejection pondering the question, wondering what answer he could on the morrow give to the ambassadors whom he had received with kindness and had caused to be sumptuously housed and entertained in his palace, Ursula came to him, and noting his troubled countenance asked the cause of his sadness. When he had explained this to her, she exclaimed:

"My kind father and honoured King, lay aside all fear, and permit me to-morrow to answer these ambassadors in person."

Such was Theonotus's faith in the sagacity of the princess that he asked nothing better than to leave the matter in her hands, convinced that none could so well solve the difficulty.

On the morrow, therefore, when the ambassadors had again been ushered into his presence, Ursula took her place on the throne beside her father, and there with matchless grace and dignity received and greeted them. Presently, divinely inspired, she thus addressed them:

"Esteemed ambassadors of the great King of England—I thank you for the honourable message you have brought me. I thank the King and his princely son for their words, which are kinder than I, in my unworthiness, deserve. I feel myself already almost a daughter to your King, and here declare to you that to the offer of no other bridegroom than his son will I ever listen. I make, however, three conditions before consenting to become his bride. First, he shall send me ten virgins of the noblest families of his land to be my companions. And with each of the ten he shall send a thousand attendant maidens, and a thousand for myself as well. Secondly, he shall permit me and my eleven thousand companions to honour our virginity for the space of three years and he shall furnish us ships in which we may travel to visit holy places and the shrines of Saints. Thirdly, the Prince

and his court shall be baptized to my faith, for none but a Christian can I ever marry."

The Princess with her unfailing wisdom had reasoned thus: "Either the King of England will consider these conditions impossible and briefly refuse them, in which case no harm is done, or, if he grant them, then, with a Christian prince who will eventually be ruler over a Christian court, and eleven thousand Christian virgins to spread the Gospel throughout the land, will not the whole realm of England be won to God?" for she counted upon converting all her companions in the space of three years of pilgrimage.

When the ambassadors returned to England with Ursula's answer, and with glowing accounts of her beauty, her kindness, and wisdom, King Agrippinus paused not one moment. No conditions in his esteem were too hard in the way of acquiring this peerless Princess. The Prince, aglow with enthusiasm, unhesitatingly caused himself and all his followers to be baptized.

Then the King summoned his vassals in the various realms subservient to him to send forthwith eleven thousand spotless virgins of gentlest origin, to accompany the Princess Ursula of Brittany, affianced bride of his son Conon, upon her travels.

Without delay from all corners of the kingdom flocked the maidens, and having been gathered together at the capital of King Theonotus, they were met by Ursula, who greeted them with sisterly affection, and saw to their comfort and entertainment.

On the following day she collected them all in a meadow which lay without the walls of the city, and from a throne raised high above the ground she addressed the assemblage. She preached to them of the glory of God and of His Son Jesus Christ, of faith, charity, purity, and of a life dedicated to Heaven. With such eloquence she spoke that the eleven thousand were moved to tears of joy, and promised to do whatever she wished,

and to follow her whithersoever she should lead them. Ursula blessed them, and ordered them to be baptized on the spot, in a brook which ran through the meadow.



EMBARKATION OF THE VIRGINS

Never on earth was witnessed such a scene. One may picture the Elysian fields dotted with the multitudinous figures of the happy shades. One may imagine the gardens of Paradise peopled with the angelic choir, but surely never upon this globe was seen vision so lovely as this! The early spring day, the azure sky, the fresh morning breeze, the sun lending to the air that peculiarly luminous quality which comes only with the birth of the year, a golden haze drenching the landscape in a bath of radiance. The tender green of the meadow painted with gayest flowers: crocus, tulip, daffodil, harebell, heartsease, pimpernel, hyacinth, cyclamen, lily. And, crowning glory of all, eleven thousand maidens attired in richest garments of hues and modes defying description, ornamented with silver and gold, encrusted with gems, and each maiden beautiful as good, and good as wise! All manner of maidens, fair and dark, small and tall, round and slim, vivid and shy, stately and demure, and every one young and therefore sweet!

Then is it a wonder that barons and knights came from the east and came from the west and from north and south to see with their own eyes this incredible and unsurpassed spectacle, and that tears came to the eyes of all at sight of so much beauty, such fervour, and such dedication?

Ursula soon wrote to the English Prince, her affianced consort, thanking him for his compliance with all her wishes, and bidding him to her father's court.

Needless to say Canon without an hour's delay replied to the summons, and was received with honour and ceremony. The Prince's happiness at beholding the Princess whom he had won can better be divined than described.

It was not long, however, before Ursula, in the presence of her father and the court, addressed him in these words: "My gracious Prince, it has been revealed to me in a vision from Heaven that I must depart with my companions to visit the Holy City of Rome. Do thou, then, I pray, remain here, a help and a comfort to my father until my return. And if it should be God's

will that I return not, then shalt thou, having been a son to my father, inherit his throne."

It is said by some that the Prince obeyed this behest, but as there are other versions of the story, we prefer to believe that he found it impossible to let Ursula depart from his sight and that he accompanied her to Rome.

The eleven thousand virgins embarked, then, upon eleven ships, and although with them went no mariners yet they were not unattended, for many prelates and a number of chivalrous knights accompanied them.

A marvel it was to see how the maidens, miraculously taught, manned the ships, and with what skill they sailed them! They were days of delight which followed, for the weather continued flawless, the winds favourable; the ships might almost have been said to sail of themselves, which left the virgins free to spend their days upon the spacious decks in elevated intercourse and in enjoyment of the charming scene. Surely the seabirds paused in mid-flight and the fishes leaped from the waves to behold the unbelievable fleet!

They did not journey directly to Rome, but first sailed up the Rhine to Cologne. Here they sojourned a brief space, reposing. And here in a dream it was made known to Ursula that she would one day return, and with all her companions win the crown of martyrdom. This news she imparted to the maidens, and far from being saddened by the revelation of impending death, all with one accord rejoiced and fell to singing jubilant hymns of thanksgiving that they had been found worthy to give their lives in the High Cause.

They sailed on up the Rhine to Basle. There they left their ships, and journeyed on foot over the Alps and across the plains of Liguria, led over the snows and the steep mountain peaks by angels, who went before, pointing the way, flinging bridges for them over the torrents, and furnishing them with food and shelter.

At length they came to the River Tiber, and so to Rome.

Cyriacus, who was at that time Pope, informed of this great concourse of maidens, went out to meet them with all his clergy in procession. What was his delight when Ursula, kneeling at his feet, begging his blessing, told him her mission. He not only blessed the glorious company, but offered them honorable entertainment. They were lodged in tents pitched in the plain beyond the city gates, whence they made their journey to the shrines of St. Peter and St. Paul and there duly performed their devotions.

It was now that Conon, kneeling with Ursula at the feet of the Pope, was again baptized, and received the name of Ethereus in token of the whiteness of his regenerated soul.

Cyriacus would gladly have detained them, but Ursula explained that they must be on their way to win the crown destined for them in Heaven. When the Pope heard this, it was borne in upon him that he must leave the papacy and go to earn martyrdom. In vain his cardinals pleaded with him not to resign his holy office in order to follow after a crew of foolish virgins! He remained firm, for it was by the counsel of an angel that he had come to his determination. When the prelates could in nowise prevail upon him to renounce what to them seemed a mistaken course, they cancelled his name from the catalogue of high pontiffs, although he had held the office for nearly two years—and put in his place a good man named Admetus.

Meanwhile, as Ursula with all her followers prepared to embark, not only Cyriacus joined her, but his cardinals Vincent and James, and the archbishops of Ravenna and Lucca, the bishop of Faenza, the patriarch of Grado, and many other dignitaries of the Church.

There were at that time two pagan Roman generals, Maximus and Africanus, who commanded the imperial troops in Germany. When they heard of and saw this gathering of Christian maidens they said among themselves: "Shall this thing be? Shall we permit these virgins to return to Germany and

convert the entire nation to Christianity, or if they marry, become mothers of numberless Christian children? Nay, that would end our empire!"

So they sent messengers to their cousin, one named Julian, a powerful barbarian, King of the Huns, and bade him bring his hosts in full force into Germany and concentrate them at Cologne; there they told him what to do.

When, therefore, after a long and difficult journey, Ursula arrived at Cologne, she found the city surrounded by the barbarian hordes.

These, when first they saw the strange company issuing from the ships, not fierce warriors, but youthful maids and venerable priests, with but a few young princes, barons, and knights among the number, all unarmed, paused for a moment in uncertainty, for sheer wonder at the sight. Then, remembering their instructions, they fell upon them like wolves upon a flock of snowy sheep.

First to fall was Prince Ethereus; then Cyriacus and his cardinals and all the prelates and knights perished in the attempt to defend the virgins. These, being left defenceless, also resisted their assailants as long as their virtue was threatened; but when the barbarians, infuriated by their resistance, fell upon them with the sword, they offered themselves gladly to the slaughter, and were massacred to the last one, so that the plain was covered with their bodies and drenched with their blood.

When they came to Ursula, however, awed by the majesty of the saintly Princess, the barbarians dared not touch her, but led her to their King. At sight of her, Julian was filled with admiration, and as tears filled her eyes, he said to her: "Be comforted, weep not for thy companions, for I will make thee my spouse, and thou shalt be the greatest Queen in all Germany!"

But, "Oh, senseless and cruel and base!" cried Ursula. "Dost thou think that I would consent to live after the slaughter

of my companions? Blind art thou, and I defy thee, even as I defy Satan thy master!"

At which words, such was Julian's anger that, taking three arrows from his quiver, he shot them from his bow, piercing the dauntless heart of Ursula, who sank lifeless before him.

But her spirit arose from the dead body in company with those of all the blessed sisterhood, of her beautiful English Prince Ethereus, of Cyriacus, who had left the papal throne to join her in martyrdom, and the many prelates and knights. All in one beatific company they ascended to the throne of God, ever after to dwell in the light of His smile, bearing palms in their hands and crowns upon their heads, and there to the sound of heavenly harps ever singing blessings and praises to Him whom they serve and adore.

CHAPTER X

ST EDWARD'S SMILE AND THE SEVEN SLEEPERS

It happened on one Easter Day that King Edward, he who was the Confessor and was afterward called a Saint, sat at dinner with all his court about him. Toward the middle of the banquet a silence fell upon the company, and it was noticed that the King smiled, but that soon his face clouded over and "fell into a heaviness." All the guests would gladly have known what had caused his merriment and then his sadness, but none dared ask him, until after dinner Duke Harold Godwin, having followed him when he retired from the table to his own apartment accompanied by a bishop and an abbot, questioned him.

The King answered: "As I sat at meat and bethought me, as is my custom, of the great goodness of God in conferring upon me such abundance of food and drink, of fine raiment and

servants, of riches and royalty, I thanked Him in my heart and He opened my eyes. Then I saw, as if I had been in the very place, Seven Sleepers that lie in a cave in Mount Coelion beside the city of Ephesus. And I smiled as I saw them all turn over from their right side to the left. But when I apprehended what this meant I perceived I had no cause to laugh, but rather to mourn, for whereas they have lain for many years on their right side, their turning means that for seventy years they shall lie on their left side, during which time hunger and death, pestilence and murrain, great battles and earthquakes shall be through all the world."

Those who heard the King marvelled at his saying, and sent to the Emperor to know if there were indeed such a city or such a mountain, and whether there were seven sleepers in a cave.

The Emperor in turn went to Ephesus, to Mount Coelion, found the cave, and in it seven martyrs, lying on their left side, every one! He was filled with wonder at the sight. After the Emperor's death, in accordance with St Edward's prophecy, insurrections began throughout all the world, pestilence, and all manner of scourges and visitations.

Now, as to the Seven Sleepers, these were seven young Christians who lived in the time of the Emperor Decius. They were Maximian, Malchus, Marcus, Dionysius, John, Serapion, and Constantine. They were accused before the ruler because they refused to offer sacrifices to the gods, but they escaped to Mount Coelion and hid in a cavern. They were, however, betrayed and discovered as they slept, and by order of the Emperor were sealed into the cave. But two Christian men, Theodorus and Rufinus, wrote an account of their martyrdom and laid the parchment, closed with silver seals, among the stones that blocked the cave's mouth.

Two hundred and eight years later, when the Christian Emperor Theodorus was reigning, he sorrowed over the heresy which had sprung up, denying the resurrection of the dead. Daily

he retired to a secret place in his palace and mourned in sackcloth and ashes. God in the following manner rewarded and justified his faith.

A certain burgess of Ephesus, in digging to make a stable on Mount Coelion, came upon the cavern; the light and air entered it, and the sleepers awoke, thinking that they had slept but over night. One of their number, Malchus, was selected to go to the city to buy food. He set forth with fear and trembling, supposing his life and that of his companions to be in great danger.

He advanced cautiously toward the city gate and was startled at the sight of a cross placed above it. He tried another gate, there found another cross. He believed himself to be dreaming, but covering his face he entered the city and went to buy bread. Hearing everywhere the name of Christ spoken boldly and openly he was more and more puzzled. Finally he arrived at a baker's and bought bread. In payment he offered a coin the like of which the baker had never seen; the baker therefore came to the conclusion that Malchus had found some ancient hidden treasure; he immediately accused him, and Malchus knew not what to say for dread. When the bystanders saw his confusion they put a cord round his neck and haled him before the consul and the bishop.

After much questioning the truth was discovered, and Malchus led all the principal men of the city, followed by the multitude, to the cave in Mount Coelion. There within sat the other youths, "their visages like unto roses flowering," and shining like the sun. Also they found the letter of Theodorus and Rufinus, sealed with its seals of silver, among the displaced stones at the mouth of the cave.

The Emperor was sent for and came in haste. Entering the cave, he with tears embraced each of the seven, saying: "I see you as if I should see our Lord raising Lazarus!"

Maximian then said to him: "Believe us, O Emperor, for our Lord has raised us before the Day of Judgment to the end that thou believe firmly in the resurrection of the dead!"

After these words, they all inclined their heads to the earth, and rendered up their spirits to God.

The Emperor wished to make sepulchres of gold and silver for them, but they appeared to him that night and bade him suffer them to remain on the earth of the cave (on their right side), as they had so long lain, until the day of the final resurrection.

To return to St Edward.

It happened on another occasion, on a Whit-Sunday, when he was praying before the altar at Westminster for the peace and tranquillity of his realm, that at the elevation of the Sacrament he "fell in a soft and demure laughing," so that all who were present wondered, but again dared not question him until the service was over. Then one bolder than the rest asked him why he had smiled, and he told them that as he prayed he had seen as in a vision his enemies across the sea, the Danes, assembling in great numbers and boarding ships to come to attack the realm of England. As the King of Denmark was about to embark he fell between two ships and was drowned, and by his death both the people of Denmark and the people of England escaped a great peril.

"That," he ended, "was the cause of my smiling."

Those who heard the King recount his vision immediately sent messengers to Denmark to inquire if this might be true. When the messengers returned they reported that it was true indeed, and that the King of Denmark had been drowned at the moment when St Edward smiled.

CHAPTER XI

ST. ZITA'S PILGRIMAGE

In a little village called Bozzanello not far from Lucca was born a child who was called Zita. At the age of twelve she was sent to Lucca to serve in the house of a nobleman, Pagano da Fatinelli by name; in that house and in that service she remained all her life long. She died when she was sixty years old, accounted by all a Saint, and at her death a beautiful unknown star was seen to rise and shine over the town.

Her masters were all her lifetime kind to her, but how could they be unkind to so devoted and obedient, to so perfect a servant?

As she started out one cold morning to Mass, her master, noticing her thin clothing, laid his warm furred mantle over her shoulders. When Zita had arrived at the cathedral door she found there a wretched beggar, so ill, so blue with the cold, that she, forgetting in her compassion that the cloak that kept her warm was not hers to lend, took it off and bade the beggar wear it while she should be within at the service.

When she came out the mendicant was nowhere to be seen; he and the cloak were gone. Greatly troubled, and knowing that she had probably merited a scolding from her master, Zita went home slowly, dreading what was awaiting her there. But before she had reached the house the cloak had been restored to its owner by a youth of tall stature and radiant countenance. To this day the door of the church at which Zita put the mantle on the beggar's back is called the Angel's Door, for no doubt existed in the mind of any but that the beggar was an angel sent to test the heart of Zita, whose compassion was not found wanting.

Then Zita, with a proper sense of the unpleasantness that had been averted, feeling impelled to make a pilgrimage of

thanks for her escape from the legitimate expressions of annoyance of her master, determined to go and speak her gratitude in a little chapel at some miles distance, in fact five miles beyond Pisa, which is ten miles from Lucca. This in all would make a fairly considerable journey on foot, during every mile of which she could refresh her sense of indebtedness, and when she had reached the chapel, entreat perhaps for wisdom and courage to brave the dangers of human disfavour which might result should occasion again offer opportunity for winning favour in Heaven.

She set out one spring morning to make her votive pilgrimage, promising to be home betimes. She started accompanied by a friend who had, maybe, some object of her own of thanksgiving or entreaty. But having reached Pisa, the friend, whose energy, endurance, or enthusiasm had come to an end, thought well of remaining with a relative for the day and, rejoining Zita on her homeward journey, covering the distance back to Lucca in her company.

Zita went on her way alone, but her friend's defection had caused some delay. Zita had accompanied her into her relative's house and had there been detained much against her will, so that when she reached the distant chapel night was closing in; the sacristan had locked the doors and gone home, and there was no way of entering. To make matters more trying, not only darkness was falling, but rain in torrents. The wind beat against Zita as she stood wondering what to do. She had come so far that, unable to make up her mind to turn back leaving her thanks unuttered, she kneeled upon the steps and fell to saying her prayers. She prayed so long, pouring out all her devout and innocent heart, that in time, because it was dark and because she had walked far, she dropped forward on to the threshold and went to sleep, the candle which she had brought to offer on the altar of the Blessed Virgin lying unlighted beside her.

In the middle of the night she awoke from peaceful dreams to find the tempest raging round her; the thunder roared, the lightning flashed; floods of rain pelting against the face of

the church ran in streams over the worn steps—but Zita herself was warm and dry as she arose, while beside her on the step, near where her head had lain, stood the votive candle, burning bright and serene.

"To thy protection, O most Holy Mother, I owe this favour. Accept the thanks of thine unworthy servant, and continue, I pray thee, thy guardianship on my return through the fearsome night."

She turned her face homeward and made all haste toward Pisa. As she was going through the town and passing the house where she had left her friend, the friend ran out and caught her by the arm:

"Ah, Zita! I have so feared for thee in the storm and the night that I could not sleep, but waited hour after hour listening for thy steps on the stones. Come in, come in and stay with me for the remainder of the night. In the morning we will return to Lucca."

"Nay," said Zita, "the morning must find me in Lucca. My master was kind; he let me leave his house bent upon my own affairs; shall I neglect his, as a return for his kindness?" Bidding her farewell she took leave of her friend.

When she had covered a portion of her road and was passing by the Baths of Lucca, the storm was still unabated. Seeing her pass, a party of merry-makers returning from a late revel invited her to come with them to shelter.

"I may not tarry," answered Zita, "for by sunrise I must be at work in my master's kitchen, ready to labour and serve. Dawn cannot now be far," and she hastened on.

There was still Monte Giuliano to climb and cross. At the summit a hermit at his vigil saw her as she passed over the path of light that streamed from the open door of his hut.

"Come in, my daughter," he called to her; "the night is wild, the forest is dark. Rude men may be abroad to do thee

harm. Come in and join in my prayers; come, rest and wait for the light of morning."

"Nay, my father," said Zita, "I pray as I go that my Heavenly Master and His Mother protect me. I must be in my earthly master's house by daybreak. The only danger that threatens me is that I neglect my duty to him if I make not haste."

She disappeared into the black wood. A castle stood between her and the town; at its gate were two sentries who in the angle of a wall had heaped faggots, by the blaze of which they attempted to dry and warm themselves. In gossip and exchange of tales they kept each other heartened during the bleak hours before the dawn. They saw Zita as she flitted into range of the glow of the flame:

"Whither away, maiden?" called one; "approach and hold thy hands to the fire. Tell us thy errand at this unholy hour. Come, take pity upon two mortals near perished for lack of cheer, as we in truth feel pity for thy weariness, which is apparent in thy pallor and faltering steps."

Indeed by this time Zita was worn with her long journey.

"I give you thanks," she said, "but I must be on my way; I have made a pilgrimage this night to a far place, and surely strength will be granted me to return to my work by the first peep of day."

She went on. The storm had ceased, but now her footsteps halted and her spirit flagged. She came at last to a bend in the road where a spring gushing out of a cleft in a rock splashed into a basin hollowed in stone. Exhausted she sank on to the grass beside it, and thinking from her faintness that she might be about to die, she commended her soul to the mercy of God and to the care of His Mother, and breathed a prayer with what seemed to be her last breath. Strangely refreshed by the act, she bent over the spring and drank a long draught, with every drop of which she felt herself to be gaining strength.

When, entirely restored, she lifted her face from the water she found that she was no longer alone: a lady stood by her side, apparently waiting. Thinking that she might wish to drink like herself from the spring, Zita hastily rose to make way for her, but when she withdrew along the road she found that the lady was still by her side. She noticed then that her companion was clad in a white robe bordered with gold, and wore a long blue mantle; also that her head was surrounded with radiance although the night was still dark, only the first suggestion of pallor having spread over the east.

In awed silence she advanced, and when she and her companion had arrived at the gate of the covered bridge spanning the river outside of Lucca, although the guard was not at his post the gate silently opened before her. The same happened when they came to the city gates. No need to rouse the watchman, for again the heavy doors opened noiselessly and admitted the two. They had walked without speaking, but Zita had realized that between her and the Wonderful Lady there was no need for speech. Her heart spoke mutely, knowing itself comprehended, while into her spirit were poured the unuttered but uplifting _words of assurance and refreshment of the Gracious One.

Having arrived at the house of the Fatinelli, Zita ran forward to open the door, and then, turning toward her late fellow traveller, was about to beg her to bless that roof by entering under it, but the Lady was no longer there, and Zita's eyes, peering eagerly in her direction, were dazzled and for the moment blinded by the first shaft of the rising sun.

Then, like the good and faithful servant that she was, she entered her kitchen, wakened the fire, set water upon it to heat, and fell to sweeping, singing as she swept, for her spirit was gay within her, her eyes were alight, and her heart aglow with the wonder of the night's pilgrimage.

CHAPTER XII

ST NICHOLAS

St Nicholas, perhaps the most popular saint in Christendom, was born in Panthera of Syria, in Asia Minor, in the third century, of rich and pious parents. For many years they had been married, but no offspring had come to bless their union, though they had prayed with tears that a child might be granted them, and had given alms without stint in the hope of thus meriting the favour of heaven.

At last, in reward for their life of charity and patience, an angel appeared to Johane and announced to her the birth of a son.

When the baby had safely been born, that amazing child stood up in the basin in which he was being bathed, and for two mortal hours, with hands joined and eyes raised to heaven, returned thanks to God for His goodness in having brought him into the world. Then, it being Friday, he refused nourishment, and thereafter faithfully abstained from his mother's breast until after the setting of the sun on Wednesdays and Fridays, the fast days of the Church.

Nicholas was but a youth when he was ordained a priest, and soon after lost both father and mother, inheriting a vast fortune. But he looked upon himself only as the steward of God in his disposal of it, and immediately set about distributing his wealth among such of the needy as came to his notice.

A certain rich noble of Panthera at this time lost all his money, and so utterly destitute had he become that he not only had no marriage portion wherewith to dower his three daughters, but not even one small coin with which to buy bread for them, and being apparently a gentleman of limited imagination or resourcefulness, the only way that presented itself to him to keep

them from starvation was to sacrifice them to a life of shame. He wept and sorrowed much over his three innocent girls, but what, he asked himself, was he to do?

All of which was very sad. Hearing of it, Nicholas went by night to the man's house, while the maidens slept and their father kept mournful vigil. The sky was overcast, but through a sudden rift in the clouds the moonlight gleamed for a moment upon an open casement. Advancing cautiously toward it, Nicholas, reaching over the high sill, dropped in a purse filled with gold. The money fell at the father's feet and his joy was boundless. The well-filled purse portioned the eldest daughter; the other two, however, were in as sore straits as ever, until, soon after, Nicholas repeated the gift in the same fashion. This time the second daughter was portioned. When Nicholas went a third time to give the purse which should dower the third daughter; the father, who was watching to discover who had been such a Providence to him and his beloved girls, hastened out and seized him by his robe, exclaiming: "O Nicholas, servant of God, why seek to hide thyself?" Then he thanked him with effusion. Nicholas charged him to tell no one, but of course he did—or we should not know the story to this day.

In course of time, Nicholas determined to go to the Holy Land. Having set sail, he was overtaken by a great storm in which a sailor fell from the mast and was killed, but Nicholas by his prayers restored him to life—seeing which the other sailors implored him to still the tempest and so save them all from certain death. He rebuked the winds and the sea; both obediently subsided, and all was calm.

When he returned from Palestine, Nicholas dwelt in Myra, humble and unknown. It was then that the Bishop of Myra died, and one of the clergy was informed by a revelation from Heaven that the first man presenting himself at the church door on the following morning was appointed by God to be bishop. According to his custom, Nicholas entered the church to pray at dawn. There he was met and, in spite of his protests, was ordained bishop.

Soon after, the land was afflicted with a famine, and Nicholas's diocese was suffering extremest hunger, when he learned that three ships loaded with grain were in the harbour. He descended to the ships and asked the captains to sell him each a hundred hogsheads of grain.

They demurred: "The grain was weighed at Alexandria, and will be weighed again at Constantinople; we dare not dispose of any of the wheat destined for the imperial granaries."

But Nicholas said: "If you will do as I ask, you will find that by the Grace of God your cargoes will not be diminished," which, though incredible, proved to be true, for when the captains reached their destination their cargoes measured the same amount as when they had left Alexandria, while Nicholas, by miraculously multiplying his own allowance, had not only enough to feed his people for the year, but enough to furnish seed to sow the fields for the following season.

There was, at this time, an uprising in Phrygia, which caused the Emperor Constantine to send three of his tribunes, Nepotian, Ursyn, and Apollyn, to quell the disturbance. Nicholas bade them to dine with him, hoping to win leniency from them for his people. While they were seated at table word came to Nicholas that the consul, bribed by some enemy, had ordered the beheading of three innocent ladies. Rising from the table, followed by his three guests, Nicholas hastened to the place of execution. Not a moment too soon, for the victims, with bandaged eyes, were kneeling before the headsman, whose bared blade was already brandished over their bent backs. Snatching the sword away and throwing it from him, Nicholas commanded that the prisoners be released. Neither the headsman, the consul, nor any of his minions dared disobey him; they, on the contrary, tried to placate him and win his pardon, which they with great difficulty obtained. The three tribunes went their ways much impressed by the power and what we might now call the efficiency of the excellent bishop.

Upon their return to Constantinople they found that evil tongues had been busy in their absence, and that they were in such disfavour that soon they were cast into prison, and were to be executed by order of the Emperor. Their discouragement was complete until Nepotian, remembering how Nicholas had delivered the innocent, proposed to his friends that they should all kneel down and pray for his intercession. Nicholas immediately appeared to them in a vision and allayed their fears. Next he appeared to Constantine, and said to him: "Arise in haste and command that the three tribunes be not executed, or I shall pray God to move a battle against thee in which thou shalt be overthrown and shalt be made meat for the beasts!"

The astonished Emperor demanded: "Who art thou that enterest my palace by night and darest say such words to me?"

"I am Nicholas, Bishop of Myra," replied the Saint.

Constantine sent for the imprisoned tribunes and asked them if they knew aught of this same Nicholas. They told him with enthusiasm of his sanctity, and of his miracles and great power.

The Emperor, enormously impressed, released them, saying: "Go forth, I charge you, bear jewels to this man, and entreat him that he threaten me no more, but pray unto our Lord for me and for my realm."

He furthermore sent Nicholas as a gift a copy of the Gospels written in letters of gold, and bound in covers studded with pearls and precious stones, convinced that it was the part not only of courtesy but of wisdom to be on good terms with the Bishop of Myra.

But quite the nicest thing Nicholas ever did was in the time of the aforementioned famine: he was travelling through a forest on one of his many errands of mercy, when he came to an inn. Tired and hungry, he asked for lodging and food, which the smiling host promised should be promptly forthcoming, though, to be sure, provisions were so scarce in these hard days of

famine that had he not been a provident and farsighted man he would at this trying juncture have had nothing to offer his honoured guest. With many words of a like effect, the innkeeper was laying the table and bringing dishes from the cupboard. He finally with a flourish set before Nicholas a fine plate of salted meat.



THE VICTIMS WERE KNEELING BEFORE THE HEADSMAN.

Instead of beginning to eat, St Nicholas paused for a long moment, looking fixedly at the dish. Then he looked at his host. Next he held the dish to his nose, and again glanced sharply at the man before him. Lastly he rose from the table, leaving the food untouched.

"Where is the rest of this most excellent salted meat?" he asked.

"Good father, it is in a tub in the cellar, but there is not much, I do assure thee. Is there not enough for thee? I will fetch more . . ."

"Nay, lead me to the tub," said Nicholas, quietly. The now trembling host led the Saint to the cellar.

There stood the tub.

St Nicholas, approaching it, made the sign of the Cross over it, and . . . three little boys whom the wicked innkeeper had slain and minced and salted and peppered and spiced and pickled, sprang joyously out of it and into the arms of the Saint, who soon restored them to their grieving mother—and she a widow!

All of which goes to tell why St Nicholas is the patron Saint of children (especially little boys), of orphans, sailors, captives, pawnbrokers, and the poor; guardian of young maidens; defender of the downtrodden, and in general and always the benign protector of the weak against the strong..

CHAPTER XIII

ST HERMAN-JOSEPH'S APPLE

In Cologne, in the thirteenth century, there lived a poor woman, mother of one dear child whose name was Herman. Though she was so poor, she cared greatly, like all good mothers, that her boy should grow up to be wise and good, and to that end expended as much as she could upon his education. Daily she sent him off to school in the morning, though often she had but one piece of bread to put into his pocket to eat in all the day.

Always he started early schoolward, that there might be time to linger awhile in the Church of St Mary which was on his way, for Herman loved that brief pause in the quiet dusk of the church, kneeling in prayer before the image of the Blessed Mother enthroned with the Holy Child on her knees. He would remain as long as he dared before the altar, reflecting upon her goodness and her deep love and sorrow, and upon the holiness and the sufferings of her Divine Son. As he looked at them both sitting there above, bending benign glances upon him, his heart would go out to them and he longed to do something that should be pleasing in their sight, that should express the fullness of his loyalty and devotion to them both.

Herman loved his own mother above all people on earth, and his feeling for her made him the more ardent in his worship of the Mother of his Lord.

One day in autumn Herman was starting off as usual to school; as he left her, his mother embraced him and gave him not the customary piece of dry, black bread, but an apple, large, ruddy, and smooth, with three glossy leaves attached to the stem. It was all she had to give him that day, and not really so valuable for the day's food as the humble piece of daily bread, but Herman's eyes shone as he took the glowing fruit; it was so

wonderful to look at and it would be so good to eat. A thing so perfect and so joyously beautiful!

He ran off dancing, and soon arrived at the door of the church. With one last look at his treasure he put it into his little buckled leathern pouch, and entered. Soon he was kneeling on his accustomed step before the altar, with his head bowed over his joined fingers. Raving finished his prayer he settled back upon his heels and let his clasped hands sink, while with lifted head he looked at the Two above.

How lovely and how glorious was the Queen of the Skies in her white robe and her sapphire, star-sown mantle! The light of many tapers made to gleam and sparkle the gold embroidery of her cloak and the gems of her crown. Her hair waved sweetly against her snowy forehead, her eyes were kindness itself, and her hands looked made to soothe and comfort; one of them held the Saviour of the World upon her knee, the other was raised in a gesture of tenderest benediction.

"Oh, thrice blessed Mother of God," sighed Herman, "would that I had something besides my heart to offer thee! That belongs to thee and to thy beloved Son already. I give it to you both over again every day! I have nothing but my life to give—nothing worthy of thy queenly acceptance!"

A sudden thought came to him; reaching into his pouch, Herman drew forth the crimson and golden fruit; then, with questioning eyes and a hesitating gesture, he held it out in humble offering.

The gracious Lady of Heaven, stretching out her hand, took the apple, and gave it to her Son, while both divinely smiled upon the little boy.

There was at that time an Order of Brothers founded by St Norbert, who built his monastery in the valley of Coucy, in a lonely meadow which the Blessed Virgin herself pointed out to him in a vision—hence the name Premontre from which the Order took its name of Premonstratensian.

To this Order Herman afterward belonged, and years later the Virgin again smiled upon him. On this occasion it was she who made him a most precious gift. Herman saw her in an ecstatic vision descend from Heaven, and taking his hand place upon his finger a ring, calling him her spouse.

After his vision the brotherhood added the name of Joseph to his own, wherefore he is known as St Herman-Joseph.

CHAPTER XIV

ST LOUIS OF FRANCE

Louis IX of France, who, as Gibbon says, united the virtues of a king, a hero, and a man, was born at Poissy on April 25, 1214. Guizot names him as one of the two princes "who on every occasion formed the first rule of their conduct from their moral creed"—the other prince being Marcus Aurelius.

Voltaire, and we may remember that Voltaire is not given to erring in the direction of exaggerated enthusiasm for kings, said of him:

"Louis IX appeared to be a prince destined to reform Europe, if she could have been reformed, to render France triumphant and civilized, and to be in all things a pattern for men. His piety, which was that of an anchorite, did not deprive him of any kingly virtue. A wise economy took nothing from his liberality. A profound policy was combined with strict justice, and he is perhaps the only sovereign entitled to this praise; prudent and firm in counsel, intrepid without rashness in his wars, he was as compassionate as if he had always been unfortunate. No man could have carried virtue further."

Louis, through the sudden early death of his father, Louis VIII, inherited the throne when he was only twelve years old, but during his entire minority his mother, the remarkable Blanche of Castille, reigned in his stead, as indeed she did to a certain extent

to the end of her days, more particularly during Louis' six years' absence at the time of his first Crusade, for even after she had handed over the reins of government to her son, she remained his chief adviser, and one might say his associate on the throne. She was herself a child of Alfonso IX and Eleanor of England, daughter of King John.

"His youth," as one biographer says, "was not spent in vain, but in a very saintly manner. The Queen, whom he obeyed in all things, caused him to be carefully educated, and herself watched over him. She made him go about in grand and noble attire such as befitted a great king. At times he went hunting, or on the river, or indulged in pastimes of that character, such as were seemly and proper. His master was, however, always with him, teaching and instructing him in letters, and as the pious King admitted, this master did not fail to chastise him for disciplinary reason. He heard Mass and Vespers daily, and all the Canonical Hours. He avoided all improper games and kept himself from all unseemly and dishonourable things. He injured no one by word or deed, and always addressed those to whom he spoke with respect."

Louis was of beautiful countenance, with light hair and delicate features. He was tall, slender, and by no means robust. He was so far from strong that one can only wonder that he should have reached even the age of fifty-six, when one considers the hardships both self-imposed and accidental to which he was subjected.

He married when he was nineteen years old the beautiful and pious Margaret of Provence, a princess whom his mother had chosen for him, whom he loved and to whom he was unswervingly faithful all his days. His love was returned; Margaret was to him always a devoted and adoring wife, and she bore him no fewer than eleven children.

One of the most picturesque details in the life of St Louis was his acquisition of the Holy Crown of Thorns, and a piece of the True Cross. He received these from Baldwin II, the Latin

Emperor of Constantinople, in 1239. This monarch, having borrowed large sums of money from the Venetians, had offered them the Holy Relics as pledge. Louis eagerly redeemed this pledge, and upon Baldwin's surrendering them to him, carried the Relics himself from Sens to Paris, walking barefoot and bareheaded all the way. He eventually placed his treasures in the Sainte-Chapelle, which he had caused to be built to receive them—the Sainte-Chapelle, which itself has remained among the most precious treasures of art on the earth.

But the great event of Louis' life was the Crusade which he undertook in 1249.

He had been ill of a fever a few years before, that is to say, in 1244. The entire nation was alarmed by the danger of losing its revered sovereign. Long processions were to be seen in the streets, and Masses were solemnized in Paris, wherein all besought God for the recovery of the King.

But the fever raged on unabated until his life was despaired of. He at last fainted and it was believed that he had died. The country was filled with wailing and lamentations. Blanche, Margaret, and all Louis' brothers and friends had never ceased praying to God, for days and nights, that their beloved might be spared to them. At last He listened to their prayers and those of the people, for when the watchers all thought Louis dead, he suddenly drew up his arms and then extended them, and spoke in the strange voice of one returning from the grave: "The Grace of God has visited me from on high, and has recalled me from the dead."

As soon as he was sufficiently restored he called for the Bishop of Paris, and when the latter had arrived at his bedside, said to him: "My Lord Bishop, I beg you to place the Cross of the Crusader upon my shoulder."

The Bishop tried to dissuade him; his mother and his wife on their knees implored him to wait until he should have recovered from his illness; his friends remonstrated; he insisted but the more vehemently to be given the cross, until the Bishop

not daring to refuse further, attached it, though with sobs and tears, to his garments. All who were witnesses, likewise, and all the inmates of the palace now wept again as if he had indeed died. But Louis was filled with joy. He took the cross, laid it upon his breast, and declared that he was entirely cured.

On his complete return to health, in spite of all remonstrance, Louis fulfilled his vow. As soon as so great an undertaking could be compassed, he set sail with his wife, children, brothers, and friends, his knights and followers, and an army of 50,000 in a fleet of 1800 ships. He took the Oriflamme, the flame-coloured standard of the kings of France, at the Abbey of Saint-Denis, and sailed from Aigues-Mortes.

After a prolonged stay at the island of Cyprus, he landed near Damietta on the coast of Egypt.

Before landing he called his leaders together on his ship, and said to them:

"My faithful friends, we shall be invincible if we are inseparable in love. . . . Happen what may, the better part is ours. If we are conquered we shall go to Heaven as martyrs; if we triumph the glory of our Lord will be made manifest, and that of all France, or rather of all Christendom, will be increased. God Who sees all has not called me in vain. This is His cause; let us fight for Jesus Christ, and He will triumph in us; and He will give glory, honour, and blessing not to us, but to His name."

It would seem that an enthusiasm so exalted might carry sovereign and followers inevitably on to victory, but adversaries even more deadly than the Saracens were lying in wait for the devoted band. Famine and pestilence succeeded where strength of arms and skill in military operations might have failed. After a disastrous campaign—during which the King's energy, patience, faith, and devotion to his cause never for one moment flagged, even as his courage, endurance, self-forgotten and tender care of his stricken subjects were unfailing, although he himself was also seriously ill—after long and valiant struggle, eventual massacres, and final rout, Louis was taken prisoner.

His heroism and calmness during his captivity won the awed respect and admiration of his conquerors.

When there was question of his being ransomed by certain rich Christians who were taking measures for his deliverance, he expressly forbade this to be done, fearing that his poor followers would suffer by it. He insisted upon remaining in captivity until he himself had negotiated for the release of all, down to the last and least of his followers.

"I wish to remain," he said, "and wait until payment is made, and the others are set free."

After four long years he felt himself at liberty to return. Having paid his own ransom by the surrender of Damietta (the stronghold he had seized upon his first landing), he set sail for France.

On the homeward journey he gave another of the countless proofs of his selfless devotion to his subjects. When his ship was off the island of Cyprus it struck upon a rock, and the keel was so seriously damaged that the ship was in danger of sinking. Every one advised him to land at Cyprus, leave his ship, enter one of those composing his homeward-bound fleet, and leaving its passengers (about 500 souls) on the island, sail away without them. He refused, saying: "There is no one who does not value his life as much as I do mine. If I leave the ship there are five hundred people who will remain on the island of Cyprus, and who, as it may chance, will never return to their country. Therefore, I would rather trust my person and my wife and children to the hand of God than to do so much hurt to this large number of people."

In course of time he arrived safely in France.

Following the Crusade came a period during which Louis reigned in peace. He brought his kingdom to the most perfect state of order, of method, and of prosperity, by the wisdom, equity, and charity of his rule. "To every man his right" was the maxim of the holy King's government.

His care of the sick, the weak, the poor, and the afflicted knew no bounds, yet his stern justice toward all evil-doers showed him to be every inch a king while yet a Saint.

The deplorable Second Crusade which he undertook in 1270, when he was already in a sad state of health, was the last of Louis' acts of religious enthusiasm and self-denial.

He landed in Tunis this time, but his troops as well as he suffered from the first with a malady almost unescapable in that climate, and it was not long before it became evident that the King's last hour had come.

He died at noon on August 25, 1270, wearing the Franciscan monk's habit. He had himself laid at the last moment upon ashes on the ground as a penitent; then, crossing his arms upon his breast, he murmured with an air of beatified serenity the words of the Psalm:

"I shall enter into Thy mansion. I shall worship in Thy holy temple, and trust in Thy name"—and expired. His heart was carried to Sicily, the kingdom of his brother, Charles of Anjou, and placed in the sumptuous Abbey of Monreale in Palermo. The remainder of his relics were carried back from Tunis, and buried in the Church of Saint-Denis. Later, a part of these was transferred to the Sainte-Chapelle.

In 1297 Louis was canonized by Pope Benedict VIII.

CHAPTER XV

THE PATIENCE OF ST FRANCES THE ROMAN

Francesca, daughter of Paolo and Jacobella Bassi, was born at the end of the fourteenth century.

What she wished from earliest youth was to be permitted to retire in peace to a convent and there spend her life in religious meditation and in good works, but her parents, much against her inclination, married her, when she was twelve years of age, to an excellent man, Lorenzo Ponziano by name, who was not only noble and rich but also kind.

As she would have made an exemplary nun had she been granted her desire, so she made an impeccable wife and mother. The same zeal which she would have bestowed upon her spiritual duties she lavished upon her home and her family.

This is not to say that she did not find time and opportunity for the performance of some of those works of charity and devotion which were needful to her happiness, for instead of spending her days in the ease and idleness and search for pleasure to which riches and position would have entitled her, she daily repaired, clad in disfiguring garments, to a *podere* owned by her beyond the walls of Rome, outside of the gate of San Paolo, a *podere*, part farm, part vineyard, and part woodland. There she gathered faggots and such provisions as the farm afforded, and on her head, on her back, in her arms, bore these back to town and distributed them to the poor and the sick. If the burden was more than human woman could carry, she loaded with it a little donkey—and herself walked humbly behind him, like any poor *Contadina*.

Had it not been for her ability thus to gratify her need for service and for the effacing of self, she must have been most unhappy, but apart from the joy she obtained from her

surreptitious good deeds, she had another hidden source of delight. She was everywhere attended by an angel, invisible to any but herself. This lovely companion made a celestial link for her between earth and heaven, and gave her at all times a sense of association and kinship with the High Lord and Master in whose service she lived.

It happened one morning that, according to her daily custom, Francesca was reciting the Office of Our Lady. Kneeling in her oratory with open book before her on the carved desk, she read the words which ever brought her fresh life and light. She had come to a certain verse, when Donato, her page, tapped apologetically:

"Monna Francesca, I crave pardon, but there is a poor man at the door who seeks alms . . . "

Francesca rose, closed her book, and descended. Having attended to the wants of the mendicant, given him bread for his scrip, wine for the warming of his heart, ointment for his sores, and money for his rejoicing, she returned to the oratory, and sinking on her knees began again at the beginning the Office in which she had been interrupted.

She had arrived at the same verse and was about to continue when a matter-of-fact voice sounded from the doorway. Very gently closing her book, Francesca went to answer. It was Beppa the cook, who must know whether the capons were to be served to the masters that night, or the pigeons that Gianni had brought yesterday from the *podere*, and if so, how many, and were there to be guests, and would her gracious lady deign to descend and see if . . . and so on.

When Beppa had been satisfied in all her questions and demands, Francesca resumed her Office at its first line.

Having reached the familiar verse "Francesca!" she heard Lorenzo calling from below, "here is Luigi just back from the hills with the falcon I bade him find and train for me, and he has

also the sheep dog from Maremma to guard our sheep at the *podere*."

Francesca joined her husband. When all had been done that required to be done for Lorenzo and Luigi and the falcon and the Maremmano sheep-dog, Francesca returned unperturbed to the oratory. She began the Office from the beginning and for the fourth time arrived at the apparently impassable verse.

Mother!" called the voice of her small son Battista, youngest of her three children, "Mother, I pray thee come here to me. The green pig thou didst give me last night has lost all his legs—"

Francesca smiled a little, sighed a little, rose and went to attend to the needs of Battista and the green wooden pig.

"A wife and mother when called upon must sometimes leave her God at the altar and find Him in her household affairs," she said to herself.

And when at last she returned to the dimly lighted little oratory, with its flowers and tapers before the image of the Blessed Virgin, the place was all aglow with a shining light radiating from the book of orisons which she had left open. On its fair page her guardian angel was finishing the inscription in luminous golden letters of the verse which she now finally read to the end:

Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel—And afterward receive me in glory.

CHAPTER XVI

ST MARGARET OF SCOTLAND

As France was blessed with a saintly King, or, might one not as well say a kingly Saint, in Louis IX, so Scotland had a saintly Queen in Margaret.

Early in the eleventh century, when England was ruled by two kings, the Danish Canute shared the throne with Edmund Ironsides, son of Ethelred the Unready. When in 1017 Edmund had been traitorously killed, Canute sent the two sons of the latter to Sweden, ostensibly to be educated there until old enough to share with him the throne of England, more probably to be there quietly put out of the fierce Dane's way forever.

But the Swedish king, being of a different temper and mind, found means of sending the two princes to Hungary, where at the time reigned that other member of the group of saintly kings, Stephen.

This kind monarch made the princes welcome at his court. The elder, however, died while still in his youth, and the younger, known as Edward the Stranger, in course of time married the sister of King Stephen's queen. Of this marriage with the Princess Agatha, Margaret was the eldest child. Later a son was born, Edgar Atheling, and on him the parents built hopes of their future house, but it was the children of Margaret who were destined to be rulers of England and Scotland, and not those of Edgar.

While Edward the Stranger and his wife and children lived peacefully in Hungary, events occurred which led to their return to England.

In his day Ethelred the Unready had added crime to folly when he had permitted the Massacre of St Brice's Day. In this Gunhilda, beloved sister of Sweyn of Norway, was killed, and

Sweyn, maddened with grief and pain, had plunged down like a wolf on the fold and laid England low under his sword. He himself died broken-hearted, leaving his son Canute to reap the benefits of the conquest. When Canute's son, Hardicanute, died without heir in 1042, another son of Ethelred the Unready came into power, thus restoring the throne to the Saxon dynasty. The cause of his ability to recapture the sovereignty lay in the fact that the Norwegians were too much occupied with battle and conquest elsewhere to give their attention to England. So it was that the brother of Edmund Ironsides, Edward, afterward called the Confessor, came to the throne.

In the heart of this gentle prince, who had himself known exile in Normandy, dwelt sympathy for his nephew, the Stranger Edward in Hungary, so, when he found himself firmly established on the throne, he sent messengers to invite Edward back to England, asking him to bring his family to settle in peace and amity in the country of his birth.

With gratitude the invitation was accepted, and when Margaret was twelve years old the family journeyed from Hungary to England, followed by the good wishes and laden with the gifts of their long-time hosts.

Edward was to be no longer the Stranger; he was returning to what he had always thought of as home, but his joy was short-lived—when he had been three days in England he fell ill and died.

Edward Atheling might then have been thought destined to be the rightful successor to Edward the Confessor, but he was a weak and delicate youth, and the men of England had set their hearts on the stalwart hero Harold, Earl Godwin, and at Edward's death in 1066 made Harold king. He had reigned only a few months when came the Norman invasion, the Battle of Hastings, and the death of Harold.

It was then that the Princess Agatha, realizing that to remain in England could only mean the subjection of her family

to the Norman conqueror, William, sailed away from England and made her way to Scotland.

Malcolm Canmore, son of that Duncan who was murdered by Macbeth, whom Malcolm in turn killed at Dunsinane, was then King of Scotland.

He was in his fortress castle of Dunfermline when messengers came to him with the news that an English ship had sailed into the Firth of Forth, fleeing before a storm, that a company of noble travellers had landed and now craved his hospitality. The messengers specially mentioned a maiden "of incomparable beauty, and pleasant and jocund speech" who made one of the party. This was the Princess Margaret.

Malcolm sent his "wisest counsellors" to meet the strangers and bid them welcome, and to say that the King himself was on his way to greet them. Hurried preparations were made for the reception of the guests, but they can have had but crude results, for of ease and of luxury, of beauty or of refinements, there were none in Malcolm's Tower.

Meanwhile, all unsuspecting of his impending happy fate, the King strode down the steep path leading from his dwelling, through the autumn woods, to the shore where the little group of strangers awaited him.

There before him stood the tall and stately Princess, fair as a lily and radiant as an angel, who was to fill his life with all the beauty and goodness it was to know.

What the Princess saw was a giant, crowned with tawny hair, whose glowing eyes rested upon her with awed admiration, eyes which none the less one could imagine filled with the savage fire of a relentless cruelty. She saw a king among men, fierce toward his enemies, but toward her destined to be always the gentlest and most adoring of lovers.

During the winter that followed Margaret won her way into the hearts of all the retainers of her host. Her bright presence filled the gloomy tower with light, her practical ability and solid

understanding brought order to the rough and chaotic household, her charm made possible the making of changes and bringing of beauty to it without giving offence, her serenity smoothed away difficulties, her joyousness brought cheer.

The result of the prolonged visit was that in the following spring of 1069, to the delight of all the Scottish court and of every one concerned, Malcolm Canmore and the Princess Margaret were united in marriage.

The wedding was solemnized with all possible state; the festivities lasted for days; minstrels sang prophetically of the bright life to follow upon this bright beginning.

Indeed, never was married life more perfect in union than that of Malcolm and Margaret. Her genius for "sweet ordering, arrangement, and accord," brought about insensibly through the years improvements which made of the primitive court she had arrived in, with its rough and homely manners, a court indeed, where dignity and high regard for ceremony were maintained.

A charming story is told, which well illustrates the Queen's method of bringing about civilizing changes. At the end of her banquets it was her custom to ask her chaplain to say grace. But the Scottish nobles saw no reason for remaining until the end of the repast, if they had finished eating. In consequence it often happened that by the time the chaplain said grace few or none of the courtiers were there to hear it.

The Queen made no comment upon the incivility of their brusque departure from her table, or their disrespect for the prayer of thanks to God, but one day invited them all to remain until the end of the feast, when, she told them, after grace flagons of her choicest wine should be served to them, of which she asked them to drink a cup. The company, therefore, remained until grace had been said and the promised cup had been drunk in the Queen's honour. Thereafter she was no longer disturbed by the dispersal of the guests before the meal's end—the Grace Cup from that day became a custom which endured for centuries.

Of her savage giant the Queen in time made no saint like herself, to be sure, but she taught him the Scriptures by gradual degrees, and through her simple daily example led him to feel the sweetness of seeking the Kingdom of God.

Her beauty, her goodness, her wit, were a never-failing source of wonder and delight to him. He loved her possessions because they were hers, her books because she loved them, and though he never learned to read them, he was often seen reverently to hold them, and kiss the pages from which she had been reading.

Few tales of wonder or miracle are told of Margaret. The great miracle that she wrought was that of leading a rude and semi-barbarous country and people into the paths of belief and civilization. But one story comes to us about a favourite copy of the Gospels which she always kept beside her. Her study of the Scriptures was constant, and this volume was one of peculiar value, illustrated with paintings of the four Evangelists and decorated with illuminated capitals. The King had once stolen it from the shelf where it was kept and had caused the volume to be richly bound and embellished with gold and precious stones. Wherever the Queen travelled this book accompanied her, being put in the special charge of some one of her retainers.

It happened on a certain journey that this retainer carelessly permitted the volume to slip from the silk and leather casings in which it was carried, and went on, unconscious of its loss.

When the Queen later asked for her book, it was nowhere to be found, nor was search of any avail.

More than a week later another of the Queen's servants, traversing the road on which the book had been lost, in fording a stream, was overjoyed to find the lost volume lying submerged near the edge of the water. For days the stream had been flowing over the open pages of the book, yet when it was taken out and dried not a trace of the exposure remained to bear witness to the

accident. The leaves were as smooth and white, the colours as brilliant, and the gold as undimmed as before.



ST MARGARET AND THE POOR.

Margaret's chronicler states it as his opinion that "this wonder was worked by Our Lord, out of His love for the venerable Queen."

The precious volume still exists and is now kept in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

Margaret's care of the poor was another direction in which Malcolm lavished upon her his generous all, for to give her the pleasure of feeding and clothing her charges he often drained the royal treasury well-nigh dry.

The news of all her good works and those of the King was in time carried afar into other kingdoms by travellers and released prisoners.

It once happened that all these things came to the ears of one who had in the past been a bitter enemy of Malcolm. When a pilgrim told him how he had heard that whosoever arrived at the Scottish Court poor, sick, or weary, the Queen tended him and the King fed him with his own hands, the former enemy of Malcolm refused to believe these rumours.

But," said the pilgrim, "that which I say is known to all. I have heard it not once but many times."

"Is it of thine own knowledge and experience that thou dost quote?"

"Nay, not of my own, but that of many with whom I have spoken."

"How simple," replied the doubter, "to spread tales of generosity and of sanctity! For what is more easy than bribery?"

"Go, then, and see for thyself," said the pilgrim. "Truly, I will," replied the other.

To make his case appear more piteous he injured his foot with a stone and, disguised as a beggar, made his way to Dunfermline. When he arrived near the castle gates he found waiting before them a crowd of poor women and men, although it was not yet near the noon hour. At noon the gates were opened and all were admitted to the square courtyard where tables were spread, and to which presently descended a man and a woman in simple homespun garb. These without delay began to minister to

the wants of the needy ones. To some they distributed clothing, to some medicaments, and to all food; some there were whose feet they bathed, and some whom they detained and sent into the castle for further care.

The sceptic immediately recognized that these were the King and Queen, for their plain attire could not hide the dignity and beauty of their regal bearing.

When his turn had come to receive attention, the man said to the King:

"My lord, as thou mayest see, my foot is wounded and would perhaps fare better at the hands of a woman."

"True," answered Malcolm; "when thou hast eaten, the Queen shall bind thy foot."

Later, Margaret came to him and, kneeling before him as humbly as any handmaiden, bathed his feet, anointed them, and bound his wound. Then rising she commended him to God's care and bade him go upon his way.

"Not until I have knelt before thee, gentle Queen, and craved thy pardon and that of thy royal consort for the ill thoughts I harboured until now." When he had told her his name and station, she led him to the King, who recognized him as one formerly hostile to the royal house of Scotland; he now made of him an honoured guest, detained him for the night, richly entertained him at his own table, and let him depart on the following morning carrying honour and praise in his heart for those of whom he had before had only thoughts of fear and derision.

Early in their married life an event occurred which settled once and for all the possibility of misunderstanding or estrangement between the King and Queen.

It was Malcolm's custom, when he was not away on campaign and battle bent, to hunt in the vast stretches of forest that surrounded the Tower. He hunted no tame and harmless quarry, but wolves and wild boars. These chases were filled with

danger which to him constituted their charm, and it was Margaret's custom, when he had set out upon a day's hunt, to retire to a little cave, of which she had made for herself an oratory. This natural cave was situated at some distance from the Tower, down a steep path in a secluded part of the wood. Here she spent the period of the chase in prayer for her lord's safety and welfare, both spiritual and physical.

A youth of the court, one cannot divine with what intent, unless from pure malice, had for some time been dropping insidious words into the King's ear. He spoke to him of the Queen's beauty and youth, leading him to realize his own middle age and rude appearance; he spoke of her erudition, which made Malcolm's comparative ignorance the more glaring in his own eyes; he spoke of the Queen's delicacy and refinement, which made the great warrior wince at his own uncouth manners. In short, he awakened in the King's mind whispering doubts of the Queen's love for him who was so unworthy of her favour. The next time he departed for the chase, after Margaret had bidden him a tender and smiling farewell, the youth returned to the charge. He wondered the Queen could look so gay in taking leave of her lord, departing on a sport so dangerous. How, he wondered, did the Queen spend the hours of the King's absence? It was said that she, too, spent her time in the forest. . . . Young and lovely ladies seldom loved solitude. . . . Maybe she found diversions of her own to wile the heavy hours.

A fury of jealousy mounted to the King's brain; he held it in bounds, only determining to discover for himself how his wife spent the time of his absences.

The next day the chase began as usual, but, unseen of his followers, Malcolm early retraced his steps, and was just in time to see Margaret threading her way down the path from the castle and into the wood below. He followed her at a distance, unseen. Soon she came to her oratory and entered. Losing sight of her, Malcolm darted forward, and arrived suddenly before the cave. From it issued Margaret's voice raised in prayer. He listened: she prayed passionately, with all her out-poured heart . . . for him . . .

that God would bring him into His great light, and teach him that it would profit him nothing to gain the world if he gained not his own soul.

With a groan Malcolm sank to the earth, his drawn sword resounding on the stones. Margaret, startled from her orisons, appeared at the mouth of the cave. What was her bewilderment at seeing the King prostrate before her. She raised him and questioned him, and he, confessing, told her all—his suspicions, his subterfuge to discover the truth, and now his contrition and shame. Easily she forgave and won him to a new point of spiritual progress and devotion. Henceforth he was willing "to watch the night in prayer by her side," at first only to please her, until at length he found comfort and peace in the exercise of the religious practices to which she led him.

Another story gives evidence of Margaret's gay courage, her stout-hearted and gallant humour.

As she constantly accompanied Malcolm, even on his wildest and roughest journeys, one nobleman was appointed her chamberlain and charged with responsibility for the Queen's safety on the way.

This post fell to a youth by the name of Bartulph. Whenever, then, the Queen travelled she rode on Bartulph's horse, and if need were, clung to him to keep her place behind him in going over rough and steep paths.

On a certain occasion a journey was made after heavy rains had turned the streams into turbulent torrents. Bartulph and the Queen were separated from the King's party, and coming to a fording place were obliged to make the crossing alone and unaided.

For greater safety Bartulph clasped a heavy leather belt about the Queen's waist, and fastened this by a stout buckle to his saddle. Then he rode his horse boldly into the flood. When they had reached mid-stream, the poor animal had the utmost

difficulty in retaining his footing, for the torrent was powerful and threatened to carry away all three to their doom.

Bartulph's attention was perforce given to controlling the floundering horse, and Margaret must certainly have been swept from its back had it not been for the belt, the buckle, and Bartulph's forethought in so anchoring her. Wet and cold, in danger of her life, and with good cause for fear, the Queen silently held to her place, until Bartulph, having found footing for his struggling and panting beast, shouted over his shoulder above the torrent's roar: "Grip hard, we'll win owre yet!"

"Gin the buckle bide," answered the Queen, still clinging desperately, and we can almost hear the chuckle that accompanied the brief utterance.

When, at the journey's end that night, the Queen, arrayed again in royal splendour, related to her lord the adventures of the day, she laughingly told of the laconic conversation which in the moment of danger had taken place between Bartulph and herself, and the King granted the Queen's chamberlain the right to adorn his shield with buckles, and to take for his device the words, "Grip hard! "

Later, Bartulph married the King's sister, and this was the origin of the great Scottish house of Leslie, whose motto is still "Grip Hard," and whose shield still shows its band of buckles.

In course of time six sons and two daughters were born to Margaret, whom she brought up in the paths of Christian love and wisdom—children worthy to become rulers, as later some among them did.

A volume might well be filled with the story of the Queen's charities; of the slaves she set free (it was her freeing so many of Malcolm's English prisoners that caused her to be as much loved and venerated in England as in Scotland), of the laws that she established; of the churches, abbeys, schools, monasteries, and hospices that she founded; of the seemly and civilizing customs that she instituted; of all the good works that

she accomplished in the twenty-four eventful years of her reign in Scotland.

In all this time she herself was treading the path to that perfection, as it was viewed in her day, which resulted in her being named a Saint: her penances and prayers were increasing, she chastised her body in order to free and develop her soul. Nor, happy as was her existence, can it be said that no shadow of grief lay upon it.

Malcolm was all love and tenderness where she was concerned, but not even her gentle influence could make him anything but savage in his dealings with his enemies. The Great Head, as he was called, was terrible in war. Five times he invaded England and laid waste the country he crossed with fire and sword, slaying men, women, and children, or driving them in hordes back to Scotland as slaves. Then, too, her second son, Edmund, unlike the rest of her children, was a source of sorrow and anxiety. Undoubtedly led astray by the influence of Malcolm's rebellious younger brother, Donald Bane, Edmund was guilty of disloyalty to his father, and was for this stripped of his royal rank. He later repented, however, and retired to a monastery, where he spent the rest of his days.

As time wore on St Margaret, wearied by her labours of state, her journeys to all corners of the kingdom administering charity and justice, her labours at home, her fastings and austerities, fell a prey to a lingering illness; she wasted away daily, yet bore her suffering and growing weakness with a marvellous courage and cheerful tranquillity. She saw with clear eye her impending death, but was undismayed; she, on the contrary, welcomed her pain and relied upon it to purify and prepare her to meet her God.

When Malcolm had made his raids into England, William the Conqueror had been too much occupied in the south to offer him resistance. When, however, William found himself securely settled on the throne, and had reduced his realm to a proper state of subjection, he determined to go into the north,

settle his score with the Scottish King, and reduce him also to such subjection that no more invasions should be feared from him. He, therefore, gathered a large army and advanced upon Scotland. Having crossed the Forth, he met Malcolm's forces at Abernethy. There could be no doubt of the issue of the battle. William's forces far exceeded those of Malcolm, and had it not been for the intervention of Edgar Atheling, who was now a pensioner of William, the Scottish arms would have suffered complete defeat. But through the good offices of Edgar a treaty was arranged. Malcolm promised to keep the peace, and William consented to allow him to hold the territory of Cumberland.

Yet after William's death, his son, William Rufus, unwilling to abide by his father's agreement, made preparations to take from Malcolm the land granted him by the treaty; so Malcolm, with the intention of forestalling him, determined to descend into Northumberland and protect his rights to Cumberland.

In vain the Queen pleaded with him not to leave her. Her illness had so told upon her that she could not face the anguished suspense of his absence. She entreated him to let Rufus take Cumberland if he would, but for love of her, not to leave her! Malcolm, never having realized the serious nature of her illness, tenderly laughed at her anxieties, and continued his preparations.

She then besought him not to take with him her two eldest sons, Edward and Edgar, both of whom were now thought old enough to accompany their father on his campaign.

Her prayers were of no avail. Princes must earn the right to bear their title, said the King, and in a short time he would return with his two sons, and she should greet them proudly and hear with a high heart the tales of their daring deeds.

Heavy with foreboding, the Queen bowed her head as always to her lord's will. They were salt tears and quivering sighs she wove into the embroidered banner which she made for the King.

Surrounded by her ladies she stood on the battlements of Edinburgh Castle and watched the departure of her loved ones, waving them a last farewell.

A mournful silence settled upon the days that followed. With breaking heart she awaited tidings of the battle; wearily, painfully, she dragged herself to her chapel; at the foot of the altar she prayed without ceasing.

Added to her fears for the outcome of the war with the English was another equally sharp fear. Donald Bane, followed by a band of malcontents, had risen in arms and lay in waiting, ready to take advantage of any misfortune that might overtake Malcolm's arms in the south.

At last, one day when her confessor had come to her, trying to bring her cheer and hope for the future, she of a sudden laid her hand on his, and with eyes gazing beyond the visible objects before her, spoke in a low voice as if unconsciously: "Perhaps to-day a great evil has fallen on the Scots, such as has not happened to them for many ages past!"

Prophetic utterance!

On that day, and in that hour, Malcolm had met his death.

He was laying siege to Alnwick, and the Northumbrians proposed to surrender, when a Norman knight undertook to deal with the Great Head himself. He agreed to the surrender, but Malcolm himself must come to take the keys from him. The King consented, and rode forward toward the gates to receive them. The knight, making as if to hand over the keys to him on the end of a spear, suddenly lunged forward, piercing Malcolm in the eye. The King fell backward dead. In the confusion that followed, Edward also was killed, with many of his followers. Edgar, with the remnants of his father's army, retreated into Scotland. The return of the lad, who was little more than a stripling, was made the gloomier by the dread of breaking the disastrous news to his mother.

Meanwhile, the Queen lay dying, surrounded by her weeping children and attendants. She prayed even while the chill of death crept over her. The priests, after giving her the last rites, were recommending her soul to Heaven when the blast of a horn sounded without the castle walls, and in a moment Edgar burst into the room. He was worn with sorrow of his losses and weariness of his journey, and now, at sight of his mother lying white and still, his boyish heart was near breaking. He sank sobbing beside her.

Margaret, who had been all but lifeless until his entrance, now seemed to revive, and, laying her hand on Edgar's bowed head, asked:

"How fare thy father and thy brother, my child?"

"They are well," replied Edgar.

"I know it—I know it," said Margaret, "but now by the Holy Cross I adjure thee, Edgar, tell me the truth. How fares it with the King and Edward?"

"The King and Edward are both slain," confessed the boy, and told of his father's traitorous murder.

When the bystanders heard the tale, and the day and the hour of its occurrence, they recalled the Queen's words: "Perhaps to-day a great evil has befallen the Scots . . ."

Then the Queen, after blessing her children, prayed again: "Lord Jesus Christ who, according to the will of the Father, hast by Thy death given life to the world, deliver me."

With the words "deliver me," St Margaret, Princess of Hungary and England, Queen of Scotland, died, on the 16th of November, 1093.

Breath had no sooner left her body than consternation spread throughout the castle. Donald Bane had appeared with his forces at the gates. He had heard of Malcolm's death and the rout of the Scottish army, and had come to reap a swift advantage from them. Woe now to the children of Malcolm!

But the spirit of Margaret was still strong to protect her own.

The staunch inmates of the castle were willing to hold the fortress while the royal princes made their escape.

The forces of Donald were at the gate, but the stronghold of Edinburgh Castle was not surrounded—the steep eastern rock was free. The Queen's body was reverently lowered down the declivity, and the royal children, with Edgar at their head, and their attendants made good their escape by the same way, while miraculously a thick white mist arose and enveloped them, keeping them hidden as they threaded their way through the forest, across the Forth, and so to the protection of Edgar Atheling.

When at last Donald Bane succeeded in entering the castle, the quarry he sought had flown.

St Margaret's body was buried in the Church of the Holy Trinity which she had built at Dunfermline. Not until twenty years later were Malcolm's remains brought from Tynemouth, where they had been interred, and placed beside hers.

In 1250 she was formally canonized by Pope Innocent IV, but the "Good Queen" had been canonized a century and a half before in the hearts of her people, who even during her life had called her Saint.

When at the time of her canonization her body was taken from its old tomb to be placed in a new and magnificently decorated silver shrine, a marvel occurred. As the bearers carried her remains past the spot where lay the body of Malcolm, they felt the Saint's relics grow so heavy that there was no carrying them farther. Try as they would, they could not move them. What was to be done? After much agitation, confusion, and fruitless effort, the voice of an aged monk arose quaveringly:

"The Queen desires that in death her husband should share her honours," he said.

Malcolm was therefore raised from his resting-place and laid beside his Queen. Then, giving proof of her assent and approval, the Queen suffered herself to be carried on with the King to the new shrine. Until death she wished to cleave to him—and after.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SILENCE OF ST JOHN OF NEPOMUK

In 1378 Wenceslaus IV, son of Charles IV, was made King of Bohemia and was also crowned Emperor at Aix-la-Chapelle. He was only sixteen years of age, but already gave signs of the manner of king he was to become. Besotted and idle he was already; his people, indeed, soon gave him the titles of 'the Idler' and 'the Drunkard,' and stupid and cruel he always remained.

An inordinate rapacity was among his conspicuous traits. On one occasion he invited all the Bohemian nobility to meet him at a certain place, where he had ordered a large black tent to be raised. Flanking this were two other connecting tents, one on the right made of white and one on the left made of scarlet material. In the central tent he greeted the guests, who were ushered into his presence one by one. Here he brought pressure to bear upon them, such as to oblige them to confess that all their lands came to them from the crown, and that they only held them subject to the King's pleasure. The same, he forced them to agree, was the case with regard to their other possessions, their castles, their subjects, their gold, their gems. If, having acknowledged that they had received all these goods originally as benefits bestowed by their royal master, they were willing to surrender them on the spot, they were ushered into the white tent, where they were served with a sumptuous banquet; if they refused, they were dragged to the scarlet tent and put to death.

This, being but one of many exploits, illustrates this amiable monarch's temper.

His first wife, daughter of the King of Bavaria, was named Joanna. The poor lady came to a cruel end. Wenceslaus owned a number of hunting dogs of all varieties, which he kept constantly by his side. Two of them, the largest and fiercest, slept in his bedchamber, and on the night of the 31st of December, 1386, the Queen was attacked and killed by these.

Her confessor had been a certain canon, John Woelflein by name, born in the Bohemian village of Nepomuk.

When Wenceslaus, two years later, married Sophia of Bavaria, John of Nepomuk was retained as the Queen's confessor. There was need indeed for bringing spiritual aid and consolation to this unfortunate woman, and by his religious instructions developing the patience and fortitude necessary for bearing her hard fate, for Wenceslaus showed toward her the same brutality that he had shown her predecessor. Beautiful though Sophia was, he treated her with the contempt that he would have expressed toward an ugly and unlovely woman; he flaunted his amours in the eyes of all the world, publicly laying slights and insults upon the Queen.

On repeated occasions he had been offended by the intervention of John in behalf of one and another victim of his insane fury. Once, when a fowl served at the royal table proved not to be properly roasted, the King, flying into a rage, ordered the man who had cooked it to be spitted and roasted before his own fire until he should be better done than the dish he had dared to send up for his lord's consumption. The savage command was on the verge of being carried out when John of Nepomuk, hearing of it, hastened to the banquet hall, and kneeling before the King besought him to spare the unhappy cook's life.

Having already, therefore, stored up an accumulation of grudges against the man of God, the time came when only one more was necessary to send the King into one of those

paroxysms during which his only thought was to destroy the individual who opposed him.

Although the King had no love for his wife, he still had the wit to see that she was beautiful and kind, and that the eyes of all dwelt upon her with affection. He at one moment fancied it possible that he had grounds for doubting her virtue and her faithfulness to himself.

Sending for John of Nepomuk, he questioned him as to the Queen's friendships and occupations. The canon answered in such wise as to remove all shadow of blame from Sophia: her actions were above reproach, her thought and speech of a crystalline purity. But when Wenceslaus, unsatisfied, commanded him to reveal the subjects of the Queen's confessions, the confessor remained mute, not deigning to reply. Nothing could extract from him one syllable of what had been revealed to him under the seal of confession; innocent or guilty, confessions were not for imparting. In vain Wenceslaus tried one method after another, resistance arousing not only his anger, but his curiosity and jealousy as well. He pleaded, he bribed, and threatened in vain. Finally giving way to madness, he ordered the canon to be shut in a dungeon to starve; when this proved unavailing, he ordered him to be stretched upon a rack, where he himself went and laid glowing coals against John's sides and passed a torch over his body. When he still would not speak, the tormentor had him taken, more dead than alive, from the torture chamber; his hands were tied behind him, a piece of wood was wedged between his teeth to keep him from speaking should he now wish to; he was dragged down to a bridge that spanned the river Moldau, and thrown into the water.

The black deed was performed by night, that none might see, but, as if the crime were not permitted to remain secret, no sooner had the martyred body risen from the depths into which it had been dropped than it began to float slowly down the stream, the face showing above the surface of the water in the glimmering light made by a crown of five stars hovering over it. All night the people on bridge and river-bank could see it

sparkling above the dead face, and after day had dawned the light continued playing on the pallid features in a crown of flames. By that light the onlookers traced the progress of the body until it floated to shore. Wenceslaus himself beheld the miracle from the windows of his castle, and fled panic-stricken to hide in a distant fortress.

The body was taken up reverently and interred in the Church of the Holy Cross, but was afterward transferred to the Cathedral.

When the Saint was canonized by Benedict XIII in 1729, the relics were placed in a silver shrine, where they still repose. On opening the original tomb it was found that, although all the body had turned to dust, the tongue was intact, the incorruptible tongue which had guarded its secret in spite of torture and kept its trust inviolate in the face of death.

CHAPTER XVIII

ST CHARLES BORROMEO

One day—God willing—you will go to Italy, and if you enter by the Simplon Pass, you will see, on a height near the shores of Lago Maggiore by which he was born, the great statue of St Charles Borromeo. There he stands, *Il Buon Santo*, in colossal proportions, the statue and pedestal together measuring seventy feet in height. His hand is raised in benediction of the country that loves him, and that he so loved.

Then, when you go to Milan, you will see in the sacristy of the cathedral a life-sized statue of him made of pure silver. Furthermore, you will see the chapel where are his remains, encased in a crystal casket. He lies, his skeleton draped in rich robes, his skull crowned with a jewelled mitre. On the casket and all about the shrine is repeated the Saint's own motto, "*Humilitas*"—Humility—in the midst of walls paneled with silver, glowing with gold, sparkling with gems—and his

glittering and gorgeous setting seems to continue after death what the Buon Santo experienced in life, though in what esteem he held it is easy to read in the story of his life.

He belonged to one of the oldest, noblest, richest, and proudest families of Lombardy, his father being Gilberto Borromeo, Count of Arona, his mother Margherita dei Medici, sister of Giovanni Angelo, afterward Pope Pius IV.

Being a second son, he was from infancy dedicated to the Church, for which he studied at Milan and at Pavia.

When he was twelve years of age, he was granted by an uncle, Giulio Cesare Borromeo, the rich revenues of the Benedictine monastery of SS. Gratinian and Felin. Upon the death of his father, when he was twenty, he received a share of the family fortune, and when he was twenty-six, at the death of his elder brother Federigo, he succeeded to all the family treasure and honours. Add to this that another uncle joined the benefices of another abbey to the youth's income, and that King Philip II settled a pension of 9000 crowns yearly upon him, and gave him the principality of Oria, that his uncle Pius IV created him cardinal and archbishop of Milan when he was twenty-three, and then pile upon all this the fact that he lived in Italy in the middle of the sixteenth century, and you will feel that had he been spoiled, or had his head been turned by such wealth and power, it would have been comprehensible if not pardonable.

But Carlo Borromeo was from childhood marked by a gravity and gentle sanctity of character, a simple humility, a spirituality, a serene austerity, and a beneficence almost unique in one of his station.

He lived in Rome as his uncle's chief adviser and companion, not only spotless among the intrigue and snares of the Court, but an object of marvel and reverence for the extraordinary combination in one so youthful, of wisdom and modesty, of caution and sincerity, of dignity and candour.

On the death of his brother he left Rome and returned to Milan to take charge of his diocese and of his huge estates. But in those estates and in his enormous fortune he personally took little pleasure. His self-denial and his charity seem unmatched save perhaps by those of some of the early Apostles of the Christian Church. All that he reserved for himself out of his almost boundless revenues was straw upon which to sleep. Literally all—everything that he had he gave either to public good works or to private charities. He was obliged, owing to his station, to live in splendour befitting his rank as Archbishop, but under his gorgeous robes of scarlet and ermine he wore a poor threadbare black cassock, and at the banquets which he gave for others, as part of his unlimited hospitality, he himself took only his habitual dry bread and water.

Tall and emaciated and stooping in figure, pale and beardless of face, with gentle dark eyes, aquiline nose, and large kindly mouth, he was, as has been said, a Saint "whom Jews might bless and Protestants adore," the model of pastors and the reformer of ecclesiastical discipline in the degenerate age in which he lived.

For a reformer he pre-eminently was. He spared not himself, his rule over himself was of the strictest, but he insisted upon and with all his power enforced the restoration of discipline in the Orders, which had fallen into days of corruption and laxity, of dishonesty and sloth and immorality.

This naturally raised up against him an army of enemies over whom his gentle inflexibility invariably triumphed—not only among the higher clergy who were using their church revenues for their own indulgence, but among the lower Orders, the Franciscans and the Umiliati, of whom he required that they live according to the laws of their Order, laws from which they had shamefully departed.

It was from among these last that one, Fra Farina by name, was hired to assassinate him.

Late on a November afternoon San Carlo was celebrating the evening service in his own chapel. He was on his knees at the altar; behind him the people were intoning an anthem, when the shot rang out which Fra Farina had aimed from behind a door. It struck fairly, but though some of the smaller shots penetrated his clothing and bruised his back, the bullet was deflected by the heavy gold embroidery on San Carlo's cope.

This, however, was not at first apparent. At the sound of the report the congregation arose in tumult to their feet, and rushed to the assistance of their beloved Father, but he—although he supposed himself mortally wounded—rising, ordered them to their knees again, and with unshaken calm and an unmoved countenance proceeded with the service.

Then he retired, and when he found his life in no danger, consecrated it anew to the service of his Master.

In those days the music performed in the Church had, with all else concerning it, fallen into such lines of secularity and profanity that at the Council of Trent the question was raised whether it were not to the detriment of religion to continue the performance of music in the churches. Pius IV referred the matter to the judgment of Carlo Borromeo. With his zeal for reform and purification, it seems probable that he might for all time have then banished music from the Church had not a champion arisen to defend the noble art, of a genius so pure, so rare, and elevated that no hearer could resist him. When his great Mass was performed before the listening judge, San Carlo's heart was won by the angelic beauty and majesty of its strains. It was the Mass of Palestrina.

His love of his people was that which brought about the most wonderful act of San Carlo Borromeo's beautiful life.

The plague broke out in Milan in 1585. He was at that moment in Lodi. When news of it reached him he determined to return at once to Milan. In vain his clerics, his friends, and relatives remonstrated; in vain they told him that to return meant certain death to one in his delicate health; in vain they assured

him that the other clergy, all the nobles, in fact every one who was materially able to do so, were fleeing from Milan to some place of safety. He replied that a shepherd's place was with his flock. He returned, and for the entire period of the plague, which carried away thousands, he preached daily, and prayed with his people and for them. He tended the sick, distributing medicines and performing the last rites for the dying, and helped to bury the dead; he gave himself, body, soul, and spirit. Time and again he walked barefoot to the cathedral with a halter round his neck, and before the altar offered himself as a sacrifice for his congregation. Twenty-eight of his priests, fired by his enthusiasm of self-forgetfulness, assisted him in his angelic ministry, and not one of these, nor San Carlo himself, was touched by the universal scourge.

Eleven years later, when he had arrived at his forty-sixth year, he died of a fever, brought on doubtless by his long-sustained privations.

His last moments were beatific. Radiant with an inner glory, he was heard to murmur: "Ecce—venio" ("Behold—I come"), and then he expired.

No Saint of legend this—of miracles and wonders, beyond the miracle of an all-loving heart and the wonder of a stainless soul.

CHAPTER XIX

ST RUADAN'S PROTECTION

To the monastery of Lothra in Tipperary came, toward the twilight of a summer's day, King Dermot, accompanied by a handful of his followers. Before dismounting the King sent to inquire of a monk who in the cool of dusk was hoeing the vegetable garden where he might find the venerable Abbot.

"At this hour he will be at prayer in his cell," said the monk.

"Then lead me thither," commanded the King, alighting from his horse.

Having arrived at the Abbot's hut, King Dermot, interrupting the vesper song, the strains of which could be heard within, beat loudly on the door. The chant ceased, and after a short pause Abbot Ruadan himself stood outlined in the doorway against the yellow light of a lamp burning on the bare altar of his cell.

"The King speaks," announced Dermot, "and craves admittance."

For all answer or welcome, Ruadan, stepping aside, permitted the King to enter. Once within the narrow quarters Dermot possessed himself of the only seat in the cell, a low stool standing on a rush mat, and, squaring himself upon it after the manner of kings who are in the habit of considering that the humblest chair occupied by them becomes a throne, began:

"You, Abbot Ruadan, know that I, Dermot, son of Kervail, have by my long-continued and hard-sustained effort, both in warfare and conciliation, brought all Ireland to a state of peace. In order to make the subjection of my adversaries conclusive, I sent heralds to the castles of all the nobles and bade them go in my name and receive pledge of faith and fealty. One of these, Mac Lomm, advanced, so it is claimed, with his spear held in his mouth. Taking this as an insult, as a symbol of the bit in the mouth, Odo of Connaught, whose castle had thus been entered, had the hardihood to slay my herald. Fearing my wrath, which he knew must bring him speedy punishment, Odo fled for his life from his castle and sought refuge in Muskerry with his cousin, Bishop Senach. But Senach, wise in his time, and knowing that I must soon come up with his mother's sister's son, has smuggled off Odo to a place of greater safety. I have cause to think that the culprit has come here for protection. I know you, good Father, I know your saintly reputation. On your bare

word I am ready to rely, for I know that lies dwell not in your mouth. Tell me then, straight: where is Odo?"

Ruadan, who had during this speech stood motionless, with serious and attentive eye fixed on the King, now shifted his position, and shrugging his shoulders, while his glance sought the rafters overhead, said with a guileless air which he trusted to disguise the deeper meaning in his eyes:

"In faith, Sire, I know not where this Odo may be, unless he is under your chair—I cannot tell."

To these words the King replied: "Upon your word I have given my word to rest satisfied, nor will I even look under the stool, which is so low it would not harbour a cat!"

He rose with difficulty from his lowly seat and took his leave.

But the King had not fared many miles when those often wise counsellors, second thoughts, began to whisper in his ear. Without hesitation he wheeled his horse about, and followed by his wondering attendants, returned to Lothra. Making straight for the Abbot's cell, he entered unannounced, pushed aside the stool he had lately occupied, picked up the rush mat, discovered the trap door beneath it, sent down his men to search the cellar under the hut, from which Odo was soon produced, with whom as his prisoner the King rode away without further ado.

With as little delay, Ruadan and his monks, who had stood by powerless to defend the man in their keeping, now followed the King's train in hot pursuit, nor stopped until they had reached Tara, the King's capital.

Dermot, having cast his captive into a dungeon, paid no heed to this mob of monks who had come swarming into the town not long after his arrival. All through the day following the night of his journey to and from Lothra the King took not the least notice of Ruadan, who, after ringing his bell in the square to call together the Brothers and whoever else of the populace should wish to join them, had spent the entire day in prayer and

psalm singing. But on the second night, determined though he was to remain undisturbed by the doings of the Saint and his followers, the King's sleep was troubled, his dreams were disquieting. He thought he saw a great tree chopped down, and waking up at the crash of the falling trunk, he realized that what he had heard in sleep was only the voices of the monks still at their psalm singing out under his windows. However, he felt that the dream was of evil omen, and he could rest no longer, so rising, weary and at the end of all patience, he went out, and standing on the high step of his doorway, he roared angrily at Ruadan:

"Your community, monk, shall be scattered!"

If Dermot was exasperated at hearing the interminable psalms and prayers, it may be judged that Ruadan might also have been somewhat weary of singing them for close upon twenty-four hours on end, without stopping for sleep or food; so his retort shot back swift and hot:

"Your kingdom shall first be scattered, and I live to see it, Sire, though none of your sons survive to occupy your throne after you!"

"The place that knew you shall be desolate," stormed Dermot, "and the sow root it up with her snout!"

No Irishman, whether Saint or sinner, was ever with reason accused of slowness in the uptake.

"May your proud city of Tara be blotted out centuries before that, and left for ever uninhabited!" cried Ruadan.

With true relish in the exercise of the natural Hibernian talent for imprecation, Dermot hurled his next shaft:

"May your vile frame be a prey to corruption and one of your limbs wither away and your eye be diseased, that your light be turned to darkness!"

"Sure!" retorted Ruadan, catching it and returning as good: "And may those that hate you tear your head off and twist off every arm and leg first!"

"May the wild pig dig up the foundations of your steeple!" said Dermot, his anger cooling and imagination flagging.

And Ruadan also, now, with abating ardour, replied: "May that leg of yours, stuck up in front of me, never know the peace of the grave, and the like to all your body!"

To which Dermot, quite recovered of his wrath, answered with an appreciative grunt:

"You are protector of the lawless, whereas I endeavour to keep order in the country; you and the like of you are the confusion of my kingdom. However, as you are the elect of God—go your ways, and take the offender with you, but you shall pay me his price!"

Thus did the scene end, and although Ruadan might not, in this exchange of amenities, be thought to have figured as befitted a Saint—still—a Saint and a very good Saint he was, with power to perform wonders. As he had neither there nor at Lothra the price necessary for the ransom of Odo, the necessary miracle came to pass. Thirty sea-green horses rose out of the ocean and galloped all the way to Tara; these Ruadan gave to Dermot. Not long after the King won a race with one of them, which was evidently considered sufficient compensation for the release of Odo, for presently the thirty sea-green horses galloped away again, plunged into the sea-waves, and were seen no more.

CHAPTER XX

ST. GUDULA'S LANTERN

St Gudula, patron Saint of Brussels, was born in the eighth century, of a saintly house indeed, for her mother was St Amalaberga, her brother St Emenbert, her sisters were St Pharaildis and St Rainelda, and her aunt was St Gertrude, Abbess of the Convent of Nivelles.

Of St Gertrude it may be said here, by the way, that it is she who presides over the inn which harbours the souls of the departed on the first night after their death, as they start on their three days' journey to Heaven. Their second night is passed with St Gabriel—by the third they have arrived in Paradise.

Well may the bewildered and shivering spirits be grateful for hospitality on that first night when, bared of mortal vestments, stripped of all the familiar human surroundings and ties, they fare forth upon their new adventures.

Kindest and most comforting of hostesses, St Gertrude makes room for and gives welcome to all, the rich and the poor, the great and the small, in her capacious hostel, and on the morrow sends forth her guests cheered and heartened to undertake the next stage of their pilgrimage.

But about St Gudula.

As well as saintly, her house was noble in Brabant, her father was Count Witger, and his castle and estates were rich and great.

St Gudula was educated in the convent of St Gertrude, after whose death she returned to her father's house and dedicated herself to a life of prayer and of service to the poor. All that she had she gave them; her revenues were divided among them, and her days were spent in caring for the sick and the afflicted. This left her small leisure for the devotions which

her soul craved. Perforce must she, therefore, repair to the Mass celebrated at midnight at the Church of St Morgele, or Moorsel, some miles distant from her father's castle.

With one maid as escort, she used faithfully to make this difficult and dangerous journey, herself carrying the lantern that lighted the path through a thicket, past a ravine, and round deceptive swampy stretches.

But Satan, ever envious of kindly and pious souls, was enraged at the influence which the lovely Saint was daily gaining over the hearts and minds of the people, so nightly he sought to lead her astray, repeatedly he attempted to entrap her. His method was simple: he contrived to blow out her lantern, hoping that groping in the darkness she might lose her way in the forest or in the quagmire, or miss her footing at the edge of the precipice, and never reach the church portal, or that, the long miles in the blackness seeming to her too fearsome, she would surrender in discouragement and return to the cheerful shelter of home.

But Gudula was not to be thus circumvented. Her method of defence was as simple as Satan's mode of attack: as often as he blew out her taper, just so often by fervent and luminous prayers she relighted it—and she and her maid continued safe on their way.

Good St Gudula! If we blind and faltering souls could only remember her effectual plan of campaign against the devil of darkness and doubt, against imminent danger and despair when our little taper has flickered and gone out—and without further loss of time or energy could simply fall to praying with a stout and confident heart—and so rekindle that lantern of hope which we all carry—and continue blithe upon our journey!

CHAPTER XXI

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA

His name was not Anthony, nor did he belong to Padua. He was born in Lisbon in 1195, and was baptized by the name of Fernando, but when he joined the Order of the Franciscans he assumed the name of Anthony, and he is styled "of Padua" because the end of his ministry took place in that town, where he was so beloved by the inhabitants that they would never have permitted his canonization under any other title. Indeed, they went through a period of four days' actual warfare to obtain possession of his body after his death, which had taken place at Arcella, in the suburb of Capo di Pont, not far from Padua.

His father's name was Martin Bullone, and some maintain that he was connected with the family of Godfrey de Bouillon, the leader of the First Crusade. His mother is said to have been Maria Tareja Taveira, and as she was descended from Froila I, fourth king of Asturias, it seems that the Saint was of noble origin.

After a childhood marked by "faultless behavior," he retired at the age of fifteen to a monastery, the better to keep himself unspotted by the world's temptations. Here he remained, studying the Scriptures, until the time when he joined the Franciscans. His turning to that Order was a result of the deep impression made upon him by the martyrdom of five Minorite Brothers in Morocco. He resolved to become a Franciscan himself, to go to Morocco, and win the crown of martyrdom. He succeeded in reaching the scene of his desired sufferings, but, eager as he was to give his life in spreading the knowledge of Christ among the infidel, this was not vouchsafed him, for there prevailed in the country a drought of long standing, owing to which men, beasts, and vegetation sickened and died. Anthony fell ill and, after some months of suffering, set sail again for

Portugal. Wind and weather conspired, however, to keep him away from his native land. They drove his ship to the coast of Sicily, where he landed at Taormina. Here he heard that a chapter of the Franciscan Order was to be held on the Whitsunday of 1221 and, weak and ailing though he still was, he made his way to Assisi to assist at the great gathering, where he had the joy of seeing and knowing the Seraphic Father. St Francis was by this date too feeble to make himself heard by the vast audience, but seated at the feet of Brother Elias, made suggestions and offered measures.

After this, Anthony, following St Francis' own example, retired to a hermitage on Monte Paolo. He lived in a grotto on the summit of the mountain and there fasted and prayed. It was by chance that he commenced his mission of preaching: he had gone to the monastery at Forli and was there performing some humble office in the kitchen, when, in the refectory one day, the Superior having asked various members to address the Brothers during the meal time, each excused himself. He finally urged Anthony to preach. At first Anthony demurred, but in the end, overcoming his modesty, he spoke with such eloquence, learning, and fervour, such humility and love, that the astonished friars knew themselves to have harboured a great luminary in their midst.

After this he was no longer permitted to remain in silent seclusion, but was sent to preach and teach at the University of Bologna, and later in France at Montpellier, Toulouse, Bourges, Limoges, and in Provence. In 1226 he returned to Italy and, after some time spent in travel, preaching, and founding convents, he arrived in Padua. Here he spent the remainder of his brief life (he died in 1231 at the age of thirty-six) lecturing on theology, preaching, striving to free the people from the tyranny of the monstrous potentate, Eccellino da Romano, and performing innumerable miracles up to the hour of his death.

The miracle by which he is perhaps best known is that connected with his preaching to the fishes, even as St Francis did to the birds. It happened in this wise. While the Saint was

preaching repentance and regeneration in Rimini, the heretics, of whom there were many, refused to listen to him, and when he would have made them hear, they mocked him and obstinately stopped their ears. Whereupon in the presence of all he confounded their unbelief. He went to the river which flowed near at hand and, standing on its edge, with hands outstretched over the water, said in a loud voice:

"Hear me, ye fishes, for these unbelievers refuse to listen. Hear me while I rehearse the benefits you daily receive from God; God it is Who created you; God Who gives you this stream of limpid water in which you disport yourselves at will, with no care or toil; God Who gives you your food and your thrice-blessed freedom."

He went on to remind them of their great debt of love and duty to their Maker. As his sermon proceeded, at first a few and gradually more, and then still more fishes gathered together, till the water was as full of them as the squares were usually full of men and women wherever he came to preach. Closely they crowded, great and small, their heads above water, eyes fixed upon him and mouths open. They listened to him attentively until the sermon ended, and their great concourse was not dispersed until Anthony had pronounced a blessing over them and dismissed them.

Another well-known miracle is that of Bononillo's horse. This Bononillo, a heretic, had one day held a long discussion with Anthony: he had resisted the Saint's exhortations and refused to believe in the Real Presence in the Eucharist. At last St Anthony said to him: "If the horse which you often ride were to bow down and worship the Body of Christ under the guise of the Host, would you then be convinced and believe?"

Bononillo declared that if such a proof should be offered him he would henceforth believe both in word and in spirit, but he added that he must himself arrange the conditions of the test. Anthony agreed to this. Accordingly, for two days Bononillo kept his horse in the stall without food and on the third opened

the door and let him come out. Bononillo himself stood outside on one side of the entrance with a sieve full of oats; on the other side stood Anthony bearing aloft the Sacrament in a chalice. The horse, emerging from his stable, stood for a moment considering the two—then, advancing toward the friar, the gentle-eyed creature bent his knees and reverently placed his forehead on the ground before the Host. The people who had come to witness what should happen further saw that the horse remained in the same position until Anthony, having blessed him, bade him rise and return to his master. The heretic, needless to add, was contented, convinced, and converted.

Pope Gregory IX gave Anthony the surname of "the Ark of the Covenant," and for this reason. Having ordered him to preach in Rome on an occasion when there was in that city a gathering of numberless pilgrims, there were among the Saint's auditors men of almost every known nation and race—Italian, French, Spanish, Greek, Slav, English, Teuton, and more still. Yet when Anthony addressed them, each heard him as if he had spoken in his own native tongue, and every man understood him perfectly.

In the same way, a certain woman was once most eager to hear the Saint's preaching, but her husband would not permit her to leave him, he being ill, as well as an unbeliever. The woman, greatly disappointed, opened her window and regretfully gazed in the direction of the spot where the sermon was to take place, which was about two miles distant. To her surprise and delight she heard the voice of St Anthony without the least difficulty, and followed his discourse, nor lost a single word of it. Her unwilling husband was obliged to acknowledge the reality of the miracle, as he also heard the sermon and was thereby converted.

Another miracle, and one very charming for its sweet sympathy, is the following. A penitent came to confess to the Saint, but upon his arrival was so overcome by shame and contrition for his faults that he could not bring himself to give them utterance.

"Go home," said Anthony, "write down thy offences and then bring me their list."

The penitent did as he was bidden. When all, down to the last humiliating detail, had been laid bare, he returned to the Saint, who accepted and unrolled the scroll. What was then the guilty soul's wonder at seeing the page which had been black with the tale of his crimes suddenly present a white surface—his sins had been forgiven.

When Anthony was once preaching in a town where he was remaining but a short time, a certain rich man offered him hospitality in his house, and gave him a room where he might retire and devote himself to prayer and contemplation. This room had a window which opened on the household stairway, and the host, filled with curiosity concerning the doings of his saintly guest, incessantly mounted and descended the stairs in order to peer through the window and see what he might be about. Invariably he found him at prayer by the light of a dim taper. His surprise was great, therefore, when, on one of his descents, he saw the room filled with a dazzling light, and Anthony kneeling before the table on which lay his open book of orisons. Upon the book stood a radiant Child. With arms outstretched toward the Saint, He smiled as if upon a well-known friend. Anthony, tender love beaming from his countenance, taking Him in his arms, kissed Him, while the Child fondly stroked the Saint's cheek.

When the apparition had vanished and the room had again fallen into its former gloom, and Anthony likewise was again sunk in deep study of his book, the man, making known his presence, tremblingly asked whether the celestial guest had indeed been the Divine Child. Anthony assented, but charged his host never to reveal what he had seen so long as he himself should live. When, however, the Saint was dead, the man, after touching his holy relics, testified to what he had seen, weeping happy tears at the remembrance, and calling St Anthony to witness to the truth of what he related.



ST ANTHONY AND JESUS.

The list of his miracles while he lived is long, and was multiplied after his death. In fact, so many wonders took place at his tomb in the first few months after his death that it came to be believed that one had only to pray to St Anthony and one's desires would be fulfilled. Who has not heard, even to this day, that St Anthony if appealed to will find and return to one anything, great or small, that one may have lost?

Anthony's death, as has been mentioned, took place at Arcella as he was hastening to Padua, where, feeling his life near an end, he wished to breathe his last. The Brothers who accompanied him, knowing that difficulties might follow, tried to keep his death a secret for the time being, until his body should have been interred.

By what agency the truth became known was never ascertained, but of a sudden the children in the streets of Padua began running distractedly about, crying out: "*Il Santo! Il Santo! Il Santo a morto!*" ("The Saint is dead!") No question arose in the mind of any one as to what Saint they meant. That the Saint

for them meant Anthony was further demonstrated when the Cathedral was built in his honour in Padua. It is not commonly called by his name. What need? If there is a cathedral in Padua, is it not of necessity his? In all simplicity they call it *La Chiesa del Santo*—the Church of the Saint, or still more simply *Il Santo*.

CHAPTER XXII

THE ROSES OF ST ROSE

St Rose was born in Lima, at the end of the sixteenth century, of rich and honoured parents. At her christening she was named Isabel, but, as she lay so rose-leaf fair in her cradle, her mother, calling her "my rose," renamed her.

She grew up beautiful as the day, but from childhood her hatred of vanity was as remarkable as her beauty, as also was the severity with which she ruled herself. For food she chose herbs bitter as wormwood, for bed she took the hard ground. When her mother bade her wear roses in her hair to enhance her loveliness—for her skin rivaled the roses in its brilliance and delicacy—she so arranged the wreath that it became a crown of thorns, which kept her constantly reminded of her Saviour's sufferings.

In vain a host of suitors sighed for her hand; she would listen to no word of love, and when their pleadings and her parents' importunities had become insistent, she disfigured her too charming visage by the application of a mixture of pepper and quick-lime.

She early took the habit of the Third Order of St Dominic, and after this her life became one long chapter of patient service and filial devotion, for her parents became poor and she toiled early and late to provide for them. All day she worked in her garden, and all night she plied her needle. Throughout these hardships, uncomplainingly borne, she was upheld and strengthened by ecstatic visions and visitations; the

Infant Jesus was with her among the roses of her garden, His Blessed Mother was her companion during the watches of the night.

Hearing of these wonders, doctors and divines questioned and examined her to discover if she were sane or mad, but she stood their tests in such wise that they decided that her visions were from God.

She died after a long illness when she was thirty-one years old.

Then it was that the people of Peru realized that in very truth a Saint had dwelt among them, and many years after her death a company of devout believers in the holy maid's sanctity sailed for Rome to entreat Pope Clement X to canonize their cherished compatriot.

The Pope listened sceptically to the one hundred and eighty who bore witness to the wonders performed both before and after her death by their candidate for canonization. It may be that he was not convinced that what he heard fulfilled the requirements; perhaps he did not discern among Rose's achievements the three miracles of the first magnitude of which he must have proof; mayhap he found in the annals but two! At all events he finally summed up his general unbelief in the fitness of one who had lived away off there in the outland of the Western hemisphere, . . . in the Indies . . . in the wilds . . . in the unknown . . . in one exclamation: "India and Saint! As likely as that it should rain roses!"

No sooner had the words left his lips than a heavenly fragrance filled the air, heralding the fall of a shower of roses—they had far to come from the heavens, and their perfume preceded them.

And then came the flowers, thick and fast and soft and sweet. Both the puzzled Pontiff and the enraptured witnesses were filled with wonder at the marvel. Down they came—red and white—the roses of Paradise—emblems of love and

purity—covering the floor of the Vatican with an ever deepening carpet of velvety petals.

Not at once could Clement bring himself to yield his point, but as long as he hesitated, just so long the shower continued. At last, seeing no other way to stop the gentle insistence of the perfumed flood, the Pope acknowledged his incredulity mistaken, and confessed himself convinced.

Thus we of the Western world came by our one ewe-lamb, St Rose of Lima!

CHAPTER XXIII

THE GOOD ALMONER'S HAT

Being a letter to Maria Lopez, in the hamlet of Cinco Cantonadas, from her son, at the Archiepiscopal Palace in Valencia.

The 14th day of December, in the year of our Lord 1545

MI MADRE QUERIDA,

As soon as Sebastian, who tells me that he is to pass through our village on his way to Valladolid, shall give thee this letter from thy *nino*, I know well that thou wilt hasten with it held close to thy heart to the house of Padre Emilio, that he may read it to thee. I here, therefore, express my thanks to the reverend Padre and my greetings and all good wishes for his welfare—and desire him to be assured that for him as well as for thee this letter is destined.

And thou, little mother, how is it with thee? Hast thou wondered why thou didst not for so long have word of thy son?

Ah—didst thou but know how full and how engrossing is the life in this great city! And how many the tasks that fill my days in the service of my beloved master, thou wouldst not marvel that the time has been long before leisure permits me to

write thee. Add to this the difficulty in finding a messenger, and thou wilt forgive. But now the opportunity offers, and I take the hour even from my duties.

Madre mia—what grandeur and what festivities when we first arrived in this city! I was still bewildered with the surprise of the honour done me by our adored friend and patron, the Senorito Thomas (for so I know thou dost in thy heart ever think of him—even as I do—though he has become a personage so high in honours and of so wide renown), that in the first days I could scarce take account of what was passing round me. That he should have chosen me among all to serve and follow him thither! But now all things have become customary and I can see them as they are.

I will not tell thee of the magnificent ceremony by which my master was ordained Archbishop in the great Cathedral. I will reserve all that until we meet. But mighty personages were there—none less than our Emperor Carlos IV, and Don Felipe his son, and many noble dignitaries of the Church. And I will say with pride that my master is dear to the heart of our Emperor, whose will it was that he be made Archbishop, even though he himself would far rather have remained Prior in Salamanca to the end.

He is still the same as he was of yore, modest and humble in mind and deportment. Not all the heaped honours and fortunes of the world could change him. He is still the same as when, but a little lad, he parted his garments on that cold day in January between the four of us ragged urchins who shivered in the Square, Jose and Manuel, Carlos and I. And his cloak and cap he gave to me—thou dost remember—and the next day thou didst bid me take back the cloak, and for that his mother, Donna Lucia Martinez of blessed memory, did us all those great benefits, the results of which are that I am here at this moment, and writing to thee with my own hand, when I might otherwise have remained ragged and untaught.

And the cap he gave me on that day I know thou dost still treasure. The cap which shaded and protected the most dear and beloved head that earth has ever seen! Padre Emilio must forgive me if this is idolatry—it is my love that speaks.

But I was telling thee of the humility which in this great good man is so boundless that there are times when I—a sinner—am almost driven to impatience by it. By it and by the generosity which knows no limit, and which results in want—yea—Mother, actual need for him—my saintly master. Still—what should one look for in the son of such parents? When father and mother vie with each other in good deeds, distributing food among the poor in times of want, giving them seed for their fields in time of plenty, lending money to the needy out of their none too plentiful store and without thought of usury. . . . And yet—I believe that had his parents been the last among creatures, this most charitable of men must still have been the benefactor of all.

When we left Salamanca to come here, I could have wished that he had thought well of purchasing some fresh raiment wherewith to make a good appearance when he arrived to take on his new honours, fine apparel to set off the dignity of his pale and delicate features, to enhance the lustre of his dark eyes—(What do I say! I babble like a foolish girl!) But no . . . he would not hear of it. He came clad in his old cassock. Of small avail was it to brush and clean it as best I might, it still was worn and discoloured. Yet he felt it sufficient for his wants.

And then his hat! Oh, *Madre mia!* It was his hat especially which gave me sharp distress. It was the same, the very same, that Don Alphonso Garcia, his father, gave him when the Senorito Thomas left home to go take the habit and vows of the Hermits of St Austin in Salamanca.

Alas—that hat! In vain I remonstrated with him. With all of us who knew him it mattered not at all what he should choose to set upon his venerated head. But in Valencia, where he was about to appear among the proud and the mighty, would he not

be misjudged, appearing in such headgear? And he pensively examined the hat I dared to deride to him, and then with a smile so seraphic that when one sees it one thinks only of heaven, he said: "What ails the hat? It is good—I see in it no holes. Must I cast it off when it has been my friend for so many seasons, shielded my head from sun and wind and rain so faithfully? Nay—I will wear this hat!"

But, *Madre*, this was not all.

His poverty when we arrived was so visible that I saw, when I attended him in public and at gatherings, that many remarked upon it—prelates clad in silks and velvets, covered with furs and with gems. Not only were their eyes and their countenances expressive of their thoughts, but some behind their hands and behind my master's back spoke their surprise—and I fear in derision—which made the blood rush to my brain.

As a result, however, the Canons of the Cathedral collected and presented him with a purse, an ample purse of 4000 crowns wherewith to purchase an outfit becoming to one of his exalted station.

I smile awry when I remember my joy at that event. A joy doomed to short life, for my master had no sooner received and thanked its donors for the gift than he called to me: "Quick, be off to the hospital where we went to visit the sick on Friday. Quickly go—and give this sum to the almoner."

"Alas, my Father!" I cried, "and your equipment I"

"I need none," he replied.

"A cassock and a warm cloak," I pleaded.

"The old ones will do."

"But the hat! A new hat, I conjure you!"

To that he made no answer. He only smiled like the angels, and with a gesture dismissed me.

And that is the way it is, *Madre mia*. So it is with the good—they are also the strong. And they carry their resolutions to the end, when you and I falter and halt by the way. My master is mild and gentle as the lamb, but when I am tried by his obduracy in denying himself not alone the commodities but the very necessities of life, Satan tempts me to call his resistance to my entreaties by the name of the stubbornness of the mule.

God forgive me—this is blasphemy! For if ever there lived one who deserved to be canonized a Saint on earth and in heaven it is my master, and, hear my prophecy, the world of men will yet know him as St Thomas de Villanueva, or perhaps—the Good Almoner, as he is already lovingly named by many.

Wonderful are the things he has so soon achieved since his accession to the rule of this see, for he immediately determined to devote two thirds of the great revenues to acts of charity. These he has planned and classified in a manner all his own, as you shall see: the poor, whom he loves as his own soul, nay, more, he has divided into six groups. First among these he places those whom he defines as the bashful poor, those who have seen better times, and with the self-respecting pride of their former station are ashamed to beg. His tenderness of the wounds dealt to these by ill fortune it were impossible to describe.

Next in order are the maidens whose need may force them into the path of temptation and shame.

Third come the poor debtors.

Fourth, the orphans and foundlings.

Fifth, the sick, the diseased, and infirm.

Thou seest, good Mother, how he has almost reversed the customary order of attention, and thou mayest divine the reason: are not the lame, the halt, and blind the care of all men? And do not orphans touch the heart of all good people? But who, before this, has had eyes to search out the claims of the shy and ashamed, of the helpless maidens and piteous debtors?

Lastly, he has set apart a sum for the strangers who come within Valencia's gates. The travellers who arrive from a distance and are unknown, who have no place wherein to lay their heads, nor the means to procure for themselves food. For them he has opened a kitchen, where travellers may come at all hours of the night or day; where all may be fed, and all claim a lodging for the night. Furthermore: on their departure, if so be their purses are empty, a gratuity is allowed to each, either to carry him farther on his journey, or to aid him in finding occupation if he remain.

Madre querida, I ask—is it not well done? And has not the Great God been good to me, thy son, that He has caused me to pass my days by the side and in the service of one so holy, that my heart which might otherwise have been hard and self-seeking is kept tender and warm by association with this beneficent man?

And now I have written at great length, concerning that which is near to my heart and present in every hour of my life, and have made no inquiries as to thee and all those at home.

But good Padre Emilio will perhaps write what thou shalt tell him, and that letter Sebastian will bring back to me in the spring, on his return from his long journey.

God have thee in His care.

THY SON WHO LOVES THEE.

I would add one little word: the hat of which I speak is even now upon the Archbishop's head. He has this morning gone to the prison, where through the gaoler he finds ways of relieving much pain and sorrow. The hat has now begun its twenty-seventh year of service.

Were it not cause for tears if it were not so droll?

CHAPTER XXIV

ST GONSALVO'S BRIDGE

Gonsalvo of Portugal was surely a saintly being from the very cradle, for is it not told of him as an infant, that when nothing else could appease his apparently unaccountable cries, if he were carried into a church he became immediately quiet, while he gazed with entranced eyes on the statues of Saints, and images of the Holy Virgin, and at sight of the figure of Our Lord upon the Cross he stretched out confiding baby arms?

Toward the end of an eventful life, it happened that he retired to a wild place near the river Tamego, where, not far from the ruins of what had once been the town of Amarante, he built a cell for himself and a chapel in honour of the Blessed Mother of God. Here he lived and prayed, and here he taught and preached to the peasants of the surrounding region.

Close by his cabin was a ford in the river over which many travellers were obliged to pass, as it lay directly in the course between two towns, but it was a most dangerous crossing, and Gonsalvo was constantly torn with grief at the number of lives that were lost in the attempt to traverse the Tamego at seasons when the stream was swollen with spring floods or autumn rains. So it was that it became his dream to see a bridge span the river; it was, however, difficult to arouse interest in the people who could have furnished means for the undertaking, and Gonsalvo, becoming more and more penetrated with a sense of the necessity for the realization of his desire, ended by going about the country on foot begging from door to door for money to build his bridge.

His petitions were greeted coldly. By all he was regarded as a visionary, and his quest made so little progress that one with less constancy might eventually have renounced it.

It chanced one day that in his wanderings he came upon a rich nobleman who was travelling far from home; to him Gonsalvo made his customary plea.

"A bridge, sayst thou, to span the Tamego, where there is now a ford, near what was once Amarante? But wherefore a bridge in that remote and outlandish spot?"

"Because the ford is treacherous and unsafe," answered Gonsalvo.

"Surely what has answered the needs of men so long will continue to do so?"

"Yea—with a yearly toll of many innocent lives," granted Gonsalvo.

"But bridges are not built in the wilderness," argued the man, "nor are they built in a place where though once there was a town there is now a desert! Bridges are built in cities, or at least near villages and hamlets."

"Bridges are built where bridges are needed," insisted Gonsalvo.

The nobleman, seeing that he could not by arguing rid himself of the quietly obstinate mendicant monk, took from his pouch a scrap of paper and on it wrote with an air of covert irony a few words, then handed the note to Gonsalvo, saying:

"Take this to my castle, my good man, deliver it to my wife, and she shall give thee what I have bidden her."

Filled with gratitude and hope, Gonsalvo blessed the giver, who with a knowing smile rode away, while Gonsalvo hastened in the direction of the nobleman's domain.

The way was long; he arrived hungry and fatigued, and was, after much questioning and delay, admitted to the presence of the lady of the castle. When he had stated his errand and delivered the note from her spouse, he waited while the lady perused it. Having first read it to herself, she read it aloud to him:

"The bearer is a poor mad fool who insists that he must build a bridge. Give him the weight of this paper in coin."

The lady looked up with ill-disguised mirth: "My husband was ever of a merry temper, yet I confess this is a somewhat bitter jest. You have come far to very little purpose, my poor friend."

"So be it," answered Gonsalvo, unperturbed; "but, gracious lady, give me what you are directed, give me at least the weight of that paper in money."

With a shrug the lady called for a pair of scales, and when these had been brought her, placed the note in one balance while she delicately laid the smallest of bronze coins in the other. As the scales did not move, she set down another and a larger silver coin; still no quiver of a downward motion in the balance; then more and yet more coins, now large and golden, she poured into it . . . but to her bewilderment and dismay it did not move until the great sum necessary for the building of the bridge had been counted out.

"A bitter jest, indeed," sighed Gonsalvo, as he gathered up his alms and bore them away.

Expressions of gratitude he thought it unnecessary to give, until he found himself alone in the forest outside of the castle walls. Then falling on his knees he thanked and praised God, Who had perhaps heaped in the scales, adding it to that of the tatter of paper the weight of the bodies of all the unfortunates who had lost their lives for lack of a bridge to carry them across the Tamego.

After his death Gonsalvo was buried in the rebuilt town of Amarante of which he is patron Saint, and in picture and statue he is represented holding in his hand a little model of the bridge he built.

CHAPTER XXV

ST STEPHEN, ST LAWRENCE, ST HIPPOLYTUS, AND ST HENRY OF BAVARIA

St Stephen's is the honour of being the first to shed his blood in the cause of Christianity. We are told in the book of the Acts of the Apostles that after he had performed great wonders and miracles among the people he was chosen deacon by Peter, and that when he was falsely accused of blasphemy against the Law of the Jews and of the Temple, "they saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Young he must have been, and beautiful and gentle. He was condemned to death and led forth outside of the gate of Jerusalem which now bears his name, and there stoned to death by the infuriated mob.

While he was suffering martyrdom, with a forgiving heart worthy of a true disciple of his great Master, he exclaimed: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!"

After his death, "devout men carried Stephen to his burial and made great lamentations over him," but it was not known until four centuries later where his remains were laid.

During the reign of Honorius, the story goes that at Caphargamala, about twenty miles from Jerusalem, there stood an ancient church, in charge of an ancient priest, Lucian by name.

One night in December, as the old man lay sleeping in his baptistry, he beheld the vision of a venerable man standing by his couch; he had a long white beard, wore gold embroidered garments, and carried a golden staff.

"Who art thou?" asked the priest.

"I," answered the visitant, "am Gamaliel, Doctor of the Law, and instructor of Paul the Apostle. After the death of

Stephen, who was stoned to death by the Jews beyond the northern gate, I caused his body, which had lain unguarded for a day and a night, to be taken to my house in the country. Thither it was carried by the faithful, and for forty days funeral rites were performed. Then it was laid in my own sepulchre, and near it the body of Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night. Go now, and tell this to the Bishop."

Lucian, fearing that the story of his dream would not be believed, did not follow this behest, so Gamaliel appeared to him on the following night bearing two golden baskets filled with red and white roses.

"What mean these?" asked Lucian.

"The red roses," replied Gamaliel, "stand for Stephen, who gave his blood for love of Christ, and the white ones for Nicodemus, who was without stain." He then repeated his instruction.

When Lucian still did not obey, Gamaliel appeared to him a third time, and reproached him for his unbelief and neglect. At last Lucian went to Jerusalem, reported his dream to the bishop, and was bidden by him to go to the spot indicated, to dig and search if he might discover the relics spoken of. The sarcophagus was found in a sepulchre in the garden designated, and that in it were indeed the relics of St Stephen was proved to the satisfaction of all by the miracles performed by them: seventy sick were healed by their heavenly perfume alone.

The relics were first placed in the church of Sion in Jerusalem, then by the younger Theodosius removed to Constantinople, whence they were sent by Pope Pelagius to Rome, and finally placed in the same tomb as that containing the remains of St Lawrence.

It is said that St Lawrence then earned for himself the title given him by the people of Rome, "*Il cortese Spagnuolo*," for when the body of St Stephen was being lowered

into the tomb, St Lawrence courteously moved aside, granting the place of honour on the right hand to his guest.

St Lawrence was, as the title indicates, a Spaniard, born at Huesca in Aragon. His parents were Orentius and Patienza, honoured at Huesca as Saints, though they do not appear in the lists of the canonized. Sixtus II, who had been Governor of Spain, upon his return to Rome took with him the young priest Lawrence, together with his cousin, that same Vincent who was afterward St Vincent. When Sixtus became Pope he made Lawrence his archdeacon because of the youth's blameless life. He gave into his care the treasure of the Church to be distributed according to their needs to the poor and the sick. This treasure had been given to the Church by various high personages, among them Julia Mamma, mother of the Emperor Alexander Severus, Flavia Domatilla, and the Emperor Philip.

It happened that in the time of Philip, who was the first Christian emperor, his general, Decius, who had been sent to quell a rebellion in Gaul, returned victorious, and was so elated by his success that he aspired to the empire. He therefore cut his Emperor's throat as he was sleeping in his pavilion and, marching upon Rome, proclaimed himself Emperor.

Philip's son, knowing his life to be in danger, gave over into the hands of Sixtus all his father's treasure and his own, lest they should fall into the hands of his father's murderer. He instructed him if he, like his father, should be slain, to give the treasure to the Church to be distributed among the poor. Then he fled and sought to hide from Decius, but was overtaken and destroyed, along with thousands of other martyrs. For Decius, having been accepted as Emperor by the Senate, who saw in him not Philip's murderer but the avenger of their gods, who had but punished one who refused to sacrifice to them, sought to establish himself more firmly on the throne by his persecution of Christians.

Sixtus was naturally among the first to be accused and condemned for worshipping Jesus Christ and refusing honour to

the ancient pagan gods. As he was being led away to his death, Lawrence clung to him, entreating to be taken with him.

"Whither goest thou, Father," he cried, "without thy son and servant! In what have I displeased thee that I am found unworthy to give my blood with thine in testimony of Christ? Peter suffered his deacon, Stephen, to die before him. Wilt thou not also suffer me to prepare the way?"

Sixtus replied: "I do not leave thee, my son. In three days shalt thou follow me. Thy sufferings shall be greater than mine, for I am old and near to the end of my course, and thou art young and strong. But as thy torments shall be greater, so also shall thy triumph be more glorious. Therefore, grieve not. Into thy hands I commit the treasure of the Church. See to it that it by no means falls into the hands of the tyrant."

He then was led away and beheaded.

Lawrence immediately applied himself to the distribution of the treasure entrusted to him. By night and day he went about Rome seeking out the poor, the sick, the naked; for their relief he gave all the money he had received from Sixtus. He arrived one night at a house on the Caelian Hill, where lived a Christian woman named Cyreaca, who constantly sheltered other Christian men and women under her roof. "Long she had had an headache," and St Lawrence healed her of the "ache and pain" by laying his hands upon her head. He washed the feet of the poor people in the house; by the sign of the Cross he restored sight to Creseentius, a blind man, and so he spent the time until the followers of Decius, who had heard mention of 'treasure' in the farewell of Sixtus, reported this to the Emperor. Lawrence was immediately brought before him and questioned concerning that same treasure. He answered that in three days he would show it.

Accordingly, on the third day, having collected all the poor and the sick among whom he had distributed his alms, he brought them into the presence of Decius, saying: "Behold the lasting treasures of Christ's Church, which shall not diminish but

increase! The hands of these have borne the treasure into Heaven!"

Decius, thinking himself mocked, ordered that Lawrence should be cast into a dungeon, there to await torture. A Roman knight, Hippolytus by name, was set as guard over him. This man, seeing the wonders performed by Lawrence in his prison (for he there healed the sick and restored sight to the blind, after which his fellow prisoners consented to be taught and baptized in the faith of Christ), came to him and questioned him. What Lawrence told him he believed. He was converted, and not he alone, but also nineteen members of his family.

As Lawrence continued steadfastly in his same answers concerning the treasure, and moreover refused to sacrifice, and constantly held to his Christian beliefs and practices, Decius had him taken away by night to the baths of Olympias, near the villa of Sallust. There he ordered a sort of iron bed to be erected, a bed in appearance, but in fact a gridiron, for under it a fire was lighted, and upon it "Lawrence Contumax" was stretched and burned alive. In the midst of his tortures Lawrence cried that the hot coals were refreshment to him, and ended by saying to Decius: "Thou wretched man, seest thou not that thou hast roasted me on one side? Turn me on the other, if thou wouldst have me well cooked, and then eat!"

Decius and his executioners, dumbfounded at this constancy, knew not what further agony to inflict upon him, when he exclaimed: "Oh, my Saviour, I thank Thee that Thou hast found me worthy to enter through the gates of Thy Paradise!" and gave up the ghost.

In confusion Decius hurried away, leaving the body on the fire. This Hippolytus took, and having embalmed it, piously interred it in a hidden place near the Via Tiburtina.

When the Emperor heard of this he caused Hippolytus to be seized. All his family were executed for their belief before his eyes; even his old nurse, Concordia, was scourged to death, and he himself, remaining constant in his assertions of faith, was tied

by the feet to the tail of a wild horse, dragged over rocks and briars, and so dashed to pieces.

Shortly after, Decius, being present at the games in the amphitheatre, was seized with the pangs of death, and loudly crying out the names of Lawrence and Hippolytus, expired.

A story is frequently told in connection with St Lawrence which has to do with Emperor Henry II, afterward St Henry of Bavaria. Henry reigned at the end of the tenth century. He was deeply devoted to the Church, and with his saintly wife, Cunegonde, founded, built, and endowed many cathedrals, monasteries, and convents. On one occasion, when he had led his armies against the Poles and Sclavonians, partly to suppress a rebellion and partly to convert them, he dedicated his army to the protection of St Lawrence, St George, and St Adrian, who were actually seen fighting on his side. He triumphed by their aid and converted and baptized his enemies.

His career was, however, not one of unqualified well-doing. Though he and his honoured Queen had for the several years since their nuptials lived together in a virgin union, he permitted himself at one time to be influenced by evil reports concerning her. Although he was in his heart convinced of her purity and knew her incapable of infidelity to him with the knight implicated in the slander, yet he consented to Cunegonde's submitting to a trial by fire. The saintly Empress walked unhurt barefoot fifteen paces upon burning ploughshares, and although Henry after this tried in every way to show her renewed and redoubled honour to make amends for the indignity to which she had been subjected, she finally obtained his permission to retire into a convent.

Now the story goes that in the middle of a certain night a hermit, sitting at his late vigil in a remote and solitary cell, heard the sound of a wild rushing in the air outside. He opened his window and asked who passed by, disturbing his meditations with such tumult. Answer came: "We are a legion of devils that

go to be present at the death-bed of the Emperor Henry, if per-adventure we may seize his soul."

The hermit said; "I adjure you that you appear to me again on your return, and tell me how you fared."

The demons promised and sped on their way.

Later in the same night the same sounds were repeated outside, and a knocking was audible at the window. The hermit opened it.

"Well," he asked of the nearest demon, "how did you fare?"

"Ill," answered the demon, sullenly. "We arrived at precisely the right juncture; the Emperor was in the act of dying; immediately we presented our claim. But it profited us nothing. Although in St Michael's balance we placed his false suspicion of his wife, and all his evil deeds, and his good angels likewise piled his good deeds on the other side, our side dipped and touched the ground, so much heavier was it. Victory had surely been ours had not that burned and roasted fellow, Lawrence, suddenly appeared on the scene and brought forth a pot of gold of great weight, which he flung into the balance, and our side flew up. We were then constrained to flee, but I, in my anger, was avenged against that pot, for I broke off one of its ears, and here it is!"

So saying, he held up the golden handle of a chalice to the hermit's astonished gaze.

Hastening to Eichstadt on the following morning, the hermit was informed that the Emperor was dead. Furthermore, on going to the church of St Lawrence, he found that the golden two-handled chalice, which Henry had had made in honour of the Saint, had indeed lost an 'ear' during the night!

CHAPTER XXVI

ST CLOTHILDE'S BANNER

It was St Clothilde, wife of Clovis, first King of the Franks, who largely Christianized France. She was a Burgundian princess; her father, Chilperic, had been murdered by her uncle Goudebald, yet she was none the less obliged to live at the uncle's court. Here she became a Christian; here also she was seen and loved by Clovis when he was but fifteen years old, and later, in 493, was married to him at Soissons.

They were happy, but Clothilde could not continue happy as long as her lord remained a pagan. He in no wise crossed her in her Christian practices of prayer and good works, but this was not sufficient; she knew that she must lead him to honour and worship her God.

By slow degrees, with great delicacy and wisdom, she drew him toward the right path, through his affection for her, and his respect for her gifts of mind and spirit. With infinite sagacity she induced him to listen when she spoke upon matters of worship, and discredited the power of the idols before which he bowed.

At last, in the year 496, Clovis was waging war against the Alemanni, who dwelt beyond the Rhine. At Tolbiac, near what is now Cologne, he was engaged in a battle which was proceeding in an alarming and disheartening manner. Shameful defeat seemed inevitable when, suddenly struck by an illuminating thought, the King drove the staff of his standard into the earth. Kneeling before it he called upon Clothilde's God to save him and his host. From that hour the tide of battle turned, and Clovis won a historic victory.

After this, in gratitude both to Clothilde's God and to Clothilde herself, Clovis could do no less than accept Christianity.

Clothilde's joy was complete when at Rheims her spouse received baptism at the hands of St Remi.

As St Remi was about to perform the ceremony, and when Clovis was already immersed in the font, the Saint uttered the much-quoted words over him: "Bow thy head, proud Sicambrian, adore that which thou hast burned, burn that which thou hast adored!"

At this moment the Holy Spirit in the form of a white dove descended, bringing to St Remi in a sacred phial oil from heaven with which to anoint the first Christian King of France.

An angel descending to earth at the same moment gave him three lilies, which he receiving in turn gave to Clothilde, who was standing beside the King.

These white lilies, the *fleur-de-lys*, symbol of purity and regeneration, she substituted upon the banner and royal arms of France for the three toads, the *crapauds*, which had formerly been there.

The heavenly oil contained in the "Sainte Ampoule" remained in the Cathedral of Rheims, and with it always the kings of France were consecrated.

CHAPTER XXVII

ST BERNARDINE OF SIENA

On the day of the death of St Catherine of Siena, as though a kind Providence had wished not to leave that city without a spiritual beacon light, Bernardine was born to the noble family of the Albizeschi, in Massa, a small Sienese town.

Early an orphan, he was left to the care of three aunts, Diana, Pia, and Bartolomea, and a cousin, Tobia, who reared him in their own pious and beautiful way. He grew up pure as a girl, at the same time spirited, resolute, and as full of courage as a lad should be, and of a personal beauty and dignity, as well as of a jocund temper so marked that they might well, as he advanced in years, fill his female relatives with apprehension of the pitfalls that must inevitably lie in his path.

On this account one day, when he was grown a youth, Tobia cautioned him against the lure of Satan in woman's form.

"Fear not for me, little mother," he answered her, "for already I am betrothed to one so noble and so lovely that I worship her with all my soul, and cannot pass a single day without seeing her. I am even now on my way to visit my love."

Far from being reassured, Tobia asked in a trembling voice: "Where dwells this lady and what is her name?"

"She dwells outside of the Porta Camollia, but her name will I never divulge," answered Bernardine with a meaning smile as he departed.

Tobia, although ashamed to spy upon one whom she knew to be limpid of heart and white of soul, followed him secretly to the place he had mentioned, and there found him on his knees before a fresco representing the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, which was painted over the gate. His lifted face glowed with reverent adoration, and he was wrapped in a

contemplation so profound that he failed to notice Tobia. Having finished his prayer he arose and made his way home all unsuspecting, but Tobia on her return clasped him to her heart with tears of relief and gratitude, calling him her own dearly beloved child.

When he was seventeen Bernardine entered the Hospital of La Scala in Siena, joining a confraternity of men who there led a life of discipline and contemplation. With them he remained, studying and practising penance, until three years later the plague broke out in the town, and raged with a greater violence than ever before in the city's history; the number of the stricken grew daily greater until scarcely anyone was left to take care of the sick. It was then that Bernardine, at the head of ten other youths, took charge of the hospital and laboured incessantly for four months, nursing and consoling the living, burying the dead, bringing order out of chaos and health out of disease. He did not desert his post until the plague had ceased. He then himself became ill as a result of the fatigue he had undergone. His life was for a time despaired of, but he slowly regained his health, and during his convalescence determined to spend his days in a life of religion. His choice fell upon the Franciscan Order as realizing his ideal of devotion. He divided his fortune between the Church and the poor and became a Minorite Brother. He, in fact, was the founder of the reformed Order of Franciscans, called the Fathers of the Observance, for they observed the original Rule of St Francis from which the Order had woefully lapsed, practised the severest abstinence, absolute poverty, and went bare-foot.

As an humble barefoot friar he began his mission, and as such he died at the end of the forty-two years of his religious life, though honours were offered him repeatedly: the bishoprics of Siena, of Ferrara, and of Urbino were pressed upon him in vain; he refused them, pleading that preaching was his mission. From end to end of Italy he travelled, carrying the gospel of peace and love and purity. Such was the concourse of people who everywhere gathered to hear him that no church could

contain them, and he was obliged to hold his services in the public squares or the open fields.

Wherever he went he exhorted his hearers to the love of God and of their neighbours, and in response to his exhortations peace seemed almost miraculously to be restored between cities at war, factions and families at strife, and individuals at feud; life-long enemies fell weeping on each other's necks and forgave old offences; creditors pardoned their debtors; debtors hastened to pay ancient debts, and brothers were reconciled after long estrangements. In the same way those who had led lives of sinful pleasure or of crime, of gaming and of profligacy, were turned from their evil ways, and in proof of regenerate hearts made great pyres in the squares of all the tools and symbols of their occupations; all manner of men cast away their weapons; women threw into the flames their mirrors, jewels, false hair, perfumes, and high-heeled shoes; gamblers heaped up their cards, dice, and chessmen.

Once, upon Bernardine's return to Bologna, where in the blaze of such a pyre all gambling implements had been destroyed, a man came to him in great distress, complaining that whereas before Bernardine's coming he had been able to earn a modest living by making and selling playing cards and dice, he was now reduced to poverty, as no one would any longer buy his wares.

"Have you no other trade?" asked Bernardine.

"None," said the man.

Bernardine then showed him a little tablet which he always held in his hand while preaching, and not only looked at frequently himself, but at the end of the sermon exhibited to the kneeling populace. It was marked by the name of Jesus, or rather the initials I. H. S. surrounded by a halo of golden rays. He told the man to make copies of this tablet and sell them, with the result that the man made a fortune, for all people wished to possess them.

This same tablet, the emblem of the Cult of the Holy Name, played a great part in the life of Bernardine. It became a symbol so generally worshipped that it was carved or painted over doors, on walls, on personal property, wherever Bernardine had preached, and might almost have been taken as a mark of his passage, for never in his sermons did he weary of extolling the beauty and the spiritual power of the Name of our Lord, and of using it as a means for kindling popular fervour. So great became the veneration of these tablets that in some quarters the objection was raised that they were becoming objects of idolatry, and Bernardine was called to Rome by Pope Martin V to answer the charge of heresy. He, however, by his replies to his accusers, acquitted himself of the charge, and the Pope, convinced of Bernardine's integrity, not only let him go free, but bade him preach in Rome itself.

In his defence he was aided by the eloquent pleading of his pupil and disciple, John of Capistrano, afterward also canonized a Saint.

Strange to say, this event repeated itself during the period of the pontificate of Pope Eugenius IV, who followed Martin. Again Bernardine, accused of heresy, was summoned to appear in Rome. Again he was acquitted and sent honourably on his way to continue his pious mission. Whereas upon his arrival he had been hooted at in the streets, insulted, and threatened with death, he departed in triumph, concerning which he said, with his customary humorous turn:

"On my arrival (in Rome) some wanted to see me fried, others roasted, but once they had heard me preach, not a man was suffered to say a word against me. When I come to consider such treatment I marvel and say to myself: Hold fast to God, for fleeting indeed are the things of this world, since they now wish me well whose death they desired but a short time previously."

"His face," as one of his biographers states, "was never sad unless he were sorrowing over some public crime, and he always loved a joke." Another biographer says: "He was very

cheerful, always joyous and gay." It was, furthermore, a part of his creed, as well as of his nature, to "be ever joyful in the Lord, amiable, gracious, and gay at all times," for he considered it "unbecoming that one in the service of God should wear a gloomy and sullen mien."

But this merry disposition accorded perfectly with the utmost severity toward evil doing, tender sympathy with the sufferings of the afflicted, and utter abnegation of self. All three of these qualities are shown in the story told of him and the wicked and powerful Duke of Milan, Philip Maria Visconti.

When once the Saint protested to the Duke against the viciousness of his life and that of his court, his excesses in luxury, his cruelty, and finally his exactions of almost divine homage from his subjects, the Duke threatened to take from Bernardine the license to preach, and even told him that imprisonment and torture awaited him if he continued in his accusations. The undaunted preacher, nevertheless, persevered in proclaiming from the pulpit, or wherever he might be, the impiety and immorality of the Duke's mode of life.

Finding threats of violence of no avail, the Duke attempted the bribery of the poor friar, sending him by his servants the gift of a hundred ducats carried on a silver dish, money intended for his personal use. His purpose was, as soon as Bernardine should have accepted it, to denounce him before all as one who could be bought and silenced with gold. But Bernardine refused the bribe. Immediately the messengers were sent back to him by the Duke, begging that if he would not accept the money for himself he would take it for the poor, or build a monastery with it. Again Bernardine refused the gift. When the servants asked him what they should do with the money, which they had been forbidden to return with to their master, the Saint said quite simply: "Follow me," and led them to the debtors' prison. There he paid the debts of all the inmates but two, and not having sufficient money to liberate these last, he said to them:

"Fear not, for I promise to buy your release, and should I be unable to procure the money, I will myself come to prison in your stead."

The populace, hearing of this, immediately gathered money enough to set free the two remaining prisoners.

The delay of his messengers deceived the Duke so far that he jumped at the conclusion that Bernardine had accepted his bribe. He announced it as an accomplished fact to his courtiers, adding with a sneer that although the friar appeared to scorn money his practice did not accord with his preaching.

In time the messengers returned bringing news of what had actually happened, and then, won by the uprightness of the Saint's action, his fearlessness and sincerity, the Duke admitted the falsity of his own accusation, and thereafter unresentfully and generously ranked himself as his admirer and friend.

In the course of his long mission Bernardine founded more than three hundred monasteries, and performed many miracles, healing the sick and taming the elements. He himself, emaciated and worn by constant toil and travel, grew day by day weaker and wearier, and finally died on his sixty-fourth year, at Aquila in the Abruzzi. The Sienese would have wished him brought back to be buried in their city, but the inhabitants of Aquila would on no account consent to surrender their precious relics, and Bernardine was interred amid inconceivable pomp and ceremony in a silver shrine in the Church of San Francesco.

Miracles worked by his effigy abounded after his death, until the reputation of his power caused even his one-time enemy, Duke Philip Visconti, himself far from devout, to send for the Saint's spectacles to cure himself of a malady of the eyes.

The ancient accusation of heresy followed Bernardine even after death. His enemies again assailed his use of the symbol of the Holy Name as unorthodox. And again John of Capistrano flew to defend Bernardine dead, as he had defended him living. He even urged the trial by fire, proposing to cast

himself into the flames of a pyre upon which Bernardine's remains should be placed. Most touching was his request that, if both should be destroyed, his death should be ascribed to his own sins, and not to any shortcoming in his dear dead master.

The Pope, Nicholas V, refused to permit the ordeal, but on May 24, 1450, less than six years after his death, announced the canonization of St Bernardine of Siena.

CHAPTER XXVIII

ST RAYMOND'S BOAT

Raymond Pennaforte, adviser and confessor of James of Aragon, had been bidden to follow the King from his capital to the Island of Majorca. He had obeyed the royal summons somewhat reluctantly, for he felt that he might by remaining in Spain have accomplished better and greater works in the service of the Church and of the Dominican Order, in the conversion of Moors and Jews, more than 10,000 of whom he had already brought to the fold of Christ.

He had at first demurred against the King's command that he follow him, and had only consented to accompany him upon the King's promising with an unprecedented degree of docility to leave behind him all the pomp and circumstance, all the diversions and feasting, all the excesses and sinful enterprises for which his court was notorious. He promised, in short, "to be good," if only his confessor would come with him, his confessor for whom he had the regard of a true friend, who appeared to him as the most interesting and stimulating companion with whom he could supply himself during the month of enforced stay on affairs of state in his Island of Majorca.

It happened one day some time after their arrival, when they had settled down to the rather dull routine of life in the little provincial court, that Raymond, coming suddenly upon the King seated on a stone bench in an umbrageous alley of the palace

gardens, during the sleep-inducing hours of the early afternoon, beheld him deep in interested conversation with a young page. The page had evidently just brought the King a cooling draught of sparkling wine, for the day was sultry and quivers of heat trembled up from the sun-saturated paths and hedges. Raymond approached noiselessly over the silent sand of the alley, his eyes fixed with suddenly awakened interest on the clear profile of the lad outlined sharply against the cypress wall. The face was familiar to him. To be sure when last he had seen either it or its prototype it had been crowned with waving locks under a coif all sparkling with gems; the figure which now stood arrayed in doublet and hose had been draped in sweeping flaming velvet and silk, but surely—yes, without shadow of doubt, it was the same face, the same form, whose beauty he had beheld flaunted at court revels.

If any question remained in his mind it was dispelled at sight of what now followed, for at a laughing and evidently saucy remark from the boy, the King drew him down and, laying hold of his firm, round chin, kissed him with deliberation.

Neither doubt nor hesitation remained to the confessor. With unhurried step he approached the two.

"Thy word, my son, was pledged to me that if I accompanied thee thither I was to have been thy sole companion; that God was to grant me this opportunity to bring thy still unregenerate soul to Him, without the rivalry of woman, of revelry, of all the snares of Satan which thou didst promise to forswear. Now hast thou attempted to make of me thy dupe. Under the guise of a page hast thou brought here, or permitted to follow thee, this woman from whom it was my wish and my duty to separate thee. I will not consent to be a party to thy sin, nor will I absolve thee from it; therefore can I remain here no longer. Give me leave and means to return to Barcelona without delay, I entreat thee."

At these words the King at first laughed the uneasy laughter of one detected in fault, as did also the disguised

damsel, whose wine had made the King rash, but upon the Saint's insistence that to Barcelona he both must and would return without an hour's delay, the King cried angrily:

"Here thou art and here thou shalt remain, and any pilot, sailor, or owner of a boat who against my command shall take thee to land shall straightway die!"

"To Barcelona I now none the less take my way," answered Raymond.

"The coast of Spain is far, my father," said the King, derisively, "and unless thou art strong to swim the distance, thou shalt scarcely reach it alive."

Without reply, the Saint turned on his heel, unheeding of the mockery that rang after him. Without pause he walked to the shore. The sea lay like a solid floor of blue enamel before him. For a space he stood in prayer at the water's edge, his head bowed over his joined hands; then, taking off his long cloak, he laid it upon the water; stepping on to it he raised one corner of it high and propped it up on his staff. A fresh breeze rose from the south-east and filled the cloak as it might fill a sail.

Raymond, kneeling, waved a farewell and a blessing to the astounded folk who had gathered on the shore and had beheld this extraordinary embarkation.

These were no more bewildered than were those who, standing on the Mole of Barcelona, saw the Saint arrive a few hours later. Still kneeling on his cloak he approached swiftly; he landed, drew up his dry cloak from the water, wrapped himself in it, and walked away, leaving five hundred round-eyed witnesses of his return to Spain.

King James, it is said, was never the same individual after this day. His confessor's power to draw upon the assistance of the Almighty in overcoming obstacles and controlling his own fate so overawed the monarch that he mended his ways without delay: his manners and his morals became so exemplary that

Raymond Pennaforte again consented (after much persuasion) to become his spiritual adviser and confessor.

The Saint died at the ripe age of a complete rounded century.

CHAPTER XXIX

ST ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, during the reign of Herman, Landgrave of Thuringia, it happened that strife arose among the nobles of his court as to which among them excelled in the art of song. Rivalry climbed to so high a pitch, it became so hard to decide without prejudice or offence in favour of any one of the gifted minstrels, that a celebrated man of Transylvania, one well versed in the arts of necromancy and astronomy as well as of poetry and song, was sent for to settle the dispute, and preside as judge over a final contest.

Klingsohr was the magician's name. He came in answer to the summons to Thuringia, and while there, upon being asked by the people for any news he might have to relate to them, he answered after long contemplating the heavens:

"I give you joyous news. I see a beautiful star rising over Hungary. On this night is born to the king of that land a daughter who shall be given in marriage to the son of your Prince Herman of Thuringia. She will be a Saint, whose sanctity shall rejoice the whole Christian world.

The sorcerer, having spoken and having also satisfactorily presided over the song contest, returned on the wings of the wind to his far country, which journey he was rumoured to have accomplished in a single night.

His prediction was soon proved true: on that night, in that hour, Elizabeth was born to Gertrude, wife of the Christian King Andreas of Hungary.

Herman took a natural interest in the little princess 169 who had been foretold as bride to his eldest son, wherefore he frequently questioned travellers who came from the Hungarian court concerning her. All agreed in extolling her beauty, charm, and goodness. The tiny princess had seemed to bring into the world with her peace and goodwill toward men; wars had ceased and even private feuds had been dissipated in her father's realm. From her first consciousness, her thoughts seemed to have leaned toward holy things. Her first voluntary action was one of alms giving; her first words had taken the form of a prayer.

When she had reached the age of four, Herman sent a company of lords and ladies formally to ask the hand of the young princess. He begged, moreover, that she might be brought to his court, there to be educated and to grow up by the side of his son Louis.

Andreas and Gertrude consented, although they found it difficult to part with their child. After many days of entertainment and feasting, with which they entertained the ambassadors, Elizabeth, wrapped in silks embroidered with gold and silver, and lying in a cradle of gold, was given by the King into the arms of Count Walter of Varila, with the charge that he would ever be his daughter's friend, counsellor, and protector. Count Walter promised and lovingly kept his word to the end.

The Hungarian monarch sent with his daughter a royal dowry and vast store of treasure, gems, and gold. Whereas the ambassadors with their retinue had brought with them but two conveyances to carry their effects, they returned with thirteen, loaded with the princess's belongings, her silver bath and gold implements, her fine garments and jewels, with richest offerings to Herman and his wife Sophia, as well as many gifts to the ambassadors themselves. She was accompanied by thirteen Hungarian maidens of noble rank.

The journey back to Eisenach was safely accomplished, and Herman received the princess joyously. Her betrothal to Louis was immediately celebrated with great pomp, after which

the two children were laid to sleep in the same cradle, where they gave signs of mutual affection, stretching out their little arms and smiling at each other, to the delight of Herman and his court. From that day they became inseparable, and loved each other more and more with every hour.



THE CHILD JESUS AND ST ELIZABETH.

For five years all went well, for Herman loved Elizabeth as his own daughter, but when he died she lost a friend indeed. He and Louis alone had understood her and did not count against her her difference from all other children. She was ever more a creature of heaven than of earth; all her thoughts, even in those years of earliest childhood, seemed centred on the desire to serve God and his poor. Her playmates reported that angels took part in her games, and that the Child Jesus often came to play with her and saluted her tenderly. Her compassion for the suffering and her charity toward the needy were the very breath of life to her. From the time she was three years old she continually gave away everything that was given to her, her clothing, her toys, her food. The aged, the children, and the sick were those of whom she made her chosen, her closest companions.

Sophia and her daughter Agnes had small patience with Elizabeth's unpractical generosity, and still less with her humility and self-abasement. They contended that her behaviour was more fitting a serving-maid than a royal princess.

Once, on the occasion of a Church festival, when Sophia had bidden Agnes and Elizabeth accompany her to Mass down in Eisenach and told them to array themselves in their finest garments, the two princesses entered the church with her, clad in robes of state, with floating mantles and with their golden crowns upon their heads. After they had approached the high altar and had knelt upon the carved prie-Dieu, Elizabeth, looking up at the crucifix above, removed her crown and bowed herself down upon the ground.

Sophia spoke to her sharply: "What are you dreaming of, Elizabeth! Is your crown too heavy? Young princesses should hold themselves erect and not throw themselves upon the floor like tired jades!"

Elizabeth answered, meekly: "Dear lady, forgive me, but as I looked upon my Saviour hanging naked upon the Cross, crowned with thorns, my crown seemed a mockery, and my own

body clad in velvet and pearls and gold seemed to me a vile thing."

She returned obediently to her bench, but without replacing her crown, covered her face with a fold of her cloak, and continued in prayer, letting Sophia and Agnes rail on as they chose. These two, to escape the unfavourable comment which they knew themselves to be attracting from the mass of the people, whose eyes were fixed upon them, now felt obliged to remove their crowns and cover their own fair countenances, which they had not the least desire to do, and which "misliked them greatly."

From the accumulation of occurrences similar to this, hatred of Elizabeth grew in these mean and worldly souls, which but deepened as the years passed. They treated her with invariable dislike and contempt; Agnes openly mocked her, and her example was followed by the people of the court, who imitated their superiors in a scornful neglect, and in complaints of her to Louis. She bore all this with a patience so saintly that Louis sometimes questioned whether she were not a creature too holy to become his earthly bride. His love, however, only deepened day by day, although he did not openly cross or resist his mother and all his counsellors when they insisted that Elizabeth was no fit bride for him, and that she ought to be sent back to Hungary. Sophia, moreover, tried in every way to induce Elizabeth to retire to some convent and take the veil, and Agnes was wont to taunt her, telling her that she was only fit for an underling, and that her brother would never in the world think of marrying her now!

They were bitter years for the little exiled princess, for the occasions were not frequent when she could see Louis alone, when he would assure her of his undiminished love, and console her for the wounds inflicted by others upon her gentle soul.

As he was often away from home on journeys, and on visits to other courts, it was his custom never to return without bringing her the gift of something rich or rare which he had

chosen for her in passing through a foreign city; it might be a crucifix, a chain, a brooch, or gloves, a knife, a jewel. Once it happened that he was accompanied on all his journey by strangers, and either had had no opportunity, or else had forgotten to bring her the customary gift. She had been used always to run joyously to meet him on his return, when he would take her in his arms and, embracing her, give her the token that he had thought of her and loved her in his absence. This time he was still accompanied by the strange guests and so engrossed with their entertainment that he paid no heed to Elizabeth. The court could be trusted to mark this apparent neglect and to make the most of it. Poor Elizabeth, rendered distrustful by mockery and unkindness, could only believe that her dear love's heart was finally changed toward her, as every one declared. She confided her fear to Count Walter of Varila, the faithful friend who had always attempted to stand between her and the intriguers of the court.

He determined to speak of the matter to the young Duke, and soon after had the opportunity he sought.

He was out hunting with Louis one day, and it happened that they were separated from the rest of the party. They were resting, lying on the grass under trees; before them rose the Inselberg, the highest mountain in Thuringia. Count Walter spoke:

"My lord, will it please you to answer me a question?"

"With all my heart," said the Duke.

Count Walter came to the point directly: "What is to be done with Elizabeth? Do you intend to marry her, as was determined when first I brought her to you from Hungary, or do you mean to send her back to her father?"

Louis sprang to his feet, his face and eyes ablaze: "Do you see the mountain before us? If it were made of pure gold from base to summit and were offered me in exchange for

Elizabeth, I should refuse it! Let them say what they will, I love Elizabeth more than anything on earth, and I love her alone!"

"My lord, I beseech you," said the Count, "let me repeat your words to her."

"I pray you will," answered Louis, "and give her this pledge of my love and faith." So speaking, he took from the pouch he wore at his belt a little mirror, framed in silver and mounted in ivory, the handle of which was formed by the Cross and figure of the Saviour.

This incident brought events to a climax. The following year, on his successful return from his first campaign, Louis married Elizabeth, putting an end to the slanders and persecutions of her enemies. She was led to the altar by Count Varila, surrounded by all the noble ladies of the land. A magnificent Mass was celebrated, and banquets, dancing, and tournaments, lasting three days, inaugurated the royal nuptials.

Louis was then in his twentieth year, Elizabeth barely fifteen. How beautiful they both were! As their story is like a fairy-tale, even so they seem truly to have been the living types of the hero and heroine of fairy lore or romance: Louis, superbly tall and straight and strong, with long fair hair, kindly blue eyes, and an expression of great candour and serenity; in manner gentle and modest as a maid; with a valiant spirit he ever vigorously defended the right, and battled against injustice and evil. He was said to resemble the paintings which represented the conventional type of the figure of Christ. Never in all his life was he unfaithful or disloyal to his beloved Elizabeth, and this although the temptations set before a princely youth might have been thought irresistible.

As to Elizabeth, she was the true representative of her race: slim and dark and glowingly lovely, with a body of marvellous beauty and a face irradiated by the light of her angelic spirit; deep eyes full of love, from which tears of sympathy were never far; she was said to be the most beautiful person in all the world.

If one might but end the telling of their story with the period that followed their union, a time of honour and happiness for Elizabeth after the long years of humiliation and insult; if one might but make of it a happy fairy-tale, and finish it with the old words "and they lived happy ever after"! For they loved with entire devotion, their union was of the tenderest, and their happiness most complete. This is not to say that her enemies ceased from attempts to do her ill; in this they never desisted to the end of Elizabeth's days, but to their eternal complaints of her Louis invariably answered: "Let her do as she will," for he felt in his heart that he and his realm could only receive blessings through his wife's saintliness and unparalleled generosity.

Elizabeth had as confessor and spiritual adviser a priest by name Conrad of Marburg, a man whose stern and rigid severity ruled her as an inquisitor through her sensitive conscience. It was he who told her that certain unjust imposts were levied upon the people, the proceeds of which were destined to furnish the Duke's lavish table. He charged Elizabeth to eat nothing except such food as had been legitimately paid for. After this, unable to distinguish between what was and what was not permitted by her confessor, Elizabeth would touch no food save bread and water. Once when, contrary to the custom of great ladies of her day, she sat beside her husband at the banqueting table (she could not bear to be separated from him even so long), Louis, taking up her cup, drank from it. Never, it seemed to him, had he known wine so delicious. He called to him the cupbearer and questioned him where he had got it. The astonished cupbearer declared that he had poured only cold water into the Duchess's goblet. Louis breathed no word but, as a biographer has put it, "he had wit enough" to know that his wife was attended by angels.

On the occasion of the nuptials of Louis's sister Agnes, when he was about to receive as guests all the nobles of his duchy, Louis begged Elizabeth to array herself in her most regal costume, as became the Duchess and his most dear wife, to do honour to the festival. Although Elizabeth took no pleasure in

rich apparel, on this occasion she bade her maids clothe her in her finest garments. When, ready in her magnificent silk robe, wrapped in a mantle of blue velvet studded all over with pearls and lined with ermine, she was crossing a court to join Louis, she heard herself called by name. Glancing down she saw a wretched beggar appealing to her, who lay stretched half naked upon the pavement, shivering with cold and disease. In haste she answered him that she could not at that moment give him aid, but that she would later send him food and assistance from the banquet hall; he, however, insisting, entreated her to take immediate pity on him, in the name of John the Baptist, her patron Saint, one in whose name she was never known to refuse anything. Impulsively snatching off her cloak she threw it over him and hurried back to her apartment, for she could not proceed to the hall of state without a mantle to cover her dress, such being the custom. The seneschal who had witnessed the scene went to Louis and related what he had seen, adding: "Does my lord think our Duchess has done well to keep us all waiting while she clothes a beggar with her royal mantle?"

Louis smiled, saying: "I will go to her; she will join us presently."

Leaving the assembled company, he went to his wife's apartments, and asked her if she were not ready to descend to the guests who were awaiting her arrival before commencing the feast.

"Yes, my dear lord, I am ready."

"But your mantle, my Elizabeth, the mantle which you wore to church—"

"I have given it away," answered she, meekly, "but if it is the same to you, I can go without it."

Before Louis could make answer, one of the maids in waiting entered the room, bearing on her arm the cloak.

"My dear lady, is this not the cloak you intended to wear? In coming through the dressing room I found it hanging in its place."



THE MIRACLE OF THE ROSES.

Elizabeth and Louis, without another word, fell for a moment on their knees and gave thanks to God, then hand in hand descended. And all who beheld the young Duchess on that occasion saw that her raiment shone with an unearthly splendour, and that her face was irradiated with a celestial light. Louis, filled with wonder and with awe, had no doubts that it was Christ Himself Who in the guise of a beggar had come to prove His beloved Elizabeth.

Once again, when Louis was away from home, spending some days at his castle in Naumburg, Elizabeth, as was her custom, devoted the time of his absence to caring for the sick of Eisenach. Among these, she found one unfortunate, Heli by name, a leprous boy whose condition was so loathsome that none would touch him, and he had been left to die alone. Unshrinkingly she took him back to the castle with her, bathed him herself, applied healing remedies, and then placed him in her own and her husband's bed.

Sophia's disgust knew no bounds, and Louis happening at that moment to return, his mother went to meet him, saying: "My dear son, come with me. I will show you something which will surprise you. You shall see with whom your wife shares her bed in your absence." Then she told him of the diseased creature.

For once impatient, Louis hastened to his wife's chamber, and snatching aside the coverlet from the bed, saw—no leper—but the figure of Christ extended upon the Cross, which vanished while he gazed. At the sight both he and his mother remained stupefied. Sinking on his knees before Elizabeth, who had arrived on the spot to calm his possible anger against the leper, he exclaimed: "Oh, God, have mercy upon me, a sinner! I am not worthy to behold these wonders. Help me to become a man after Thy heart!"

One day in midwinter, as she walked down the steep snow-covered path leading from the Wartburg, burdened beyond her strength with bread and provisions for the poor of the town below, Louis met her and, stopping, questioned her. "Dear love,

why goest thou thus alone and bowed down with such a weight? Is this fitting that the lady of the castle go burdened like a menial? And what is it thou dost carry, held so close in thy mantle?"

Elizabeth, confused at having been thus discovered, shrank from showing him what she carried, but he urged, and finally, taking one end of her cloak, drew it aside. And her upheld robe was filled with red and white roses, roses of such beauty and fragrance as grow only in Paradise. Louis would have embraced his adored one, but looking at her he dared not, for she seemed like one not of this earth, but an angel; so, taking one of the red roses from her heaven-sent store, he went on his way and treasured the flower in his bosom to his dying day.

In all this time Conrad so worked upon Elizabeth's sensitive conscience and fervent heart that she dared not permit herself to be innocently happy with her loved one. She constantly tortured herself with fears for his soul's salvation and her own. She scourged herself and wore a hair shirt against her delicate flesh. At night, Louis, awakening, would miss her from his side, and rising to seek her, would find her at prayer on the icy stones.

It is told that on one occasion, while she was assisting at a solemn Mass, she so completely lost herself in the contemplation of her husband, in thoughts of his beauty and of the kindness which made him dear to all, that she forgot where she was and what she was doing. She only recovered herself when, upon the elevation of the Host, she beheld a vision of the crucified Saviour, His wounds all bleeding. The sight informed her that she had offended her Divine Spouse by her purely human adoration. She spent the rest of her day weeping before the altar and imploring forgiveness. Her problem seemed impossible of solution. She considered that she owed all her thoughts, allegiance, actions, life, and love to God, and yet here beside her was a love which likewise clamoured to engross all her life and thoughts, actions and allegiance. Her soul was torn

by the never-ceasing conflict between these two masters: a jealous God and an adored husband.

Now came the year 1226 when the Emperor Frederic went into Italy. With him went his vassal, Louis of Thuringia.

Elizabeth's only solace during any separation from her husband lay in her redoubled care of the poor and the sick. On this occasion more than ever they needed her attention, for no sooner had the Duke departed than all the land suffered from a famine. Wisely and well Elizabeth distributed money and grain among the needy. She doled out only so much as was necessary to each, preventing waste and loss. She herself bestowed upon nine hundred people daily loaves hot from the castle ovens. She gave grain for planting, and when harvest-time came, furnished the workers with clothing, shoes, and harvesting implements.

But during the following winter, as is so often the case, pestilence broke out as a result of the famine, from the weakness consequent upon privation. Here again Elizabeth expended wealth and strength without stint. She founded new hospitals and spent her time between them all, tending the sick whose diseases were so revolting that her ladies in waiting refused to accompany her. She now poured out all the money of the treasury in the maintenance of these hospitals, she sold her rich robes and gems, she even pawned the state jewels. So that when Louis returned, the councillors of state, the steward, the seneschal, and all who had been incensed by Elizabeth's course, hastened to meet him, fearing his displeasure, and wishing to forestall all blame by setting upon her the responsibility of the depleted exchequer and granaries.

Louis would listen neither to the officials nor to his mother and brothers, who had come to meet him with bitter complaints.

"Tell me no more of these things," he cried. "Is my wife well, are my children well? That is all that I wish to know." And to their renewed accusations he replied: "Let my Elizabeth give to God all she pleases. He will restore all to us in good time. Let

her bestow all the charities she chooses if she but leave me Eisenach and my castles of Wartburg and Naumburg! Charities will never ruin us. I want you to aid rather than thwart her!"

When, after the sharp ascent, he had reached the castle, Elizabeth flew out with her three children to greet him, and they fell weeping for joy in each other's arms.

"Dear one," he said, presently, "what has become of your poor people during this disastrous year?"

"I have given to God what was His, and God has preserved for us what was thine and mine," she answered, pointing to their children.

And they say that while the reunited lovers walked arm and arm up and down the great hall, grain flowed from all sides and slipped in under the gates, so that they trod it under, foot, Inquiring the cause of this, Louis was told that the bins of the granaries were so full that they overflowed, and the grain was scattered everywhere.

Again, one would wish to dwell upon the period of happiness that now followed, for alas, the joy of these two was short-lived—and it was to be their last.

The following year Louis must join the Emperor in the Third Crusade. For days after he had received his summons and accepted his cross, he dared not tell Elizabeth, knowing that with another separation her heart would break. Instead of wearing his cross in plain sight, he concealed it upon his person.

But one night, when they were in Elizabeth's bower, she unfastened his belt, and as she unthinkingly looked into the pouch attached to it—she saw the cross. In an instant she understood, she saw her doom upon her, and sank unconscious to the floor. Lifting her tenderly, Louis restored her and tried to comfort her, but "Oh," she cried in anguish, "if it be not against the will of God, stay with me, I beseech you!"

Yet in the end she acquiesced: "Against God's will I have no wish to keep you. I make the sacrifice to Him both of you and myself. Go, then, in the name of God!"

Before leaving, Louis recommended Elizabeth to the care of his mother and his brothers, and all his officers.

"I know very well," said the steward, "that the Duchess will give away all she finds, and reduce us to misery."

"God will replace all that she may give away," replied Louis.

Unable to bring herself to bid her lord farewell, Elizabeth accompanied him first to Smalkald, the appointed meeting-place of the knights and soldiers who were going to Palestine. Then, still unable to resign herself to the final parting, she went with him to the frontier of Thuringia. Having arrived there, she had not the courage to leave him, and rode on one more day and then another. At the end of the second day she confessed herself unable to tear herself from him, and wondered if she might not journey on with him to the end. Count Varila, however, urged the necessity of her now returning, and finally, swooning, more dead than alive, she turned her face homeward, supported by her companions, the black presentiment chilling her heart that she would never see Louis again.

The last hour of her happiness had struck—for she was indeed never to meet him again on earth.

Louis never reached Palestine. He was smitten with fever and died in Calabria, at Otranto, in the arms of the Patriarch of Jerusalem. With his last breath he charged his knights and followers to bear his body back to Eisenach, and to champion and serve Elizabeth and her children, even unto death.

Meanwhile, upon her desolate return to the Wartburg, so widowed did her prophetic soul already feel itself, Elizabeth had laid aside her royal robes and donned the widow's garb, which she never more doffed. Her fourth child was born soon after.

Before she had fairly recovered her strength came the news of Louis's death. It was imparted to her by Sophia.

"Now I have lost all," cried Elizabeth, "the whole world is now dead for me, the world and all that it contains of sweetness." She seemed bereft of reason, and ran distractedly from one end of the castle to the other until the walls blocked her way. How continue to live without the beloved of her life? How live bowed under the burden of so great a grief?

Calamities now fell thick and fast upon her unprotected head. Without an hour's delay Louis's brother Henry resolved to take the rule of the realm and to banish Elizabeth from it. In the depth of winter, with her infant daughter in her arms, followed by her three other children, accompanied by two devoted maids of honour, Elizabeth, Princess of Hungary, and Margravine of Thuringia, slowly descended the icy path leading from the castle whose gates were closed behind her.

In Eisenach, which she had, one might say, deluged with her charity, she might well have expected hospitality, but Henry, determined to drive her out of the land, had forbidden any to receive her. The little unfriended group wandered about forlornly in the snow, in cruel need, incredible as it might seem in the case of one who had given so much and done so much for others in need. Finally, they found asylum in a miserable tavern, where they for a while remained, Elizabeth earning money for their necessities by spinning wool.

Her uncle, Egbert, Bishop of Bamberg, hearing of her plight, sent for her and offered her hospitality becoming her station. He placed at her disposal the castle of Bottenstein. But, seeing his niece still so young and so beautiful, he urged upon her, even insisted upon arranging for her, a second marriage. Nothing could have been more revolting or intolerable to Elizabeth, whose heart was passionately devoted to the memory of her life's love.

At this juncture, the knights returned from Calabria, bringing Louis's body, and true to the vow to their dying lord,

they so pleaded Elizabeth's cause that Henry was forced to place Louis's son Herman upon the throne, himself retaining the regency during the Prince's minority—and to give Elizabeth as dowry the city of Marburg.

But this relief brought small improvement in her condition, for, completely under Conrad's dominion, now that Louis was no longer there to protect her, Elizabeth never again knew an hour's peace.

Seeing that here indeed was material for a canonized Saint, her inquisitor seems to have been determined to make of her a martyr as well. One by one the fanatic separated her from her children—his reason being that she loved them too well. Also from her followers, Pentrude and Guta, he detached her and replaced them by two strangers, harsh and unloving women, upon whom Elizabeth waited as if she had been their servant and whose perpetual chiding she bore with meekness and patience. Hardest of all was his prohibition of her charities, charity which was woven into the very fibre of her being. Were her charities a solace? Then must she abstain from them. Would it have been joy to her to join herself to an Order of nuns? He forbade it. By his command, as well as by her own choice, she lived in a low hovel, and spun her wool and prayed; she still visited the sick, bringing to them the comfort of her care and of her love, having nothing more now to give them. Some joy she must have found in the utter abnegation of self, and in the giving up of every human tie and pleasure, for, when Count Varila came to her with a messenger, Count Parma, from her father, asking that she return to the Hungarian court and live there as his beloved daughter, she gently refused, feeling neither strength nor desire to change her state, or to take up again the life of the world.

When Count Varila told her that evil tongues were busy with slanderous insinuations that she and her adviser, Conrad, were bound by other than spiritual ties, and begged her to be careful of her good name, she answered, unresentfully:

"I have given up everything, husband, father, children, country, riches, beauty, and nobility. But one possession I had retained—my reputation. If it please my God to ask this of me now, I give it to Him with all my heart, but oh, my Saviour, let not my poor children who are innocent suffer because of me! As for you, my old and dear friend," she added sadly to Count Varila, "you will, I know, not doubt me," and she told him of the penitences and scourging inflicted upon her by Conrad; she showed him her shoulders scarred and lacerated by his stripes.

She grew daily weaker, until she could no longer stand, but continued to spin, stretched upon her pallet. Finally her hands could not even hold the distaff, and she painlessly faded out of existence.

Before her death she sang heavenly melodies in a voice more than mortal sweet; then, with the murmured words, "Silence—silence—" she bowed her head as if in sleep, and angels singing bore her soul to Paradise, while a divine fragrance filled the air.

This was three and a half years after Louis's death, when Elizabeth was but twenty-four years old.

No sooner had she breathed her last than the people acclaimed her as a Saint. They parted her garments and cut off her long hair, which they distributed as relics made and which worked numberless miracles. Conrad made these known to Pope Gregory IV, along with the detailed history of her life. In the fourth year after her death the Pope canonized her. A beautiful church was built in her honour; in a magnificent chapel her remains were enshrined, and for centuries worshipped by countless pilgrims whose knees wore grooves in her altar's steps.

It is told of Blanche of Castille, Queen of France, and mother of Louis IX, afterward St Louis, that one day as she sat in the banqueting hall she noticed among the pages serving her a lad whom she did not remember to have seen before.

"Who is the beautiful youth with the yellow hair, standing with the other pages, the Count de Sant-Pol and the Count de Boulogne?"

"That," was the reply, "is Prince Herman of Thuringia, eldest son of Elizabeth of Hungary, serving his term at your court page before knighthood."

Rising from her throne, the Queen went toward him, and stood for a long moment gazing into the noble countenance.

"Fair youth," she said, at last, "thou hadst a beautiful and blessed mother. Tell me, where was she wont to kiss thee?"

In silence, Herman pointed to a space upon the broad brow between his blue eyes, and Blanche reverently placed her lips upon it. Then, looking upward with tearful eyes, she murmured: "Blessed St Elizabeth, saddest of ladies, sweetest of patrons, pray for us!"

CHAPTER XXX

THE DEDICATION OF ST FRANCIS BORGIA

Francis Borgia, Duke of Gandia and Marquis of Lombay, one of the proudest grandees of Spain, rode beside his wife, the beautiful Eleonora de Castro, in the funeral *cortege* of their sovereign lady, the Empress Isabella, first wife of Charles IV.

His heart was lead within his breast, for not alone the loss of the benign Queen caused him sorrow, but the remembrance on this day of another loss in the death of his most dear friend, the poet Garcilaso de la Vaga.

The procession wound its interminable way from Madrid to Granada, where the royal remains were to be entombed in the Chapel of Kings. Gloomy thoughts enwrapped the Duke's spirit like a cloud, and no consideration of his own happy estate would drive them away. He turned to look at the pure countenance of Eleonora, and as she returned his gaze, a wan yet sincere smile

of sympathy and understanding lighted her eyes; he called up to the inward vision the image of their eight children, and his heart warmed with love at the thought of them; he reminded himself of the glory of his domains, the riches at his disposal, the freedom which these gave him to scatter benefits and well-being among retainers and dependents, but no consideration of these matters brought relief to the weary spirit and the sick soul.

At last the journey came to its end. The destination being reached, nothing remained but to lower the sumptuous coffin into the sepulchre. Only one sad duty remained to Francis Borgia: as Master of the Queen's Horse, it was his office, at the moment before the tomb should forever close upon the Empress, to raise the lid of the coffin and, uncovering her face, take oath that this was indeed she who had been Isabella of Spain.

With a final gesture of devotion, with the picture of the revered liege lady still glowing in his memory, he stretched out his hand and drew aside the winding-sheet.

The ghastly features that lay revealed might have been those of a stranger, so unrecognizable had they become during the period since the Queen's death: here was hideous dissolution where beauty had reigned; noisome corruption where health had lived; the pathos of utter helplessness where once had been exuberant vigour.

"And to this we must all come, my friend," the pale mask seemed to say, "power and splendour, beauty and wit, strength and joy—all must come to this. The beloved object of earthly passion will ultimately come to this; to this will the body of the adored one inevitably come; the world's riches may deck and drape it in cloth of gold and pearls worth a king's ransom, but to this it shall come; steep it in all the perfumes of the Orient, and to this revolting mass of decay it still must come. In horror you turn from me: I was so beautiful and am so changed. . . . Turn then from your one-time friend, and become the friend of One who in this universe of change remains unchanging. Turn, while yet there is time, from considerations of earthly love, ambition,

and delight, which pass like a cloud and are as unsubstantial—turn to the only lasting good, which is God. Devote to Him all of thyself which is enduring. Not only dedicate to Him thy brief and illusory life, and so fill it with good works that He may find it acceptable, but so make beautiful thine immortal soul with understanding and faith that it may become worthy to offer Him . . . "

Francis Borgia seemed to hear within his innermost spirit the voice of his sovereign, and whether he had listened for a lifetime or only a minute's span he could not have told. Then, not because he knew by the witness of his senses, but because owing to his vigilance he was sure that the body of the Empress entrusted to his care had not been replaced by another, he took audible oath that these were of a certainty the relics of Isabella, and within his heart he took oath, and dedicated himself henceforth to the service and worship of God.

CHAPTER XXXI

ST JEANNE D'ARC

And then, after a long, long time, they honoured her, and called her Saint, whom in her lifetime they despised and rejected. Strange fate shared by the holiest and noblest ones, the wisest and best since time began, that the world will have none of them, but must crucify or stone, burn, starve, torture, poison, or in some way destroy and be rid of them!

On the 5th of January in 1412 was born Jeanne, daughter of Jacques and Isabeau d'Arc, in the little village of Domremy, on the borders of Champagne and Lorraine. The father was a well-to-do farmer. Three sons and one other daughter he had, who all took their share of the labour of the house and the land. To Jeanne, within doors, fell duties under her mother's teaching. She learned to spin her wool, and to embroider beautiful things to make lovely the little village church. For early she learned to

love her church. She took pleasure in saying her prayers, kneeling in its dark nave, and there was nothing that so delighted her as the music of its bells, chiming at dawn, and noon, and nightfall. Devout she was, and gentle and helpful. She nursed the sick and fed the poor, and none had any but good words and kind thoughts of her.

One day, when she was twelve years old, she sat at her needlework under the whispering summer trees of the garden. It was late afternoon. The air was still thrilling with the peal of the angelus. Jeanne had raised her eyes from her work, and was looking toward the church, when she became aware of a brilliant and unearthly light at her right hand, a little behind her, and shining over her shoulder. Out of the radiance issued a voice saying: "Jeanne, be good and obedient. Go often to church."

This was the beginning of her hearing what she ever after called her 'voices.'

Only a brief period had elapsed before the radiance appeared to her again, forming itself into shapes and faces, and she could see as well as hear the Saints, Michael and Catherine and Margaret, who addressed her.

St Michael with flaming wings and sword and crown was at first chief in giving her counsel. He told her of the piteous condition into which the kingdom of France had fallen. Of this she knew something already, and her heart was torn with sorrow for her motherland, made desolate and laid waste by the enemy English, distraught with internal warfare and dissension, and with never a champion to rescue or defend her.

"Be good," St Michael bade her, "and God will help you. You must go to aid the King of France, for it is you who shall give him back his kingdom."

The Dauphin, afterward Charles VII, had four years before, in 1420, lost all hope of coming to the rule of his realm, when his mother, Queen Isabeau, had by the treaty of Troyes

delivered over her daughter in marriage, and the kingdom with her, to King Henry V of England.

What now was the confusion of Jeanne at hearing this definite command to her from the celestial warrior to restore the crown to the rightful heir!

"Messire," she cried, dismayed, "I am only a poor girl. I cannot ride, or lead armed men!"

"Go to Robert de Baudricourt, Captain of Vaucouleurs," continued Michael, ignoring her reluctance, "he will take you to the King. St Catherine and St Margaret will come and help you."

The frightened child fell to weeping. Who was she, small and weak and ignorant, that she should attempt a labour so great, she who had never seen anything but the life of her peaceful village, and who knew not even how to read or write; who knew, in fact, nothing but her prayers and the daily, homely tasks set her by her mother?

But true to the promise of St Michael, who thereafter appeared to her only on rare and high occasions, St Catherine and St Margaret with their heavenly countenances and gentle, soft voices came to give her direction and comfort.

For four years Jeanne pondered these things in her heart, and the message which had at first caused her to shed timid and helpless tears sank into her soul, and there took root and grew, and filled it with the conviction that she was indeed destined by God to fulfil His command to help the Dauphin back to his realm and cause him to be crowned its king.

Then came to visit in Domremy from Burey-le-Petit an uncle, Durant Laxart, whom at the end of his stay Jeanne begged to take her home with him to visit in her turn. He gladly complied, for Jeanne was a welcome guest in his house, but what was the good man's amazement when, on the road home, she revealed to him that she wished him to take her to Vaucouleurs to the Sire de Baudricourt, for he was to help her to go to the

Dauphin, whom she must conduct to be crowned King of France?



ST CATHERINE AND ST MARGARET APPEAR TO JEANNE.

Had the child lost her senses? Was she quite mad? By some inexplicable means, however, perhaps by the force of her dedicated earnestness, she convinced him that her errand was commanded by none other than the Archangel Michael, and Laxart accordingly took her to Vaucouleurs.

In an interview with Robert de Baudricourt he revealed the purpose of his coming, while Jeanne waited without, in the courtyard.

The answer given by the Captain was a terse: "The little fool! She deliver France and crown the King? Box her ears, and send her home to her mother!"

He consented, however, to see the child, and, as it has been said that the privilege of truth is to make itself believed, Jeanne in her interview convinced Robert de Baudricourt that she had come to him on the part of her Lord, the King of Heaven, and that he must send her to bring succour to the Dauphin before the middle of Lent, for she must lead him to be consecrated in spite of all his enemies.

She returned home after this, but only to meet with the stern and bitter opposition of her father, who declared that he would rather see her drowned than riding away with men-at-arms.

But what could Jacques d'Arc hope to accomplish against commands which Jeanne knew to have come to her from the King of Heaven?

In the beginning of Lent she again started out for Vaucouleurs, and this time the much mystified Captain sent a messenger to the Dauphin at Chinon, asking for instructions as to what he should do with this determined maid. His decision was hastened by the fact that Jeanne told him that she must now all the more promptly go to the Dauphin, for he was suffering defeat at Orleans.

Word returned from the Court at Chinon that such indeed was the case, that the Dauphin's forces had been defeated at the

Battle of Herrings, and since help of any sort, whether real and material, or imaginary, was desirable and not to be scorned or refused, let the maid by all means be conducted to the Dauphin's presence.

So, on a day in February, escorted by the King's messenger, Colet de Vienne, and two young men with their servants—young nobles, Jean de Metz and Bertrand de Poulangy, chivalrous and high-hearted youths, fired by her enthusiasm and determined to follow her fortunes—Jeanne, arrayed in man's apparel, set out upon her perilous journey, followed by the prayers and good wishes of the people, of Baudricourt himself, of every one but her own father, who bade her angrily return home, and threatened her with his malediction should she disobey him.

As the party was about to start, "How," cried an affrighted voice rising from among the crowd gathered to witness the departure, "oh, how have you the courage to set forth upon a road so dangerous?"

"God clears the way before me. For this was I born," answered Jeanne, untroubled.

The journey lasted for eleven days, during which the little group travelled mostly by night, to avoid encounters with chance bands of English or Burgundians, until they arrived at the village of Fierbois, near Chinon. Surrounded as it was with every danger, the Court was none the less given over to revelry and feasting and laughter and intrigue. A levity pervaded it, difficult to reconcile with the threat of annihilation compassing it round.

Then was sent to the Dauphin a messenger, who in two days returned, reporting that an audience was granted.

When Jeanne was admitted to the royal presence, all thought to see her confounded, for, by way of a jest, the Dauphin had adopted the simple costume of a common gentleman, while one of the courtiers wore the royal attire and occupied the

throne. Not misled by these superficial symbols, Jeanne walked unhesitatingly toward the true Dauphin, and kneeling before him spoke: "Gentle Dauphin, God give you long life."

"But I am not the King," answered Charles. "Yonder sits the King."

"Gentle Dauphin," she insisted, "I am Jeanne the Maid. The King of Heaven sends me to tell you that you shall be consecrated and crowned at Rheims."

Then Charles, growing grave, drew her aside, with the intention of speaking to her privately. Had he indeed the legitimate right to be crowned King? Without a word from him the question was answered by Jeanne. "My Lord has sent me," she said, "to tell you that you are the son of the King, and true heir of France."

The Dauphin, profoundly impressed by this answer to the most secret question lying close to his heart (for he had himself had reason to doubt his legitimacy), would willingly have let Jeanne have her way, allowed her to go forth to meet the enemy and cleave her way and his to Rheims and the coronation, but from the first the captains and generals of his army sneered and scoffed at the thought of a woman, nay, an untaught and ignorant child, being entrusted with the conduct of war, and the representatives of the Church determined that she should be sent to Poitiers, and there examined by a tribunal composed of all the wisest and most learned men of the law and the clergy, who should determine whether she were indeed a true messenger of God.

She passed successfully through a long trial. No harm was found in her after much wearisome questioning and debate; how wearisome may be judged by the note of impatient protest which finally crept into her ever ready answers:

"You say that God will deliver France; if He has so determined He has no need of men-at-arms."

"Ah, the men must fight; it is God who gives the victory!" cried Jeanne, discomfitingly.

"Words are all very well, but God would not have us believe you unless you give us some sign."

"I have not come to Poitiers to give signs," she answered, "but take me to Orleans. I will there show the signs I am sent to show. Give me as small a band as you will, but let me go!"

Orleans was, indeed, in great danger from the besieging English troops, whose positions outside the city were so strong, and whose prestige from long continued victory was so great, as to make it seem that no hope of deliverance could exist for the doomed city. The raising of its siege, and the defeating of the English there, were the first steps that Jeanne declared herself commanded by her Saints to take. So, after her return from Poitiers, Charles determined to make such use of her as he might in his war, if indeed it was for this that she was sent him from Heaven.

When he offered to give her a sword, she replied that the weapon destined for her would be found behind the altar of the little church of Fierbois where she had stopped to pray. A sword was, indeed, found there, which after being polished and sharpened was sent her encased in a crimson and gold scabbard. Even dearer than her sword, though this also was precious to her, was her standard of white linen, with its silken fringes, and its embroidery of the figure of Christ holding in His hand the world. The words "Jhesus-Maria" were also embroidered upon it. It was made according to the description which Jeanne had from the Saints, Catherine and Margaret, who bade her bear it boldly, since it came to her from God.

In battle thereafter she always carried it. Her gentle heart had no wish to shed blood, and when by rare chance she drew her sword, it was not to thrust and kill, but to lay on as one might use a stick or rod; never was she known to take a life. She would always rather have spared the lives of her enemies; she exhorted

them to surrender before she made an attack, giving them the opportunity to save themselves.

On one occasion, during the victorious battle of Patey she came upon a Frenchman cruelly maltreating an English captive. Ablaze with indignation she sprang from her horse, and seating herself on the ground, held the bleeding head of her dying enemy in her lap. She eased his wounds, and comforted him with her tender pity, while she sent for a priest to give him the solace of the Church during his last moments.

At the end of April, when all preparations had been made, Jeanne at the head of a small army set out for Orleans, accompanied by many generals and captains. She was clad in a suit of white armour inlaid with silver, dazzling as the apparel of St Michael himself. With her was the trusty Chevalier Jean d'Aulon, chief of her staff, who never left her until the end of her days of freedom. With her also were the friendly Jean de Metz and de Poulangy, and her brother Pierre, who had left home to join her.

They were a strangely converted army whom Jeanne led: priests and choristers accompanied them; Mass was celebrated at every turn, confession given to all at any time it was desired, even though the march should have to be suspended to perform it. Not an oath or blasphemy would she permit, so that her rough, powerful, and most devoted Gascon general, La Hire, was tamed to swearing by his baton. The crew of loathsome and prowling camp followers she banished and dispersed.

When they had arrived at Blois, Jeanne sent a letter to the English generals, bidding them all, from the King down, listen to the command of God, and leave France. Needless to say, their one answer, now as always after, was a shower of curses and abusive epithets, for then as later the English considered her an impostor, a witch, and an agent of the devil. Sad to say, also, there were all too many among the French who never recognized her as the envoy of God, but looked upon her askance, with distrust or with derision, or envy and malice. During all her brief

career, chief among her powerful enemies were the King's counsellor, La Tremouille, and the Archbishop of Rheims, so that through these two men of influence many both in the Court and the Church were hostile to her.

As she drew near to Orleans, and when she had reached Chery, Dunois, known as the Bastard of Orleans, one of France's bravest and most skilful generals, came out to escort her into the besieged city. With a convoy of food for the nearly starving inhabitants, Jeanne entered the town at nightfall, the English in no wise impeding her. All the citizens crowded on her path as she made her way to the church, to see her whom they looked upon as a miraculous deliverer. Men, women, and children tried to get near her and touch her, or the white horse she rode, or her standard. And as she advanced among them she gave them words of encouragement, and bade them be of good cheer, for they would, if they had faith, come out of all their troubles.

It would have been her wish to advance immediately on the following day against the besiegers, while the enthusiasm of the citizens at her arrival ran high, but this her captains discouraged.

While, however, Jeanne lay asleep, exhausted, in the afternoon, she suddenly awoke, and leaping to her feet declared that she had been roused by her 'voices,' and must immediately go against the English.

As she was hurriedly donning her armour, she exclaimed in anguish: "French blood is flowing! Why did they not tell me!" Then, flinging herself into the saddle and grasping her standard, she darted away, her horse's feet striking sparks from the pavement in her haste. Her followers had meanwhile roused themselves to follow, and were soon hot in her wake.

Jeanne's 'voices' had indeed warned her aright. The malcontent captains had attempted a sortie on their own responsibility, and resenting the sudden prestige of this obscure maid had sought to win a victory without her agency.

When Jeanne reached the spot where the fighting was occurring, however, it was only to find the French in defeated flight.

Without a word she flew past them, leaving her followers to turn the retreat into an advance, and never paused until she had reached the foot of the fort of St Loup, where for the rest of the day the battle raged bitter and furious.

Everywhere Jeanne was to be seen, urging and encouraging her men, though herself not fighting, but leading them under her standard and at all times exposing herself in the most dangerous places in the very front of the fray. Finally, toward dusk, the bastion was taken, and Jeanne returned in triumph to Orleans.

Two days later the fort of Les Augustins was stormed, and the only important point remaining untaken was Les Tourelles.

Early in the morning of the following day, against the combined efforts of the generals and all in authority, Jeanne dashed out of the town, again followed by a flood of enthusiasts who would have let themselves be called to any place soever by her stirring voice, her radiant armour, and the white standard. When she had reached the foot of the fort's wall, she was placing a ladder against it, bidding her men mount, and promising that all would be theirs, when an arrow struck her above the right breast, and she fell, the arrow standing out a hand's breadth beyond her shoulder. She had the strength and courage to pull out the arrow herself, and then—she wept with the hurt of it, the girl child of seventeen, even though she was general-in-chief of the army of France!

She was carried to a vineyard close by, where her wound was tended, and she made confession to her chaplain, whom on the day before she had bidden keep close to her side during the battle, "for," she had prophesied, "I shall be wounded tomorrow."

In the vineyard she rested, and presently realized that the attack of her men (for the battle had continued to rage) had begun to flag and waver. She rose to her feet, and mounting her horse went to find Dunois and the generals. "Rest for a while, and eat, and when you see my standard floating against the wall, forward, for the place is yours."

Then she again withdrew to the vineyard, and kneeling prayed for a long time.

Returning to the scene of battle, her standard in hand, she stood at the edge of the moat surrounding Les Tourelles.

"Tell me," she said to her squire, "when the pennon touches the wall." So saying she stretched forth the banner, whose white folds unfurled and fluttered out toward the fortress.

"It touches," shouted the squire.

"Then on—on—on—! All is yours!" cried Jeanne. "Enter, de la part de Dieu."

Her followers rose as one man, and advanced like an irresistible tidal wave, while she, standing untouched amid a shower of arrows, continued to shout encouraging words to them. The mere sight of her white armour blazing and flashing in the sun struck terror into the hearts of her enemies, those English who had been looked upon, and who had, indeed, come to look upon themselves, as invincible.

Before night the last fort had been taken, and no Englishman was left to threaten the so lately beleaguered city, the city which had for seven months suffered siege, and which Jeanne had in as many days set free.

On her return into Orleans she was swept along by a crowd delirious with joy, all pressing about her in the attempt to touch her mailed feet or kiss her hand. She rode in the midst of the happy din and clamour almost like one in a dream, content, to be sure, with the sense of a great task accomplished, but wounded, weary, and, above all, filled with sorrow for the souls

of those who, whether friends or foes, had died that day unconfessed, and without the sweet comfort of the Church.

Jeanne would now have wished, after her return to the Court of Charles, to lead him immediately to Rheims. But delay followed upon delay, until one day she cried in dismayed protest: "I shall only last a year! Take the good of me, gentle Prince, as long as it is possible." So did she prophesy the brevity of her career, as she had prophesied her wound.

At length the Dauphin consented to go to Rheims as soon as the way thither should have been cleared. Jeanne, therefore, set out to perform the task.

First to fall was Jargeau, whither the Duke of Suffolk had returned with his troops after the raising of the siege of Orleans.

Again her associate generals would have hesitated to attack, but with her usual impetuosity Jeanne took her stand, banner in hand, at the foot of the wall of the resisting town, and summoning her followers bade them enter, "for the Lord has condemned the English," and after a bitter struggle Suffolk yielded.

Next fell Meung, then Beaugency. Next came the battle or the chase of Patey, in which the English were beaten and driven shamefully routed from the field. Everywhere Jeanne exhibited an incredible ability in the arrangement and use of her forces, especially the artillery, and an aptness in the art of war nothing short of genius.

Returning to Court, aided by public opinion which was all in her favour, and in spite of the King's counsellors, she induced the Dauphin to make a beginning of his journey in the direction of Rheims.

On the way lay cities, still hostile to be sure, but these one by one surrendered to Jeanne's spirited attacks—Troyes, Chalons, and many other towns of less importance—until after six weeks of what almost constituted a triumphal procession, Charles found himself in mid-July at the gates of Rheims, at the

head of a greatly increased army, for Jeanne had from all quarters attracted adherents to his cause.

The Maid had fulfilled her promises, and had now come to the brink of the realization of her highest hope.

Even now the King would have hesitated and delayed, had not the citizens of Rheims sent him the keys to the city in token of welcome, which welcome he could not well refuse.

In triumph the royal cortege and army marched in, Jeanne riding by the King's side, a strange sight to be witnessed by her father and uncle Durant, who had come from home to Rheims to convince themselves that hearsay was indeed correct and that their Jeanne was the heroine of the war and the companion on equal footing with the highest and proudest in France. With wonder and open-eyed amazement they must have seen her surrounded by the adoring populace, which ever sought to approach and honour her.

On the following day the great event took place, the climax of the Maid's career. With great ceremony the Sainte Ampoule, the vessel containing the holy oil sent from Heaven at the crowning of Clovis, was brought from the Abbey of Saint-Remi and taken to the Cathedral.

At the hour of the coronation the Cathedral, not to say the town, was filled to overflowing with the nobility of France, all arrayed in the most gorgeous apparel. The night had been spent by the townsfolk in decorating the Cathedral and the streets.

Jeanne was among the dazzling group occupying the raised platform upon which the ceremony took place. In her radiant armour she stood, bearing the standard which had played so great a part in bringing about and making possible this very occasion. She stood like one lost in an ecstasy, witnessing the fulfilment of her prayers and labours, and when the ceremony was completed and Charles VII stood up the crowned and anointed ruler of France, unable longer to control the emotion of

her brimming heart, Jeanne threw herself at the feet of her sovereign, clasping his knees:

"Gentle King," she cried, in a voice broken with tears, "now is God's pleasure fulfilled, who willed that I should raise the siege of Orleans and lead you to Rheims to receive your consecration. Now has He shown that you are true King, and that France belongs to you alone."

She then begged to be allowed to withdraw. Her mission was accomplished, the duty laid upon her fulfilled. She wished to return home, to her people and to her peaceful existence.

But this, alas, was not permitted. The Maid, crossed and badgered and hampered as she had been at every step by those who had the power and the will to do so, was still too useful to be allowed to depart. Was not her voice, was not her very name, sufficient to strike a superstitious terror to the hearts of the enemy, and to fill those of her followers with a fiery courage? Moreover, the people, whose idol she was, would not have permitted it. But from that hour dated her decline. She had prophetically said that she should last but a year, and from this time onward she seems to have fought like a marvellously able and gifted general, to be sure, but no longer with her former divine invincible inspiration. And she was aware of the change. Her voices still gave her counsel, but with an intimation that disaster was about to befall her. They always, however, assured her that God would be with her and give her eventual victory.

One great boon she at this moment secured for the dear village to which she was no more to return. When offered any reward she might care to name, she asked nothing for herself. But Domremy was granted perpetual exemption from taxation "because of the Maid," a privilege which it retained up to the time of the French Revolution.

The next step after the coronation was patently the taking of Paris, which was not only held by the English and the Burgundians, but was, unlike Orleans, positively hostile to the

King's party, and whose inhabitants looked upon Jeanne as a sorceress.

Here began again a period of delays and discouragement, during which Charles made repeated truces with Philip of Burgundy, who promised to hand over Paris to him, but who, acting in utter bad faith, merely toyed with the situation. Furthermore, from the day of the coronation, Jeanne, knowing her mission over and herself no longer the envoy of God, could not act with the spirited decision which had heretofore overcome all obstacles.

Finally, however, after standing the restraint put upon her as long as she could endure it, she one day sent for the Duc d'Alençon, one of her most friendly officers and aids, and cried out to him:

"Fair Duke, make ready your troops and those of the other captains, for in the name of God, and by my staff, I will see Paris nearer than I yet have done!"

With that the eager troops under her command and the Duke's were made ready and promptly pushed on to Saint-Denis, under the very shadow of Paris. Here a pause was made, while the King was with difficulty induced to leave Compiègne, where he had established himself, and where he was taking his ease and pleasure.

This delay gave the Parisians time to strongly entrench and fortify themselves, whereas at the moment of Jeanne's first approach they had been comparatively defenceless and without a leader, the Duke of Bedford, Regent of France for Henry VI, being absent in Normandy.

On the 8th of September, the Nativity of the Virgin, Jeanne's forces, led by her old and dear friends and supporters, d'Alençon, La Hire, Guy de Laval, and others, made their attack upon the fortifications of Paris and quickly carried the gate of Saint-Honore. From the height of this it was discovered that the city was surrounded by a double ditch, the inner of which was

filled with water, the outer one dry. On the ridge between these two Jeanne stood during the entire afternoon, exposed to the arrows showered upon her from the wall, probing the water of the ditch with her lance, to find places where best her men might cross, and ceaselessly encouraging them with the shouts of her marvellous ringing voice.

There she was standing, all unprotected, when she was wounded in the thigh and her standard-bearer killed. She crept down and lay upon the slope of the dry ditch, continuing to urge on her men, assuring them that Paris was theirs if only they would persevere. But darkness came, and d'Alençon took her, bitterly grieving, back to camp. Unwillingly she went, weeping and moaning: "Oh, the pity of it! the pity! Had we but persevered until morning, the city was ours!"

On the next day, rested and refreshed, for the wound was not serious, she again led forth the troops, determined not to leave the spot until the city was taken, but before the attack had fairly begun messengers arrived from the King with peremptory orders to her to lead the army back to Saint-Denis.

Poor Jeanne, in utter despair, forced to obey, returned rather as a prisoner than a leader.

And here the campaign ended.

At Ghien the King held his Court for the winter, and Jeanne, housed like a noble warrior and dressed like a prince (for she never relinquished her manly costume), had to pass months in weary inactivity. To be sure the King, and more particularly the Queen, were kind. They would have given her anything she craved, rich clothing, gems, a castle, and a great title, any of those things for which she cared nothing, but not the one thing she wished—liberty to drive the English to the last man out of France, give Charles a loyal and united kingdom, or else immediately return in peace to Domremy.

It may here be said that just as the populace was always friendly to Jeanne, so also, at every point of her career, women

from the noblest down to the poorest believed in her, loved her, were devoted to her and glad to serve her.

Before the end of the winter, smitten perhaps with pity for Jeanne's evident pining over her enforced inactivity, the King consented to let her go forth to take some of the hitherto unsubdued towns.

She went to Bourges to collect an army, for the forces had during the winter been utterly dispersed. Now no longer aided by her friends, d'Alençon, Dunois, and La Hire, she had as captain a stranger, one d'Albert, son-in-law of La Tremouille, the King's counsellor and her arch enemy. It may be imagined that little help or encouragement were to be looked for in the circumstance, yet none of Jeanne's achievements were more remarkable than one at this time, the taking of Saint-Pierre-les-Moutier, a town strongly entrenched, well defended, armed, and provisioned.

The first attack upon the stronghold had been unsuccessful, the retreat had been sounded, and the forces were hastening back to camp, when Jean d'Aulon, himself wounded, beheld Jeanne, almost alone, still at work before the point of attack, directing the four or five adherents who had remained with her, in constructing a bridge across the ditch.

In spite of his wound, d'Aulon leaped to horse and hastened forward, calling to her, asking why she remained there, unsupported and unprotected.

"I shall not leave," she cried, taking off her helmet, the better to reply, "until the town is taken!"

"Jeanne, withdraw, I conjure you—you are alone!"

"I have still with me fifty thousand men!" she shouted, her face shining in vision-seeing ecstasy, and she continued her labour, calling to her men: "To work, to work, to work! All to the bridge!"

The sound of that silver-clear and fearless voice, aided by the efforts of the desperate d'Aulon, had the effect of rallying

the scattering troops and bringing them again to the charge, and little less than miraculously the town was taken before nightfall.

But before the spring the campaign was perforce abandoned. The King not only gave no assistance but either left her in the cold of winter without provisions and arms, or hampered and defeated her purposes by sending peremptory and incomprehensible orders for delay or retreat.

While Jeanne had been occupied in these operations near the Loire, a great part of the territory before taken for the King had been reconquered by the English, who now put the towns and villages to fire and sword. And when Jeanne was finally recalled to the Court, which was now at Sully, she bore the weariness and sickness of anxious inactivity only for a few weeks, and then suddenly, upon an April day, followed by a small band of devoted followers, left the castle and took her way to Melun, where she aided in repulsing the English.

It was here, while she was standing on the edge of the moat, that her 'voices' gave her a message all unexpected and differing from any she had heretofore received.

"Before the feast of St John," they said, "you will be taken prisoner. But," they added, "have no fear, be strong and of good courage."

In spite of the encouragement and assurance contained in the latter part of the message, Jeanne's prophetic soul must have warned her of the fate that awaited her, for not long after, as she stood in the church of Saint-Jacques at Compiègne, after she had had communion and a crowd of children and people had drawn round her, she allowed to escape her, in a cry from the heart, the knowledge which made her spirit heavy.

"Dear children and friends," she said to them, "I have been sold and betrayed, and shall soon be given up to death. Pray for me, I beg you, for soon I shall be powerless to serve the King and the kingdom."

And it was indeed at Compiègne itself that her fate overtook her.

In May she was at Crespy en Valois, when news reached her that Compiègne was in grave danger of seizure by the combined forces of the English and Burgundians. Immediately she set out to go to its aid.

Toward nightfall, after a day spent in overseeing the defences and preparations, she made a sortie upon the enemy. At first all went well, but soon a panic seized a part of the French forces, who made a hasty withdrawal toward the town, so hotly pursued by the English that the city's gates were closed lest the enemy should enter it.

So it was that Jeanne's party was cut off from retreat. It is said that Flavy, the governor of Compiègne, deliberately and traitorously shut the town's gates whither she was seeking refuge, and Jeanne, her armour covered with a tunic heavily embroidered with gold, her white standard in hand, visible even in the twilight, was surrounded, dragged from her horse, and captured.

Undaunted, she held her sword above her head, refusing to surrender it to anyone: "I have it from One higher than any who can claim it!" she cried, as without unseemly struggle or tears she was taken prisoner by a Burgundian archer, who that same night sold her to John of Luxemburg.

Meanwhile, although the bells of Compiègne rang out the wild alarm and grief of its inhabitants over the loss of its defender, no sally was made to deliver her. Charles neither then nor later lifted a finger to recapture or ransom her. All France remained inactive in her cause, lethargic, uttering no protest, striking no blow. In Paris bonfires were burned in token of rejoicing over her downfall, and a *Te Deum* of thanksgiving was sung in Notre-Dame. Orleans, it is true, and Blois, made public prayers for her safety. In Tours the populace walked barefoot in sorrowful procession, singing the *Miserere*, and Rheims had to be quieted by a letter from the Archbishop, who explained that

Jeanne, by disobeying the counsels of God and following only her own pleasure, had incurred His punishment. Otherwise the Maid was left to her tragic fate, un comforted, unbefriended, unaided by the France she had served and saved, not only by her victories, but by awakening in it a national consciousness.

In John of Luxemburg's castles of Beaulieu, and afterward of Beaurevoir, Jeanne was kindly treated.

She was allowed comparative freedom to roam about at will. The wife and the aunt of the Count were friendly and gentle. But how could Jeanne rest under the knowledge that victory might now be with the enemy, and she powerless to aid her country? In desperation she one night attempted to escape, throwing herself from the battlements (a height of sixty feet). She was stunned by the shock of the fall, but escaped without other harm.

She was eventually sent to the fortress of Crotoy, where again kind women gave her solace and comfort, for, as has before been said, no woman was ever known to be anything but friendly to her.

But from Crotoy she was sold into the hands of the English for the sum of six thousand francs, in that day the price of a prince's ransom. They carried her away to Rouen, in the depths of Normandy, their own undisputed territory, farthest away from any hope of rescue, had any been attempted.

Here, in January of 1431, began Jeanne's martyrdom, to be endured to the last of her days, May 31st. She was for six weeks, until the beginning of her trial, imprisoned in an iron cage, chained by the hands, feet, waist, and throat to a pillar, under the incessant watch of low and brutal guards. After the trial had begun she was taken from her cage and only chained by one foot to a beam by day, and to her bed-post by night, but of the intolerable presence of the bestial watchers she was never relieved.

Meanwhile, from all sides, scholars, men of law and of the Church, were gathering to form a tribunal to judge the Maid. That her doom was predetermined was unquestionable, but the forms of a trial, even though it were only a mockery, must be adhered to before she could be condemned for sorcery, heresy, or blasphemy.

The Burgundian Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, was at the head of the convocation chosen to examine Jeanne. He was assisted by distinguished members of the University of Paris, in the name of the Inquisition.

The trial lasted for many days. Jeanne was cross-examined for long, weary hours by the sharpest and most artful wits of France, bent, not upon discovering the truth and dealing justly with her, but upon finding her guilty. Yet she, untaught girl of nineteen, who could neither write nor read, not only by her truthful directness avoided the traps set by their subtlety, but so carried on her own defence, with the adroitness of perfect honesty and clear intelligence, that they found it difficult to gather sufficient evidence to condemn her. Abandoned by her friends, lonely, treated with every form of cruelty and contempt, she stood steadfast, simple, valorous, dauntless, amazing, miraculous—even more marvellous, perhaps, in the character of witness than she had been in that of warrior.

The voices of her Saints alone gave her comfort and strength, and promises of aid and deliverance—aid and deliverance which proved so different from those which she expected.

Useless to follow the intricacies of that interminable investigation, its endless and purposeless repetitions, so wearisome, so trying to Jeanne's patience, and irritating to her keen mind. Enough to say that her answers, always swift and pointed, were at times of such breath-catching brilliancy as to leave her questioners confused and speechless. On one occasion an English knight among the auditors could not restrain the cry: "Well said! Why was she not English, this brave girl!"

Why dwell upon the detail of the trial, heart-breaking as much for its exhibition of ruthless human cruelty and duplicity as for its martyring of a Saint? It has been good to linger over her victories, her short day of glory; it also seems well to touch lightly the days of her agony.

Let it be remembered that from no point was the trial legitimate. Jeanne was a prisoner of war, which should have ensured her personal safety and protected her against trial as a criminal. It was against the laws of France that she should be judged by her enemies, and also against the law both of France and of the Inquisition that she should have no counsel to plead her cause. Legal aid she had none, nor witnesses for or against. She made her own defence, and although it may well be that no other could have done it more effectively, still it was against odds bound to overwhelm her. Had she but known that she had full right to appeal to the Pope, she might perhaps have escaped, but of this she was unaware, and although in the course of the trial she made the request, she did not insist upon it.

Whenever anything in the examination brought out some point in marked favour of Jeanne, Cauchon forbade its being reported, until she sadly exclaimed from the depths of a heart grown heavy with the uselessness of struggle: "You write what is against me, but you do not write what is for me!"

When the trial had come to an end, a condensed and garbled version of it was sent to the University of Paris. This was in due form passed upon, and Jeanne was accused of blasphemy, superstition, impiety, cruelty, lying.

The horror of the sentence of death by fire over-coming her, Jeanne had her hour of darkness, of blindness, of despair, in which she recanted, and to save her life denied the divinity of her sacred mission, her spirit being overwhelmed by the fear that the promises of deliverance held out by her 'voices' were false. If she was to be condemned, if she was after all not to be delivered, must it not be that her 'voices' had deceived her?

But soon, recovering courage and faith, she reasserted her conviction that all that she had done was in obedience to God's commands.

She was then sentenced to be burned, and on the 31st of May was led to the Old Market Place of Rouen. A huge pyre had been raised, surmounted by the stake. In unconcealed distress she went, weeping, a sight so heart-breaking that at one moment the entire multitude burst into a wail of lamentation; no eye could witness without tears the sacrifice of a victim so appealing in her innocence and purity. The English guards themselves shed grudging tears (was this suffering child the witch they had sworn to burn?), and, most amazing of all, tears flowed from the eyes of the pitiless Cauchon.

When she had reached the pyre she asked for a cross. None being there, one of the English soldiers, breaking a stick into two uneven lengths, bound them together in the form of a cross and gave it to her. She clasped it to her breast while she mounted to the stake. Then, having been bound to it, she asked that a cross be placed where she might see it. One was hastily fetched from a neighbouring church and held before her dying eyes.

When the smoke had risen and hidden her from sight, from its midst arose once more the voice, clarion clear as of old, of Jeanne, crying: "My voices were of God! They did not deceive me!"

At last she understood the message of the Saints; the promise of deliverance was being fulfilled, her victory was now complete and everlasting.

Repeating the name of Jesus until her lips were stopped by the suffocating smoke, the Maid of France died, more wonderful, more beautiful than any other being who ever trod this earth—save only ONE..

CHAPTER XXXII

ST. FRANCIS, THE BIRDS AND THE BEASTS

The sweet Saints were not alone friends of God and friends of man; friends of the beasts they also were, friends of everything that lived and suffered, and so it is small wonder that the beasts, great and small, loved and understood them by whom they were so loved and understood.

Countless stories are told of the good understanding existing between Saints and animals. Chief perhaps among these great lovers is St Francis. No animal was too mean, insignificant, or repulsive to be enfolded in his heart. All breathing creatures were his Brothers and Sisters. With solicitude he removed Brother Worm from the path lest he should be trodden under foot by some more unheeding passer by; not Brother Worm alone, or Sister Grasshopper, but any insect or reptile was with care placed by him in safety against destruction. The fishes, caught and gasping, he replaced in the sea to live and rejoice in their freedom; a little rabbit, brought to him to furnish him with food, he released, and when it would not leave him, but remained hidden in the folds of the skirt of his brown woollen frock, feeling itself safer there than anywhere, he took Brother Leveret up in his arms and held him until he could release him in the forest to sport unseen with his kin in the undergrowth and brambles.

He was seldom to be found without a lamb as companion. Once, coming upon a young man who was taking some doves to market, he stopped him, saying: "Oh, good young man, these are the birds whom the Scriptures compare to those who are pure and faithful before God! Do not kill them, I beseech thee, but rather give them to me!" The young man consented, and Francis returned to his convent with his Sister

Doves in his bosom. He made for them nests, and fed them daily until they became so tame that they ate from his hand.

At one time, returning from Syria across the Venetian plain, hearing numberless birds singing, he said to his companions: "our Sisters, the birds, are praising their Creator, let us sing with them." And he began to sing the service, whereupon the birds sang but the louder, drowning the human voices until St Francis addressed them "Be silent, my Sisters, until we also have praised God!" They were then silent until he had finished his service, and only resumed their song upon his granting them permission.

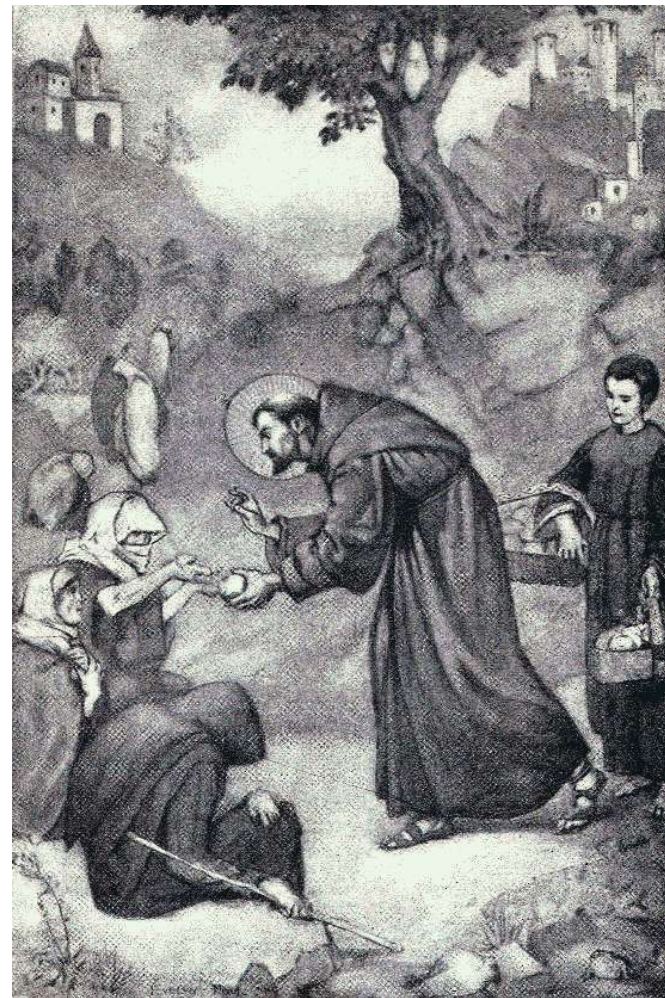
Another time, as he was preaching, swallows in process of building their nests twittered so that he could not make himself heard. "You have talked enough, my Sisters," he said to them; "it is now time that I should speak; let me have my turn, be silent, and listen to the Word of God." And they immediately obeyed him.

But once a congregation of birds who sat about in the trees, shrubs, and on the grass, had a little sermon quite to themselves, for St Francis addressing them spoke: "My Brother Birds, greatly should ye praise your Creator who clothes you with feathers, and gives you wings wherewith to fly, and a purer air to breathe, and who cares for you, who have so little care for yourselves."

The birds having listened with heads bowed, and shining, attentive eyes bent upon him, spread their wings, stretched their necks, and opened their beaks, chanting in chorus when he had finished; then, as he left them, passing among them, even brushing them with the skirt of his robe, they remained in their places, until he, making the sign of the Cross over them, dismissed them, when they all flew away.

And then there was the wolf of Gubbio, a savage beast who was the dread and terror of the countryside, for not only did he devour sheep and cattle, but children and men as well.

To this bloodthirsty creature St Francis, having gone in quest of him and found him in the forest, thus addressed himself: "Brother Wolf, come hither."



ST FRANCIS TENDING LEPERS

The huge brute, probably to his own surprise, obeyed: "Brother Wolf, I command thee in the Name of Christ, that thou do no evil to me nor to anyone more." St Francis went on to

chide him for being a murderer and a thief. "And I wish, Brother Wolf," he ended, "to make peace between thee and all men; therefore torment them no more, and I promise thee they shall pardon thee all thy past crimes, and neither men nor dogs shall molest thee."

In acknowledgment of this promise the wolf, raising his right front paw, offered it to Francis in pledge of acceptance and good faith, then, like an obedient dog, followed him to Gubbio, where in the market-place, surrounded by all the townsfolk, Francis stated Brother Wolf's case, saying that he would make peace with them all, and never more steal, or kill, if they in return would give him the necessary sustenance for existence.

With cries of delight the people consented. The wolf bowed his erstwhile savage head and again gave his paw to seal the compact, and ever after, like any tame and friendly member of the community, daily begged from door to door his needed food, nor ever again harmed man or beast.

CHAPTER XXXIII

ST ROCH AND HIS DOG

St Roch was born at Montpellier in Languedoc of rich and honoured parents, who brought him up to lead a life devoted to the service of God, although they did not directly dedicate him to the priesthood.

At their death, when he was twenty years old, he sold all those of his possessions with which he was empowered to part, gave the proceeds to the poor, left the remainder under the care of an uncle, and donning a pilgrim's robe, set out on foot for Rome.

Having reached Acquapendente, he found the town in the clutches of a horrible plague; the sick and dying choked the streets. St Roch proceeded to the hospital and offered his

services; there, until the plague had been checked, he remained ministering to the sick. His success was extraordinary. Such was his sympathy and his loving care of the stricken victims that his cures were miraculous, and his patients were healed by a prayer or a sign of the Cross made over them by him.

Hearing that the Romagna was also smitten he went on to Cesena and Rimini, then to Rome itself, everywhere bringing aid and healing to the most miserable and hopeless.

Finally at Piacenza, where there raged a form of the scourge more virulent than any he had yet encountered, he himself fell a prey to the disease. He awoke one night afire with fever, and with an ulcer on his right thigh the pain from which was so excruciating that he could not refrain from crying out aloud. Fearing to disturb the other sufferers in the hospital he stole out into the street. There the watchman would not permit him to remain, lest he spread the infection. So he crawled away beyond the city gates, and found refuge in a wood, where he knelt down to pray and to await death.

But he who had carried consolation to so many was not himself forsaken in his dark hour. As he prayed, a cloud descended from heaven, and where it rested upon the ground a spring gushed forth, from which St Roch drank and in whose water he bathed; and a little dog who had attached himself to him during his wanderings, and had faithfully followed him, now became his saviour. Daily he trotted off to the town, and returned at evening with a loaf of bread in his mouth, though none ever discovered where he obtained it.

So it was that Roch presently recovered and resumed his pilgrimage with his loving attendant at his heels. He this time bent his steps homeward, and, having arrived at Montpellier, found the country desolated with war. He himself, as he knelt at prayer in church, was arrested as a spy and thrown into prison. His long wanderings and sickness had so emaciated, aged, and changed him that no one, not even his uncle, who was the judge, recognized him.

Believing that God intended this affliction as a trial of his faith, St Roch bowed himself to the unjust sentence, and for five years remained in prison. One morning the jailer, entering with his daily portion of bread and water, was startled at sight of the great light that filled the cell. On the ground the prisoner lay dead, but beside him in writing were the details of his birth and identity. These words were also added: "Whosoever shall be smitten with the plague and have recourse to the intercession of Roch, the servant of God, shall be healed of his malady."

For in his sleep a voice had been heard by Roch offering him whatever he might ask, and he had prayed that all who asked his aid might be saved from death by plague.

His dead body was carried before the judge, his uncle, who grieved sincerely, and caused him to be buried amid the prayers and lamentations of all the town.

When the plague broke out in 1414 during the Council of Constance, and all the bishops and other dignitaries prepared to flee to safety, it was checked immediately upon the effigy of St Roch being carried through the streets.

Then, in 1485, the Venetians, who were constantly threatened with plague owing to their continual mercantile intercourse with the East, sent a company of men ostensibly on a pilgrimage to Montpelier, but in reality to steal the Saint's relics. They succeeded in securing the body, and with it returned triumphant to Venice, where it was received with joyous acclamation by the people headed by the Doge, the senate, and the clergy. The remains were interred in the Church of San Rocco built to receive them.

One wonders what became of the little dog. There is reason to hope that he remained with his friend to the end, to cheer his life in the dungeon and to share his honours after death, for one sees in picture and statue of the Saint, whether during the pilgrimage or in the prison, the little dog always at his side.

CHAPTER XXXIV

ST RIGOBERT AND HIS GOOSE

In the year 696 there lived in Rheims a Bishop named Rigobert. It was he who in the Cathedral had consecrated Dagobert II, Chilperic II, and Theodoric II, kings of the Franks. When Charles Martel was waging war against Rheinfrid he came at a certain moment to the gates of Rheims and claimed admittance. Rigobert refused to open them and would not be prevailed upon to admit him, saying with great prudence: "How know I which of you shall prevail, whether thou, Charles Martel, shalt overthrow Rheinfrid, or he overcome thee? Neither one, then, will I admit to my city."

Charles, incensed by the Bishop's obduracy, vowed vengeance upon him should he come out victorious over his enemy. When, therefore, he later vanquished his adversary, unforgetful of his old injury, he sent Rigobert into exile in Gascony.

When Pepin the Brief succeeded Charles, he recalled the old Bishop from Gascony, but the see had been given to an abbot named Milo, and to Rigobert's lot fell only the church of the small and poor parish of Gernicourt.

He used, however, to go occasionally to officiate at a Mass in neighbouring towns and even in Rheims, at the altar of St Mary's.

It happened once that he had gone to visit the Church of St Cyriac in the little town of Courincy.

After Mass, as he was conversing with the comptroller of Rheims, this man, Wilbert by name, invited him to dine with him.

"Alas," said Rigobert, inwardly rueful, for invitations to dine were welcome and by no means frequent events, "I may not

dine with you this day, for I must hasten home to hold Mass in my church of St Peter at Gernicourt. I must therefore be on my way betimes."

At this moment an aged woman came toward them carrying a goose which she had brought to the governor. When she had made her gift and withdrawn, Wilbert, turning to Rigobert, said:

"My father, since you may not dine with me to-day, take this goose; it shall serve as your dinner to-morrow at home."

With thanks Rigobert accepted it, and having taken leave of the governor was soon on his homeward way.

The good man walked with hands clasped before him in an attitude of pious meditation, his head bowed over up-pointing joined fingers, and eyes fixed upon the ground. All the way he either whispered prayers to himself, or chanted hymns in a subdued voice.

A few paces before him went a figure with silhouette of very different cut from his own. His little serving lad strutted along in no devout and humble mood or attitude. He hugged under his right arm the white goose which was to serve on the morrow for his master's dinner. She was heavy; so much the better; might not a brave boy who had carried her so far the more surely expect from his master a generous share of that same goose? She was heavy and she was fat; he poked an appreciative finger among her soft feathers. Ah—what a dish she would make, roasted all brown and crisp and hot. . . . Oh, the good smell

He walked, not feeling the distance, with head thrown back, his little lean front protruding in anticipation, his gait martial; but his eyes—his hungry eyes so filled with the vision of the morrow—were dreamy, and his brain engrossed with the thoughts of the treat—the smell, the sight, the taste of roasted goose—ceased sufficiently to concern itself with the living goose under his arm. And geese, along with every other animal,

have an uncanny sense of the intentions toward them of the mortals dealing with them. In this goose's fat-encased heart doubtless was dawning a feeling of impending doom. What so easy as to disengage herself from the arms of a small boy? One push of her powerful foot, one flip of her powerful wing, and she was off, flying upward over the road, into the wood and out of view.

Farewell, the kind old Bishop's dinner! Farewell, the dreams of his little servant! The boy ran helplessly in the direction of his escaped prisoner with arms outstretched, uttering cries of dismay. Then a sudden thought checked his steps and brought tears to his eyes. What would the Bishop say, the dear master who was doubtless almost as hungry as himself? He turned back; Rigobert was approaching at his moderate gait.

"What has happened, child, that thou art so distraught?"

"The goose—" the boy hesitated.

"Where is she?"

"She is gone, she has flown away!"

"How came she to fly away?"

"I was not paying attention. I let her go!"

"And of what wast thou thinking?"

"Of how good she would be to-morrow, when you ate her."

"When I ate her?" the Bishop smiled.

"And I—a little, little piece—"

"And that 'little, little piece' of goose so engrossed thy mind and thy heart that now the loss of it fills thine eyes with tears, thy throat with sobs, and thy soul with despair! How came we by the goose, my little one? By God's good bounty. And if the Lord has taken her out of our reach, is it not as well done as when He gave? And then, my child, there is the goose also to be remembered. Thou hast lost thy 'little, little piece' of roasted

goose—and I have lost my dinner, and we are both hungry, but the goose . . . the goose has saved her life. Shall we not then rejoice for her? She was about to die to furnish us food, and now she is free! She may range the sky and the earth singing the praises of her Creator and Deliverer. Rejoice, my son, and tell me that thou art happier in the thought of a free and happy bird, than in that of a toothsome morsel."

"Yes . . ." agreed the lad, reluctantly.

"And the good God who sent us food yesterday will undoubtedly provide us with food to-morrow," added the Bishop.

At that moment a flapping of heavy wings was heard overhead. Both looked up. It was the goose. She came to earth directly at St Rigobert's feet. The little servant would have pounced upon her had not his master caught him by the skirt of his tunic.

"I forbid thee to touch her!" he cried, and then: "Welcome, my sister! And shall we now all proceed on our homeward way? It grows late and Gernicourt is still far." With a gentle forward push to the boy, Rigobert relapsed into prayer, while the goose, with an assenting clack, struck into a comfortable waddle at his heels.

There, it is said, she ever after remained. Whether he stayed at home, or walked abroad, she was his inseparable companion. Even when he went to Rheims to perform his Mass at the altar of St Mary, the goose accompanied and contentedly awaited him on the steps outside.

As to the people of Gernicourt, they looked upon the goose as a miraculous creature, and realizing how the Saint had spared her when she was manifestly intended for his dinner, and he undoubtedly hungry, they saw to it that he should never after, for any reason whatsoever, lack food.

CHAPTER XXXV

ST DEICOLUS AND THE WILD BOAR

St deicolus was an Irish lad who had left home to follow St Columbanus when he went to East Anglia and thence to France. After Columbanus Shad, by the hatred of Queen Brunehaut of Burgundy, been driven from the monastery he had founded at Luxeul, Deicolus faithfully followed him again. Unable, however, to suffer the hardships by which Columbanus was undaunted, he begged to be allowed to remain behind, find some solitary spot where he might live as a hermit, and worship God in peace and tranquillity.

Columbanus, taking pity on the weariness of his less stalwart follower, clasped him to his heart, bade him farewell, gave him a tryst at the foot of the Heavenly Throne, and weeping departed.

Deicolus, left to himself, first prayed, placing all concern for himself in the hands of the Almighty, then, entering a tangled wood, set out in search of something which should fill the purpose of a habitation. The region was, however, utterly desolate, and search as he would he could discover no place where it was possible to find shelter.

He fortunately came upon a swineherd tending his pigs; of him he inquired if there were not some hut or cave or other "commodious spot" where he might take up his abode.

The swineherd said that there was indeed such a place, but it was far away near a little lake called Luthra.

"Lead me thither, I pray," begged Deicolus.

"I gladly would but I cannot drive my pigs to such a distance, nor dare I leave them."

"Have no fear for thy pigs," Deicolus assured him. "I will drive my staff into the ground, and I pledge my word thy swine will neither stray from it nor be stolen until thou return."

Such was the monk's engaging Irish smile that the swineherd took his word, and led him to the lake of Luthra, where there was a spring of clear water, and where a little chapel stood, dedicated to St Martin.

Charmed with the place, Deicolus built a hut of boughs in the forest, and made daily visits to the chapel, where he entered, knelt, and prayed.

This chapel had been built by a rich man, Weifhardt by name, who occasionally had services held there by his own chaplain, and this chaplain complained to him that a hermit who lived in the wood made use of the place of worship as if it had been his very own. Weifhardt ordered brambles and thorns to be placed over doors and windows to keep out the intruder. When these did not deter Deicolus from entering, he ordered his servants to search the woods for the hermit, and when they had found him to beat him soundly.

Deicolus suffered their ill treatment, yet when shortly after he heard that Weifhardt was seriously ill and needed his good offices, remembering the precept of the Master to render good for evil, he hastened to Weifhardt's bedside. When he had offered up prayers for his enemy's recovery, God heard him and made the sick man well.

In gratitude for this intercession Deicolus was given the farm of Luthra, the wood, and the little chapel in it.

His joy knew no bounds. Here for him was peace and delight for ever. He settled down to a life of calm contemplation.

One day, as the Saint was reading the Hours in his chapel, Clothaire II, King of France, came hunting in the forest. The chase was hot, the hounds were close on the heels of their quarry, when the poor beast, a wild boar, mad with fright and white with foam, nearly spent with the haste of its flight, dashed

into the chapel and fell panting and quivering at the foot of the altar.

The man of God, standing over him, pity brimming from his eyes, spoke with shaken voice: "Believe me, friend, because thou hast sought refuge in the love of thy brother, thy life shall be spared to-day."

When the huntsmen and dogs arrived, the hermit barred their passage into the chapel. Then, the King himself arriving, discussion followed, with the happy ending that the King granted Deicolus not only the game in the wood and the fish of the waters, but some vineyards besides.

After this, other monks joined him in his retreat, and in time a monastery arose on the spot, over which Deicolus reigned with cheer and kindness as Abbot. The joy and peace of his simple heart which had painted themselves upon his countenance filled his days to the end of his life.

CHAPTER XXXVI

ST GILES AND THE HIND

Bearing a certain likeness to the story of St Deicolus is that of St Giles.

St Giles was an Athenian of royal birth, who fled from home and from the prominence won for him by his miracles, one of which was the healing of a sick man by casting over him his cloak. He set out in quest of some remote spot where he might live in solitude the life of a hermit. Such a place he found near the mouth of the Rhone, not far from Nimes. Here he dwelt in a hut, on herbs, berries, roots, and on the milk of a spotted hind, who came to him daily and allowed him to milk her. A long time he existed with only his loving hind for companion. But one day the silence was torn by tumult of the chase. Horns echoed in the distance, and the baying of the King's hounds drew every moment nearer.

Hearing the sounds and going to the door of his hut, St Giles saw the hind fleeing in the last exhaustion from the pursuing dogs. Taking courage she made a final effort, and reaching him, threw herself into his open arms.

At sight of him the dogs not only paused, but turned whimpering away and returned to the huntsmen, who by this time appeared on the edge of the clearing in which the hut stood. One of them, sending an arrow at random in the direction of the deer, pierced the Saint's protecting arm, so that when the King reached the scene he found an aged wounded man holding in his arms a quivering hind. Deeply moved by the sight, he entreated the holy man's forgiveness and wished to send his physician to attend him, but St Giles refused all aid, saying that he cherished his wound, and that his prayers would bring him the necessary aid from God. The King then asked for his story and having heard it, offered him honour and riches, all of which Giles refused to accept. He eventually consented to allow certain followers to join him in his solitude, and thence sprang in time a monastery over which he presided as the first Abbot, but for the moment the King and all his court were obliged to turn away, leaving the Saint to his cherished solitude, with his little cherished friend.

CHAPTER XXXVII

ST CORENTIN'S FISH

St Giles was fed daily by a hind, who shared with him the solitude of the forest, so St Corentin was kept from hunger by a fish.

St Corentin was first Bishop of Quimper in Brittany, and lived in a hermit's cell at the top of the mountain of Saint-Come. Near by bubbled a spring which had for its lone inhabitant a fish. How Corentin first discovered the little fish's disposition, as well as his ability to provide him with a daily meal is not told. We are

only assured that every day Corentin went to the basin into which the spring flowed, put his hand into the water, drew out of it the fish, sliced from him a cutlet sufficient for his day's food, and then placed him back in the water.

As his performance continued for years, the truth is not to be doubted that the fish was daily healed of his wound, and his flesh entirely restored.

One day the King came hunting in the vicinity, as was the wont of kings, and, as also seems to have been their habit, he with a single retainer was either lost—or else he strayed or stole away from the rest of his party. On this occasion, the retainer happened to be the King's cook. When both King and cook arrived at Corentin's cell they were hungry, and the hermit was obliged to cut an unusually large slice of his fish to feed his two guests.

Even so King Gallo's cook sneered at sight of the slender portion, but he fried it—and as he fried, it increased and increased until it filled the pan, and proved more than sufficient for all three—King, cook, and Saint.

When the rest of the party, after long search for their King, arrived on the spot and were told of the miraculous animal, they trooped to the basin to have a look at him. There he was, frolicking in the water, with not even a scar where he had so lately been wounded. The retinue were greatly interested, and one, bolder than the rest, taking out his hunting knife, and performing the operation which had been described to him, carved a substantial piece out of the back of the fish. All were aghast at what then happened, for the fish, far from taking the performance as a matter of course, wriggled feebly back into the water, lay on his side gasping, and looked as if he were about to die.

Corentin was hastily summoned, and when he arrived quickly uttered a prayer, healed his friend, and bade him depart from the basin before any other heedless knave attracted by

rumours of the miracle should make further experiments upon him.

But Corentin did not subsequently go hungry on this account, for King Gallo, impressed by the occurrence, made him a gift of all the rich forest of Plou-Vaudiern and the hunting-lodge standing in it, which the Saint enjoyed for the rest of his days.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

ST ORINGA AND THE HARE

Oringa was the name of a little Tuscan maid born at Santa Croce.

Her family was of the poor peasant class, and she spent her days in work upon her parents' farm. She tended the cows, who under her care became so tame that it was a delight to see.

After the death of her parents, her brothers wished to marry her to a rich farmer for whom she had no liking, so she took her courage in both hands and ran away in the direction of Lucca.

The path of her flight lay through a thick wood, and the child would surely have died of fright in the long hours of the night had not a little hare suddenly appeared at her feet. He so took up her attention with his antics, for he seemed more like a playful kitten than like a wild hare of the forest, that she forgot her terror of the dark, and of the strange forest night sights and sounds, and in her play with her little companion, her races with him and her pauses to stroke him, the night passed, dawn broke, and she found that not only had he kept her from dread and fear, but he had led her on the right path across the forest. Daylight having now come, he conducted her to the edge of the highway to Lucca, where with a parting flip of his expressive ears he disappeared into the undergrowth.

Oringa continued on her way to Lucca and there entered the service of a family by whom she was most kindly treated.

On one occasion she made a pilgrimage to Mount Gargano, where it was said that St Michael had once appeared; she spent her time there in devotions to him, and that he heard the good child's prayers was proved on her homeward journey. For certain men on the road tried to mislead her by night in a thick wood, when of a sudden Michael himself, the Saint in shining armour, stood among them, and with his flaming sword protected Oringa, scattered the evil-doers, and sent her safe on her way.

The end of her life was spent in Rome, where she lived with a widow named Margaret, to whom she was rather a daughter than a servant, and who valued her for her goodness and for the sanctity of her life. She is worshipped as St Oringa, but is sometimes called St Christiana.

CHAPTER XXXIX

ST SPIRIDION'S MULES

Spiridion, although Bishop of Trimethus in Cyprus, was a shepherd before he was made bishop, and remained a shepherd to the end of his days. Robbers entered his fold one night, intending to carry away some of his flock, but when they tried to leave the enclosure they found themselves hindered by an invisible power, and were forced to remain on the spot. At daybreak Spiridion came to lead forth his sheep; at sight of him the robbers knew not what to do, for they were powerless either to attack him or flee.

"Take a ram away with you," said Spiridion to them, "it were a pity that you should leave my fold unrepaid for the trouble of entering it; but would it not have been simpler to have asked me for one before you attempted to carry away my sheep?"

It happened that once during Lent a weary and hungry traveller arrived at Spiridion's house. Having nothing else to give him, the Bishop offered him some salted pork. The stranger refused it, saying that he could not thus break his Lenten fast.

"To the pure all things are pure," said Spiridion, as he himself ate the meat.

It was not to be wondered at, such being the unorthodoxy of the Saint, that when the Council of Nicaea was called, the orthodox bishops feared that their cause would be injured by the presence of one so ignorant and illiterate as the Cyprian shepherd. They could not imagine him successfully meeting and answering the subtleties of their Arian and Alexandrian opponents.

It was Spiridion's custom to travel on foot and alone, but the great distance to be covered on this occasion, and its unusual dignity, caused him to take with him his deacon; for the latter and for himself he furnished two mules, one white and one black, mounted on which they set forth upon their journey to the Council.

One evening they came to an inn where a number of the orthodox bishops had already arrived on their way to Nicaea, and were spending the night. The opportunity seemed excellent to these for preventing Spiridion's appearance at the Council. During the night some members of their party went out into the pasture where Spiridion's mules were tethered and cut off their heads; then, very quietly, not to say stealthily, and with no delay whatever, they set forth again on their journey.

Long before daylight Spiridion's deacon went out to saddle the mules and make ready to start, in order to cover as much of the road as possible before the heat of the day. Feeling his way in the dark, he discovered the headless mules; he rushed distractedly to Spiridion and reported what had happened.

All undismayed, Spiridion accompanied him back to the pasture, and having knelt down and prayed, directed him to set

the mules' heads upon their shoulders again. The deacon, obeying, stood speechless and open-mouthed as the animals, raising themselves from the ground, shook themselves as if to throw off the effects of heavy slumber, and began peacefully to break their fast with the grass at their feet. The mules, apparently unusually refreshed by their more than natural rest, were not long in overtaking the cavalcade of bishops, notwithstanding that these had had several hours' start. In the first light of dawn the bishops saw a strange sight as Spiridion advanced toward them seated upon a white mule with a black head, while the deacon bestrode a black one with a white head: in the dark he had failed to return to each its rightful and proper head!

"The truth is not far to find, my brothers," said Spiridion. "None of us is all white in innocence and worth, nor, equally, are any of us utterly and irretrievably black."

The discomfited bishops had further proof of the simple shepherd's wisdom when, during the Council, discussion ran high. There seemed no end to it, and the controversy bade fair to continue indefinitely, when Spiridion, stepping forth among the disputants, addressed them briefly:

"Christ and his apostles left us no system of logic, no subtleties and vain deceits, but a Truth to be guarded by Faith and Good Works!"

And again he said: "You deny that there can be Three in One—" he reached down and picked up a brick tile lying at his feet. "Look at this brick, it is made up of earth, water, and fire, yet it is one."

As he spoke the brick dissolved into its elements, the fire blazed, the water trickled over his hand; he remained holding only a handful of clay—and the bystanders were silenced.

CHAPTER XL

ST UMILIATA AND THE WEASEL

Rosina was the secular name of the Saint who by her humility won the name of St Umiliata. She was of a noble family of Faenza, and was desired in marriage by a prince related to Frederick II. She would not listen to his suit, yet was later, against her will, married to one by the name of Ugolotto Caccianemici.

She had always wished to live a religious life and long pleaded with her husband to permit her to retire to a nunnery. He would, however, never consent until after a severe illness his eyes were opened, and he permitted her to take the veil.

She went to the monastery of St Perpetua in Faenza. There, by her holy life and the wonders she wrought, she so won the veneration of the nuns that, feeling herself in danger of becoming proud, she prayed to be allowed to leave the convent. In answer to her petitions she was carried by unseen hands through the doors and over the walls of the cloister, and arriving in the Appenines, was admitted to a company of nuns of St Clare. Here she remained until again her miracles won for her undesired fame.

Later she found the solitude she had so long craved, for a cell was built for her next to the Church of St Perpetua, and there she lived as a hermit.

Her solitude was broken only by the companionship of a little weasel, which suddenly appeared one day with a bell round its neck. Who can express the pleasure and solace of the little creature's presence to the lonely nun! The weasel shared her daily bread and water, and followed her constantly as she went about her routine of devotions.

But, the time coming when Umiliata was called upon to leave her retreat (for the fame of her sanctity again caused her to be called from the hermit's life she loved, and obliged her to go and found a hospice in Florence), the weasel leaped lightly to the sill of the cell's one narrow window, the bell fell from its neck, it sat up on its haunches, waved, and bowed a polite and affectionate farewell, and disappeared.

CHAPTER XLI

ST FELIX AND THE SPIDER

There lived in the third century a man called Hermias, who was by birth a Syrian. Having served for a term in the army, he went to Campania and there, in the town of Nola, bought and settled upon an estate, where he remained to the end of his days. He had two sons, one of whom, named after himself, also became a soldier; the other, Felix, entered the priesthood, and personally served the old Bishop of Nola, whose name was Maximus.

During the reign of the Emperor Decius, in one of the periods of persecution, the aged Bishop, fleeing from danger, escaped to the hills, leaving his flock in the care of Felix.

The Emperor's agents coming to Nola, unable to find Maximus, seized his representative, and threw him into a dungeon, where he languished in darkness, heavily manacled with chains.

One night an angel appeared to him, telling him that Maximus, in his hiding place, was dying of cold and hunger. He bade Felix go to his aid; at the same moment the chains fell from the prisoner's hands, ankles, and neck, the doors and outer gates of the prison opened before him, and in freedom Felix followed the angel, who led him to the spot where Maximus lay.

Felix gave the exhausted Bishop food and drink provided by the angel, chafed his nearly frozen limbs, and restored him to life. Then, taking him on his back, he carried him safely home, where a faithful old servant ministered to him.

Felix himself returned to his abode, and there remained in hiding until the persecution came to an end through the death of Decius in the year 251.

But this was not the end of the persecution of Christians, and it was not long before the life of Felix was again in danger.

As he left his lodging one day to seek some place of safety, he came face to face with the very men who were searching for him to take his life. They did not, however, know who he was, and, waylaying him, asked: "Hast thou met one Felix on thy way?"

"Nay," answered Felix, "I met him not."

Then both he and the soldiers hastened each, in his own direction. Felix, knowing well that it was only a matter of minutes before the searchers should learn his identity and hasten after him, fled with all speed toward the edge of the town. There, in the outskirts, he came to a ruined wall whose face was cleft with a narrow rift. He crept with difficulty through this aperture and found among the ruins beyond the wall a dry well, in which he hid himself, none too soon. The soldiers, not finding him in his house, and their suspicions being aroused by the memory of his face and apparel, hastened back on their tracks, expecting to find him still on the road. They came to the cleft. He could hear their voices, and his heart stood still as he heard one suggest investigation beyond the wall.

"Nay," answered another, "it would be useless to look beyond this opening. Seest thou not? No man has passed through in many a day, for so heavy a web have I never beheld spun by living spider. A web like this is a long labour!"

Such was God's method of protecting His own. He sent him a saviour in the hour of his danger in the person of a spider,

who wove, with a rapidity possible only to one sent by God to protect a friend, a web of such size, thickness, and intricacy, that it formed a veritable curtain of gray lace across the break in the wall.

For six months Felix remained in the bottom of the well, tended and fed by a Christian woman who discovered him in his hiding.

When an end came to this persecution of the Church, Felix came out of his retreat, and was greeted by the people of Nola as one supernaturally protected and miraculously saved. They looked upon him as an angel as well as a Saint, and Maximus having died, acclaimed him Bishop. Felix, however, persuaded them to elect Quintus in his stead, and retiring to a little farm remained there in peaceful labour and contemplation to a ripe old age.

CHAPTER XLII

ST LAUNOMAR'S COW

St Launomar, having twice fled from the life of the monastery in the attempt to gain the blessings of the solitary and contemplative life of a hermit, had finally been obliged to resign himself to becoming the abbot of the monastery of Dreux, not far from Corbion, for wherever he went, disciples followed him, attracted by rumours of his holiness.

His kindness under all circumstances was the wonder of all.

It happened one night that two robbers came to his monastery in search of booty. As there was neither gold nor silver to be found there, nor precious vessels in the chapel, the robbers had to content themselves with taking away the cow which they found in the stable.

They were, however, neither shepherds nor versed in the ways of cattle, so they not only had difficulty in inducing the cow to leave her stall with them with whom she was unacquainted, but having finally, by muffled but emphatic persuasion, by much silent pulling and prodding, succeeded in driving her into the thick forest, they discovered that in their anxiety to secure the cow they had paid no heed to the path by which they had brought her, with the result that at daybreak, although they had gone a great distance, they had no idea of the road over which they had travelled, and the surrounding landscape looked in the early light entirely unfamiliar. Not knowing what else to do, they anxiously and hurriedly drove the cow harshly onward and onward, hoping to come upon some familiar landmark.

As hours passed she became no more amenable to their persuasion, until one of them cried: "As we do not know whither we are going, and as wherever we are going the cow is unwilling to accompany us, and as we are many leagues from our starting point, were it not well to let the beast go whither she will, provided, of course, she lead us not backward over our steps to her monastery? There is often wisdom in the ways of dumb creatures; let us allow her to do her will, and see what shall occur, for I am more than mortal weary!"

The other agreed, so from exhausting coercion they lapsed into easy following of the cow. Released from their tether and blows, the gentle animal fell into a contemplative gait. Frequently she stopped to crop the grass bordering the path; when the hungry and thirsty robbers would have milked her she raised no objection; once she lay down beside a brook and chewed the cud. Her attitude toward them and toward the situation was one of absent-minded detachment. Given her choice of paths, she went on her road with the quiet confidence of one who knows that if she can but have her own way all will be well.

Throughout the day this pleasant journey continued. The cow never made a motion to go home; she never turned her mild

and magnificent eye backward in yearning for her shed and her kind master. She strolled on and on and on and on and on, and at night, all unwearied herself, though the robbers were by this time near to fainting in their tracks, she led them without fuss or worry into the clearing in front of the monastery, where Launomar himself stood with a happy smile and outstretched arms to greet her.

To the robbers he turned the same sweet countenance as he said:

"Blessings upon you and thanks, my Brothers, for bringing back to me safely the cow that had strayed from us. You must be weary and hungry, for by your appearance I judge you have come far, very far. Shall we all go within and rest, and eat?"

With his arm round the neck of his beautiful and wise red and white friend, Launomar led the way toward shelter and food.

CHAPTER XLIII

ST KENTIGERN AND THE ROBIN

Loth, King of the Picts, had a beautiful daughter named Thernin, who loved and was loved by Eugenius I, King of the Scots, but, more fair than wise, she found herself one day about to become a mother, though she was not a wife.

When Loth was made aware of his daughter's condition, in anger and grief he ordered her to be dashed to her death from the rock on Mount Dunceld before she should have disgraced him as well as herself.

She fell from the height, but fell unhurt; then Loth sent her away to Culross, where she gave birth to a son.

When St Servan, one morning, was in his cell saying Matins, he heard angel voices singing, and following whither they led came to the edge of the sea, where in the half light of

dawn he found the young mother rocking her child and weeping. Filled with compassion, the old monk took the girl and the child to his cell, and there kept them, and did for them all that a father would have done.

He baptized the boy Kentigern, but what he called him was Mungo, which means 'Dearest.' And truly he loved him as his own son; so well that other lads whom he had under his tutelage were jealous of his partiality. They therefore hated Kentigern, and did all that occurred to them to grieve and annoy him.

It was in those days difficult to make fire unless one had a flame to start it with; it was, indeed, next to impossible. So it was the duty of each of the boys in turn to rise in the night and mend the fire lest it should go out before morning. Once, when it was Kentigern's turn to tend it, the boys put it out, to bring him into disgrace. When Kentigern arose in the morning and the fire was quite dead, he allowed himself not a moment's dismay; he held a stick over the dead ashes, called upon the aid of the Holy Trinity, blew upon the wood, and it leaped into flame.

On another occasion, the boys did a thing more detestable. There was a robin redbreast which was the special pet of St Servan, who used to feed it out of his hand, let it perch on his shoulders, and watch it delightedly as it sang and fluttered its wings while he chanted the Psalms.

The boys wrung this robin's neck, intending to accuse Kentigern of the murder. When he found the dead bird tears streamed from his eyes, not only tears of grief for the robin, but grief for his beloved benefactor. Picking up the pathetic remains in his hand, he made a prayer to God and a Sign of the Cross over the little stiff body, and the robin, reviving, flew off to meet St Servan on his return from Mass.

At last, unable longer to endure the miseries inflicted on him by his tormentors, Kentigern ran away. St Servan followed and found him. He remonstrated and pleaded with him to return,

but Kentigern had heard the voice of God calling him elsewhere, so in the end, with St Servan's blessing, he went his way.

He settled near Glasgow in a cave in the face of a rock. In course of years he became Bishop of Glasgow, and there spent the greater part of his days, though he was for one period in Wales, where he built the monastery of Llan Elwyn.

In Glasgow he lived under the reign of a good King, Roderick the Liberal, who was his devoted friend.

The wife of Roderick, so the story goes, being so foolish and unfortunate as to contract a reprehensible passion for a knight of her husband's court, was further so unwise as to give him in pledge of her affection a ring which had been bestowed upon her by the King.

One day, as the King and this knight were out hunting they spent the hot hours of noon resting in the shade of some trees on the bank of the river Clyde. The air was heavy, the chase had been keen, both were exhausted, and the knight, overcome with weariness, slept. In his sleep he stretched out his hand in full view of the King, who, when his eyes fell upon the ring which had been a token of his own love for the Queen, with difficulty refrained from smiting the knight dead. Subduing his wrath, he reached out and, taking the ring from the unconscious hand, flung it into the stream at his feet.

On his return, going directly to the Queen, he asked her for the ring. When she was unable to show it, he ordered her to be cast into a dungeon and there put to death. With difficulty the Queen obtained a respite of three days' time. Then, having sent to the knight imploring him to return the ring, and having learned that it was gone from his finger, she sent in despair to St Kentigern, entreating him to come to her aid. She told him all her story, and he, remembering his own mother to whose shame he himself owed his being, and wishing to save the Queen for repentance and the service of God, fervently prayed with her, and for her.

That night a salmon caught in the Clyde was sent the Bishop. Upon opening it he discovered the ring. He sent the fish with its precious contents to the Queen. She showed the ring to the King and her life was saved.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE FRIEND OF ST GERASIMUS

St Gerasimus sat with his companions at the gateway of his monastery, in the cool of the day. The pitiless sun had set, and now the weariest, most languid of breezes had arisen. The air was sweet after the heat, and twilight was grateful following upon the glitter of the yellow sands.

I know not what fatherly, brotherly converse the Saint was holding with his children and brothers, but only that this was cut short, and that with a sudden rush the Brothers fled from their places and sought shelter within.

The Saint alone remained on the spot, while, coming straight out of the heart of the dusk, a tawny lion of unusual size approached him. Not with the stealthy, sinuous tread of the feline creature, nor yet with the plunge of the wild beast upon its prey, but with a painful limp he advanced, uttering sounds impossible to mistake for any but those of distress. Observing all of which, Gerasimus, rising to his feet, hastened forward to meet the sufferer.

"How now, what ails thee, Brother?" he asked.

For all answer, with something resembling a whimper, the lion raised his right front paw, and offered it to his new acquaintance for inspection.

"Alas! but this is most grievous, my friend!" exclaimed the Saint, as with care he extracted from the soft pad a cruel thorn.

"There—is it better now?" he questioned. "It shall be bandaged with healing ointment, and soon it will be well, but until then thou shalt dwell with me and share my cell."

With signs of friendliness the lion expressed his gratitude for the release from pain afforded him, and followed Gerasimus within the walls of the monastery to receive further assistance.

Nor did the matter end there: impelled by an affection born of gratitude, the lion thereafter moved ever by the Saint's side, following at his heels like a dog.

It was, perhaps, natural that the monks of the cloister should demur at the hospitality shown the erstwhile wild beast, and it was on this account that, to give himself reason for retaining him, St Gerasimus devised for him an office of service which should win the countenance of his companions.

"Thou knowest," he said to the lion one day, "that our excellent ass, the faithful friend who brings us fire-wood from the distant forest, browses unguarded, perforce, wherever he can find food. Do thou, then, stand as his guardian. To thy charge I commit his safety. Look to it that no harm befalls him, either from thieves, wild beasts, or ought else. And remember thou fail not in thy trust," he said, raising a warning finger.

With glad assent, and pledging his faith by the holding up of his now healed paw, the lion set himself with a will to his new task. Early and late he watched over the safety of his charge, spent long, hot hours of the day with eyes blinking lovingly in the direction of the browsing ass, or yet longer cool lapses of the night, with luminous orbs turned like watchful lamps upon him.

But alas—flesh was ever weak, even that of the king among beasts, and mightiest of animals. On a night it happened that as he sat upright and proud, with head erect and eyes fixed at attention, a heaviness fell upon his lids; waves of somnolence broke over his senses, and his brain swam as in a mist. Useless to struggle against a foe so insidious and insistent as the

yearning for sleep. He scanned the horizon with blurred gaze. All was well, nothing was in sight, the ass himself was sweetly dozing—he could tell it by certain sounds. With a sigh he lowered himself to the sand, and laying his muzzle upon his outstretched paws, he slept.

With the earliest dawn he awoke, raised himself slowly, shook himself, luxuriously stretched first his front legs, then the hind, yawning largely the while. Then he looked for the ass. There was no ass in sight. Slow to take alarm, he started at a moderate trot in his search; first in small circles, then in larger; finally, thoroughly aroused to the appalling nature of the situation, he ran at a gallop in this, that, and every direction.

In vain—in vain—the ass was nowhere to be found. The ass was gone. Oh, misery Oh, disgrace!

Tired and thirsty after the day's fruitless search over every hillock, behind every clump of cactus, or of grass, he turned reluctant steps homeward.

St Gerasimus stood at the gate peering out, shading his eyes with his hand, when by the last rays of the sun he perceived the lion returning, head carried low, tongue hanging, tail dragging, dejectedly in the sand. Every evidence of shame, every symptom of guilt written upon his person.

No word was uttered on either side. Having reached the Saint, the lion crouched at his feet, not daring to raise his eyes, and there lay motionless, as one who should say: "I have sinned; deal with me as thou wilt!"

The Saint called the Brothers in conclave to decide upon the fate of the culprit. "Turn him away!" said some. "Let him die of hunger," said others. "Since he hath slain and devoured our ass," cried yet others, "let him in turn be slain!"

But, "Nay," said Gerasimus, "he has devoured our poor friend, this there can be no gainsaying, but we should remember, my Brothers, that it is indeed a lion with whom we have to deal, and no dog; and nature in the heart of wild beasts is difficult to

subdue. Moreover, if we slay him, then truly are we bereft of our carrier, and how shall our firewood be brought? A dead lion does not make a live ass. Since he has lost us our ass, let he himself replace him. Let him carry the fire-wood and perform all those honest tasks by which the ass was wont to assist us."

With this counsel the Brothers all acquiesced. As a result, daily the lion journeyed to the forest to fetch the faggots required for the monastery; thankfully, patiently he toiled—if by so doing he might but atone for his sin, and win back the favour of his benefactor. Yet was his heart bruised, that a fouler deed was accredited to him than that he had committed. Still—labour was good, and expiation better, and service thrice blessed.

But there dawned a day—oh, precious day!—when, as the lion came home bending under his load, he spied in the distance a caravan. It stretched in a long silhouette between him and the western sky. Camels in multitude there were, horses, men, and bulky packs of many-hued merchandise. In the van of the long procession walked an ass.

The lion halted—he stopped upon his tracks—he looked. He looked long with lambent eyes, reflecting the fire of the setting sun. Surely he knew that outline. Surely the angle of those ears, the bearing of that out-stretched neck, the delicate step of those little feet were familiar. Could it be . . . Nay—it could not. Yea—but it was! With one shake of his shaggy mane he ridded himself of his burden, and swift as the arrow from the bow darted off toward the caravan, uttering a jubilant roar.

It was then the ass's turn to stop upon his tracks, listening. Surely he knew that voice. He answered with a lusty clarion bray.

Then fell confusion upon the caravan as the lion came down upon them. After brief salutation followed by consultation between the two old comrades, the ass set out with nimble gait in the direction of the monastery, the camels following him, as was their established usage.

The merchants, herded in by the lion who followed after them, snapping and making lunges at their heels, had no choice but to go whither they were driven. And so it came about that presently the entire caravan found itself in the court of the monastery, and when St Gerasimus came forth to enquire what meant this stir and bustle, the merchants fell upon their faces before him, confessing that it was they who had stolen the ass.

What shall be said of the delight of the lion? Indeed he thought to die of joy. He went from one Brother to the next throughout the monastery, kneeling before each in turn, wagging his tail engagingly, begging to be forgiven for his past sin.

As for St Gerasimus, he ordered the camels to be unloaded, their feet bathed, and the thieves he not alone pardoned, but bade to partake of a repast which he instructed the Brothers to spread.

And who shall say that the Saint's ready forgiveness was not in some measure owing to the well-being in his heart at finding that his lion had not sinned so darkly as he had believed? For few things are more bitter than disillusion, and few more sweet than relief from it.

As long as St Gerasimus lived the lion remained his constant companion. When the Saint died and went to Heaven, the lion lay upon his grave and died of grief, and undoubtedly followed in his footsteps after death, even as he had in life.

CHAPTER XLV

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF THE SAINTS

SAINTS ACCORDING TO THEIR CENTURY

St Thomas, Apostle	First century
St Stephen	A.D. 83
The Seven Sleepers	250
St Lawrence	258
St Hippolitus	258
St Felix	Third century
St Christopher	Third century
St Nicholas	Fourth century
St Spiridion	350
St Ursula	451
St Gerasimus	Fifth century
St Corentin	453
St Patrick	464
St Bridget	500
St Ruadan	Sixth century
St Mary of Egypt	Sixth century
St Clothilde	534
St Launomar	583
St Kentigern	601
St Gertrude	664
St Deicolus	Seventh century
St Gudula	712

St Giles	720
St Rigobert	749
St Elfleda	Tenth century
St Henry of Bavaria	972-1024
St Edward the Confessor	1002-1066
St John Gualbert	1020-1073
St Margaret of Scotland	1045-1093
St Raymond Pennaforte	1175-1275
St Francis of Assisi	1182-1226
St Claire of Assisi	1194-1253
St Anthony of Padua	1195-1231
St Elizabeth of Hungary	1207-1231
St Gonsalvo	1259
St Louis of France	1214-1270
St Zita of Lucca	1281-1278
St Oringa	1237-1310
St Roch	1295-1327
St Umiliata	1310
St John of Nepomuk	1330-1393
St Bernardine of Siena	1380-1444
St Frances the Roman	1384-1440
St Jeanne d'Arc	1412-1431
St Thomas of Villanueva	1488-1555
St Francis Borgia	1510-1572
St Charles Borromeo	1538-1584
St Rose of Lima	1586-1617

St Rigobert	January 4
St Edward	January 5
St Gudula	January 8
St Gonsalvo	January 10
St Oringa	January 10
St Kentigern	January 13
St Felix	January 14
St Deicolus	January 18
St Launomar	January 19
St Raymond	January 23
St Bridget	February 1
St Gerasimus	March 5
St Frances the Roman	March 9
St Patrick	March 17
St Gertrude	March 17
St Mary of Egypt	April 2
St Ruadan	April 15
St Louis of France	April 25
St Zita	April 27
St John of Nepomuk	May 16
St Umiliata	May 22
St John Gualbert	July 12
St Henry of Bavaria	July 14
St Christopher	July 25
The Seven Sleepers	July 27
St Lawrence	August 10
St Claire	August 11
St Roch	August 12
St Hippolitus	August 13
St Anthony of Padua	August 15

SAINTS ACCORDING TO THEIR FEAST DAYS

St Clothilde January 3

St Rose of Lima	August 26
St Giles	September 1
St Bernardine of Siena	September 8
St Jeanne d'Arc	Ascension Sunday
St Thomas of Villanueva	September 18
St Francis of Assisi	October 4
St Francis Borgia	October 11
St Ursula	October 21
St Elfleda	October 23
St Charles Borromeo	November 4
St Margaret of Scotland	November 6
St Elizabeth of Hungary	November 19
St Nicholas	December 6
St Corentin	December 12
St Spiridion	December 14
St Thomas the Apostle	December 21
St Stephen	December 26

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LIVES OF SAINTS	Alban Butler
A BOOK OF SAINTS	Lawrence H. Davidson
A CHILD'S BOOK OF SAINTS	William Canton
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LIFE OF ST BERNARDINE OF SIENA	
ST PATRICK	(Pub. by Sands & Co.)
A BOOK OF SAINTS AND WONDERS	Lady Gregory
ST MARGARET OF SCOTLAND	(Pub. by Sands & Co.)
A GARNER OF SAINTS	Allen Hinds
PATRON SAINTS OF CATHOLIC YOUTH	M. E. Mavix
SAINTS OF ITALY	E. Noyes
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