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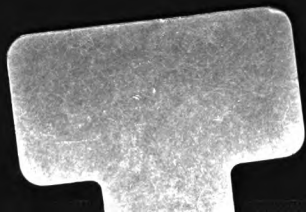
LIFE OF



SAINT MARGARET OF CORTONA



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LIFE AND REVELATIONS
OF
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OF
SAINT MARGARET OF CORTONA.

*DEDICATED TO HER BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF THE
THIRD ORDER OF SAINT FRANCIS.*

WRITTEN IN LATIN BY HER CONFESSOR, FR. GIUNTA REVEGNATI
OF THE MINOR ORDER.

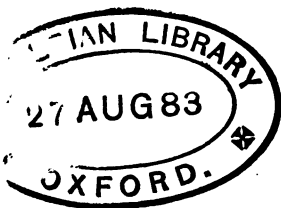
*Translated with Mgr. Luquet's Introduction to his
French Version,*

BY
F. M'DONOGH MAHONY.

LONDON: BURNS AND OATES,
GRANVILLE MANSIONS, ORCHARD STREET.
DUBLIN: M. H. GILL & SONS.

1883.

210. p. 100. Digitized by Google



Nil obstat.

DAVID O'LEARY,
Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur.

✠ ANDREAS,
Epis. Kerriensis.

REVERENDISSIMO PATRI ALFREDO MURRAY, O.S.F.

Sanctæ Memoriz

QUI

DOCTRINAM ET VIRTUTES

SANCTÆ MARGUERITÆ,

PROPAGAVIT

ET

HANC VERSIONEM PRIMUS PROPOSUIT.

P R E F A C E
TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION.

AT the instance of a friend I undertook the translation of the Life of S. Margaret of Cortona, in the hope that her great fervour and extraordinary zeal may be an example to the faithful, stimulating them to greater efforts, and that her conversion may be an incentive to those who still linger amid the shadows of sin, to abandon their evil ways and return to the bosom of the God of mercy, to rest in His fold. The Life was originally written in Latin by Father Giunta in the thirteenth century: and it will be easily understood that many things written at so remote a time and in so primitive an age had to be expunged when translated into the English tongue, in order to make the book suitable to the country and the times in which we live. Those who desire to know more of this wonderful saint would do well to peruse the original work of her confessor, so simple in language and beautiful in idea.

I have to acknowledge my deep obligations to the Very Rev. David O'Leary of S.^t Brendan's Seminary, Killarney, and to the Rev. Frederick G. Maples of the diocese of Westminster, for their valuable assistance and advice during the progress of this translation.

KILLARNEY, *6th April* 1883.

THE LIFE AND MIRACLES
OF
SAINT MARGARET OF CORTONA.

—o—

IN compliance with the wishes of one of my superiors, I thought to compile a profitable little book for virtuous souls, since duty required of me this labour. I began to gather, if not all the actions of the blessed Margaret's admirable life,—which would have been impossible,—at least some characteristics, some choice flowers in the history of the wonderful and austere penitent of Cortona. Under the heads of different chapters I have brought the sublime virtues of her soul, the heavenly graces planted so abundantly in her breast, in order that our holy mother the Church, ever rich, ever flourishing and proud of her fruitfulness, might afford new examples of holiness as food for her faithful children. I now make an offering of my researches, such as they are; at the same time, humbly entreating wise and learned readers, if they meet with anything out of place, to restore it to its proper position. Embarrassed by innumerable other occupations, I was not able, God knows, in performing this labour,

to blend the combining elements with all the care I desired.

In the name of our crucified Lord, from whom all good cometh, I begin by noting the chapters which comprise this story :—

- I. On the Life of Margaret in the World.
- II. On her Perfect Conversion to God.
- III. On the Austerity of her Life, and on her Love of Poverty.
- IV. On her Profound Humility and Contempt of her own Achievements.
- V. On her Meditations on the Cross of Christ, and on her Calmness and Patience in Suffering.
- VI. On her Assiduity in Prayer, and Ecstatic Meditation.
- VII. On her Purity of Conscience, and Frequent Confessions and Communions.
- VIII. On her Sweet and Maternal Compassion towards All, and her Indefatigable Zeal in the Welfare of Souls.
- IX. On the Revelations with which she was Favoured as regards her own State and that of Others, both during their Life and after their Death.

ATTESTATION

Written in Father Giunta's own Handwriting.



FATHER GIUNTA, the blessed Margaret's confessor, was the compiler of this life by order of Father John of Castigliona, anti-heretical inquisitor. It has been revised by Father Tarlato, Father Paul di Soci, Father John above mentioned, Father Philip, guardian at Cortona, Father Renault of Castigliona, guardian of Arezzo, and Father Ubaldo of Colle, one of her confessors. The provincials of the Order have had it successively under their notice, Father Ranievi of Sienna, Father Barthélemi, Father Thomas, Father Anthony, who communicated it to Father Badia, and Father Hubert de Gênes, who preached it. The venerable Monseigneur Napoleon, Cardinal-Legate of the Holy See, kept it many months at the Apostolic Court. When he returned it on his departure, he commanded it to be preserved without change, and translated by all who wished to do so; he also ordered it to be preached *contrariis non obstantibus quibuscumque*. It was also seen by many abbés, bishops, priors, and judges at Cortona.

I, Father Giunta, compiled this life in virtue of holy obedience, by order of Monseigneur Napoleon, Legate of the Holy See. The present attestation was given in the court of the palace of Seigneur Uquccio de Casali, in presence of Father Hubert de Gênes, Father Banievi de Volterra, guardian of Arezzo, Father Mansueto of Cortona, and Father Benvenuto of Pratiago, on this 15th day of February, 1308.

The following were the fathers and advisers of the blessed Margaret :—Father John of Castigliona, Father Renault and Father Ubaldo of Colle, guardian, Father Hildebrand of Volterra, Father Jean, Father Hildebrand of Poggibonzi, Father Tarlato, lector, Father Vito, Father Benignus, Father Peter of Prato, and many other great and holy friars, to whom, with tears and fear, she laid bare her life for their instruction.

INTRODUCTION.



THIS translation was an undertaking in common with a person whose soul, we trust, is at this moment enjoying the rest of those who have suffered much in union with our Lord Jesus Christ. At first we undertook this work with the intention and fond hope of glorifying Saint Margaret; subsequently, we proposed to ourselves to distil the dew of hope on the "dried-up plants of the world,"* in order that, according to the Divine promise, the glorious penitent of Cortona may be made to bloom for ever through the lapse of ages.

Together with this we ought to make a theological study on the promise which our Lord repeated more than once to His beloved, to place her among the virgins. Saint Peter Damian,† Saint Bernard,‡ Suarez,§ and others have given us the weight of their authority to establish the possibility of virginal reparation in the soul from penance. How happy should we be to

* An expression in the life.

† Opusc. xxxvi.

‡ *De modo bene vivendi*, c. xxii.

§ *Tract. de Benil. com. in quest. 89, S. Thomæ, art. 3.*

stretch out our hand to the fallen, and to show them that "what is impossible to man is possible with God."—*Luke* xviii. 27. The Lord stops us; may His Holy Name be for ever blessed! The story of Father Giunta will suffice to awaken in many the sentiments which these sweet recollections have developed in others with the noblest zeal. May the Divine Light kindle in their hearts the desire of reparation by the suffering endowed by the soul of her, truly crucified, who has co-operated in this work.

She believed in the resurrection of virginity within her, after the promises made to Saint Margaret. More than once she experienced it in the language of her heart, which savoured of heaven more than of earth. We shall give one example of her utterances, made on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.* Her soul was then plunged in a sea of sorrow; and thus she gave expression to her feelings, addressing herself to the Sacred Instrument of forgiveness and salvation:—

“O Bed of sorrows, bed of my love; bed where my flesh was torn, where my soul becomes inebriated; bed where my sweet Jesus laid Himself to sleep, grant sleep to me, this is the end of the day! I love no more than Thou dost, the things of earth. In exile my arms stretch but to Thee alone; then open Thine for me. No longer art Thou angry with me, Bed of Wisdom, O Bed of my King! Be thou my last joy. O only creature! Grant me to suffer with the love

* In 1855.

of Jesus. I have touched my Spouse, and already I am pure. To awake a virgin, O tree of life, I must sleep first, and suffer or die."

We repeat these sentiments, because we know to what generosity of sacrifice and to what holiness of life one can attain by their means. May Jesus and Mary, source of immaculate virginity, bless this translation! May Saint Margaret and Saint Francis be our help! May the Third Order, in fine, to whom we offer it to-day in a special manner and with all the joy of our heart, receive it favourably. May they find in the life of the noblest of their sisters the strength to follow the teachings of our seraphic patriarch!

✠ J. P. O. LUQUET,
Bishop of Hésébon.

ROME, *June 17, 1858.*

CHAPTER I.

ON THE LIFE OF MARGARET IN THE WORLD.

I. It was after the close of the year of our Lord 1277 that the holy Margaret, pure in spirit and fervent of heart, went in tears, with suppliant hands, to throw herself at the feet of Friar Renauld, guardian of Arezzo, and to offer herself, body and soul, to the order of the blessed Francis. By pressing entreaties she obtained the habit of the Third Order of the glorious Patriarch.

One day, as she was praying before a picture of Christ crucified, which is honoured even to this day in the Church of the Friars-Minors, she heard a voice cry out to her, "What do you want, my child?" Enlightened by the Holy Spirit she answered, "I seek nothing, I wish for nothing but you, my Lord Jesus Christ."

II. On another occasion, while she was at prayer, she heard our Lord make mention of the different stages of her vocation from its first beginning:—"My child," He said to her, "think on the manifold graces and lights with which I have endowed thy soul, in order to turn thee to Me. Think of how, on the death

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of the enemy of your salvation, overcome with sorrow, with downcast looks, bathed in tears, and clothed in black, you came in confusion to Laviano, to your father's house. Think of how, at the instigation of your stepmother, he altogether forgot fatherly compassion, and drove you from the house. Deprived of human advice and aid you knew not what to do ; you withdrew into the garden, and sat beneath a fig-tree, and wept. You turned towards Me, beseeching Me to be your master, your father, your spouse, your Lord ; and you humbly deplored your spiritual and corporal misery. But at the same time, the old serpent, seeing you driven forth by your father, to his shame and for your destruction, seized this opportunity to make you vain of your beauty and your youth. He suggested to you that, abandoned by fortune, you had every excuse for giving yourself up to sin : that, wherever you chose to go and live, you would find rich and voluptuous masters to love you for the sake of your exterior loveliness. But I, the Maker of your inward beauty, which you had deformed and which I wished to renew, I bore Myself towards you with a true love. By My inspirations and My light I touched your conscience. I urged you to set out immediately for Cortona, and there to submit to the obedience of My Friars-Minors. You were filled with strength, and you set out on your journey. In obedience to My commands, you presented and offered yourself to My Friars ; and with great zeal and courage you brought your soul under subjection to their rules and instructions. Think of how, at the very outset of this career of salvation, you found balm for your heart, in the respectful, filial fear with which I filled your soul towards the religious to whose care I confided you. This fear vanquished the

invisible enemy, who had the hardihood to present himself to you in the hour of your affliction. Did you not tremble from head to foot, were not your cheeks suffused with blushes, when a friar of the Order of our ever-blessed Father appeared in the Church, in the house, or in the street? You dared not sit down or speak in their presence. Think of how I moulded your soul; how, from that moment, I inspired you with a supreme contempt of worldly ornament, and drew you, little by little, for My love's sake, to a most lawful position in relation to your fellow-creatures. Think of how your body, accustomed to delicacies, was reduced, by My grace, to an abstinence not merely from the most savoury morsels, but even from the most ordinary meat. Think of how, strengthened by this same grace, you mortified yourself by constant fasts; you rejected soft garments; for rest you joyfully chose the hardest beds, at one time a bundle of twigs, or the hard boards; at another time the bare earth, with a stone or a piece of wood for a pillow. Think of the liberality with which I vouchsafed to grant you the precious gift of holy fear, of sorrow and constant tears. Plunged in an ocean of sadness, you used to ask the Friars-Minors with whom I placed you, and even the seculars themselves, if I would not recall you from the unhappy exile into which you were drawn by sin; if I would not one day show My mercy towards you; if I would not summon you home. The groanings of your sorrow and your deep-drawn sighs used to make them weep with you. Do not forget how indulgent I showed myself towards you, and with what marvellous goodness I changed into joy the bitterness of your tears at a time when, full of sorrow, you used to weep copiously while meditating on the mystery of

my incarnation in the womb of my Virgin-mother, and on the sublime privileges of that Virgin-mother, and while celebrating the solemn festivals of the Saints. This was the beginning of your conversion, on the death of your seducer, who kept you for nine years against your will in the snares which he had made to entrap your purity and honour. My poor child, think of your journey during the night in the midst of the waters, where the old enemy would have wished to see you perish. And yet you renewed the torments of My passion. But I do not forget My paternal clemency ; I guarded and saved you from the danger into which you ran. Think, too, of how, when the world still pleased you, and while yet you lived in the shadows of sin, I, the infallible Master, became your teacher ; I endowed you from that moment with a motherly compassion for the poor and the afflicted ; I inspired you with such a taste for retreat and solitude that, inflamed with devotion, you used to exclaim in certain places, ' Oh ! how sweet to abandon oneself here to prayer ! How fervently one could here sing the praises of God ! In what peace and safety one could here undertake the work of salutary penance.' Think of the time when you were still in darkness, how, finding yourself alone in the house or in a room, you would feel yourself illuminated by a ray of My grace, and you would deplore your evil doings, and if at that time a nobleman or any person either from town or country, were to accost you, you would say to him that, knowing your criminal life, persons ought not only refuse to salute you, but even carefully watch themselves from addressing to you a single word. Think of the time when I withdrew you from your unhappy state, and by a special favour secured for you the protection and

company of two noble and pious ladies, Marinaria and Raneira. Think of how, after devoting your time to the preservation and increase of the beauty of your figure by means that gave Me offence, you began to despise and hate it, and sought only to obliterate its last traces by abstinence, by smearing yourself with soot, by scraping yourself with sharp stones, and by causing your blood to flow from voluntary scourges. In fine, think of how the fire of My love transformed thee unto Me, and the better to approach Me, by a complete separation from the world, thou didst often ask, with tears and moving prayers, the habit of penance from the guardian of the Friars-Minors of Cortona."

III. But why did the Friars delay to give to Margaret this habit of the Third Order? Because they doubted her constancy, and also because they thought her too attractive and too young. In time they saw that she was inseparably united to Jesus; they remarked that she advanced more and more in fervour, and they heard her frequently entreat them thus: "Fathers, you to whom I have been sent by our Lord, O do not doubt me! If I had to spend my life in a desert, so much do I love God, and in such a manner does the All-Powerful fortify me, that I would never yield to creature or temptation by my hope in the Lord, Whose grace has drawn me to Him. O Fathers, you have seen me flee the world, and live only with pious people; you have seen me reform my life by the grace of Jesus Christ. Why are you yet afraid? Why do you delay to clothe me in the garments of religion?"

At length, touched by these words, the Friars gave Margaret the habit of the Third Order for the love of

Him Who had already clothed her with His grace. As for her, with the change of outward garb, she sought every day more and more the inward adornment of her soul, as the pious reader will perceive who runs through the following chapters.

Imperceptibly she had announced beforehand her admirable conversion. When her companions and friends of the world would remark on frivolities—“What will become of you, Margaret, after all these vanities?” she would answer, “A time will come when you shall call me holy, because I shall have become so; and you shall visit me staff in hand, with a pilgrim’s wallet on your shoulders.” We now see the truth of these words; for men from all quarters, and also crowds of women, go to visit her tomb, and to pray near her relics.

CHAPTER II.

ON HER PERFECT CONVERSION TO GOD.

I. No sooner had Margaret received the habit of penance from the Friars-Minors, than she was observed to change, by the effusion of the Holy Spirit, into a different woman. The fire of divine love had transformed her, and diligently did she seek a solitary spot where she could live hidden from all, and flee the occasions of speaking of the things of earth. This new Magdalene desired nothing but to unite herself intimately to the King of the world, by meditation, prayers, tears, and fasts. The fire of charity which consumed her, led her to deprive herself of everything that could please soul or body, so that, crucified to the world, she had come to despise it. Not content with selecting the bare earth to rest her weary limbs, she sought to chasten the flesh by chastisements so violent as to cause her blood to flow, and by an uninterrupted fast. No miser was ever so greedy of gold as was she of the subjugation of the flesh. In order to facilitate the watches during the night, she would rest her head, drooping and enfeebled by fasting and tears, from time to time on a rough stone, or

on a piece of hard wood. Bathed in tears, she would prolong her fervent prayers from the first night-watch until daybreak, the hour for none. Her soul was penetrated with a lively sorrow at the recollection of her past faults, or when thinking on Christ crucified ; she lived spiritually united to the cross ; and so violent were her sobs, so deep her sighs, that she thought more than once she was going to die, and she frequently lost her voice and senses, falling into a dead faint.

This true lover of chastity selected an unpretentious and lowly cell, apart from the din and bustle of the world, though near to the homes of her noble benefactresses, in order that she might dwell there in peaceful obscurity. Here she offered herself as a sacrifice to our Lord.

Her flesh, naturally of a brilliant whiteness, became wan from the whippings and scourgings which she inflicted on herself for the love of Him Who atoned for our faults by His wounds. Margaret used to say that she felt more joy in the destruction of her body, than she would ever have experienced by her elevation to the imperial throne ; for this reason she was not content to ask it of our Lord, but she laboured at it besides by every means in her power.

But one only reaches step by step the highest degree of virtue, and the fervour of the newly-converted should increase by degrees and with becoming joy. I think it may be of some use to relate the different kinds of Margaret's fasts, in order that the weak ones of the world may not fear to submit their flesh to the spirit. From the moment in which she entered within sight of salvation, she never ceased to practise fast and abstinence even on those days which

the Church does not ordain ; and she used to season her food with fat, but would never touch meat. In a little time, the better to enjoy the delights of divine love, she would use no fat, and took nothing but oil for flavouring. She and her son having resolved to support themselves by the labour of their hands, the humble Margaret sought, as a midwife, the patronage of the noble ladies of Cortona. Though she had to dress the most delicate meats for their nourishment, she continued to fast herself as if it were Lent. When others would sing for the amusement of their patients, she used to hold herself aloof and weep, in such a manner, that the singers could not prevent themselves from mingling their tears with hers, and from interrupting the songs to share in her sorrow. So sweetly used Margaret to speak to the bystanders on the mercy and strictness of divine justice, that there was not one among them whose heart, howsoever attached to worldly pleasures, could resist the fascination of her words, or guard itself against sorrow and repentance. But that our readers may the better understand the humble discretion of Margaret, we should say that, always binding herself to a rigorous fast, she never allowed anybody, except in the homes of her sick patients, to take the trouble of preparing food for her. While the others used to feast on meat, she, the abstainer, was content with the commonest food on the table. Without the least remittance in her care of the patients, she used to recite every day, with the greatest punctuality, the Divine Office and other fervent prayers, in which she sang the praises of our Lord. In such places and under such circumstances, Margaret, fasting and weeping, watching and working, was, indeed, a lily amid thorns, a bright beacon in the

midst of darkness, a jewel of rare brilliancy in the dust; and, notwithstanding, she never allowed herself to judge those who ate and drank well, who lived in luxury and slept in idleness. For her patients she prepared the bath, but she washed herself with her tears; with them every night she inundated the bed of her conscience, and by virtue of her constant affliction, she never ceased to purify her soul mysteriously in the blood of Jesus Christ. In one of these revelations, while she was at prayer, a young mother, whom she was attending, saw her fall prostrate to the ground.

II. But her laborious occupations prevented Margaret from consecrating herself, as perfectly as she desired, to the service of Jesus, and frequently deprived her of the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and of sermons. She resolved to quit the service of her patronesses, and to hold herself more disposed to receive the favours of heaven. She longed, at the same time, to be able to help the poor. She besought a pious and liberal gentleman to assist her in the accomplishment of her desire. This happened under the roof of a lady of the name of Diabella, where the Father of mercy and light shed on Margaret such a gift of mercy and compassion towards her neighbour, that she induced the owner to change the house into an hospital for the poor. Margaret centered her whole heart in this new institution; she wished to spare nothing from the comfort of the afflicted. Filled with gratitude towards her spiritual directors, she arranged that this house should always furnish the necessaries of an infirmary to the Friars-Minors of Cortona. This truly merciful mother, so diligent in alleviating the wants of others, never allowed the smallest portion

of the resources of the institution to be set aside for her wants, however pressing they might be. It was in this house that the Father of Mercies filled the heart of Margaret with such an effusion of sweetness and comfort, that He seemed Himself almost to descend into her, to strengthen her by divine encouragements, or at least to allow her to commune with the angels and saints, while He ever remained by her side, fought her battles, and conquered for her the old enemy.

III. Every year the pious Margaret gave a feast to the poor in honour of Saint John the Baptist, whom she had chosen for her special protector; with the labour of her hands she prepared for them the repast, while she and her son were deprived of the necessaries of life. Fervent soul! she besought at the same time our holy father Saint Francis to obtain from our Lord Jesus Christ, through the merits of his intercession, and as a token of especial love, a plenary indulgence of all her sins. From the earliest years of her conversion, no matter how weak or indisposed, she never touched milk or eggs, although it was not Lent; at time of quarantine she denied herself the use of all kinds of fish; nay, more, whenever she could do so unperceived, she distributed her ordinary food to the poor, shedding tears of compassion on their misery, and keeping absolutely nothing to supply her own wants. The great charity of this mother of the unfortunate was so well known that the poor and needy left off knocking at the doors of the rich, and came in crowds to her humble cell, where there was always so little, and often nothing at all. The pious ladies, who dwelt hard by, became alarmed at the daily increasing numbers, and sought to induce the poor to withdraw from the lowly cot of Margaret, in order that she

should have some means of subsistence. But this displeased her very much ; for, indeed, towards the poor, hers were the bowels of charity.

As she was not yet altogether a recluse, she used to go every morning to hear Mass, with great devotion, at the church of the Friars-Minors. There she used to remain wrapt in prayer, on days not kept as fasts by the generality of the faithful, until the hour for terce ; she would then return in silence to her cell, shut out the door, employ a little time in work, but by far the greater portion of the day in prayer. The fear of God, the beginning of wisdom, took possession of her spirit, and prevented her from looking persons in the face, or from speaking of worldly matters. If she happened to have spoken or heard during the day anything of the outer world, that night she could not close her eyes, she dared not seek, in prayer, her wonted comfort from our Lord ; but she would pass the whole night without rest, weeping with great interior sorrow. She would feel herself consumed by the intensity of her grief ; she would strike her breast and pray aloud, like a woman in labour ; and the neighbours were oftentimes awakened by the piercing shrieks in which she gave expression to the sadness of her soul.

But sorrow only finds an end in joy, as cold disappears but in the face of heat. Margaret, overpowered by her repentance, used to recall her soul to meditation on the Cross and the insults of our Redeemer ; and in following the sufferings of Jesus, she would abandon herself to tears, the sweet alleviators of sorrow. Meditation on the passion of our Lord produced in her the most lively effects ; she would rend her garments, and lacerate her face with bruises ;

or she would cause her shoulders to bleed with knotted cords, for the love of Him on whose shoulders fell the scourge, that was to be the redemption of sinners. Amid tears and sighs that dimmed the vision of her sins or the remembrance of the passion of Jesus, she never forgot that the surest token of perfect love is in the practice of good works done from a proper spirit. The better to cast aside the wicked remnants of her former life, and to atone for the empty pleasures which she sought in the world, she used to go on the streets as a beggar, never entering the houses, never looking in the face. If a lady give her an entire loaf, she would refuse it, fearing that it was given from a special personal regard; but her motherly zeal for the poor would induce her to accept anything given for their sake. She had given in charity all the utensils and conveniences of her humble home, and from love of poverty she reduced herself to nothing but a broken jar, covered with a stone, in which she kept the bread she used for her supper.

So perfectly did she follow the teaching of the Gospel, that, for the love of her divine Spouse, she neglected her only son, and, by means of the Charity of Jesus, preferred to him the poor, the orphan, and the abandoned, for whom she frequently deprived herself of the necessaries of life. Seculars dared not approach her cell, because she spoke but seldom to any visitor, and also because they knew how she preferred the divine Love to the child of her womb, to such an extent as not even to prepare for him his meals, in order not to interrupt her prayers. She used to speak to him very seldom. Once for all she gave him this advice:—"My son, when you come in, take and eat what you find cooked in silence; it is not fitting that

I should spend on you the time that I ought to devote to praises divine." Though she acted thus towards her son, she prepared meat, fish, and other delicacies for the poor of Jesus; and in this way she thought not of the loss of time, for this occupation, she said, was suggested to her, not by the flesh, but by the spirit. When Margaret had no food for the poor, she would procure for them linen, knives, belts, bowls, glasses, charwood, jackets, and other garments or bed-covering. If all failed her, she would cut off her own sleeves, and give away even to the veil on her head; and she has deprived herself of her wreath, her girdle, the cup in which she kept holy water, and torn off, to the very gable, the wood that propped her humble dwelling. Her son was the only person she took no care of, as if she had forgotten a mother's love. The distinction was very marked principally on the solemn festivals of the saints, when she invited and served the poor, but put by nothing for her son.

IV. Later on Margaret, impressed by a fresh impulse from heaven, no longer contented herself with her early fasts, but began to use only herbs with no seasoning; then she rejected cooked food, bread excepted, which she ate in tears, together with hazel nuts and almonds. This austerity lasted not merely for some days or months; Margaret persevered in it for several years; and used to fast and pray uninterruptedly until the hour of none, and frequently until vespers. With the passion of our Lord, she wept for her neighbours' sins, with so violent a sorrow that her eyes seemed to protrude from their orbit, and then her blood more than ever trickled forth in union with her tears.

If there are no grounds for despairing of the salva-

tion of a man who goes to confession once a year, with the earnest desire of fulfilling the precept of the Church, or through fear of death, who need be uneasy for Margaret, who never stopped accusing herself, not only of faults, but also of virtues, which, in the excess of her humility, she treated as vices? The better to prepare herself for the kingdom of heaven, she had forbidden her son to mention in her presence any of his father's relatives; she could not or would not think of them in any way, because she had entirely laid to rest her heart in Jesus. Whenever she happened to hear or to say anything unprofitable of her neighbour, or not altogether agreeable to God, although of great advantage to herself, seized with terror she would fall in a faint, lose her speech and very nearly her life. "The Spouse Eternal is exceeding jealous," she used to say, "He watches attentively over the souls He has created. Actions which we think virtuous are to His eyes impregnated with hidden vice; and hence it happens for those actions, from which we hope to obtain a reward, we frequently deserve everlasting punishment."

V. Margaret listened with the greatest attention to the lessons of the Divine Word, instructing and enlightening her. On Sundays or feast-days, when they used to preach in the church of the Friars of her Father, Saint Francis, she would never break her fast until after the sermon, although she had to wait until the hour of none; by this means she kept her spirit more disposed and more disengaged to receive truth, and her soul revelled in its fervour. But what is most remarkable, and what ought to excite the emulation of persons aspiring to perfection, is, that nobody ever envied another's lot as did Margaret that of the sick, the poor,

the wretched, and the afflicted. "If I could but deliver from their torments all who are burthened and oppressed with sorrow," said she on one occasion to her confessor, "I would do so willingly, and take upon myself the weight of their afflictions." One day as she was in her cell, praying, sighing, and fasting, and confessing her sins to God, she groaned in distress of spirit at her exile, uttered loud cries, and became lost in admiration at the patience of our Saviour, Who had so long borne with her grave offences,—it was the day after the feast of Saint Thomas the Apostle. While she was buried in prayer, she heard in spirit Jesus her spouse; He spoke to her with singular goodness:—"My poor little Margaret, do not again go about Cortona in search of alms. Turn not aside your steps, but proceed direct to the church of My chosen ones, the Friars-Minors, to hear their Masses and sermons; for I have recommended you to them, and I have, in an especial manner, entrusted them with the charge of your salvation; fear not for the full remission of your sins. Of thee I have already made a wonderful light, to enlighten those who are seated amid the darkness of their sins; I have filled thee with divine fire, to warm all tepid Christians, in order that they may love and follow Me in all fervour of spirit; I have made thee an example for sinners; for thou canst truly show them that, if they offer no resistance of themselves, but are animated by My grace and inspiration, and turn to the work of their redemption, I am ready to cede My mercy towards them as I have done towards thee. This is the reason that I recommend you, my poor child, to the care of my Friars-Minors; I charge them to protect and instruct you for love of Me wherever you live. As a reward for their anxious solicitude on behalf of your

salvation, their entire Order shall derive a new lustre in the world." At these words of our Lord, Margaret was penetrated with a lively joy; a daughter devoted to her parents, she recommended the Order to the especial protection of our heavenly Father. He vouchsafed to hear her prayers, and to answer with fatherly compassion:—"I am with thee in thy desires, and the Friars recommended by thee are the chosen ones whom I love with a most intimate charity."

VI. This servant of God longed to unite herself inseparably to our heavenly Father as a truly adopted child, and to receive an especial token of His love. She began by asking our Lord when He would vouchsafe to grant her the title of *daughter* instead of that of *poor one* which He generally called her. He Who loves mankind with an unquenchable love answered her thus, in the tone of a stern judge, or a master who correcteth:—"You cannot yet receive from Me the title of daughter, for you are the daughter of sin. When by a new general confession you shall be entirely cleansed from your sins, I shall number you among My daughters." This answer filled Margaret with a holy fear, so that, bathed in tears, she uttered this humble prayer:—"O Lord Jesus Christ, you Who are the true Light that dispels the darkness, you Who see all things, and from Whom nothing can rest hidden, vouchsafe to show me all the secrets of my heart, in order that I may purify myself by a perfect confession, that I may deserve your mercy, and that I may obtain the title, and be in truth your daughter." The blessed Margaret had scarcely concluded when the Eternal Spirit, who guided her interiorly, recalled to her mind all the past sins of which she had not sufficiently accused herself; she saw clearly even to the least of her thoughts, and the

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smallest of the errors into which she had fallen. Our Lord, the Father of Mercies, exposed all the stains of her soul, that she might not be obliged to disclose her transgressions to the just Judge on the last day before all mankind. I was her confessor, and to me she made a general confession of her sins, which lasted eight days; she laid bare in order and with precision, and with bitter tears, all the faults of her past life; and thus she became a vessel of holiness and purity. When she approached the sacrament of the Eucharist, she presented herself at the rails unveiled, and with a halter round her neck, like a criminal. After partaking of the Bread of Life, she heard our Lord give her the title of daughter with ineffable sweetness; and there was something so sweet and ravishing in the name, that Margaret fainted, and thought to die of happiness. These mysterious delights, renewed for the faithful soul that experiences no other joy, ravished her in ecstasies on that day; she completely lost her senses, and remained unable to move, in presence of Friar Renauld, the head of the community, Friar Ubaldo, the guardian, Mario, the pious Eiglia, and myself, her confessor. If her senses returned for a moment she could not speak, for she lived absorbed in God; she forced herself, however, to express her admiration and gratitude, and ended in these words:—“Oh infinite and sovereign sweetness of God! Oh day promised to me by Jesus! Oh converse full of sweetness, in which I received the title of daughter!” She again became lost in God, notwithstanding the presence of many bystanders, and that not in pretence, as some envious persons have said, but in reality; for the friars tested her in a number of ways, and made the women who were witnesses to it drag her limbs and

pull her by the hair. Returned to consciousness Margaret in astonishment asked her soul how it could have remained attached to her body during her sweet dialogue with Jesus. Again redoubling her tears, which flowed in abundance, she would murmur:—"O words so long desired and sought for, with all the fervour of my heart! O words, the hearing of which is pleasure, and the remembrance joy! My daughter! God has said to me, 'My daughter!' Jesus has said to me, 'My daughter!'"

Her guardian angel appeared to Margaret after this, gave her salutary advice, and made her many promises on the part of God. He brought her to the love of Him Who has created all things, and Who governs all things. "I am," said he, "not your Lord, but the messenger of the sovereign King." As the comfort which Margaret experienced on seeing the angel appeared far less than what she had experienced before, she interrupted him:—"Ah! I ought not to be surprised that your presence fills me not with the same joy as the presence of Jesus, the common Father of all, the beloved of my soul, especially since He has given me the title of daughter! Angel, continue, minister to my salvation, continue your discourse." "I am," answered the angel, "the envoy of your Creator, coming to prepare in your soul an eternal dwelling for our Lord." He began by laying the foundation of humility, and by freeing the soul of Margaret from its faults. Then he strengthened and encouraged her, and, by his mysterious aid, disposed her to the virtues with which she became rapidly adorned.

VII. Among the teachings of Jesus which Margaret treasured in her heart, one of the principal was what He said to her on the admirable intercourse which God

sought to establish with creatures when He formed human nature. She meditated in this mystery on the abasement of the infinite Majesty on the one hand, and, on the other, the dignity of the Mother of our Lord, whose purity and humility drew the majesty of God to such an abasement.

To honour this great mystery, she desired and earnestly hoped to receive the Bread of Life on the day of our Lord's birth; notwithstanding, through reverence, she dared not approach it, if the Father of heaven did not offer Himself to her. For one ought not to receive this adorable sacrament without proper disposition and careful preparation. In order that Margaret should present herself with the greatest humility to the King of heaven, and become more eager to taste the Bread of Angels, Jesus spoke to her and said:—"I reserve for you, on the Feast of my beloved John the Evangelist, the favour that you ask of Me. On that day, at the altar in the church of your ever-blessed Father, you shall experience a happiness of which as yet you know nothing. I do not wish you to go to Communion on Christmas Day; while the faithful are rejoicing, you will keep Me company in sorrow; in tears you shall meditate on Me among the beasts in the stable. To enable you to receive Me with the greatest devotion, these are the commands I give you. On the Feast of Saint Stephen, My first martyr, in order to prepare a place in your heart for Me, your eternal Creator, speak no word to the seculars. When you receive Me, observe inviolably the same rule; and the one and only desire of your soul, I shall unite Myself to you with a special grace."

Margaret received these commands from Jesus at prayer in the oratory of the Friars-Minors. At that

moment her son's master came into the sacristy, and from the sacristy into the oratory. He happened to have heard something of the young man, and came to reclaim the wages he had paid him. Attend to this point. But he remembered how Margaret, the servant of God, disengaged from all worldly matters that could impede her progress in spiritual life, had rifled the feelings of maternal tenderness because she was so new to the world, which she looked on in horror, that it seemed to her she had never brought forth her son. This was evident when, by a stratagem of the enemy, she heard that her child, in a moment of despair, had drowned himself in a pit in Arezzo ; excess of sorrow and want of maternal aid had, they said, driven him to this step. But the circumstance that gave the most colour to this story was, that the child could not be found at the school in Arezzo, and he had not returned to Cortona to keep Christmas with his mother. But to return to his master's visit. Margaret made no answer to his first words. The master then spoke big and began to utter indignant protests in presence of the friars ; he taxed her with pride and ingratitude. She remained immovable, ever united to her Beloved in God ; and faithfully obeying the commands of Jesus, her sole inward Master, she never spoke a word, not even at the instance of the friars. I, her unworthy confessor, besought her with the rest to speak, joined by Friar Benignus of blessed memory. But Margaret, absorbed at this moment in God in heaven, knew not how to obey us upon earth. She heard Jesus speaking in whispers to her soul : " Now I shall see how you will treat your son's master, whether you will answer him or prefer Me to all creatures." And she declared that in nothing would she transgress His

commands. This was the reason that she answered not a word to her son's master, though he persisted, insulted, and overwhelmed her with reproaches ; neither did she obey the friars who urged her to speak. She said to Jesus : " No, Lord, I will not speak to him." The master went away much troubled ; and she heard Jesus, Jesus from whom comes all virtue and grace, say to her : " Observe, O Margaret, my daughter, with what strength I endowed, and with what constancy I armed you, since to your soul it was sweet to keep silent before those who insulted you, and not to answer those who questioned you."

VIII. On the night of the octave of the Epiphany, Margaret was praying alone in her cell, meditating on the necessity of solitude for the greater devotion to prayer, and asking of our Lord the grace never to go out again. If she went to pray in the church of Saint Francis, some pious ladies in her neighbourhood would distract her ; her cell was removed from the bustle of the world, and besides the walk fatigued her, weakened as she was by the austerity of her penance ; in fine, she entreated not to be allowed to receive in public the divine comfort.

But Providence, that ordains all things, heard not her prayer. Our Lord thought this of great help to Margaret, and answered her thus : " Margaret, why do you ask incessantly without tasting of My pleasures—sought you not sorrow formerly to dispose you to receive them ? Why ask you Me to leave you in your cell ? Go to the church of the Friars-Minors and spend your time as usual there. Continue to hear Mass in the church of your ever-blessed Father Saint Francis ; there you can adore Me with humility and meditate on Me between the hands of My priests ; go,

and think to hide yourself no longer, until it pleases Me that you do so." At daybreak she set out for the church, but with great difficulty, she was so weak. She was penetrated with a divine sweetness, so as to remain wrapt in prayer until sunset. In the evening she returned home, her soul filled with a new joy. The Master of her soul had given her a new rule of life at prayer in the oratory of the church: "My daughter," she heard Him say, "I do not wish you any more, except on going away this evening, to speak to the seculars. If your infirmities sometimes require their aid, receive it in silence. In a low voice and with few words, you can make known your wants to your confessor. If you observe exactly and with devotion this mode of life, I shall reveal to you things great and useful, not only for you, but for My faithful. Take care and fear no creature more than Me. Turn not your eyes, nor fix your looks on those who address you. For the more you renounce all outward intercourse the more shall I approach you; the more you hold yourself aloof from the world, the more shall I be intimately present in your soul and familiar with you. But remember that these commands do not apply to the Friars-Minors who are sent to visit you, for they are the instruments of your salvation. Think on how often conversation with people in the world has been injurious to you, and what trouble it brought on as a consequence. You shall suffer also in the future, if you are not more careful on this point than you have been in the past. The seldomer, then, that you speak to them, the oftener shall I converse with you and enrich you with My gifts." The servant of God would not relate even to me the particulars of these favours, because they seemed to have passed all human

thought; and, also, because the lowly opinion she entertained of herself, and which she maintained in comfort, made her incredible of the more splendid promises.

The old enemy, always seeking to destroy souls, saw Margaret become more and more richly adorned with virtue; he began to pay visits to her cell. He presented himself to her under various forms, a woman, a man, a serpent, a four-footed beast. Not content with visiting her under hideous forms, he tried to threaten her continually. Sometimes he would say to her that she was the butt of dangerous illusions, or declare that he would take her from her cell by force; sometimes, he would assure her of everlasting torments; he would remind her of her past life, and say that she had not the gift of final perseverance, in union with Jesus, in the practice of virtue; or, under some pretext, he would urge her to take a more luxurious diet.

He Whose eyes are always on the just, and Whose ears are attentive to their supplications, came to the assistance of Margaret, as she was trembling and praying. "Fear not, doubt not, O Margaret, my daughter," he said to her, "in your trials and temptations I shall be with you always. You have begun to taste the sweetness of My spirit; all other things appear to you insipid. I shall notify to you beforehand the favours I am about to bestow on you. But if you really desire My consolations, which surpass all others, avoid conversing with any person, no matter whom. I except the Friars-Minors, who will adorn your life with a great variety of virtues. They will teach you how to live inseparably united to Me your spouse; they will show you the sublime and salutary

doctrines which I shall reveal to them, I, the sovereign and eternal God. The Creator of all living things, it is I who have given, and who preserve their being; and I wish and require you, for My love's sake, to respect and love all creatures, and to judge and despise none; and, above all, to guard yourself against a feeling of rancour and bitterness towards any person whatever." Margaret forgot not the commands of the eternal King. According as she advanced in virtue and became influenced with divine love, her compassion towards the afflicted increased also, and she rejoiced still more at another's good fortune. She proved this by depriving herself, for the poor, of what she received for her own wants.

IX. Margaret, under the direction of the Word of God speaking to her heart at the time of its elevation, attained the highest degree of perfection. Lost in profound contemplation, she knew Him Who is the splendour of the universal world. He condescended to address her in these terms:—"Daughter, I have hitherto allowed you to stay in this cell; now, it is My will that you remain here no longer; nor shall you dwell in that at first destined for you. I command you to go into the cell on the mountain at the foot of the fortress." The friars disliked the change, the place appointed was too far distant from the convent; and, besides, they feared that Margaret's body, after her death, would be buried away from them. Wherefore our Lord spoke: "With regard to your burial the covenant is already made. It has already been arranged and fully decided that, wherever you happen to die, you shall be borne thence to the church. I do not wish, My daughter, that the friars should have any doubt on this point, for there

are no grounds for doubt ; I have placed you entirely under their care and their holy protection. Again I confide you to, and I bestow you on the institute of your Father Francis, during your life and after your death." We have already shown this, and public acts bear witness to it ; she offered herself spontaneously, with loud voice and suppliant hands, to Friar Renauld of Castigliona, at the same time bestowing her body on the Minor Order.

In the revelations of the Lord all-powerful to Margaret, one can see how He approves of her zeal and solicitude for souls :—" Say to the friars who come to visit you for love of Me, to pray for the love of Him who came down from heaven, not that you may receive honour or taste enjoyment, but that you may support trials and sufferings ; I, the comforter of angels, I descended to the tribulations of the world, and reserved Myself only for its sorrows. Oh, Margaret ! I, your Jesus, have placed in you, out of the common, a new and singular grace. Do you, on your side, avoid creatures and seek solitude ; let Me fulfil the inclinations of My will in you, for the advantage of My children. I am your guide." Jesus, the Author of all good, without Whom we could perform no act of virtue, thus renewed the colloquy at the happy moment of communion : " Daughter, the friars say they have laboured much for you, and it is true ; but I have bought you at a greater price, and I have sent you greater labours than theirs. If I appointed them your masters for outward teaching, I am, and I have ever been, Myself your inward Master. I am your Guide on the journey. I have vouchsafed to draw you from the depth of the world and its miseries ; in Me was the beginning of your conversion, in Me

the regulation of your conduct. I shall be the means of your salvation; I have drawn you to this cell, where I shall be less offended by mankind, and more faithfully served by you. Say to Friar John and to your confessor, to offer no further opposition to your dwelling here; for it is by My command that you came hither. I placed you with the friars before, that you might obey them, when they sent you back to your first cell, and that is why this journey was not made unworthy of My grace."

X. One day, when the servant of God could not enjoy, as usual, the divine sweetness, she was filled with fear, and began to weep and to lament with sorrow, never ceasing to make humble petitions to our blessed Lord. He Who said, *knock and it shall be opened unto you*, thus answered His afflicted servant: "You seek Me on earth by thinking on earthly things, and on earth you find Me. If you were to seek Me in heaven by meditation on heavenly things alone, you would there find the joy that you wish for with tears. Separate yourself entirely from the world, which does not allow you to live spiritually." "In separating myself from the world, I shall not be separated from Thee, O Lord," returned Margaret. "And what do you do, my daughter, at the time when you fight against temptation? The voice of temptation is safer than that of persons of the world. By trials you shall be purified, while the image of external objects obstructs the tabernacle which I have made Myself in your soul." After this colloquy, the devil saw the servant of Jesus restored to peace. Goaded by demoniac envy, he commenced to assail her with reflection, bid her remember that her life was only an illusion, and that her interior joy came not from Jesus,

the fountain of true pleasure. Margaret besought our Lord for strength to combat these attacks; she entreated Him not to allow the enemy to change Himself into an angel of light, and deny her the true origin of her joy. Jesus, her beloved, encouraged her anew:—“Know you not, my daughter,” said He to her, “that the deceiver of mankind cannot bestow the gifts of which I am the sole dispenser, and no one can enter into your soul but I, your Creator? How could he fill you with the sweet joys of which he is himself forever deprived? He has not in him what is given to you; he seeks entirely to overturn the source of your happiness. But fear nothing from him, I am jealous of your salvation; I shall never allow you to be deceived by this bitter foe.”

XI. The Sun of Justice sought to illumine with greater splendour the soul of Margaret. One day, about the hour of none, after she had received Holy Communion, she was irradiated with supreme splendour. And she heard Jesus say to her:—“My daughter, for love of Me you devoted yourself to the praises of the saints. In return, I have given each of them the power of bestowing on you the special favour or grace for which he was remarkable; hence the seraphim shall communicate to you burning love; the other angels, the graces of their state; the prophets, the gift of prophecy. Besides the tribute of constant praise that you never ceased to offer to My divinity, to the excellence of My humanity and to My Virgin Mother who is enriched with such abundant graces, you are pleased to address yourself to your ever blessed Father Saint Francis. Fear not to act thus, and to continue in this course, putting your Father after My Mother before all the saints; I am pleased

to see you use him thus, for he shall intercede for your salvation with lively solicitude; never cease to give him, after My Virgin Mother, those praises that are his due. Hitherto you have obeyed My commands with fear and love, but the time is not far distant, when you must render me a more perfect obedience, by conforming yourself to the enlightened accents of the Voice Supreme. Then shall your angel show you the persons to whom you must not speak, and those whom you must honour, or try to teach. You have never been jealous of Me, your spouse, as I am of your salvation."

XII. In order that no person should keep to himself more than he ought, the Divine Word which took flesh of virgin thus spoke to Margaret:—"I wish your soul to live free from doubt on the things I say unto you; wherefore, fear not to lay open to Friar John and to your confessor the reason of My will towards your seclusion. Nor shall they doubt, or be careless to keep you shut in. In the solitude of your cell, you shall speak to no one save your confessor and My Friar-Minors, to whom I have given you in charge from the beginning, and I wish you never to wander from their advice. Should you happen to be tempted to keep silence with them, or no longer to obey them, banish this dangerous suggestion at once; it comes from the enemy. I now give you leave to speak to the woman who attends you in sickness, at the same time avoiding all converse with others, religious or worldly. Delay not to reveal to the Friars-Minors the things I have declared to you in intimate familiarity, and they shall have the prudence to keep them secret, until they see them exactly fulfilled. Your body is weighed down with infirmities; it shall not,

however, be consumed by the stringency of sickness ; My divine fire is sweet and penetrating ; it destroys faults and disposes unto grace ; while, on the other hand, the fire of worldly affliction does nought but ravage and lay bare. Oh, Margaret, My daughter, truly become a pearl in My eyes ! Who am your Jesus, incarnate in the womb of the Virgin Mother, and after many and grievous sufferings, nailed to the cross for the redemption of mankind."

XIII. One night, as Margaret was praying in her cell, an angel of the Lord, her guardian, appeared to her, and said :—"Beloved of our Lord, know that you are not yet fit to see into the depths of the limpid stream of the Divinity, which is the sovereign and ineffable purity of the King supreme. Have confidence and take courage ; Jesus, your Immaculate Spouse, will disclose to you hidden things, He will speak and communicate with you more clearly." So innocent had she now become, that she could not believe there existed in the world a man who, for love of earth, would willingly offend God in his heart, or by word or outward acts. "O my Father ! is it possible," she exclaimed, "that there is any creature capable of insulting and offending the sweet and bountiful Creator ?" She neither boasted nor thought herself the better of her good works ; she presumed nothing on her actions or on her merits. She had drawn upon her the pure affections of Jesus, so that, charmed by the beauty of her heart, this true friend vouchsafed to invite her to the Holy Communion, and to say :—"My daughter, come and receive Me." She then began to meditate on the height of the Divine Majesty and on her own little-

ness. Struck with fear and terror, she answered Jesus :—“ I see a frightful disproportion between your infinite Majesty, your ineffable purity, and my enormous crimes. Would I not deserve to be punished for my presumption before the whole world if, seeing you yonder where the sun is, I dared, from the opposite direction of the universe, to raise even my eyes to behold you.” A great storm raged within her ; on the one side, our Lord’s sweetness forcibly attracted her ; on the other, she was detained by the thoughts of her littleness and misery, which made her think herself the vilest of living beings. The enemy, dethroned through pride, sought to put an obstacle to the practice of her excellent virtues, and reproached the humble Margaret with vain-glory. Immediately she had recourse to the arms that could serve her for protection. The tempter told her that she had been adorned and enriched by Jesus with many virtues ; that she was honoured and justly revered by all classes of people ; besides recalling to her mind with malice the number of persons who used to visit her, and seek after her with respect. Margaret aspired to no other glory than the glory of God ; in silence she waited for the night, and while the neighbours slept, she went out upon the balcony of her house, and began to pray with loud cries, tears and sobs impeding her utterance :—“ Arise, inhabitants of Cortona, arise,” she cried, “ arise, I say, and lose no time, but banish the sinner from your country with stones, for she has committed crimes upon crimes against God and against her neighbour.” In this manner, awakening all the persons in her neighbourhood, she accused herself in tears of her past life. All wondered and were touched with com-

passion ; edified and moved with pity, they returned to their dwellings, wept in their turn, and gave thanks to the Lord. The proud enemy, vanquished, removed far away from the humble Margaret.

XIV. Here is another evident token of her perfection ; I relate it as opposed to the vanity of worldly people. Margaret, the servant of Jesus, for His love's sake, determined always and above all things to heal the evils of her spirit, by application of the contrary virtues. Hence she made up her mind to go to Montepulciano, to the town where of old she was seen dressed in fine clothes, her hair done up on combs of gold, her features preserved by art ; where she used to ride and walk, rejoicing in the wealth of a man who was not her husband. In her abasement of spirit and for the glory of God, she wished to repair thither with shaven head, clothed in a simple tunic, to beg from door to door of the persons before whose eyes she had misused the splendour and the elegance of wealth. She agreed with a woman to accompany her, and to guide her like a blind person with her face veiled, holding her by a cord, and crying out :—"Heigh ! good people, here is Margaret, whose blind course, vain-glory, and bad example, have given such annoyance to many souls in your town." She wished to give her guide a full account of herself, in order that she should not fail to make mention of the least fault of which she had the slightest recollection. "Then, Father Giunta," said she to me, "overwhelmed with the reproaches I so richly deserve at the hands of creatures, I shall return to Cortona, and conform myself to Jesus, Who bore the torments of His passion for my sake. I shall

be called a fool by those before whom I formerly boasted in words and air." I, her confessor, thought of the calamity which befell Dinah, the daughter of the patriarch Jacob. I considered that women, in the flower of their youth, should not be too easily allowed to undertake long journeys; that the impetuous movements of imprudent fervour should be checked by the bridle of discretion; and that it frequently happened that self-abnegation was the means of renewing flattery. I forbade her, under pain of obedience, to accomplish her design, and bade her be contented with her good will; she lost not the merit of her intentions, but by her obedience exposed herself to receive, in reward, new and abundant graces.

XV. Notwithstanding corporal infirmities of all kinds, the servant of God continually employed new methods of mortification, to which she joined the most austere fast and a most rigorous discipline. The beauty of her face did not, however, disappear as quickly as she expected. She thought of a mode of torture hitherto unused; but, as a truly submissive daughter, she submitted the accomplishment of her design to her confessor, as she feared the deceptions of her old enemy under all forms of virtue. "Father," said she to me, "let your piety grant me to-day to use my face, as I have long since desired, and which I detest; and by your dissent place no obstacle to the fulfilment of my wishes. I can satisfy your conscience by assuring you that, if I do what I purpose, I shall not wound myself mortally." Such a request did not strike me as sufficiently clear, and I feared the excess of her extraordinary zeal. As I would not give her permission until she explained herself more fully, she declared

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to me that she intended to procure secretly a red-hot iron with which to disfigure her nose and upper lip. "I have longed for this," she said, "for the charms of my appearance have been the destruction of many souls. Grant me permission to avenge the insults offered to God, and to disfigure my bodily comeliness; allow me freely to offer Jesus our King the sacrifice I had intended." On hearing this, I turned to her: "My child," said I, resolutely, "I shall on no account give you permission, first, because fears of your outward charms prompt you to live in seclusion; and, secondly, because such disfiguration might lead to mortal hemorrhage, or at least bring on an ulcer. If you attempt to carry out your design, I shall not again hear your confession; the friars and I shall cease entirely to occupy ourselves with the care of your soul." No sooner had I forbidden her thus, than she checked the hand and the iron ready to wound her flesh.

XVI. On the day on which we commemorate the birth of the King Eternal of a Virgin Mother, Margaret's angel-guardian addressed her thus: "Margaret," he said, "remember the chain of our Lord's benefits towards you. In the first place, He drew you from the claws of a fierce wolf which He forced to release you in the field, where he was about to devour you. Then, by the voice of hearty sorrow and general confession, He guided you to the pastures of His sheep. Then He admitted you to His nuptials, in which He gave you a ring whose virtue is that of Moses' wand. That wand obeyed the first sign and worked miracles against Egypt; the ring of grace obeys you, at the same time, in fasts and tears and prayers, in purity, in poverty and patience, in humility and charity. The hardest and most diffi-

cult things have become easy to you by virtue of that ring. Besides, your Creator, not satisfied, has prepared and offers you a banquet to which His friends are alone invited. He has opened to your soul the bosom of His mercy, in order that you may rest thereon like John His beloved. In fine, our Creator has permitted you not only to penetrate Him with the voice of burning love, but He has entered Himself into your soul by means of His grace. I exhort you, O beloved of God, converted to God, to frequent more and more your Creator and Lord, to throw yourself more and more into His arms. He has said that you shall suck from the wound on His side; prepare yourself courageously to support afflictions for the love of His name."

XVII. As Margaret's reputation spread more and more, she left off, for denial of honours, attending the baptism of infants whose parents invited her through devotion. She sought to avoid the frequent goings-out which she detested. She was meditating on this subject, and was in doubt as to whether she ought to deprive herself of the merit of such a good action, when she saw coming towards her the mother of the son of the Procurator of the Friars-Minors. This lady asked her to assist at the baptism of one of her son's children. The pious Margaret feared to offend by a refusal; she immediately recommended herself to the lady's prayers, and accompanied her to the baptistery. After the ceremony she returned to her cell in great affliction, and passed the night without sleep in tears. He who never fails to comfort the afflicted appeared full of sweetness to His servant, and told Margaret, still trembling, that she ought not so easily accept every invitation, at the same time forbidding her again to attend the baptism of any infant.

Our Lord added : " Except to go to the church of the Friars-Minors, to whose care I have intrusted your body and soul, you shall not leave your cell ; and while you are in the church remain near the pulpit." This place was marked out for her as being more retired and favourable to modesty. There she could see nobody, and if any person saw her, her face was hidden from them. Our Lord then said to her : " My daughter, you have received three signs of grace while in the secular state. The first is an extraordinary fear of your neighbour ; the second, confusion at the number of your sins ; the third, humility with regard to your reputation."

XVIII. One day Margaret besought in tears her ever-blessed Father Francis to vouchsafe to obtain for her, through the merits of his intercession, a plenary indulgence, and the remission of all her sins. The Father was favourable to his beloved daughter, and asked our Lord to pronounce Himself the wished-for word. The Most High granted this grace to Margaret. She heard Him say impressively in the depths of her soul : " I, Jesus Christ, Son of the Eternal Father, Who was crucified for you, fully absolve you from all your errors."

CHAPTER III.

ON THE AUSTERITY OF HER LIFE, AND ON HER LOVE OF POVERTY.

I. The divine goodness, model of all virtues, thus instructed Margaret, as she was praying with fervour: "My daughter, if you wish to follow the footsteps of Magdalen, and to participate in her consolations, give up all bodily pleasures; even those members of the body that provoke my anger through pride, which my eye distinguishes in their movements, should be subject to the spirit. Employ yourself in mortifying these, like straw separated from the grain, when the time of sifting is at hand. Your weakness shall never be so great after fasting, fevers, and suffering, which you cannot allay as long as it pleases me that you hear the sermons and assist at the masses of my friars." Nevertheless, by a course of rigorous abstinence, the bodily strength was so wasted, that she knew not how to arise from her hurdle, from the bare earth, or from her lowly bed without straw, on which she slept a little, in order that she might be able to repair in the morning to the Friars' Church, of which the Order considered her the flower. But the taste of heavenly sweetness strengthened her, and she went nimbly, as if she had had no sufferings during the night.

O lover of austerity, what things have you not told me, your seryant, to encourage me to its practice? "My soul finds joy in the sufferings of my body, and feels no less, however, the stimulus of fear. I have no doubt but, under pretence of the necessity of supporting nature, you would compel her to eat cooked food, and to drink wine." The fervour of her love had reached the point of being no longer tempered by the remembrance of her littleness; she feared that the flesh, naturally greedy of comforts, would feign languor and infirmities. "How," she used to say, "can my body pretend to be weak, since it was neither weak nor infirm in vanity, in the enjoyment of sinful pleasure, and of the demon of the world? For the remainder of my life I shall give it no more confidence than I would to a traitor, an assassin, or the most perfidious enemy."

II. Some pious ladies, on seeing Margaret so strict and unyielding on herself, cooked some dry figs, without salt or oil, and entreated her to take, for the love of God, this light repast. She yielded to their importunities, and ate a little; then, that she might remain in full liberty with God alone, she politely dismissed them from her cell. She was ordered by Jesus to meditate, at meal-time, on some mystery that would afford her interior joy; in order to conceal this custom from the persons mentioned, she neglected on this occasion to do so. But no sooner had they left than Margaret began to weep, and to confess her negligence aloud before her Judge. Our sweet Jesus loves those who love Him; He saw Margaret asking for divine consolation with entreaties and tears, and He delayed not to answer to her wishes and to visit her. He approached and favoured her with sovereign familiarity,

and consoled her by sublime revelations and promises, so that she forgot all her sorrows and was filled with interior joy. This is how I obtained from herself the details. I asked her what caused her face to beam with joy and peace, and whence came this unusual happiness. Always eager to humble herself, she told me that Jesus had scolded her, saying: "My daughter, you sought the pleasures reserved for Magdalen, and yet you lent a ready ear to some women's words, who said you would lose your mind from such excessive abstinence. Do you not remember what I said to Martha, when I raised Lazarus, for four days dead? *I am the resurrection and the life. Whosoever believes in Me, although he be dead, shall live; living and believing in Me, he shall live for ever.* Know thou that My grace strengthens and sustains you more than the food you take. You have longed for the condition of Magdalen by reason of your solitude. I drew you not into the desert, because life in a desert would not answer to your necessities; but it is My will that you live as much alone in the midst of this vast city, as if you were in the largest desert. My Friars-Minors, to whom I have confided you and recommend you anew, shall give you a maid to assist you in silence, provided that you do not speak to her or even look her in the face. But you shall receive from the Friars-Minors, that I have given you as Fathers, no personal attention unsuited to their calling. I command you, besides, to seek no more to bleach your veil, which shall consist of pieces of stuff sewn together. If you dread that the uncleanness of this veil is an object of disgust to My sons the Friars, know that there is no room for this thought. When first I sent you to them, and placed you under their holy protection, your sins gave forth a

bad odour ; and, besides, for love of Me, none of them would be disgusted with you, but would take you for their daughter. After making and consecrating you My tabernacle, how much more shall I prevent them from being disgusted by the uncleanness of a veil ? Then I shall comfort you by My mercy ; then shall I make you taste of the superabundant virtue of My visits."

III. This great lover of poverty looked down with supreme contempt on the things of earth, the better to gain Jesus ; by her sentiments, her words, her actions, one could see that these to her were no better than dross. One day, on turning her eyes towards heaven, she was asked if she would lose or delay to receive the least spiritual consolation for the sake of gaining a great earthly treasure. She answered immediately, " If our Lord Jesus Christ sought to give me of the things of earth, I would entreat Him not to do so with prayers and tears, so that He would not refuse me." It is easy to see how real and sincere was her desire to live poor, if one remembers that she kept nothing of what she received for clothing and support. She kept neither tunic nor mantle, neither mattress nor pillow, nor girdle, not even the tablets which they sent her to mark the canonical hours and the prayers to say. She gave all to the poor with affection and cordiality, as if it were their own. She frequently remained in her cell without any covering, wrapped either in a mat of reed or in the tunic or mantle of the sister who attended her. If she despoiled herself thus willingly in the heat of summer, she made it a point to do so more willingly and with still greater pleasure in the cold of winter. Having at length nothing more to give, she was reduced to cut the

sleeves off her tunic and to give away the veil off her head ; she even deprived herself of the holy water pot. At a time, too, when she was attenuated by her voluntary rigorous austerities, she would not warm herself ; even in the severest cold she stealthily withdrew the wood from the fire which had been prepared for her ; then she besought the woman who attended her to take it at once to the poor.

IV. Margaret, ever ready to afflict her body by austerities for the love of Jesus Christ, despised all dainties ; from the time of her conversion to the last day of her life she would never eat fresh figs, because of the pleasure they afforded her while in the world. She deprived herself, sick though she was, of the flesh of birds and other meats, together with the seasoned dishes that had been formerly so agreeable to her palate. And let nobody misunderstand what I have just said. It is enough to read part of Margaret's life to know that for many years she nourished herself only on a piece of dry bread, raw herbs, or nuts and almonds. She took her meals with sighs and groans, and preceded them with long and fervent prayer. At the end of her repast she returned thanks to God, invoking the saints and all creatures to praise with her the Lord who rules us. She never touched the slightest nourishment without having recited the whole office, or at least five *Paters* and *Aves* in honour of the five wounds of Jesus ; she used to say the same number of *Paters* after her meal.

V. The old enemy, the deceiver of souls, saw that Margaret did not lessen the rigour of her abstinence. Humiliated at being conquered by a woman, he came to her and said, " What are you doing in this cell, un-

happy woman? I warn you to renounce divine grace, and to cease for the future to aspire to the possession of goods and favours, which you cannot obtain without great fatigue, or preserve without cruel sufferings. Would it not be better for you to conform to the common rule of Friars-Penitents, such as is generally observed? You could obtain with them the pardon they are promised by fasting and assisting at the sermons and offices in the Church. Is it not more than enough, Margaret, to rank yourself among the number of those who are saved? What, then, are you doing here, unhappy woman? Why do you, shut up in this cell, lose soul and body together?" To these words the servant of Jesus, strengthened in her good resolutions, made answer thus:—"Tell me, seducer, is there a creature that ought to serve you even for a single moment? You are prone to evil, and you bear it in every suggestion; you have neither created nor redeemed mankind, and it is not your province to rule them. We surely ought to be attached to Him Who has created and redeemed us, Who rules us, Who everywhere rejoices in and exalts His servants, and Who prepares for their reward an eternal inheritance. Do not the followers of your evil counsels themselves feel perpetual sorrow during their life? Do they not feel a goad in the depths of their conscience? Do they not, in a word, receive as wages eternal damnation with you? I shall always endeavour with all my strength to follow Jesus my Master, as my true Creator, my most liberal Benefactor. He honours His followers in heaven and on earth; for me He has prescribed abstinence as a rule which I cannot infringe, and He has promised me, if I persevere, eternal life."

VI. Like a brave soldier, Margaret perfected herself in the art of war, and her contest with the enemy became more frequent. When the battles began, she used to prepare for them by a rigorous abstinence, or ask for fresh strength to resist the assaults of the evil spirit.

The first Sunday of Lent, when the victorious strife of Jesus with the glutton took place, a certain lady, wishing to strengthen Margaret's weakness, brought her cabbage cooked without any seasoning. The servant of God, yielding to pressing entreaties, tasted the food, but it inconvenienced her weak stomach; and, unconsolable at such sensuality, she passed the whole night without sleep. She prayed with tears, and said to our Lord that confusion prevented her from daring to appear in His presence. The just Judge who exercises judgment under a calm sway, took compassion on this afflicted soul, and said: "If you, my daughter, cannot suffer yourself, if the heaviness of your stomach impede the movements of your heart, how shall I communicate unto you My presence? I have said in My Gospel: Take care that your hearts be not heavily laden. O daughter of little faith! I nourished the angels and saints of heaven without this material food which you take, and you fear that I shall abandon you,—you whom I have chosen for my tabernacle! Continue to observe your strict rule of life; take a little bread, and for the weakness of your body, some wine mixed with a large quantity of water, together with almonds or hazel-nuts; to this food I shall give such sweetness that not only will they be sufficient and agreeable for love of Me for whom you have undertaken to mortify your flesh, but they shall also perfectly sustain your weakness. When the length and

severity of your abstinence shall have too much weakened you, when the sense of taste shall have been so blunted that you will find no flavour in wine or food, I shall allow you more delicate meats." Consequently, her stomach was reduced to such a state of marasmus that wine and other things seemed to her as insipid as earth. In the innumerable sufferings which she underwent, I tried to induce her to take the remedies prescribed by a physician ; but she refused alike doctors and medicines, and declared with tears that she would rather give her weakened body to rot, or to be the prey of worms. She could scarcely speak, but continued to accuse her flesh of feigning infirmities, and of secretly betraying her.

VII. One day, when I saw her reduced to this state of weakness from privation and suffering, I urged her to allow herself the comfort of some nourishment. She who offered her body as a living hostage, holy and agreeable to God, knew that the enemy seeks to conquer us with our own weapons. "Father, there should never have been a treaty of peace between my soul and body, and I shall never forgive there being one. Allow me to continue my mortifications without changing my diet. Throughout my life I shall have no rest until I see my flesh give way. Do not imagine that it is so weak or attenuated as it seems to be ; he makes it appear thus, in order that I may not exact from him payment of the debt which it had contracted in the world, by abandoning itself to his pleasures and delights. In order that I may obey you against my will, allow me, Father, in this holy season of Lent to content myself with seasoning my vegetables with oil." Here she broke off weeping copiously, and thus continued : "O my body, why dost thou not help me

to serve my Creator and Redeemer? Why dost thou not hasten to give Him homage, since thou hast transgressed the laws? Deliver thyself not up to complaints and lamentations; pretend not to be half dead; for thou shalt bear the burden I have imposed upon thee, as I have borne thine in the past, in all the offences which thou hast committed against the Creator." Shut up alone in her cell, under the impression that that she had never done a good act, she wept and cried: "My Lord and my King, the glory of the blessed, sovereign Jesus, the grace of your elect, in remembrance of the bitter chalice which you drank for me, I desire not only to abstain from animal food, but I should wish, if possible, as long as my soul is imprisoned in this mortal body, to die for you a thousand times a day." To these words of Margaret's, Jesus, always near those who invoke Him in truth, made answer: "My daughter, say all this to your confessor; remind him also that the Christians My servants cannot be perfect in this life unless they bridle their appetites. Without abstinence cannot be quenched the fires of concupiscence; and these will receive such violent blows therefrom, that they will regret of their own accord the appointed remedy."

VIII. This lover of Jesus, poor herself, loved poverty to such an extent that, having already stripped her cell of every convenience, she even now give away a broken crock in which she used to keep her bread. Let nobody, however, imagine that it was to assume the burden of penance. Margaret observed an admirable prudence to deceive her body; before arriving at a daily fast on bread and water, she commenced to lessen by degrees her allowance of food, until she

accustomed herself to a quantity equal to a saucerful. When she began a daily fast and gave up the use of all cooked food, she sustained her frail body entirely on bread and water, to which she added hazel-nuts or almonds.

CHAPTER IV.

ON HER PROFOUND HUMILITY AND CONTEMPT OF HER OWN ACHIEVEMENTS.

I. By constantly meditating on her faults, Margaret, the servant of God, attained a high degree of humility. She frequently would relate aloud, and with profound sorrow, how she had offended the Creator in everything, and how she had scandalised the souls of His friars by her disobedience of the divine commands. Not only used she to implore the saints with tears and sighs to become her mediators, and to obtain for her the remission of her sins, but she would even address herself, in ecstasy, to persons in the world plunged in the mire of vice; she would ask them if our Lord, Who is the avenger of the wicked, could ever forgive the greatest of sinners. "Do you think," she would say, "my dear fathers and mothers, that the all-powerful God mercifully seeks to draw this poor exile to His grace?" She used to tremble violently, and a cold sweat would pour out upon her, as if she were overcome with fear at a sentence of death. It was then that Margaret, in expiation of the honours of which she had been the unworthy object in the world, shaved her hair, and

covered with soiled rags her head, once adorned with brilliants and pearls.

II. In a short time afterwards she went, one Sunday, to Laviano, the place of her birth and early education. There, during the parish mass, in presence of the congregation, having only a cord on her neck for a collar, and prostrate at the feet of a lady named Manentessu, she publicly asked pardon of her sins with such abundant tears, that the faithful themselves wept and remained in mute admiration. She attached herself to this lady, and persuaded her, by her entreaties, to take the habit of penance. Whenever Manentessu came to Cortona, Margaret, as long as she lived, prepared a lodging for her, and procured her food by depriving herself; she even went so far as to strip herself of her dress to clothe her.

There was a woman who never ceased to complain of the humility of the servant of God, and her kindness towards the distressed. To revenge herself on her attacks, Margaret gave her tunic and woollen veil, together with what food she had prepared for her own subsistence. But this revenge was not sufficient for the daughter of the Gospel; anxious to lead her enemy to the practice of charity by redoubling her own humility, she actually paid off her debts by diligence and fatiguing walks.

O Margaret, humble in truth and without pretence! The pious faithful came to her in crowds from far-distant countries; they wished her to touch them and to cure their diseases. She used to answer them, weeping:—"If this creature, vile amid all, were to touch you as you desire, or to make upon you the sign of the Cross, you may be sure that, from the multitude of my sins, your infirmities, far from lessening, would only become more aggravated."

III. Margaret, in her eagerness to reach the heights of the kingdom of heaven, never boasted of herself, nor felt vain-glory externally in the familiar dialogues with Jesus Christ with which she was favoured. It often happened that the King of glory spoke to her at great length not only on the manner in which she should sing the divine praises, but also on the subject of the marvellous promises which He had made with His servant. Believing herself unworthy of these revelations Margaret said to Him :—" If these words are the flattery of the invisible enemy, transformed into an angel of light, in the name of Christ I command you, whom I hear, to be silent and to depart." Jesus looks with pleasure on humility, and exalts to heaven the humble of heart. He answered Margaret that He Whom she heard was the same Who, nailed to the cross, had raised from the death of sin and called to the tears of penance, the virtue of which heals the soul of all her bruises. " I, Jesus, your Redeemer," said He to her, " Whom you love to find in everything, I tell you that you are My well-beloved daughter ; in you I shall plant the most precious gifts of My grace, giving to you especial privileges above all women living under the heavens in your time." Margaret inquired how the Most High could design such favours for a creature physically so weak and incapable, besides, of doing much work. Our Lord thus answered His servant, so penetrated with the idea of her own littleness :—" Margaret, my daughter, did you not offer Me your heart above all things that you possessed ? Would you not willingly suffer death for Me ? Do you not live in the constant hope of possessing Me, and of possessing but Me alone ? Do you not fear the least fault in all the actions of your life ?" Margaret answered each of

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these questions in the affirmative. Our Saviour said to her:—"My daughter, you are pleasing to Me in these things. Love Me, for I love you; praise Me, for I shall praise you, and cause you to be praised throughout the world."

IV. The Babe Who was given us by the Father older than time, and born in time of a Virgin-Mother, appeared to Margaret. Under this appearance, He endowed her so abundantly with the ineffable sweetness that she had not the strength to bow before Him, although she acknowledged His presence by profound respect. She could not speak, so inebriated was she with divine love. In this delicious repose, however, she prayed for the inhabitants of Cortona, whom she loved. Our Saviour replied that peace would be concluded and concord immediately re-established between them and Gugliebus, Bishop of Arezzo. Our Lord also advised her to exhort certain persons to accuse themselves more clearly of their faults in confession. He told her that she need not fear to expose to them their sins. Whatsoever our Lord revealed to her was verified; every person to whom Margaret told them assured her of their truth. But ever ready to judge herself rather than others, she dared not yet disclose what our Lord said to her. As confessor I reproached her with imposing on her tongue so rigorous a silence, against the will of God, and to the disadvantage of her neighbour; I represented to her that she ought to give what was given to her for others, that she ought not to compromise the salvation of their souls through humility, and that without danger to herself she could not deprive the sick of the remedies which they needed; in fine, I said it was better that she should tell me all, in order that, without mentioning her name, I

might be able to inquire of my penitents into the circumstances and the chain of their sins. "Father," she answered, "as you will keep silent on my name, I will tell you, through zeal for the salvation of souls, everything henceforth revealed to me by our Lord."

V. Humility is the first of Christian virtues. It had brought Margaret's soul under its sway; it breathed in the reserve of her manners, in her watchfulness over the senses, in the sweetness of her heart, in the brevity of her words, in her forgetfulness of injuries, and in her love of poverty. Removed from everything that could soothe her flesh, the servant of Jesus Christ never lent the ear of her spirit or of her body to a particular or common praise of the virtuous actions which she never ceased to practise with a fervour ever new. The proud enemy could not endure this humility. One night, while Margaret was at prayer, he came into her cell and represented to her how great was the celebrity which her name had attained; what a number of men and women were eager, through devotion, to see and to touch her; and how, confirmed as she was in grace, she could not fail to obtain the highest reward. She had a horror of the insinuations of the deceitful enemy. Like a courageous warrior she girded herself for battle. She began at once to deplore her sins, and to detail aloud, amid violent groans, as exactly as she could, the number and circumstances of her sins; thus did she vanquish and trample upon the fiend of hell who upbraided her with vain-glory.

VI. In proportion as she advanced in a true and perfect knowledge of herself, Margaret, enlightened interiorly by a ray of the sovereign Sun of Justice, seemed altogether to despise herself; she wore a ne-

glected look in garb, in words, and in manners. Nay, more, knowing that humility in the midst of honours is very rare, she exerted herself to cover with confusion those who honoured her. We shall give an example. At Borgo-San-Sepulcro there was a young man so cruelly tormented by the demon that three strong men could scarcely hold him. This person, conjured by the religious and by his friends to tell who it was to whom he owed his deliverance, replied frequently to those who asked him, that the demon was hunted by virtue of the prayers and the merits of Sister Margaret who lived at Cortona. The young man was brought from Borgo to this town. On arrival at Castel-Giralde, whence appears the top of the citadel of Cortona, the demon, no longer able to endure the atmosphere of Margaret's prayers, went out of the man, having first made him feel the torments of a violent rupture. The enemy had said beforehand to those who guided him :— "I cannot suffer myself to be conducted to Cortona, nor bear the presence of Margaret, whose prayers increase my fire ; I shall give you up the young man during the journey." The companion of the possessed, full of gratitude to God for the benefit done through the merits of Margaret, went to thank the servant of Jesus, and to present to her his friend completely cured. Margaret felt so keen a sorrow that she burst into tears, and answered in indescribable emotion :— "I am stained with every sin, and full of unworthiness ; I am a hideous object, an abominable vessel, an infectious receptacle for filth ; do not imagine that the sovereign and eternal Wisdom, the power of the Most High, infallible in His works, has done this at my supplication." Her visitors took leave, sure of the miracle and full of joy ; Margaret only remained de-

prived of comfort. She would accept none ; she wept and exclaimed that she was vanquished, that she had offended God, not only since she came to the use of reason, but also before she came into the world. At this recollection she shed torrents of tears. She insisted, with indescribable groans, that there was no creature under heaven so bad as Margaret. Grounding our belief on the testimony of Scripture, could we not say that she found grace before God, she who, without any sinister intention, never ceased to humiliate herself in all her works, even in the most virtuous ? The lower she sat, after the example of Magdalen, the more did the fruitful valley of her heart experience the effusions of our Lord.

VII. Jesus Christ, the Wisdom incarnate of the Father, reveals His secrets to His little ones ; for where is humility, there, too, is found wisdom. One day when Margaret had devoutly received the body of our Saviour, she thus addressed Him as her real Master :—
“ O Lord, Who hast visited me at this time, unworthy of it as I am, our enemy, the deceiver of souls redeemed by Thy Precious Blood, was not ashamed to tell me that I would become foolish if I continued to seek Thee with such burning desire.” He answered her kindly :—“ You have spoken the truth, My daughter ; he is indeed the deceiver of souls ; but fear nothing from him, for you are My little flower, and it is I who have planted you ; you walk in My footsteps, and I am your Guide, as you once asked Me to be with purity of heart.” During this dialogue Margaret was instantly inundated with an ineffable sweetness ; she was obliged to acknowledge to our Lord that she could not bear it, and that she felt her strength give way. She cried :—
“ You spoke the truth, O Paul, beloved apostle of

God ; you spoke the truth, O vessel of election. *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what things the Lord has prepared for those who love Him.*" The Saviour replied in the language of the Spirit :—"The things that you enjoy at present are as nothing compared to what I have reserved for you. For the eye cannot embrace, nor the spirit know nor perfectly conceive nor believe what sublime graces I am about to bestow upon you." Then He showed her at the same time the vessel and the mirror of sovereign humility, His pious Mother, the Virgin Mary. "My daughter," he said to her, "I show you and I give you the Elect whom you have chosen." "Lord," returned Margaret, "I have been a sink of iniquities, why do you promise me such exalted things? And why, Lord, do you call the Elect this pure mother whom you show me? Please do not give her this title, but rather call her Queen of heaven and earth." And our Lord to Margaret :—"Daughter, My Father loves you, and together with Him this ever-blessed Mother loves you also, and the whole company of the saints. Would you wish to see her again?" Margaret answered :—"Lord, sovereign sweetness, I wish it and long for it ; but perhaps I shall not ask this of You consistently, for when I possess You, You the Holy of Holies, I think I possess her also and the whole heavenly court." Jesus Christ appeared so satisfied with this answer, that Margaret, dazzled by the brilliant light that surrounded her, was near fainting. Our Lord again said :—"Henceforth you shall taste of these comforts without hindrance." After such a strong assurance of graces received and promised, the servant of Jesus humbly thanked her Lord.

VIII. At the end of these fervent acts of grace, Jesus spoke to her again:—"You are My daughter," He said to her, "because you obey me; you are My spouse, because you love Me, and Me alone; you are my mother, because you have made every effort to accomplish My Father's will. Become not, however, presumptuous because of the things I reveal to you; know that hitherto you have not bought consolation as dearly as you shall buy the like in the future. A time will come when, in the depths of your affliction, you shall know the price at which I redeemed you." Margaret, who might have been elevated to glory by her humility, fought against presumption with all her might. "My Lord Jesus Christ, can I endure such sufferings?" she inquired. And Jesus said to her:—"I, your God, have borne more than you." A devoted daughter of the Minor-Order, she feared that her trials would weaken the institute of her ever-blessed Father Francis; she recommended it to our Lord, and heard this answer:—"I have planted you, My daughter, in the garden of My love; for your ever-blessed Father, My beloved Francis, had nothing more at heart than My love; he loved Me to such a degree that even now no other on earth can be compared to him. And know that those who have laboured for you shall receive a great reward and much consolation." Margaret answered with joy:—"For them be thanks returned unto Thee, Most High God; for, animated by Thy love, they have laboured with the greatest zeal to change me and to keep me united to Thee, the Source of all merits."

IX. This humble soul, destined for glory, perceiving that the bark of her soul wandered amid tempests, said:—"Abase yourself not, O Lord, for so vile a

creature ; I am and have been nothing but darkness under the heavens." As she expressed herself thus with lively devotion, Jesus answered her :—" My daughter, you shall be a light in the world." And she :—" O Lord my God, give Your blessing to all who are in the garden of Your love, and above all to the fathers who have laboured so earnestly for my salvation." " I shall give them, My daughter, special graces in reward for their labours," replied our Saviour, " and I shall enlighten them by My light in their prayers. Receive the pledge of this in My blessing, in the name of my Father, in My own name, and in that of the Holy Ghost, and in the name of the ever-blessed Virgin, My mother. You besought Me not to leave you in darkness ; well, I tell you that you shall be a flaming beacon, for I have heard you in this." Margaret again spoke :—" My Saviour, my Lord, and my King, I offer to You a vow, and I ardently hope that You will vouchsafe to agree to it ; I beseech You, my God, that having refreshed me by the sweetness of Your Presence, You may keep Your servant buried in the world ; grant that I am no longer to disclose the secrets which You reveal to me in ecstasy of spirit." Our Lord answered :—" Margaret, whether you speak or keep silence shall depend on My will."

X. " I shall give you," He continued, " My Friars-Minors for apostles ; they shall announce what happens to you, as My apostles preached My Gospel to all nations. You entreat Me not to abase Myself by conversing with you. I tell you that though My Being is susceptible neither of increase or diminution, by the influence of your example and by the efficacy of the gifts which you shall receive, I shall be glorified

even by those who now despise Me for My seeming weakness, renewing their offences, and, far from loving and praising Me, blaspheming Me in their words and by their acts, but who shall end by imitating your life. For when they see you, they will enter into themselves with the dispositions of an humble and contrite heart; they will recognise in Me their Redeemer, their God immense and eternal; they will love Me with fervour; they will pay Me marked and respectful attention; they will praise and serve Me with an irreproachable zeal. Many persons who, now ungrateful, know not how to long for Me, will be interiorly illumined in the sweetness of My service; and, excited by new desires, they will call Me with all the fervour of their souls, and seek Me with tears."

Margaret acknowledged herself unworthy and incapable of such great things; she said to our Divine Master:—"O Lord, make the vessel of my soul pure and bright; for hitherto I have been nothing but dross, more offensive than the filthiest sweepings, but darkness more obscure than any obscurity." She heard Him answer:—"My daughter, you shall be a light in many provinces of the world." Margaret was, indeed, a torch of justice, of goodness, and of truth in the Lord. Notwithstanding (and I speak from experience), she felt in all her senses, whenever she approached the altar to receive Jesus Christ, such overpowering sensations that the assistants were struck with astonishment, and even moved to tears. Her holy fear of this inaccessible light and her profound respect could never weaken her desire for frequent communion, nor relax her fervour; and she used to exclaim in uneasy accents:—"Did I offend

You, my Lord, by the ardent thirst with which I sought to make frequent communions of Your Body and Blood?" Jesus answered her:—"This frequent reception is so agreeable to Me, that I shall bless your confessor and guide for having urged you to it, and for having encouraged you in your fears, and I shall grant him a special grace. Then be you comforted. All that I tell you shall come true; all the just demands that you make on Me in meditation or in prayer, I shall give ear to, and grant with pleasure."

XI. Margaret was very grateful to her benefactors. On hearing Jesus promise to grant her petitions, she prayed to Him for the inhabitants of Cortona. She besought Him through His mercy to deliver them from the dangers which at that time threatened from at home and abroad. No sooner had Margaret made her request than the Eternal Truth, to show her that His promise was positive, answered her in these terms:—"By reason of their doings they deserved to be exposed to great dangers. My daughter, having regard to the respectful affection and pious veneration which they show you, I shall grant them a special grace, and they shall escape from their threatened dangers. I shall act thus, not towards them alone, but towards any person that loves and respects you for My sake. Those, on the other hand, who by their opinions, their words, or their actions, shall dare to insult you, I will punish to the extent of not listening to your prayers on their behalf."

Margaret loved her persecutors for the love of Jesus Christ; she commenced to weep and to tremble at the threats of her Divine Master. "Most merciful Lord," she exclaimed, "I offer you the prayer of your servant Moses for his sister the murmurer, and for those who

offended her. I conjure you to forgive them all, for the love of the ever-blessed Virgin and the Saints, to all those who have injured me intentionally, or in any way whatever, grant in exchange the blessings of an abundant mercy and those eternal joys that I ask of you each day with tears. If you will not give them a free pardon, at least revenge their faults on me alone, and punish me, but at the same time forgiving them."

XII. Considering how far the majesty of the Most High is humiliated, the humble Margaret would be ashamed to boast of anything. If after receiving the Body of Jesus Christ she was elevated to ecstatic vision, she used to compare herself to mud and ashes. She would bury her face in the dust, she would proclaim aloud that she was the most sinful creature in the world, and declare that she was never anything but darkness. "How long I have waited!" she exclaimed, "Sovereign Father of mankind, how long I have waited to come to You! How late I began to love You? Ah! Why did I not love You from my mother's breast!" One day, after one of these outbursts of Margaret's fervour, our Lord drew up before her all the faults of her past life. At this catalogue she exclaimed, bursting into tears, that she was the vilest creature on earth. Our Lord, perceiving that she was seized with terror, and wishing to recall her to the hope of His mercy, kindly said to her:—"My daughter, late and early did you begin your penitent life; late as to time, but early as to the fervour of your love." These words, full of sweetness, transported Margaret with indescribable and lively confidence; she invoked Saint Peter, prince of the apostles: "Blessed Peter, beloved of God, you spoke truly when

you said to those who remained away from the Source of life, *To whom should we have recourse, Lord? You have the words of eternal life.* What greater present could you give me, O Lord, without whom I could not live, when your apostle made this profession of faith? I would have devoutly adored You with Magdalen, your faithful disciple." Our Saviour answered: "Remember what I said to my apostle Thomas, *O Thomas, because you have seen you have believed; but blessed are they who believe and do not see.* I assure you that the reward of those who believe in Me before seeing Me is greater than that of those who believe in Me after seeing Me. Love Me, my little flower, whom I have placed in the garden of the ever-blessed Francis, and made the instrument of My grace."

At her Father's name, pronounced by the lips of our Saviour, this grateful daughter said to Him: "Great and mighty Lord, you have loved my Father much, and honoured him with magnificent gifts." And our Lord: "Much, indeed; but how, too, has he loved Me! The love of his order is sweet to Me because I have loved himself in the odour of sweetness. The pious woman who was taken by one of his companions, fell into such a transport of spirit that she said your Father Francis was like another God, an expression which it is easy to justify, for it is true that in some cases I made Myself like unto him. I chose twelve apostles; did not My blessed Francis, also, and does he not still choose for himself friars? I united only seventy disciples; his form an innumerable phalanx which overruns the world." Then our Lord showed Margaret the blessed Patriarch, surrounded by a multitude of saints, and he asked her why she did not claim a place in their midst. "Lord," returned

she, "I wish and I long to be united with the saints ; but it is You alone whom my soul ever craves to call with sighs and tears, since it is for you I was made, O my eternal and unchangeable Good !" And our Lord answered : " Because you seek Me alone you shall be great in My glory, and you shall possess Me there in the fulness of joy." At these words Margaret experienced comfort mingled with fear, and replied : " Ah ! it is true, O Lord, that I seek only You ; hence I entreat Your Majesty to turn an eye of compassion on my faith."

He who said not to His own : Learn of Me to raise the dead to life, to walk upon the waters, to cure lepers and restore sight to the blind ; but who said : *Learn of Me that I am meek and humble of heart*, thus instructed His servant in His designs : " If your troubles increase, the marvellous growth of My grace will be in proportion." But Margaret, who was only eager to please God alone, answered : " My soul, O Lord, is prepared to receive all troubles, for the honour of your name, and to support willingly every kind of torment. Hence I could experience no greater sorrow than that of offending you. Come to my aid, O God ; grant that the world may not esteem or exalt me because of your magnificent gifts, at a time when, inebriated with love, I am unable to remain silent. I have never tasted more abundantly than I do now, the ineffable comforts which take their source in your glory ; give them to me, I entreat you, in such a hidden manner, that nobody shall hear me speak, when I receive them."

XIII. Then Jesus, the glorifier of the humble, showed Margaret, in ecstatic vision, a seat of indescribable beauty in the choir of Seraphims. He told her

that this seat was prepared for her, and He promised it unto her. Mute with admiration, she could only cry out at the vision of such splendour: "O Lord, if you had prepared this throne for one of your apostles, all the heavens would wonder; how much more if you reserve it for Me, who was nothing but darkness and sin?" During this vision her body, languishing and worn out by fasts, experienced something so delightful, so sweet and reviving, that she seemed to be supported in mid-air, as if following the flight of the Spirit. Margaret, unconscious of those who surrounded her, cried out: "Now, O Lord, my soul tastes and feels the flavour of the glory of your paradise." She could add with truth: "*My heart and my flesh have started in the living God.*" She heard Jesus address to her these words: "My daughter, say publicly, proclaim loudly that you are My elect and My true daughter." Though experiencing such exalted honours, Margaret in no way was exalted. With every new grace she felt fresh terror: "Give not unto me, O Lord," she exclaimed, "a name so sublime; for I think on earth there was never found, nor will there ever, a creature more vile than I am." The more the great man humbles himself, the more capable he becomes of receiving grace. He who looks on humility with an eye of goodness, spoke again to Margaret: "I tell you in truth that everything that has been predicted or shown unto you, will be in you faithfully accomplished."

Jesus Christ had engraved in the soul of His servant the knowledge of its own littleness, which brings the Christian to the perfection of virtue. In nothing was Margaret more diligent, than in accusing herself of the faults attributed, or possible to be attributed, to the most abandoned creatures. She always repre-

sented herself as in a condition inferior to that of any other man or woman, by reason of her birth, manners, or poverty. The more exalted she appeared the more did she deplore herself, and consider herself stained with every vice, except that of heresy. She would grow sad if persons did not believe everything of this kind that she chose to tell them, sighing and sobbing, so eager was she to be despised, ill-treated: "My daughter," He said to her, "through you I went to cruise amid the depths of this world, and I have drawn therefrom and chosen a vile creature like you, the vilest of all creatures. I have acted thus to glorify the little ones, to justify sinners, and to make precious stained and detestable objects." Margaret, converted by Jesus into a vessel of election, was always boasting of her weakness; she began again: "My Lord Jesus Christ, separate me from the world, for I live in continual doubt, if you vouchsafe to separate me, I shall have nothing more to fear deprived of your mercies." Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, encouraged the timid Margaret, and returned: "My daughter, you are already confirmed in grace and sanctified in soul and body, because of your true faith, your eager desires, and your purity of intention in thought, word, and deed; I shall never allow you to be separated from Me; I will honour you during your life and after your death." Margaret, who turned the eyes of the spirit on her faults, and beheld nothing but faults, answered: "How is it, O Lord, that you give such great things to so abject a creature?" And our Saviour: "Because I have made of you a bait destined to catch the fishes that swim in the waters of the world. The things I have promised shall not be fulfilled for you alone; but they shall again serve to restore unto Me My people. Where-

fore I wish to see spreading about and propagating itself the voice of the graces that I have given you, and that I shall give you, not only in this country, but also beyond the sea."

And who could make mention of the persons of both one and the other sex, ecclesiastics, religious, and lay, who came to her from Spain, from Turkey, Rome, Perugia, Gubbio, Città di Castello, Borgo, San Sepolero, Florence, and Siennà, to benefit by her salutary teachings?

May we conclude by saying that when balm is found without smell, the sun without splendour, fire without heat, only then can the heart of Margaret be found without the virtue of true humility?

XIV. How great was Margaret's poverty of spirit, when she used to sacrifice to the poor her tunic, her oratory, and the first necessaries that were placed at her disposal? The following circumstance, truly miraculous, will give an idea of this. The son of a widow had fallen into sin, and lived openly with another man's wife with whom he cohabited. His mother by her prayers and tears failed alike to soften his hardened heart, and to induce his concubine to return to her husband, in order to complete the salutary work of penance. One day, as she was weeping over this misfortune, her son, so tightly bound by the shameful chain of sin, thus addressed her: "If you procure from the table of the servant of Jesus Christ a morsel of bread for me to eat, I hope by its merits, not only to send back this woman to her husband, but also to offer to our Lord, Whom I have so grievously offended, some worthy tokens of penance." On hearing this, the mother ran immediately to the cell of the servant of our Lord, but she had great difficulty in procuring

this morsel of bread. Margaret refused it, saying: "It is enough that a thing be approached or touched by me, the vilest of creatures, that it remain soiled; if it before possessed any virtue, it would then lose it." The mother continued to urge the wants of her son. By her importunate prayers and tears, she at length obtained the object of her desires. O miracle, worthy to be published with praise! No sooner had the son tasted the morsel of bread brought him by his mother, than he was changed into another man. Animated by new dispositions, and touched by a desire of repentance, he sent back of his own free will the faithless woman to her husband, and by her side accused himself of the crime of which he was guilty.

XV. A faithful and fervent disciple of perfect faith and humility, Margaret discountenanced any promise that was in the least opposed to Holy Scripture or to the decisions of ecclesiastical authority. On the feast of the royal Virgin, Saint Catherine, after receiving Jesus Christ at the altar, she heard: "My daughter, I shall place you among the Seraphim, where are the virgins burning with charity!" Seized with terror, she answered: "How can this be, O Lord, since I am stained with so many sins?" He who made this promise by the mouth of His prophet: *Turn thyself unto Me, and I will receive thee*, found the humility of His fearful servant agreeable to Him. He answered thus: "My daughter, your renewed acts of penance have so purged your soul from all stains of sin, that your contrition and your sorrow will restore you to your virginal purity." At these words, Margaret's terror increased; she questioned her Divine Master Jesus Christ, and asked Him if He had placed Magdalen in the rank of virgins in the glory of His kingdom. This

True Master answered: "After the Virgin Mary and Catherine, the Martyr, there is none above Magdalen in the choir of virgins." Always eager to degrade herself by self-abnegation, Margaret would not make known Our Lord's promises to her in this dialogue. She was satisfied to disclose the secrets entrusted to her, only when the divine commands compelled her to do so, or when induced by the hope of still greater guarantees of her salvation. She was still filled with the fear of deceptions contrary to Holy Scripture. Whatsoever may have been the delight which she had interiorly enjoyed; howsoever brilliant the lights with which she had been illumined, notwithstanding the assurance of the Infallible Truth, she dared not believe anything that appeared to her ever so little contrary to our holy books.

XVI. The humble Margaret could say with the Psalmist, *Lord, my heart hath been in no way exalted.* On Laetare Sunday, I, her confessor, compelled her to receive in the communion the King of kings, Jesus Christ. She obeyed me and approached the sacred Table. Immediately the sadness of her soul was changed into joy, her terror gave way to confidence, and a calm peace entered her heart recently so disturbed. But because her long wished-for Spouse, Jesus Christ, desired her not to converse as usual, she exclaimed: "O Jesus, my rest, my joy, my only hope, Whom my soul seeks and longs for alone, how is it that I feel you within me and hear not your word? Have you, by reason of some fault of which I am not altogether purified, withdrawn from me this converse which strengthens and invigorates my soul." And our Lord: "O disobedient one! Why did you not at once yield to your confessor when he desired you to

receive the communion of My Body?" "It is true, Lord," answered the humble Margaret, "that I disobeyed him because I thought I was despoiled of every ornament of virtue, when I found myself deprived of your consolation. If I have offended your goodness, which is communicated and promised unto me with so benevolent and admirable a condescension, I humbly acknowledge my fault." And our Lord: "You have not annoyed Me by abstaining from communion, for you have done so through consideration of the greatness of My majesty, and the depth of your own littleness. Nevertheless, I command you, My daughter, to obey your confessor in all that he tells you. For your line of conduct through life I shall grant your spirit the light of a special grace." Margaret swooned in presence of Jesus, Who offered Himself unto her, and exclaimed:—"O Creator of heaven and earth, immaculate mirror, My eternal Good, how can I, vile creature as I am, stained with sin, agitated by such troubles, trials, and temptations, approach your altar? How can I dare receive Your Body, already immolated for me to God your Father on the Cross?" And our Lord: "Do you not remember what I said to you? Every time that you are afflicted, come to Me, Who am the Haven of peace. Did I not tell you that you are a vessel which must be purified by many and painful trials? Did I not assure you that this vessel, which I protect and guard, shall not be broken by any rock?" Margaret answered: "O Lord, I know that this vessel is so fragile that I fear it will break at the first approach of temptations and afflictions." Our Saviour: "My daughter, the constant remembrance of your littleness, and the fear within you, make things appear to you thus; but My eye is your guardian and

My virtue shall protect you always. I say unto you that, until the day of your death, you shall be in the furnace of afflictions." "Lord," exclaimed Margaret, "how can a vessel so small and frail resist the furnace for long? There is none, I think, more fragile than mine under the heavens. Is it pleasing to your mercy to make known to me my end, and to tell me how long I have to live?" Jesus answered: "You shall live as long as it pleases Me."

XVII. The new disciple of humility, who compared herself neither to her superiors, nor to her equals, nor to her inferiors, neither to the high or to the low, or to any person whatever, constantly deplored her sorrows; bathed in tears, she would declare herself the most despicable of creatures. She was so convinced of this that, overcome with sorrow, she exclaimed: "Ah! Lord, why was I born, since I have so offended you, that even now I cannot keep your commandments!" As Jesus replied severely to these words, she continued:—"I spoke thus, O Lord, because to me it is incomprehensible that a majesty so sublime can abase itself for a creature so miserable, and vouchsafe to make its abode in so depraved a soul. Do you, O Lord, to whom nothing is hidden, forget my former misery and inconstancy? You know well what I have been, and what I am: You know well that under the heavens there is not a creature so vile and weak." Thereupon, the lilies of the valley infused so sweet an odour through the valley of Margaret's heart, that she cried out:—"When I have to bear all the sufferings which the saints endured for the name of Jesus, with what ineffable consolation are they changed into sweetness and

refreshment." Our Saviour said to her :—" Margaret, my daughter, no saint would ever have the constancy to bear his troubles, if I abandoned him to his own resources, and did not strengthen him with my grace. Why, then, do you not suppose that when I have sustained and fortified them in their afflictions, that I can also guarantee your weakness from the danger of all unagreeable torments, and protect you from all calamities and tribulations ?" Margaret answered :—" I believe, Lord, that you could do anything you wished ; but I am unworthy that you should do it for me." Then He who giveth knowledge to His little ones, inundated with heavenly splendour His humble servant, and she penetrated the secrets of many hearts, absent and present, because their thoughts and inward desires were revealed unto her. She led a great number to a true and entire confession of their faults, to a bitter contrition, and to the amendment of their life.

XVIII. By a humble confession the Most High is overcome ; by hatred of self one conquers self-love, and performs a work more astonishing than the conquest of a city. The humble Margaret spoke in these terms to Our Lord :—" Do not say, O my God, that I have despised your mercy and your wisdom for exclaiming : Ah ! Why did you give me birth ? I spoke thus, because from Adam to the present time, I see no creature more unworthy of your favours than I am." To which Our Saviour answered :—" Know that I can bestow My gifts upon whomsoever I please. Have you forgotten Magdalen, the woman of Samaria, the Chanaanite, the publican Matthew, whom I have

made My apostle, and the thief to whom I promised paradise?" "I remember, Lord," said Margaret, "all these and many others whom you have favoured with your benefits; but I know, and I am certain that they were more worthy than I am of your grace, stained, as I am, with vice and robbed of virtue." She spoke thus, because it belongs to holy souls to see a fault where there is none. Here Jesus praises her who despises herself:—"I say unto you in truth, my daughter Margaret, from the crown of your head to the sole of your foot, I have clothed you afresh with grace, and adorned you with virtue." To which she answered:—"My Lord, whether or not it is the sight of the things you have shown and promised unto me, the present gifts appear to be but small, or whether it is that I always fear to become unworthy or to lose the favours which you have granted me, or, in fine, whether it is the desire of having you that has taken possession of me, all that I have hitherto obtained seems nothing." And Our Lord:—"You believe, my daughter, that God is the sovereign and infallible Truth; so, too, ought you to believe that the things that are promised unto you will be fulfilled." Margaret answered:—"Most High Master, instruct me; why have I suffered new afflictions for some time back?" And Jesus:—"My daughter, you shall have also of the new consolations; hence a new army of envious enemies is risen against you. But fear not, I will protect you, I bless you in the name of My Father, in My own Name, and in the name of the Holy Ghost, and in the name of the Blessed Virgin, My Mother."

XIX. He who seeks to gather the fruits of virtue

independent of humility, only scatters dust before the wind. In proportion as Margaret perceived supernatural gifts descending on her in abundance from the supreme source, she turned the eye of her spirit on her own littleness. She exclaimed with tears:—"O God, drive me far away from you, and withdraw from me, a most vile and unworthy creature." And as purity is always joined to true humility, Our Lord, becoming more familiar to her, spoke to her on purity. After listening to Him, Margaret answered:—"O God, you are the source of purity; you alone can give purity, and having given it, preserve it. Without you, not one of the saints could have persevered." And Our Saviour:—"If you wish to preserve it inviolably, take with you the five stones of My wounds, you can make use of them to strike your enemy on the forehead. What did you ask of Me, when I made you drink from the wound on My side?" Margaret answered:—"I asked you, O Lord, for a perfect knowledge of your goodness, and a perfect love of heart." And Jesus Christ:—"If you desire these things, preserve humility in such a manner as to attribute your works to yourself, and Mine to Me. If you long to know Me, begin by loving Me, your Creator, with an ardent love; then, from the bottom of your heart love all creatures, not even excluding infidels from your affections, for you should sympathise in their perdition. You know that I have created and redeemed them by many torments. Margaret, O commiserate those who are in trouble, and rejoice with those who are glad; if you act thus, from this moment I shall confirm you in all My promises."

XX. At the feet of Jesus Christ, the true Lamb, Margaret laid aside all exaltation and haughtiness of spirit. On the eve of the feast of her blessed Father Francis, after receiving the Body of Jesus Christ with great fear, she heard an interior voice which said to her: "Do you love Me?" And without waiting for an answer, the voice continued, "I tell you, you do not; for, through your fears and preoccupation about your neighbours, you have not kept your spirit fixed on Me; I command you to return to Me all the benefits that I have bestowed on you; if you fail to do this, I shall punish you after your death, if not during your life." And Margaret answered: "Forgive me, Lord, if, by reason of the great sweetness which I feel you infusing within me, I address you too confidently; and let me see therein a token of your true friendship, and not the appearance of my presumption. You know, my God, what I am of myself; I throw myself, therefore, into the arms of your mercy, as one dead and incapable of action. When I address you thus, O Lord, it is because without you I can do nothing." Our Saviour said to her: "If I give you My grace, if I give you sight to work well, why do you not work? Do you now know any creature to whom I give such abundant graces as to you? Misers have made Me greedy; the careless have made Me stern towards them, not that I am of Myself either greedy or stern, but they deserve Me to be so unto them." Whereupon Margaret, humbly and with groaning, besought the abundant pleasures of the divine sweetness, and she heard Jesus Christ say to her: "You sought Me on earth, and on earth you found Me; if you only meditated on heavenly things in asking Him whom you seek, you would find Him really in heaven. And what, think you, would be

a greater sign of humility on your part? Is it not to make your soul come to meet Me, that is to say, as far in advance of your Sovereign as possible, or to entreat Me to descend upon you in My mercy, and to abase Myself even to keep you company where you are?"

This question was no sooner asked than our Lord gave Margaret to understand that she required more humility to guide her soul before Jesus Christ. Margaret received in this dialogue the gift of divine consolation; she exclaimed: "O Christ, the repose of creatures, without whom there is no peace, grant rest to me your humble disciple." And Jesus answered: "Indeed I am not only the repose of those who love Me, but I am also the repose and the peace of sinners when they throw themselves upon My mercy, although they do not inwardly taste repose, for they despise My word."

XXI. On the feast of Saint Barnabas the Apostle, after receiving the Body of our Saviour, she heard these words: "Rejoice, My soul." Absorbed in God, she thought at first that it was to herself that Jesus Christ spoke thus. She heard again: "Rejoice, O daughter of Jerusalem, for I have fixed in you, by My grace, My royal throne. Praise Me, for I shall praise you; love Me, for I love you; serve Me, for I serve and will serve you." Margaret, the servant of God, answered: "I know full well that I am not pure enough to deserve to be the object of your mercy. And this is so true that the whole world could not contradict it. Nay, more; if I saw a great fire prepared for me, I would consent to be thrown into it and burned, rather than break this word." Our Saviour replied: "O incredulous! you know not what My saints have done for Me, and how I have heard those

who went before you, as I do those alive to-day. If the vision of My greatness and My beauty were not an excuse for you, your answer would have closed the gate of My mercy against you. I say unto you that the purity of the angels and saints of heaven and earth together would be as nothing compared with My brilliant purity, if I ceased to incline unto them. Did I not abase Myself, my daughter, to take flesh of the Virgin Mary? Yes, I did so, poor and simple child. Did I not allow even sinners to touch Me, to converse, and to eat with Me? See if My words have not so vanquished and allured your heart, that you would prefer to be consumed by the most scorching fire rather than deny those things or sin against Me? You know well that I gave you life with the will to undergo all kinds of torments rather than wilfully offend My majesty. O violet full of the perfume of humility! Your humility differs from that of others in not appearing by outward signs, words, or actions, greater than it really is within." And, after the example of Jesus Christ, Margaret was truly and unpretendingly meek and humble of heart. A friar expressed his astonishment to her one day at not hearing her speak of God with her ordinary fervour; she answered: "Our Lord acts towards me as towards a person who returned not what he borrowed; when he again seeks a loan, he is refused. I have not been grateful to Jesus Christ, and He has justly withdrawn what He gave me."

CHAPTER V.

ON HER MEDITATIONS ON THE CROSS OF CHRIST, AND ON HER CALMNESS AND PATIENCE IN SUFFERING.

I. As Margaret was meditating on Jesus suffering on the cross for us, the divine Conqueror invited her to battle, saying :—" Prepare to combat and to encounter all sorts of difficulties as long as you live. Gold is purified in a furnace ; so will I purify you by trials temptations, infirmities, sorrows, fears, fasts, tears, hunger, thirst, cold, and nakedness ; and when you are purified, you shall pass into the glory of eternal bliss. Let not the fear of all this discourage you ; but bear yourself with manly courage, and endure all with fortitude, for I shall be with you in tribulation. And that you may not faint on this rugged road, I will frequently strengthen you by the sweetness of My presence." Margaret answered in transports of divine love :—" O Lord Jesus Christ, who didst endure such torments for my sake, I offer myself gladly, through love of Thee, to endure all sorts of suffering ; animated with the most lively desire of pleasing Thee, I am ready to die, O my Beloved, for Thee." In this elevation of spirit she saw many things that she would not relate ; however

towards the end she turned to me, her confessor, and said :—“ Father, will you return satisfied to the convent and to your Friars ? ” I answered in the affirmative. “ Know,” she continued, “ what I have been assured by Jesus Christ, and what you ought not doubt, that the Holy Ghost dwells more especially in the Friars of your order than in any others under the heavens.”

II. Divine consolations refresh the soul in proportion as it suffers with the sorrows of Jesus ; they abounded in that of Margaret. Through love of Him who strengthened her, the servant of God was ready to endure things not only difficult, but things which seemed impossible to most persons. Meditating one day on the opprobriums of Jesus Christ, she heard Him say :—“ My daughter, the infirmities of your body, which is gradually weakening according to My will, are weighty ; weighty, too, are the trials which the tempter occasions you ; but what ought appear to you far more weighty and afflicting is, the suspension or cessation of My sweet and divine communications. Never fear, or be astonished ; for I will so fill you with My consolations, that the envious enemy will leave off assailing you with his suggestions. O My spouse, be not frightened ; for I am the Spouse Whom alone you love, and I dwell with you.” The enemy challenged her soon afterwards. In order to induce her to take more delicate food, he recalled to her mind and made her enjoy the smell of the most savoury dishes she had ever seen, heard of, or tasted ; but the sweetness of the divine mercy so filled the heart of Margaret, that it could not conceal the delights with which Christ had endowed her. Bursting into tears, she exclaimed :—“ Forgive me, my Lord and my God, if

nothing can so fully satisfy me as your presence, in which is found a perfect and an infinite sweetness."

III. The passion of our King and the compassion of the Virgin Mary so occupied Margaret's spirit, that there was nothing, be it ever so hard or difficult, that did not appear to her sweet and easy to suffer. One night she urgently besought our Lord with tears to vouchsafe to grant her, as far as her strength allowed, a share in the dolours of His Mother at the foot of the Cross, when she heard these words:—"Go as usual, at daybreak, to the church of My Friars; there, by meditation on My Passion, you will experience a violent and bitter sorrow, the like of which you never felt before." She came accordingly to the church. Having sent for me, her confessor and unworthy guide, she asked me, as a special favour, not to leave the convent, as it was revealed to her that, on that day, she would be crucified in spirit before the Cross. The high mass was concluded about the hour of terce. Watered with the gall of the Passion and absorbed in God, the fervent Margaret beheld the treason of Judas and the fury of the Jews, she heard their cries and the iniquitous designs of the barbarians who conspired for the death of Jesus, and undertook to crucify Him. She saw our Lord saluted and receive the traitor's kiss in the garden; she saw Him bound and led out by the light of torches and lanterns; denied by Saint Peter and abandoned by the apostles; His face livid; pitilessly scourged at the pillar; His face covered; buffeted; crowned with thorns; His cheeks boxed, and His hair dishevelled; then adored in derision. She saw the Cross preparing with astonishing quickness, the nails, the lance, and the false witnesses brought up against Jesus. When she heard the voice which spoke these words: *There*

is your King ; and the others : We have no king but Cæsar ; then : I find no cause of death in Him ; and again : Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, her grief was such that she uttered a cry and fainted ; the persons present thought she was dead. To this soul, which the sword of sorrow had pierced, appeared the Virgin Mother. Margaret saw her with the other women, Mary and Magdalen, following her Son amid the crowd, and the Jews who blasphemed Him. "There," she exclaimed, "is He, led forth from the palace of Pilate, and conducted without the gates ; and they make Simon carry the Cross behind Him. He is nailed to the cross, and two thieves, one at one side and one at the other, are placed beside my Saviour. How," she continued, "the thief on the left side murmured against Him ; the good thief justifies himself and asks Him for His kingdom. I hear our Lord promising him glory. Now he recommends His mother to His disciples and the disciples to His mother ; now the Jews insult and outrage Him ; now darkness is upon the face of the earth ; now our Lord is thirsty and they offer Him gall to drink ; now He forgives those who crucified Him, and recommends aloud His spirit to His Father. Now," concluded she, "my soul sees Longinus led to the cross, a lance is in his hand, he is enlightened by the blood of my God." Though she expressed herself only in short phrases, she omitted no particulars of the Passion. A spectacle so new and mournful struck the inhabitants of Cortona with surprise. They left off their business and their labours, children and sick people remained in their cradles or their beds, even men and women visited our church many times during the day, and filled with their sobs and sighs the oratory of the blessed

Francis our father. It was said with truth that Margaret was crucified at the foot of the Cross : she suffered bitter torments. So strange were her symptoms that we thought her at the point of death. The excess and the violence of what she experienced made her grind her teeth, she twisted like a worm or a serpent, she blanched, and her countenance turned an ashy pale, then her pulse stopped, and she remained speechless and frozen in the chill of death. When she recovered her senses, her voice was so hoarse that she could scarcely be heard. Until the hour of none she was deprived of all external life, and she did not perceive the number of people weeping around her, she distinguished neither the voice nor the countenance of those who assisted and supported her. I think I ought not to pass over in silence what remains to be said. I will only add this much : When it reached the time of our Saviour's death, that is to say the hour of none, when, having bowed down His head He gave up the ghost, Margaret drooped and rested her head obliquely on her breast ; everybody thought her dead, for she had lost all power of moving or feeling. She remained in this condition from none to vespers, in presence of our Friars and of many others who were bathed in tears.

IV. At vesper-time, as one risen from the dead, she arose with renewed vigour Her eyes were turned to heaven and full of joy, she seemed enriched with new and wonderful gifts, and she returned thanks to the Giver of all good. But when she came to herself and saw a crowd of persons in the oratory, her great joy was changed into bitter sorrow, she was in violent grief because God made her feel the dolours of His passion before all the people, and not in her own cell.

The admirable Lover of those who love Him appeased Margaret's terror and said to her:—"Fear nothing, my daughter, and have no doubt of the things this day performed in you, for I have made you the mirror of sinners. The most obstinate will know by you how willingly I employ My mercy to save them." Margaret, grateful, and full of anxiety for the salvation of her neighbour, answered: "O Lord Most High, whensoever I can pay you a tribute of honour and praise, and obtain for the people you have redeemed a means of salvation, in whatever quarter that may be, there and nowhere else do I wish to live." We were surprised to see that she had recovered her bodily strength, but she told us that she found herself much stronger than she had been in early morning.

V. When, however, evening came on, Margaret took leave of me, Father Giunta, and returned to her cell. This new Magdalen, who had seen in spirit Jesus on the Cross, was plunged in sorrow because she thought that she had lost her senses; she used to ask incessantly the persons she met, aloud, and weeping, for her crucified Lord, and they would mingle their tears with hers. In the transports of her longing and her love for Jesus, she used to say: "Have you not seen my Lord? Where shall I go, ill-fated, to find Him? Oh! if I could only see you, my God, with what infinite joy would I be filled! I seek, I sigh, I cry, I watch, I labour, and I feel my heart grow weak, yet I find you not, because inexorable death has taken you from me. O angels, men, creatures, tell me where is my crucified Lord, whom I seek and find not. Alas! what have you done, my God? Does your goodness deserve such contempt and cruelty? My Love, why have you abandoned me? Where are you hidden when, burning to

see and hear you, I see and hear you not? O evil, evil to me! And why do I continue to live?" She took neither food nor sleep whilst her anguish lasted; it continued from the hour I mentioned until the following Sunday morning.

VI. On Sunday, while High Mass was celebrating in the church of the Friars Minors, and I, her confessor, was preaching to the people, the respectful Margaret found not in her fears and habitual reserve the strength to resist the attacks of bitter grief. As one out of her senses, she began to cry out in presence of the faithful; she asked me if I knew nothing of her crucified Saviour; where I had placed her Master? On seeing her weep with irrepressible affliction, the whole congregation, men and women, began to weep likewise with a lively sorrow. As for me, whom she called upon to give her confidence to find her Master, without interrupting the Divine word which I was preaching to the people, I hastened to tell her aloud that our Saviour whom she sought with such lively desire is full of kindness and liberal, that He would no longer hide from her His presence, but would soon manifest Himself unto her. On hearing that our Lord would soon manifest Himself unto her, Margaret fell half dead in the presence of all the people.

VII. After Mass, she turned homewards, asking with tears and heart-rending sighs, of all whom she met by the way, if they knew where her Saviour was, and if they had seen Him. She shut herself up in her cell, refusing food, rest, or sleep. She would only weep and say: "Jesus, my Love, who put You to death? Who took You from me, O my Good? Tell me, my Love, where You are hidden? And why do I live if I cannot possess You, You Who have saved

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me by penance?" She remained in this interior anguish until Monday morning. Then the true Lover of those who love Him, after appearing to her at first wan and dishevelled, now manifested Himself unto her clothed in the robe of immortality. His Presence brought her peace, so that all the grief of soul and body disappeared. Many things were revealed to her in secret, and our Lord left her replenished with joy. This good Pastor, however, who corrected His apostles by appearing to them, severely rebuked Margaret for keeping her fervour and sufferings locked up within her because of the congregation? In this she had not perfectly imitated Magdalen in her manner of seeking our Saviour.

VIII. The servant of Jesus Christ understood how the saints, by means of faith, subjugated kingdoms and performed so many works of justice. One day, as I, her confessor, was conversing with her on this subject, she said she would be much surprised if they did not run before contempt and death, singing and a smile on their lips. "I who am so weak taste so great a consolation," she added, "nothing, in fact, to be compared to the glory of Paradise, that I could not compare with it the most magnificent things or the most exalted honours; it is so great that, in order to experience it, I would gladly encounter every kind of torment. When I was thrown into the fire or hacked by the sword, I should not imagine myself exposed to any suffering, sustained, as I am, by all that I feel and all that I can draw from this inexhaustible fountain. The assurance that I shall receive the pledge of glory, a promise made on condition that I see the face of no creature; but there is more; I long to break my ties and to die immediately. To die, for eternal life

is sovereign joy to me ; life henceforth for me is but a torment, a hell. Your sweetness draws me thither, O Lord, and for the love of your Name, I wish the worms to feed on my flesh even to the marrow of my bones ; by this means I could offer you, at least in part, satisfaction for my past faults. I would, in a measure, shut myself up with You in suffering ; I would sooner, to my joy, brave the miseries of this life. If one of these worms were to fall from my body on the ground, I would pick it up and caress it, O my Lord, and restore it to the open wound."

Margaret aspired so ardently to please the Most High, that she never ceased to reproach herself in His service of a negligence of which, however, she was not guilty. She thought she practised no virtue. Notwithstanding, however, her ecstatic contemplation of things divine, the continual austerity of her life, her fruitful exhortations to her neighbour, and her overwhelming infirmities, she recited no less than six hundred times a-day the *Our Father, Hail Mary, and Gloria*. To soften her tears and to calm her uneasiness, I told her that her eager longing for Jesus Christ and constant meditation on the Passion was a continual prayer ; and that the prayer of the mind is as sweet and efficacious as vocal prayer. In a short time the anguish of her malady increased, and Margaret was beset by fresh temptation. Our Lord, ever faithful, watched close by His servant, in order that she should profit by the trial ; He strengthened her weakness and illumined her spirit, troubled by the enemy. "My daughter," He said, "how great is the joy you derive from My Presence?" She answered : "This joy is immense and indescribable ; with the sweetness of which I taste, I could bear torments of all kinds ; no temptation, no

suffering would be enough to frighten me. It surpasses all suffering and banishes all sorrow. Your consolation so changes bitterness into sweetness that it would be enough to make me plunge fearlessly and with delight into melted lead or boiling oil; and I would sing in the midst of the flames." So great was her strength of spirit that, not content with forgiving all injuries done her, she used to disguise them from herself and try to forget them, and she never hesitated to do a service to anybody who offended her. She never contradicted, except in one case, and then reluctantly, when the rights of God were attacked; then conscience urged her to speak for the purpose of extirpating vice or planting virtue.

IX. One day I went to her cell to give her encouragement, when the provincial chapter was sitting at Sienna. She expressed herself in my presence with a certain degree of vivacity, and said: "My father and my confessor, I have learned, by revelation of the Holy Spirit, that the friars, assembled in chapter, will put a limit to your visits to me. Scriptural experience, and the example of many persons labouring under delusions, have created some doubt as to my state. Nevertheless, the condescension of the divine mercy will not permit you altogether to abandon the little flower confided to your care by Jesus Christ."

The chapter closed, and the new guardian of the friars came to Cortona. As Margaret had foretold, he gave me an order from the chapter not to abandon her, but, though I was her confessor, not to visit her oftener than once a week, except in the case of an unforeseen accident, or an aggravation of her maladies. The old enemy saw that some of the friars had doubts of her perseverance, and thought that her consolations

were delusions, or that she had feigned them to acquire a reputation among the people. He introduced this subject to her in her cell. He told her that the friars, guided by experience, and enlightened by the Scriptures, and still more by the grace of the Holy Ghost, had doubts of her, because they were fully convinced that, during her whole life, all her revelations and consolations were only deceptions. Margaret, weeping and trembling, prostrated herself in prayers. "My Lord Jesus Christ," she exclaimed, "You Whom alone I desire in simplicity and purity of spirit; You Whom alone I love; You for whom I spare not my body and despise every object under the heavens; You whose Scriptures I follow, interpreting them according to the preaching of your ministers, as far as my simplicity is capable of so doing; O incline unto my aid, for I weep and I tremble, a prey to fresh doubts." Our Saviour said to her: "Why do you weep?" And she answered: "O Lord, Who knowest all things before they exist, dost Thou think I could do otherwise? I have to battle with the invisible enemies armed against me, and the friars to whom You have recommended me, distress me by their suspicions." To strengthen the timid Margaret, the Eternal King stood before her like a mirror of patience: "My daughter," said He, "be not astonished if the friars have different opinions about you, each one speaking according to his light. If many have believed in, yet many have doubted Me, the true God and the Son of the living God." Incessantly purified in the crucible of tribulation, like refined gold in a furnace, Margaret became calm and strengthened by these words. I saw her in person, at the very time when she was preparing anew to support the most afflicting trials, prudent with beginners and willing

with those who advanced in virtue, and joyful with the perfect. No injury could break her heart of diamond ; no attack could open her lips to reproach.

The servant of God, yielding at the same time to the influence of divine love, to the vehemence of her sorrow or interior fears, or to the impression of fraternal compassion towards her neighbour, frequently redoubled her groans and sighs to such an extent as to be unable to repress or to hide the sorrow of her soul. It often happened that when she addressed herself to God in prayer, or when she wept, the women of the neighbourhood would run with devotion at the sound of her voice to gaze on her from without through the door of her lowly cell. There they beheld her praying with tears ; and the divine favours which they saw revived in them holy love. Animated by a kind of zeal, a lady, one day—a companion of Margaret's—sought to drive thence the women who wept and sang the praises of God. One of the assistants, wounded by her imprudent words, was driven to anger ; she insulted and accused her of injuries which belonged neither to the place, nor to the time. The gentle Margaret, at prayer in her cell, sent her companion to soothe the afflicted one. She humbly besought the offender to pass the night with her. But when anger rises, particularly in women, it takes in bad part everything that can be said to it in good ; for it is at once unbending and unreasonable. This woman, as if possessed by the demon, again outraged aloud the servant of Jesus Christ. Margaret, whose spirit was sweetly and incessantly fixed in God, remained unmoved ; she renewed her invitations in a more pressing manner, and accompanied them with the most persuasive remarks, going even to the length of accusing herself. She

could not, however, succeed in appeasing the enraged woman, who, persisting in her anger, would neither listen to her, nor go into her cell, nor cease her scandalous uproar, notwithstanding the representations of the assistants. On seeing that she still persisted in refusing to come to her proper senses, the humble servant of Jesus Christ besought her to take her into her own house, in order that they might pass the night together. Anger had so upset this woman's spirit that, instead of yielding to the instance of the servant of God as she ought to have done, she absolutely refused to receive her. Physicians counteract cold by heat; Margaret did the same. On that evening she sent this woman a supper which she had herself obtained in charity. In the depth of her heart she would have wished to kiss those lips which opened but to revile her. She used to say:—"An injury suffered for the love of Jesus Christ brings me a sweetness which comforts and refreshes me more than anything."

X. Every day she performed the way of the Cross. Nevertheless, she celebrated Friday in a special manner in her heart, and she used to say that on that day no Christian should rejoice. It happened on one Good Friday that the violence of her dolours drove her without her cell; with head uncovered and dishevelled hair, she wept for our Lord, grieving like a mother who had lost and mourned her son. Uttering loud cries, she ran through the town to the convent of the Friars-Minors, to whom Jesus Christ had recommended her. She would have gone into the other churches also, if extreme modesty and fear of the Friars had not restrained her. At this point the Lover of those who love Him, our blessed Redeemer, said to Margaret

as she was weeping over His Passion:—"If, in the small hours of night, you find yourself alone in a forest of insidious enemies, will you delay to seek Me?" Margaret answered:—"O Lord, I think I should seek you like a child who goes to his mother on hearing her call. In the eagerness of my longing I would fall by the wayside; and running more than my strength allowed, I would be overcome by the effort." And Jesus Christ:—"My daughter, why seek you to make a paradise upon earth, when I have not given it here below to My Body united to My Divinity? Do not hope for that; you cannot succeed. In your wishes you imitate Peter who, having contemplated Me in the midst of the splendour of My light, upon Mount Thabor, wished, in his enthusiasm, to erect there three tabernacles. He knew not what he said, he was so transported with a strange joy. I did not grant him what he asked; neither shall you, during the term of your pilgrimage, enjoy the Paradise which I have prepared for you in Thy Kingdom."

XI. Margaret, the follower of the Most High, sighed after Jesus Christ alone, and loved Him only. Nothing could comfort her but the sweetness of His visit. Patient in infirmities, strong in temptations, she frequently and with tears recalled to mind Him, without Whom there is nothing strong or holy, and Who occasionally deprives her for a time of His favours. "Why do I rejoice more now," she would say, "in your sweet presence, longed for above all other things, with my whole heart, and without which I would live in sovereign sorrow? Holy Father, only Father, Father of mercy, why do You abandon me in my distress now, when I am consumed by daily fevers, and wish for no

other remedy but you? Why, my Defender, did You leave me alone with the enemies who beset me under various forms? Where can I go if I have not You for a Guide? Where can I hide? Without You, what victory can I obtain in the struggle?" Jesus, the Rewarder of His soldiers and the health of the weak, answered Margaret: "As long as you live this life of the body you shall be afflicted by great trials. Though I am always with you, you shall not uninterruptedly feel my sweetness as you desire. For while you sit quietly at the table of this delicious banquet, there is no affliction, no physical infirmity, no temptation, however violent it is, or however painful it appears to you." Margaret, strengthened by this divine colloquy, replied to the Master of Truth: "Lord, however great may be the trials which I have to endure for your love, I shall always praise You, and remain inseparably united unto You. I cannot live without You, by Whom all things subsist; I entreat You, go not away from me."

I, her confessor, visited Margaret at this time. It was thought that she was reduced to the last extremity, so much did she afflict herself with excessive fear of the Lord. I told her to put her trust in God, and that the blessed inhabitants of the heavenly city would accompany her in her passage. No sooner did she hear the name of the heavenly city than she was ravished into ecstasy; she saw the Mother of our Lord entreating on her behalf the King, her Son, to hasten her happiness. At the conclusion of the vision she was filled with a more lively desire than ever to die soon; and in this longing confidence excluded the fear which, by reason of her past life, she entertained of divine justice. She saw Jesus,

near His Mother, smile on her with kindness, and hear the prayers of the ever-blessed Mary.

XII. After the octave of the Epiphany, the grateful servant of Jesus Christ meditated with tears on the Passion of our Redeemer. She said to Him : " Lord, if it is Thy will I am prepared to swear that I shall never during my whole life seek consolation, in order to imitate Thee, Who hast been so outraged by men." She then addressed our Lady : " Mistress of the World and Queen of Heaven, and Mother of our Lord, if I saw from the West Thy Son appearing in the East, Who suffered for me such cruel torments, I would be unworthy to raise my eyes unto Him. Nevertheless, His love draws me violently towards Him, and such is the impetuosity of my desires, that I could run on, unable to control myself, until I had found and enjoyed the perfect possession of Him I love so much."

She remained thus buried in meditation and absorbed in the dolours from the hour of matins until that of prime ; then her exterior sufferings were renewed at the thought of the jeers and blows borne by Jesus Christ, and she meditated on the whole course of the Passion, plunged in inconsolable sorrow. She associated herself by crucifying compassion to the Mother of our Redeemer, and was herself more than once spiritually crucified. The sufferings of her heart were agreeable to Jesus Christ, and He said to her : " My daughter Margaret, since you approached My Cross, I have enriched you with many graces and gifts, and I would grant you still greater if you had never departed from My Cross. Delay not to return and to live as is your wont, weeping without consolation from the middle of the night until none. Experience has

taught you that it is there I adorned you with graces, virtues, and spiritual gifts; there I illumined you with the light of truth for yourself and others; in divers temptations I fortified you with an unconquerable strength. Delay not, I repeat, but return unto My Cross, where I shall bestow upon you My former and even greater favours. Suffer not the smoke of the enemy's suggestions to enter into your heart, follow the directions of conscience in making a full confession of your sins, and expose them to your confessor without flattering yourself or glossing them over. Hitherto, you used to recite aloud the circumstances of My Passion, abandoning yourself to tears and sorrow; now, through fear of those who murmur and rashly attribute to vain glory the sorrow of your tears, you shall preserve an absolute silence. Delay not to deliver yourself up to holy desolation, as formerly. You must not hide My Passion in your bosom for the vain discourse of worldly people, who put a wicked construction upon the best things, and look on them as lies deserving of the severest punishment. On no account fear your neighbour, when on your side you offer him no occasion of sin, but rather the merits of grace and glory. Desirous of pleasing Me alone, your Creator and Redeemer, why do you not meditate upon My Passion with those sobs and sighs which, far from injuring you, will obtain you grace. If you meditate upon it in spirit attentively and unceasingly, and if you describe its stages to your neighbours, I shall hear all your requests; as a Father full of loving kindness, I will not only enlighten you unto salvation, but I will also reveal to you many things of great importance to others."

XIII. Margaret forgot not the teaching of our Lord.

She wept aloud over the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ from the hour of matins until that of prime. At every fresh torment, she used to exclaim: "O Lord, the force of Thy love for us has made Thee endure these things." She heard Jesus answer her: "My daughter, you said that My love drove Me to suffer, and that all that I have done was done through zeal for souls. Know, then, that as I went in search of you through such suffering and anguish, so shall you also come to Me by much sorrow and affliction. Prepare yourself for greater trials. The cry of your worldly life formerly rose against Me from the tongue of murmurers who detailed your scandal in the village, the forest, the field, the meadow, and even in the heart of the country. Hence you shall never cease to preach the history of My Passion and to remind the world how, for love of mankind, I lived incessantly amid travails and trials. Whoever dares to complain of your conduct shall displease Me greatly, and you shall be agreeable unto Me. Tell them, O my daughter, that, burning with love for you, I descended from the bosom of My eternal Father into the womb of the Virgin Mary, at a time when the Queen of Heaven called herself a servant. Tell them of My circumcision, the adoration of the Magi, My presentation in the temple in the hands of the aged Simeon, My servant, the persecution of Herod, and the flight into Egypt. Tell them how I, the Sovereign and Eternal Wisdom, heard their cries when, as an infant, I lay sleeping upon the hay in the manger; how I remained silent in presence of the shepherds and the wise men, I, Who opened the mouth of the dumb. Tell them of My poverty; say to them that, at the age of twelve, I tarried with the doctors to

question and to instruct them ; and that My Mother, overcome with weighty sorrow, sought Me, all in tears, among her friends and acquaintances. Tell them how I, the Creator and the Lord of all things, Who adorned the firmament with stars, reserved for Myself nothing but a garment and sandals. Tell them of the calling of the disciples, and of the miracles performed ; say that I restored sight to the blind, cleansed lepers, cured paralytics, delivered possessed persons, and raised the dead to life. Tell them how, at the prayer of his sisters, I brought Lazarus to life. Tell them of the mercy which I showed the paralytic, who dwelt for a long time near the pool. Know that, as they murmured against My miracles and teaching, so will they murmur against the Friars-Minors, to whom I have specially confided you ; but if I did not choose to exclude them from a share in My good works by reason of the assaults of My detractors, neither ought they, at the vain instigations of the wicked, renounce what they do for love of Me. Tell them how, at the close of a long and fatiguing walk, I stopped by a well in Samaria, and conversed for some time with a woman, by whose means I worked the conversion of the inhabitants of the town. Tell them how I ate with the publicans and with sinners in the house of a pharisee, at the table at which I pardoned the repentant Magdalen, to inspire the sinners with a hope of pardon. Tell them how I suffered Myself to be tempted and carried bodily away by him who is not even worthy to behold Me. Tell them how, in My travails, I have sweated a watery sweat, and in the terrors of My Passion, a bloody sweat. Tell them all that you have learned of Me, even to the particulars of My life and conduct. Tell them how I was sold

for a mean sum. Tell them of the fast which I kept with My disciples, and of the humility with which I washed their feet. Tell them how I was betrayed by a kiss, covered with stripes and bound ; how My hair was plucked out, My face bandaged, and Myself turned into derision by those whom I had delivered from the bondage of Egypt by the prodigies of My power. Tell them how mostly all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and many strangers repaired to Calvary, to see Me suffer ; not to compassionate My sufferings and My sorrows, but to rejoice together over My affliction. Tell them how I was stripped and scourged, bruised and buffeted by the scourges of the impious. Remind the faithful of the manner in which I was tormented, crowned with thorns, struck with a reed ; how the Jews pardoned Barabbas, accused of sedition and homicide, unwilling to spare Me, their King, to meet Whom they had gone but a little time before with palms. Tell them of the erection of the cross, My companionship with the thieves, and the hardness of the nails which pierced My hands and delicate feet. Remind them how I forgave those who crucified Me, received the penitent thief, and recommended My Virgin-Mother to John My virgin-disciple. Tell them how My Heart dried up in the midst of My anguish ; how I was thirsty, and they gave Me gall to drink. Remind them with tears how, on the bed of the Cross, My Head, rent with thorns and wounded with blows, had not whereon to lie. Remind them how, having recommended My spirit to My Father, I bowed down My Head on My breast in presence of My sorrowing Mother, and left My lifeless Body upon the Cross. Remind them how My pitiless enemies pierced My side after My death ; and how blood and water, the

price of your redemption, flowed therefrom. But at every fresh instance of My goodness, I wish you to say that My love for souls alone induced Me to do these things."

XIV. The time of the resurrection was at hand, and Margaret again sought the Presence of her Redeemer with tears and a more lively fervour. He appeared suddenly to the tender soul of His servant, and complained to her of sinners. "Fix the eye of your understanding," He said, "and see how constantly I am crucified by mankind. In order that you may the better understand the injuries done me, I shall acquaint you with the cruel men who crucify Me. Who are they that betray Me, like Judas? Surely they who speak and laugh, and eat and drink and sleep with men, and afterwards kill them for money. Who are they that strip Me and cast lots upon My vesture? The brigands on the highway. Who are they that accuse Me, and drag Me before Pilate? The judges who, through false witnesses and unjust decisions, condemn or cause to be condemned, those arraigned before them. Who are they that pluck out my hair? Goldsmiths, merchants, and artizans, whose avarice invents new means of gain. Who are they that scourge Me bound to a pillar? Surely they who chain their fellow-men in forests or castles, beat and torture them to extort an exorbitant ransom, and also the officers of the courts. Who are they that incessantly buffet Me? They who now lay hands on the religious and on priests, for whoever touches them irreverently, even though they deserve it, touches Me in the pupil of My eye. Who are they that are not afraid to pluck out My beard and to strike Me on the cheek? They are the wretched usurers who renounce all hope of salvation.

Who are they that make for Me a short and narrow cross, on which My Head cannot lean and rest? They are the thieves who cast out their fellow-citizens from their homes and compel them to go about the world earning a livelihood by begging, robbery, brigandage, and debauch. Who are they that furiously cry out, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him?' They are the wicked lawgivers and councillors who make laws contrary to My law, and lend themselves to every evil, either through contempt of conscience or through ignorance. Who are they that hide their face from Me, as from a robber? They are the adulterers and fornicators. Who are they that are not ashamed to spit upon My face? They who blaspheme My Name and artificially paint themselves. Who are they that nail Me to the Cross? The false coiners. Who are they that, after other torments, offer Me gall, myrrh, and vinegar, at the very moment when My soul is about to leave My Body? They who revel in the pangs of those nameless vices against nature, which I have extirpated by My birth. Who are they that buffet Me on the Cross? They who behold My Body on the altar and believe not My real Presence. Where is Herod, who derides Me? In every wicked prelate. I know that, as on earth, My mercy is employed towards criminals, so shall My justice be employed later on in punishing their crimes. O my daughter, there are to-day, among Christians, more Jews banded against Me than there were around Pilate at the time of My Passion. These sought to put My Body to death, these renew My wounds in Myself, and in My members; if My Body, born of a Virgin-Mother, was as big as the whole world, and still capable of suffering, there would not be a spot to-day that would not

be so full of bruises, caused by the reiterated sins of men, that the point of a needle could not pass through without touching them. The Jews who crucify Me in these times are more numerous than the Jews at the time of My Passion. And why? Have I not formed them to My own image, and made them out of nothing? Would I not have given them a place in the Paradise of pleasures? Would I not have given them My precepts? But they broke My commandments, and I am come to make them obey Me. They lost heaven, and I came down upon earth for them. They lost glory, and I became a sharer in their wretchedness. O My daughter, they were covered with stains, and I cured them by My wounds. They were deprived of the sweetness of grace and glory, and I tasted for them a bitter drink. They had lost their royal crown, and for them was I crowned with a crown of thorns. I made Myself little in order to make them great; I hungered to refresh them; I worked to procure them rest; and that they should taste greater honours, I submitted for their salvation to every kind of insult. Consider, my daughter, if mankind could understand by meditation the mere temporal benefits which I have granted them upon earth; I do not speak of My spiritual and eternal gifts. Why, then, do kings and great people, judges and notaries, governors of different territories and their officers, Jews, Saracens, and others, those whom I blessed, on whom I bestowed My former gifts anew, and to whom I would grant new favours if only they renounced sin, reopen My wounds? But the world is so universally plunged in vice, that with difficulty I could find one elect among a thousand.

“ My daughter, how often have you sought Me with

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bitter tears, as if I had forsaken you ; if you long for Me with such a burning desire, why do you not return to the cross on which you have so often crucified Me ? ” These last words so troubled, afflicted, and frightened Margaret, that she dared not again ask of Jesus a favour, nor even turn her eyes on high to Him Whom she loved so tenderly. But our Lord’s kindness brought back assurance to her grief-stricken heart. “ Undoubtedly, ” He said to her, “ you have often crucified Me ; but since you were converted to Me, and received from the Guardian of the Friars-Minors the habit of your father, My beloved Francis ; and since, with total self-denial, you have offered and consecrated yourself to the Order of his Friars, you have been careful to heal My wounds ; you have taken Me down from the Cross by the bitter sorrow of your heart, and you have never set Me up thereon. My daughter, say to the Friars-Minors that they must never give the habit with which they clothed you, except to persons disposed to conform to their rules and injunctions. Before giving this habit, they must diligently acquaint themselves of the condition, state, age, and capacity of the applicant. ”

XV. On one occasion when Margaret was praying with sorrow in her cell and calling her spouse Jesus Christ, she found herself suddenly enjoying perfect tranquillity of spirit, and she exclaimed :—“ Return to me, Most High God ; return to me, O Thou Who lovest me ; return to me, my Creator ; return to me, my Redeemer ; return to me, my Spouse ; for without Thee I can taste no repose. ” The Loving Spouse, so humbly invoked by His spouse, amid sighs and tears, answered immediately :—“ I am, O My daughter, that Saviour Who first revoked your sentence of death

upon the gibbet of the Cross, and who then drew you to repentance, like Matthew and Magdalen. They followed Me faithfully after their conversion; in the same way shall you walk in My footsteps, a butt for the contempt and ridicule of many. You shall not leave this world by the martyrdom of blood, like Matthew, but as Magdalen was exposed to unjust reproaches because, in order to attach herself to Me, she had despised the vain ornaments of the world, so do you expect that many will pursue you with their sarcasms from the moment that you desire to follow Me. But what does it matter? You are My daughter, My beloved, My sister. Be constant and take courage; as your affliction increases so also shall My grace increase unto you. Tell your director and confessor to ask Father John to pray immediately for you, for your affliction shall be great, and often so singular that it will come to pass that many shall doubt you; you shall have suspicion and defiance launched upon you by many until your death. Towards your end I will give you help, and you shall leave to many of the faithful tokens of comfort and grace, for you are My daughter. I have placed you as a light in the darkness, and I wish your life to strengthen in My faith, as that of your Father, the ever-blessed Francis, the support of My faith and of My Church. I have called you to repentance in order that you may be a mirror unto sinners, as I called thereto Matthew, a public sinner. O My daughter, I do not wish you to look into your afflictions, or even to name them; content yourself by reposing with them in the arms of My charity. The woman with whom you associate will cause you grief; she will not obey your orders concerning the glass

phial and speaking." To understand this it is well to know Margaret's instructions to her companion. She was accustomed to send a little phial into the town for wine, but she would never send to the same house oftener than once a month. Margaret knew by divine revelation that this woman went more frequently to the great houses with a larger vessel, and spoke falsehoods of her sister; she reproached her with this secretly in humble words. The culprit was not slow to deny with impatience what she had done through greed for herself and children, and she answered in bitter and reproachful terms Margaret, who had made to her only just representations. As our Saviour had foretold, saying to her :—"My daughter, she will murmur against your patience, your charity, your humility, your tears and sufferings." This woman abandoned herself altogether to ill-humour. I, the unworthy director of the servant of God, bound to procure her repose, dismissed this attendant; I separated the lily from the thorn. Our Lord again said to Margaret :—"My daughter, I shall allow you to be despised by many, and to be the butt of your detractor's onslaught; but a time will come when those who raised their voice against you shall repent them of so doing. Fear not their meaningless calumnies, for I have granted you My grace, and it shall not be lessened in regard to you. You said that you would rejoice even in the midst of afflictions, and find them sweeter than honey, if you knew them to be agreeable to Me, your Creator, and I reply unto you, as your confessor has already very properly told you by way of encouragement: Your fasts and your meals, your watches and your sleep, your silence and your speech, your comforts and your trials, your rest and your temptations, your labours and all

your life are pleasing unto Me, because you offer everything to Me, and act in accordance with My Will ; you are also My tabernacle, and the Sovereign Trinity, one only God, speaks in you. You are My Mother's tabernacle and cell, for she unites with Me in all the gifts which I have given, and which I reserve for you ; she rejoices in all your consolations, and urgently beseeches Me to grant them unto you."

XVI. On the Saturday of the twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost, after receiving our Lord, Margaret was filled with so great an unction, that her body, shattered by a preceding malady and by the austerity of her penance, could not hold out. He Who disposes all things for the best thus addressed His servant :—
“ Since your weakness makes you faint in the sweet colloquies with your Master, I give you leave to rest your head on the pillow.” And when she had done so :—“ Do you believe that I, the Eternal God, am also one God in three Divine persons ?” Margaret answered :—“ Lord, You are ignorant of nothing, and You know well that I believe it firmly ; why do You ask me and seem so eager to cause me uneasiness ?” Jesus replied :—“ My daughter, I asked Peter also, because I am pleased to hold familiar colloquy with those I love.” And Margaret :—“ How canst Thou take pleasure in a creature when your own intrinsic delight is so great as to be incapable either of being increased or diminished ?” Our Lord :—“ My daughter, My Scriptures declare that I delight in conversing with the children of men. I shall continue in some measure to afflict you still, in order to afflict him whom I drove out of Paradise, and whose only endeavour is to crucify Me by robbing Me of souls to destroy them.” Margaret longed only to please Jesus Christ.

“My Saviour,” she said to Him, “even though the sufferings which I endure are beyond my strength, I shall count them as nothing if they are agreeable to Thee. May the wish of my heart be pleasing unto Thee, O my Saviour, that I have placed and rested on Thee alone.” Jesus answered her :—“My daughter, I delight in pure love.” The pure lover, on hearing her Divine Master praise pure devotion, cried :—“Teach me, O Lord, Thy pure love, that nobody can ever possess more than Thee, the source of all good.” Our Saviour said to her :—“Are you eager to know the signs of pure love in you?” Margaret answered :—“Yes, Lord ;” and immediately she heard these words, “Would you not willingly die for love of Me? Do you not find it sweet to observe with tears a perpetual fast in honour of My Name? Have you not reduced yourself to a state of abject poverty for the love of Him Who became poor and needy for you? Do you not wish to avoid conversation with persons in the world, the more easily to unite yourself to Me alone, your only God? Would you not suffer all kinds of torments for love of Me?” And she replied :—“My Lord, there is not a weighty, hard, or difficult task, that would not seem light to me for love of Thy sweet love; but Thou fillest me with so great a fear that I believe myself robbed of all these beautiful feelings.” Then Jesus said to her :—“This harassing fear which accompanies your pious desires serves to obliterate the sins from your heart, but have no doubt all that is promised you will take place. You shall be great in My kingdom if you support afflictions without murmuring and complaint. Comfort yourself in the same manner as you have done in other trials, and I shall reveal to you the state of those who offend Me.”

XVII. Margaret knew that there was no proportion between the sufferings of the present life and the glory to be manifested in the future; she said to Jesus:—"My Lord, how can I be thus raised on high, I, who am the most insignificant of creatures by reason of my faults, and who feel no good in my soul to inspire any confidence?" But our Saviour said to her: "Cannot I, the Master of all things, give of My treasures to whom I choose, as much as is pleasing unto Me? Say if you do not now find yourself overflowing with the abundant sweetness of My familiarity?" Margaret answered:—"Lord, I confess this truth; where Thou art, there is Paradise. Nevertheless, I do not believe that, even in the supreme glory of the blessed, one could overflow in such a manner that even satiety could not beget desire; for the infinite joys of those that taste Thee are such that they incessantly draw after them the spirits of the faithful." And our Lord:—"Do you firmly believe and confess that I am one only God in essence, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?" Margaret answered:—"As I believe that Thou, my God, art one in essence and three in person, so do I entreat Thee to give me a full assurance of Thy promises." Jesus Christ:—"My daughter, you shall not have that perfect assurance which you entreat in tears, as long as you are upon earth and I have not called you to the heavenly country." "O Lord," returned Margaret, "hast Thou condemned Thy saints to such doubts as these?" And our Saviour:—"I have given My saints strength in the midst of torments; a full assurance they obtain only in My kingdom."

XVIII. On the Sunday within the octave of the Epiphany, after a long ecstasy, she recovered her senses and left her cell as if drawn outside by devotion. In

the joy of her spirit, she sought Jesus abroad Whom she carried within her soul. She ran in ecstasy to the Church of the Friars-Minors, and met her confessor, who said to her:—"Come to your Lord Jesus Christ." He conducted her to her cell, where the ecstasy continued. She heard:—"You would like to be a child at the breast, but you shall be a child of gall by the afflictions which you shall endure; but they shall make you My beloved and My sister, and render you like unto Me. I have resolved to withhold Myself sometimes from you, for your greater merit; for I wish to do with you what is done to gold in the furnace. In this state of purgation, your soul will be made to understand the offences which you committed against Me in the world. But be assured that the intense love, singular and pure, with which your soul seeks Me alone amid supplications and tears, induces Me to use My mercy towards you to the extent of not denying Myself unto you." Margaret answered:—"My Lord, I entreat Thy majesty to vouchsafe to grant me a favour; whensoever or wheresoever I serve Thee, make me love and praise Thee incessantly without offending Thee in thought, word, or deed. Thy Name is so sweet to my soul that I do not and should never refuse gall, since Thou didst taste it on the Cross for Me." And our Saviour:—"If Lucifer, the most cruel of your enemies, could leave hell to assail you, he would immediately seek to surprise and to deceive you, for he is irritated against you because of the manner in which I raised you in My grace; but you shall be well defended, My daughter. If I depart from you with regard to the enjoyment of the ineffable delights which now you partake of, and to the sweetness of My words which now you hear, I shall be no

less with you always in the presence of My mercy and by the protection of My grace."

XIX. For several days before the Friday preceding the first week of Lent, Margaret, afflicted, remained buried in prayer. I, her confessor, compassionating her affliction, undertook to recall to her mind some of the divine promises made unto her. On hearing them, she experienced fresh confidence. "Father of my soul," she exclaimed, "help me to make an exact confession, in order that I may receive my Creator this morning. I have desired it so long that I have grown sick from waiting, and a heavy languor enervates all my senses." The confession over, she devoutly received the body of Jesus Christ, and immediately all sorrow and weakness entirely ceased. Fortified by the sweetness which inebriates the angels and the blessed in heaven, she saw her sadness changing into joy. Her soul liquefied when her Beloved thus addressed her:—"My daughter, after being so long in sorrow and tears, are you now content?" "My Lord and my Saviour," answered Margaret, "this day may indeed be called a day of joy; the joy I experience is ineffable. But why hast Thou prescribed for me so long a fast, and why didst Thou oblige me to seek Thee so long with sighs? Why, O only Love of my soul, Whom alone I love, seek and long for, didst Thou leave me and conceal Thyself, delivering me to such anguish?" "My daughter, I acted thus because the time which has just passed represents the fast which I kept after my baptism; I wished you to unite with Me in solitude and fast. Now at hand is Lent, instituted by the Church enlightened by the Holy Spirit. I manifest and give Myself unto you!" Margaret answered:—"Lord, this is Friday, the day on which Thou wert

so sorrowful ; I would rather not abandon myself to these ineffable delights. I would prefer to share in Thy sorrows, O my King and crucified Lord. Why didst Thou make this day so sweet for me ? Never before did Thy colloquies give me such peace and joy. Forgive me, then, O Jesus, my amiable Comforter, if I have spoken to Thee too familiarly."

XX. Her sweet and amiable Master, who recalls transgressors to His law, anxious to reassure the timid Margaret, said to her :—" My daughter, to you do I complain of those who live chained by the bonds of sin, not in contradiction to their own desires, but contrary to true knowledge and willingly. Thus bound, I may well strike them with My scourges, as they allow themselves to be lured from vice to vice, and end by no longer feeling My blows nor resisting their passions. To you, O My daughter, I complain of these, because these people, created to My own image, are made like unto the brute ; they glory in receiving the devil's earnest in the world, and they prefer everlasting torments to the glory of the land which I have promised them. Did not I suffer Myself to be bound to a pillar to burst their chains ? If they became captives willingly, let them not impute that to My goodness. I complain of them with reason, for they call that bitter which is sweet, and sweet which is bitter. To liberate them, to raise the veil which covered their eyes, did I not bear, like a slave, the chains of their sins ? Did I not appear with face veiled before Pilate and the Jewish people ? Oh ! why, then, to despise Me, their Creator, did they choose for themselves masters whom I have cast out from the glory of Paradise ? Why did they forget Him who drew them out of nothing ? Why did their chains appear light unto them, whilst they

were voluntarily running into eternal perdition, until I say to them :—‘ Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire?’ Then, My daughter, they shall be horribly troubled, because they shall see the blessed enter into the kingdom of heaven, while they themselves, deprived of infinite good, shall be precipitated into everlasting fire.”

XXI. These great things having been revealed to Margaret with such familiarity, she commenced to deplore the lot of sinners like a mother full of tenderness, and exclaimed :—“ My Lord, suffer not Thy people to draw on them such afflictions.” And Jesus :—“ The devils by whom they let themselves be bound scourge them always ; they riddle them like wheat in the air. These people have become beasts of burden to the enemy, and bear his loads, not knowing the frightful dangers to which they expose themselves. But such masters as those to whom they have so blindly submitted, and who can do nothing but evil, will keep them in pay with the coin of their realm. Hence I shall allow the evil spirits to bring epidemics upon the earth, and I shall leave mankind divided to destroy, to their common prejudice, things and persons.” Margaret, overcome with pity, groaned over the obstinacy of these persons, and said to Jesus :—“ Mercy, mercy, mercy, my Lord and my God.” Our Saviour answered :—“ My daughter, I call them, but they hear not My voice, because they have become deaf. I say it to you, that however hardened a man may be, if he is truly and sincerely converted to Me, I shall receive him into My grace with ample mercy. Nay more, I send My angels unto sinners to watch over them, and to exhort them frequently to a salutary repentance.” Here the pious servant of Jesus Christ interrupted our Lord. On

hearing Him speak of the angels' ministry she inquired :—“ Do the glorious angels vouchsafe, O my Saviour, to abide with sinners ? ” Our Lord answered her :—“ Not continually, owing to the stench of their sins ; nevertheless, they call them and often lead them to the sweetness of grace ; they induce them to fly to My mercy. The fallen angels suffer and tremble at these invitations. And why do My own children deceive Me and not advance in the path on which they first set out ? Tell the Friars to preach My word with fervour, in order that by their teaching they may open the ears of the deaf, and by their example restore sight to the blind.” Margaret, who only contemplated the depths of her own misery, answered :—“ O Lord and King all-powerful, in this do I hear great things. But I see in myself no good to make me worthy of Thy complaints to me of the world's crimes. Whence comes this rare and incredible familiarity ? ” Our Lord replied :—“ My daughter, I am pleased with your humility, your purity, and your charity. It is long since there has been a woman to whom I have revealed such mighty things ; nor is there a person alive to-day so interiorly afflicted as you are. But fear not, for you know that I am your God, and that I will watch over you.” To these words Margaret answered :—“ Thou art my Father, my Redeemer, and my Light, whom I fear to displease in my afflictions.” And our Lord :—“ Dispel and overcome all these fretful fears ; be content with accusing yourself exactly in confession of the burden of your thoughts ; and, because of your numberless trials, cease not to receive the communion of My Body.”

XXII. Thus invited to the sacred table, Margaret was immediately transported in spirit before the royal

throne of the Mother of God. Wondering at such a sudden change she exclaimed :—" O Lord, what has happened ? While I was speaking with Thee upon earth Thou didst, in an incomprehensible manner, introduce me into heaven." Our Saviour answered :—" I have done this that you may recommend yourself more familiarly to My Mother, the Queen of Heaven, and to the other saints who surround Me as their sovereign Lord." Margaret thus addressed the Blessed Virgin :—" Mistress of heaven, Advocate of the world, and Mother of my God, thy Son, who is my Guide, has conducted me to thee." " And I receive you," answered Mary, " and I hear your prayers. You are the daughter whom I recommend powerfully and unceasingly to the Creator, who rested on my bosom." At these words Margaret, filled with indescribable joy, began to return thanks to the Mother of the Eternal Judge. " O my Queen," she exclaimed, " my heart wonders that it rejoices not in a colloquy with thee. Perhaps I was not listening to thee, because I was occupied alone in seeking with devotion thy Son, my Lord." And the Mother of God :—" My daughter, whoever seeks my only Son and Lord, seeks me at the same time ; in possessing Him they possess me also."

After thanking Mary, who took her under her special protection, and her Son, Margaret addressed all the saints of the Eternal City, particularly Saint John the Baptist, Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Francis, her father, and Saint Catherine, entreating them to pray for her. Her soul abounded in joy in this haven of happiness. Thereupon the Most High addressed her thus :—" You would wish to be always in a state of repose and eternal peace ; do you not remember what I said to you that year when

you were shut up in your cell, that you should drink from the Wound on My side? Prepare yourself for the afflictions foretold to you; for the time is at hand." Margaret answered Jesus:—"O Lord, my only Hope and sure Refuge, reveal to me by Thy mercy, if the trials which thou hast foretold are in expiation of my sins, or for a renewal of grace." And our Saviour:—"My daughter, by your bitter sorrow and repentance, by your many and divers afflictions, My mercy has wiped out all your past sins. Your afflictions are to-day, and shall henceforth be for you, a means of growing in grace and virtue. O My daughter, rejoice in the lot of your mother, for whom you prayed to Me. For ten years she has been in purgatory, but she is now enjoying the glory of Paradise."

XXIII. On recovering from her ecstatic state, Margaret, who had heard the last of a colloquy so sublime, was bathed in tears in her cell. "Alas! my Lord," she exclaimed, "where am I? Wherever I find myself deprived of Thy sweet Presence, it seems to me as if I were condemned to hell." An angel appeared to console her, while she prayed thus:—"Angel of God, and guardian of my soul," she cried, "give me to understand the signs by which I can distinguish devotees and the elect of God." The angel answered:—"He is an elect whose heart is already detached from the empty things of the world, and who lives united to God alone, and day and night sighs unto God." "O angel of God," continued Margaret, "haste and tell me the virtues of the elect." "He who possesses the following virtues," answered the angel, "has a right to be called an elect; namely, first, perfect humility, for the

love of Our Lord humbled even to the death of the Cross ; and, secondly, a perfect charity. He is an elect in whom is fulfilled the words of the Gospel :— *Blessed are the pure of heart.* He is an elect who, for the love of Jesus, denies and, in a measure, tortures himself, not by the use of the rack, but by the submission of the will ; and who is prepared, if needs be, to sacrifice his life for the name of Jesus, or for the profession of the Christian faith ; as does whoever mortifies his senses by penance. He is an elect who takes compassion on the poor, in whose mouth is always found truth, and whose life in all other respects is beyond reproach. He is an elect who, for love of his Lord Jesus, supports afflictions to spare his neighbour, and is content with bad clothes, bad nourishment, bad drinks, provided that others are treated well. He is an elect who is afflicted by and mourns the affliction of his enemies, as of his friends ; who rejoices in the success and in the joys of all, and envies the prosperity of none.”

XXIV. During Passion week, Margaret, who had devoutly received the Body of Jesus Christ, was fearful of hearing worldly matters discussed beyond her cell ; she wished to discourse upon the things of God alone. “ O Lord,” she exclaimed, “ suffer me not to be attacked by the serpent, nor my spirit to wander into strange thoughts, since I desire to please Thee alone.” She prayed long and earnestly to obtain the favour of conversing with nobody but with Jesus Christ. Our Saviour said to her :—“ You are much fatigued, My daughter Margaret ; but My fatigue has surpassed yours, for I had to walk the way of the cross, and My torments were of longer duration than the Scriptures relate. At daybreak,

on the day of Lazarus' resurrection, I saw its whole course in the hearts of My enemies ; the picture was presented to My soul, united to My Divinity. Now it was a plot of treason, again the threats, blows, and accusations of My enemies ; at one time it was the nails, the thorns, the bitter drink, the weight of the cross ; at another, the lance piercing My side. At these images I became exteriorly changed before My disciples, who perceived it not." These words were spoken with extreme familiarity ; and the servant of God, owing to the consolation which Our Saviour afforded her, became incapable of experiencing the sorrow which she desired. "O Lord," she exclaimed, "I have never found anything so sweet and consoling." And the Divine Master :—" My daughter, I have corresponded with your desires ; you wished to be assured of My love by the clear tokens of charity. Nevertheless, I must withdraw from you three sensible signs of My direction, and the afflictions which you shall endure are by no means light. To the eyes of worldly persons your life shall not seem so perfect as it really is. The world despised Me, and knew Me not ; I wish you to be, like Me, a butt for its contumely and scorn."

XXV. On the feast of Saint Mark, while she was tasting the most enjoyable delights in the sacrament of the altar, she heard Jesus say to her :—"Fervently you besought My heavenly court to know if your residence in the cell on the citadel was really agreeable unto Me. In token of My pleasure, I give you My blessing in the name of My Father, in My own Name, in the Name of the Holy Ghost, and in that of the Blessed Virgin, My Mother, and of the whole

court of heaven ; you suffered for love of Me ; I, too, suffered for love of men. You wish to preserve My grace and to grow therein, but you could not avoid afflictions." At these words, Margaret beheld the arms of a cross which extended from one of her hands to the other, and corresponded in length to her own height. The servant of God was not, however, fastened to it with iron nails. Our Lord blessed her, and made the sign of the cross with His own hands ; and another cross appeared to which Jesus was nailed. At this sorrowful spectacle, Margaret's soul was filled with anguish :—" My Lord," she cried, " suffer me to be crucified." Our Saviour answered :—" You shall be crucified by tribulations, My daughter, but not on the wood. Flee creatures as much as you can, in order not to offend Me, and I shall watch over you, to save you from sin. But I repeat, you have but little faith. For when you express such fervent and holy desires that, for love of Me, you abandoned yourself, how, think you, could I bring Myself to forsake you ? No, My daughter, it shall not be so. I am and I shall be with you always. I know your eagerness to avoid displeasing Me ; the motive which induces you to avoid sin is, not that you may obtain greater consolation, but only that you may guard against what is offensive to Me. In this praiseworthy course, not only shall you not sin, but when you are overcome with tribulations, you shall swim in joy, although your body should yield to the weight of its infirmities. Tell your confessor and director from Me to make no further opposition to your dwelling in the cell on the citadel. He must, at the same time, write to Father John Benedict not to lessen his

cares and anxiety on your behalf, because of this change of residence, but, on the contrary, to recommend you to My servants your neighbours. Your soul, it is true, speaks not with some persons as eagerly as with others; but with regard to this, the line of conduct which should guide a soul illumined with My Light is such as your confessor has marked out for you. When you go to your new cell, remain there in obedience to the instructions which I shall give you. I know that a certain person, whose state appears to you doubtful, has not renounced her guilty desires or evil doings, although she has been to confession. I am He Who vouchsafed to take flesh in the womb of a humble Mother, when she cried:—*Behold the handmaid of the Lord.* That you may have no doubt on the preceding matters, hear Me salute her, and say, *Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.*”

XXVI. The priest of Saint Mark visited the servant of God one day when she was overcome with affliction, temptation, and divers infirmities. She prepared herself immediately with great care and devotion to receive the Body of our Lord. After communicating she remained absorbed in the sweetness of His love by consolation. After a long time thus spent in repose, she recovered the use of her senses towards the hour of terce. Nevertheless, she still remained insensible, and her eyes were fixed, but she was heard answering our Saviour with a joy which shone on her countenance:—“My God, Thou didst tell me to ask of Thee whatever I desired; I long but for one thing alone, to serve Thy Majesty perfectly; and oh! may I love Thee and Thee alone, my true Lord, and may my life be a light, not a shadow,

for the faithful who trust in me." Jesus answered:—"My daughter, since you entered this cell, you have found tranquillity of soul and body. Prepare yourself in the future for tribulation, sickness, and divers temptations of the old enemy."

XXVII. Another day, before the priest of Saint Mark, who was bringing Margaret the Body of our Lord, came to her cell, she experienced abundant consolation, and ardently looked forward to the coming of her Saviour. Having received the Bread of Life, with the most profound respect, she heard Jesus say to her:—"Are you now in trouble, My daughter?" As she replied in the affirmative, our Saviour continued: "I, too, was in trouble for the love of man, not through My own fault, My daughter; love Me, for those who love Me now are few in number; serve your Creator, for there are few who wish to serve Me; praise Me, for small is the number of those who seriously think of praising Me. I became man incarnate of Mary, ever Virgin; by her I wished to be suckled and rocked in the cradle, afterwards I refused not torments, I was judged, delivered up by Pilate, and nailed to the Cross, though he declared that he could find no cause against Me. The death to which the Jews thereupon submitted Me was cruel, but more bitter still, if I was capable of suffering as man, would be the death to which Christians never cease to condemn Me, heaping sin upon sin. The nauseous odour of their vices has even ascended to My Father. You were surprised that the Feast of the Assumption was so sorrowful to you, but I tell you, by My Mother's prayers this feast for you was full of favours. She addressed Me, her Son, and said:—"Be pleased, on this solemn festival consecrated to Me, to console Margaret

recalled by Thee to grace, and so consecrated to me.' The whole court of heaven await with a great joy the day of your passage into eternity. If you suffer, so I suffered for you. Your sorrow shall increase, because the moment of your dissolution is drawing nigh. Entreat the priest of a certain church to make a general confession. Be not ashamed to say to him that he shall be strong to fight against the flesh, because I am prepared to employ My mercy towards him; I will grant him My grace if he disposes himself unto it with fervour."

XXVIII. One morning during the octave of St. Francis, she received with devotion the Bread of Life, the Food of the blessed which strengthens all. Our Lord Jesus Christ said to her:—"My daughter, by the austerity of life which you have borne for love of Me, you are become weak and infirm, fear not to rest your head. You think that you have already crossed the sea of troubles which you have to endure; but you shall suffer still greater afflictions and reverses, and shall find yourself almost given up. For you shall be darkness to those who see; I mean, to those who ought to see. In the same way as I remained unknown to the end of My life, and the world supposed that I had failed in My mission, because it had not known Me and has known Me since; so, too, those who call you darkness, to-day shall know you after your death to their confusion and sorrow. But remember that the vessel of your spirit must be purified by divers afflictions; in bearing them for love of Me, not only have you stripped yourself of the tatters of your faults, but you have even deserved that I reveal to you the gifts of grace."

XXIX. The Saturday preceding the nineteenth

Sunday after Pentecost, Margaret received the Body of the true God, and Jesus Christ said to her:—"O my daughter, avoid as much as possible all familiarity with persons in the world beyond the order of the Friars-Minors. Your trials, now so multiplied, seem to the eyes of many light and small; for you who experience them, they are heavy and exceedingly sad. If you find nobody now to torment you as you would wish, bear with sweetness and evenness of spirit your other troubles for love of Me. Your contests, which seem to you more painful and difficult than suffering, shall serve to adorn the vessel of your soul, and they shall be accounted to you for a martyrdom." On hearing this Margaret answered:—"Lord, I do not believe that the vessel of my soul can be purified or adorned by my suffering." And our Lord:—"You speak the truth; they would be insufficient and would not embellish you, but your faithful love and My mercy will supply the want. I know that in your temptations, in sickness, and in your other good works, you shall suffer much tribulation, but I will defend you, and you shall never mortally offend Me."

Margaret said to our Lord:—"I return Thee thanks, my most sweet Love, Jesus Christ, for announcing to me the sweet and the bitter things before they come. But I entreat Thee, my most loving God, to allow me carry in my heart, by love alone, the satisfaction of my desire, by giving me a firm assurance of Thy protection." And our Lord:—"You shall not have a full assurance, until you are enjoying the glory of My kingdom. Such is My Will, in order that you may the better preserve the favours which I have granted you, that the gifts of grace may grow within you, and that, in this way, you may labour with more zeal

for your salvation. I Who have vouchsafed to speak to you, I am Jesus Christ your Saviour, born of the Virgin Mary, nourished on her milk, and by her laid in the manger ; John baptized Me, and naked I ascended the Cross for you." As Margaret specially honoured Saint John the Baptist among saints, she said to our Lord :—"Does Thy illustrious precursor, whom I have chosen for my advocate, implore Thy Majesty for me?" And our Lord :—"Yes, My daughter, and with him John the Evangelist, your father Francis and Catherine, together with the whole heavenly court. As for you, in the moments of your anguish say the *Our Father*." "I do say it, O Lord," returned Margaret, "but my weakness is so great that I find no pleasure therein." Our Saviour :—"Do not, however, leave off reciting it, if you can, returning, at the same time, to the Cross." Margaret answered :—"When I pray and approach the cross, I feel myself drawn back from behind." Our Lord gave her to understand that she experienced this sensation, because in trials her spirit could not remain impassionable. He added :—"Although up to then you should be afflicted and quaking, nevertheless you shall instantly experience the benefit of My cross." Margaret cried :—"O Lord, send a leprosy upon my body, in order that, henceforth, I may never offend thee ; and vouchsafe by thy mercy to reconduct me to thy cross." To her first request, He replied that her troubles were sufficient ; for with leprosy she would be too presumptuous, while, with temptation and bodily infirmities, she would be preserved at the same time in a state of fear and grace. As to her second request, our Lord said :—"Often do I call and lead you to the cross ; but, poor creature that you are, you should try to become worthy of returning

thereto. You beseech Me to grant you to sin no more and to die, I say unto you, that I shall leave you in this valley of tears, as long as it is pleasing to My will."

XXX. The night following the feast of Saint Benedict, Margaret, the servant of God, wept bitterly for compassion with one of her spiritual fathers in affliction. While she was praying thus in tears, our Lord answered:—"Tell him to prepare for the worst, for this trial shall not be the last. Like all those to whom I have granted the gifts of My Passion, he shall be afflicted interiorly and exteriorly so much as to fancy himself even at the point of giving way. Nevertheless, let him be strengthened and put his trust in Me; for I shall not allow him to lose patience, and in the end he shall find himself in an exalted state." Margaret, at the same time that she heard these things, saw the Divine Master treat His servant with sweet familiarity.

XXXI. One day our sweet Jesus said to her:—"Go to My cross; sound My Wounds within and without, and learn how sorrowful they have been." The devout Margaret instantly obeyed, and heard as follows:—"I am God Who never deceives, because I am Truth itself; and I say unto you, that you shall enter into My Wounds by a variety of innumerable afflictions, before departing this life." Then, as she was engaged in meditating on the cross, she experienced such torments in the depths of her soul, that, by reason of the sorrow which she endured, her eyes appeared to protrude from their orbit, and she could not touch the palms of her hands.

XXXII. On the day of the Finding of the head of Saint John the Baptist, when Margaret had received

the Body of our Divine Saviour, He addressed to her these words :—“ You asked Me to bless My Friars, and I their Redeemer bless them all for love of My elect, in the number of whom I place them. But tell their superiors, My representatives, to prepare for trouble, because the Friars-Minors are My first imitators under the heavens. Let them take courage ; I shall be with them always. Although I have already blessed them all, I give a special blessing to those, who, for love of Me, have not refused to serve you faithfully, My little sheep, restored to the fold by grace. O My little sheep, you say that it was very late when you entered it ; and I say that one single day of reconciliation and grace is better than a year, and that a year spent thus is better than a hundred otherwise.” Eager to be indissolubly united to her God Whom alone she loved, Margaret exclaimed :—“ O Lord, when shall I be separated from the world, and when may I come to Thee ? ” And our Lord :—“ I have told you, that your life shall last as long as it pleases Me. But before possessing My gifts, as far as it is possible for man to possess them with his mortal body, you must buy them. Prepare yourself, then, for great and divers trials.” Margaret answered :—“ O Lord, Thou grantest me inestimable benefits, and yet Thou leavest me not a perfect confidence.” Our Lord :—“ A full confidence, such as you desire, you shall never have in this life.” And she :—“ I entreat Thee, let me not be deceived.” Our Lord :—“ Verily I say unto you, you shall not be deceived in the things promised to you.” “ Lord,” she returned, “ I do not ask it for myself, but for the faith of those, who, at my instance, shall praise Thee, serve Thee, love Thee, and long for Thee. O my Lord and my God, all that I love and all that I

desire, it is for Thy sake and not for mine, the most unworthy and the vilest of creatures." Our Saviour:—"You love Me, and you shall be loved; you serve Me, and you shall be served; you long for Me, and you shall be longed for; you praise Me, and you shall be praised; you obey Me, and you shall be obeyed."

XXXIII. On the Feast of Saint Stephen, the first martyr, when Margaret had shed abundant tears and enjoyed some lengthened colloquies with our Saviour, the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary, answered in these terms:—"You are become very presumptuous; in a miserable worldly life you wish to possess My glory. But I do not wish you to know joy in this world; you must be like Me and follow Me by sharing in My torments. Prepare for trials, since on your voyage the land does not yet appear." Margaret answered:—"O Lord, where Thou art there is paradise." And our Lord:—"I shall be, and I shall not be, with you. Clothed in my grace, you shall think yourself stripped thereof, and while I dwell within you I shall do so in such a manner that you will not know Me. I wish to preserve you in My fear, that you may grow in grace. Your confessor fully satisfies you; I bless him in the Name of My Father, in My own Name, in that of the Holy Ghost, and in the Name of the Blessed Virgin, My Mother. For whoever serves you for love of Me, serves Me likewise."

XXXIV. One day after the feast of the Ascension, our Lord said to Margaret in prayer:—"Raise yourself in thought, daughter of the Holy Ghost. Here I reveal to you, and I make you understand, that never since the period of the Redemption, did so many go down to the pains of hell as now. If I took compassion upon their lot it was not for Myself, Who did not

want them ; but it was for the sakes of those who, far from Me, their true Life, are running into eternal death. I pursue them constantly in the accents of My mercy, to save them from perishing, and to you do I complain of them, for I have redeemed them by My Precious Blood." Our Lord thus continued :—" Raise your heart and arise, daughter of the Holy Ghost, recite fully the salutation of the Blessed Virgin, My Mother." When she had done so Margaret said to our Lord : " Whence comes it, my God, that in Thy presence I find not the same interior joy that I used ordinarily to experience in the past ?" And our Lord :—" I made you a source for the purification of sinners, and you disturbed the fountain of My mercy, but your sorrow preserves you in grace. Prepare for sickness and tribulation, and do not forget how horribly I suffered for you. As I had no rest in this life no more ought you."

XXXV. Jesus Christ added :—" The voice which has often called you on the Feast of the Archangel, is that of Michael, prince of the Church. His invitation was addressed to you on My behalf, as a token of the power which is reserved for you, of the strength which shall be yours in tribulation, and of your light in revelation." Margaret :—" Lord, I am greatly afraid of offending the eyes of Thy Majesty, if I offer and communicate myself to Thy creatures, who seek me with such confidence." " It is My will that you comfort the afflicted," answered our Lord ; " but I wish you to use discretion. In order that you may not restrain the operations of My grace within you, I command you to eat alone, for you ought not, because of the assistants, lose during this time devotion and tears." (While taking her meals, the servant of God was wont

to weep. Her spirit frequently remained in suspense, and seated at table she ceased to eat in order to converse with God; sometimes she was ravished into ecstasy, she prayed and praised the Lord, and at sight of the bread prepared for her body she asked only for that of eternal joy.) "You ought only to omit in particular," continued our Lord, "and in public the things which are not done for love of Me, and which are not entirely conformable to the pleasure of My will."

XXXVI. One day, as Margaret was praying, she heard our Lord say to her:—"Your trials shall increase." And she answered:—"My God, shall they make me offend Thee?" Our Lord:—"They shall make you deserving of grace and glory. It will come to pass that you will sin venially; but fear not, for I shall be your protector. You shall have to suffer for the priest you know. The enemy is sorry that he escaped his hands." "O my Saviour, must I abandon him?" inquired Margaret. And our Lord said to her:—"Forsake him not, but come to his assistance. But haste, My daughter, for I have elected you in opposition to the false religious, and your crown shall be the reward of your haste. Know, O My daughter, that a confession so general and detailed as yours is a special grace that I have granted you. Few use, though many need it. Tell this priest to meditate upon My death and upon many things by which he renewed My wounds before discovering himself unto you. On your side do not forget how often I have shown Myself full of kindness to you, and left you meekness; when I appeared to you as a judge pronouncing sentence, I communicated to you the mode of judging; after preaching repentance to you, you recovered many souls; when I communed with you sweetly, I left you sweetness in

your speech. I was agreeable to the eyes of My disciples, and you are to those of creatures, for I shall make you a light to penetrate the guiles of darkness. I wish you to keep pure the book of your conscience, in which I write My lessons, and to guard for Me the throne of your soul, which is My resting-place. Keep My temple closed with the key of My passion."

XXXVII. On another occasion an angel appeared in prayer to Margaret and said to her :—" Prepare yourself for trials so great that you will long to die and cannot." Margaret besought the Most High to keep her from offending Him, and our Saviour answered :—" What greater pain can you suffer than this fear? Every sin in the interior of their conscience should be deplored by those who love Me, as if it was mortal. Whoever follows Me and stops at the least thought contrary to My will, offends Me grievously; but he who quickly dispels such a thought, deserves by the victory which he acquires a crown of glory."

XXXVIII. After many days passed in tribulation, Margaret received the Body of Jesus Christ with much devotion and fear. Thereupon she heard :—" My daughter, your charity is undervalued by your detractors, and shall be crowned in heaven; for you suffered at the shedding of My blood more than any other living creature. Many, it is true, deplore My cruel death and the shedding of My blood, but not like you. My daughter, I have suffered; you, too, shall be overwhelmed with suffering; I have endured fatigue, you, too, shall experience it; I have been a butt for murmurers, and they shall rise also against your works. Now I am in glory, and by My mercy you shall find a place therein. I say unto you, your troubles shall increase." At the word *troubles*, Margaret answered her Spouse,

Jesus Christ:—"If my troubles increase, may Thy grace increase likewise unto me." "My daughter," replied our Lord, "you have overstepped the first degree leading to grace. Now I wish to raise you to a higher state of knowledge in Me." Margaret answered:—"If that is what Thou desirest to operate in Me, O Lord, why dost Thou fill me with such dreadful fears?" Our Saviour:—"I have withdrawn and hidden My power upon the wood of the cross; hence, I steal from you to increase the value of your crown, and to make you understand more clearly what you are of yourself without Me. But there are many who, like My apostle Thomas, are slow to believe the things performed in you. Now write: *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, to mark the new operations of the Most High God; write, *Pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis*, to announce the coming of peace to many faithless Christians."

XXXIX. On receiving the Host of Salvation on Whit-Sunday, she heard Jesus Christ address her in these terms:—"O daughter of tribulation, glory and greatness, I will place you among the virgins in My kingdom. Your afflictions will throw you into such perplexities that not only shall you be fearful of not reaching the promised state, but you shall even believe that you have fallen back into your former habits. Thus shall you recover the light to know and to accomplish the works of virtue, and to eradicate much evil from others; for, to this end, a special power shall be given you. Daughter of perfect faith, praise Me and love Me; and serve your Creator who has given you such faith. With that faith which you experience every time you see Me on the altar, you think always to obtain a new gift, and it is really so. You say that you have not received of Me the token

of this new grace to-day, the feast of the Holy Ghost, and I say unto you that the greatest grace has been given you, unperceived by yourself. Know that here in a few days your confessor will endeavour, though unsuccessfully, to come to your assistance in affliction. In this voice have I called you, and trials are My gifts. Nevertheless, you must try your utmost to help yourself."

XL. On the feast of Saint John the Evangelist, Margaret cried aloud :—" Let us all run to the source of divine love." Thereupon she heard Jesus Christ say to her :—" New Light born in the midst of darkness, I who suffered the passion, and who arose from dead, I bless you. Know that your confessor will be present at your death. But be sure that your afflictions will increase, and though your son shall be saved, he will be the cause of one of your martyrdoms. My Father has given to you to walk on the way of My tribulations ; the more humiliated you are by being despised, the more shall I be with you. You shall undergo afflictions proportionate to the things in which you have offended Me ; but you shall not know, at the time, how to explain My work and to say :—God is punishing such and such a fault into which I fell in the past."

XLI. One day when Margaret had received the Body of Jesus Christ with a lively devotion she heard :—" My daughter, you are uneasy and fearful of the things that I say to you ; but I assure you that your hope shall not be deceived, because you are written in the Book of eternal Life. I bless you, in the name of My Father, in My own name, in that of the Holy Ghost, and in the name of the Blessed Virgin, My Mother, of whom I took flesh, immolated upon the cross, raised from the dead, and ascended into heaven ; and in the

name of the heavenly court, who wait on Me with a great joy,—you unknown among creatures. I give a new light unto your spirit ; henceforth you shall know how to answer easily and truthfully to those who question you. Now you shall receive your angel's revelations ; sometimes I will converse with you Myself, but more rarely. Be strong in the trials which My Father has destined for you, in order that by sight of them you may follow your crucified Master to the end of your life."

XLII. On the feast of SS. Laurentius and Pergentinus, Margaret said to our Lord :—" My God, unworthy though I am to approach the Sacrament of Thy sacred Body, I come to Thee as one sick to a physician to be cured." Having received in fear the Body of our Lord, she heard :—" I am the Bread of Life, come down from heaven, and the Lamb who took away the sins of the world. Do you wish to come to My Father ?" She answered :—" Lord, when I am with Thee, I am with Thy Father and the Holy Ghost." And our Saviour :—" Do you really believe so ?" " Ah ! Lord," returned Margaret, " Thou, who knowest all things, knowest well that I believe it." At these words Jesus Christ gave her a greater blessing, and added :—" To relieve you from all doubt, I shall Myself salute My Mother." And He said the *Ave Maria* to the words, *Benedictus fructus ventris tui*. When Jesus had finished the angelical salutation, He continued :—" My daughter, do you love Me ?" And she answered :—" Not only do I love Thee, O Lord, but I would wish, if it was pleasing to Thee, to be in Thy heart." And our Saviour :—" Eager as you are to enter into My heart, why do you not try to penetrate the wound on My side ?" And Margaret answered :

—“O my Lord Jesus Christ, if I was in Thy heart I would be in the wound on Thy side, in the depths of Thy nails, in the crown of thorns, in the gall and vinegar, and in the bandage covering thy venerable eyes.” And our Lord said again :—“My daughter, do you love Me?” Margaret :—“No, my Lord.” And our Lord :—“When will you love Me?” Margaret answered :—“I shall love Thee when I shall so cruelly feel in my body the sufferings Thou didst endure for me, that I can join my hands to die.” Our Lord :—“Would you not wish another death?” Margaret :—“No, my God, for that is the one which I ought to choose, at the same time, for love of Thee and for my sins.” Our Lord answered :—“My wisdom is such, that amidst the like torments I could give you a happy death.” “My Jesus,” cried Margaret, “I do not wish for it. I long to expire in bitter sorrow for Thy sufferings.” Our Lord asked her for the third time, and said :—“Do you love Me?” Margaret answered :—“If I loved Thee, I would serve Thee. I believe that no creature has ever loved Thee as Thou deservest to be loved.” And our Lord :—“You speak the truth.” Then this elect soul continued :—“I would wish to love Thee, and, if possible, to do more than love Thee, so much do I desire Thy love. I am well bound thereto, if I consider my littleness greater than that of any other person, and incapable of elevating itself to the height of Thy dignity, who didst vouchsafe to descend so low to my distress.” Our Lord asked her :—“Would you wish to die like the blessed Andrew?” And Margaret answered :—“Let me die, my God, howsoever Thou pleasest, provided that I die in the sorrow which I so ardently entreat Thee to grant me ; for if I obtained it, I would this moment be crucified.

It is proper that it should be thus ; one sees in the world the innocent son dying for his father ; and not only am I guilty of the crime of my first parents, on whose account Thou didst die, but I have also voluntarily committed many actual sins." Our Lord said :—" Would you not wish to share in My sweat ?" Margaret, who longed to feel all the dolours of the Passion, did not answer this particular question. Our Saviour continued :—" If a new Scripture were written and joined to that which I have given, men could never understand the anguish I experienced in that sweat."

XLIII. On the eighteenth of July Margaret devoutly received the Body of Jesus Christ, then she was elevated to the sublime regions of peace, and asked God to keep her from ever offending Him. " I wonder that it should be so, O Lord," she exclaimed ; " I throw myself as one dead into the arms of Thy mercy. I wish to abandon myself, and Thee alone to support Me." She added :—" O blessed Paul, I write with you, Who shall separate me from Jesus Christ my Saviour ? Certainly neither hunger, nor thirst, nor fire, nor the sword, nor tribulation. My Lord, Thou hast given me such fervour that I would run promptly and in full security through all those obstacles. Should the whole world oppose me, it would yet be unable to separate me from Thee." Margaret passed this morning in peace and new spiritual joy.

XLIV. On the vigil of Saint Clare she received the Son of God and heard these sweet words :—" Blessed daughter, for love of whom I took flesh of the Virgin Mary, blessed be all the afflictions which I suffered for your soul. Blessed be this same incarnation ! Blessed, again, be all the labours which I have borne with that

love which binds Me to the human race. I have to-day but few good sons compared with the number of the wicked. But though there remained to Me but one in the whole world, for him I would bless my sufferings. I will say that if I have sometimes communicated to you My grace in your relations with your son Badia, it was in order to increase My love in his heart. I recommend him gravity, honesty, love, and solicitude in all things that he thinks agreeable unto Me, and watchfulness over the spirit and the flesh, wheresoever he thinks or perceives an occasion of sin. In the world he set his wits to offend Me; I wish now that he would endeavour with as great a zeal in all his thoughts, all his affections, to acquire My grace."

XLV. On the Monday after Pentecost, when Margaret was preparing to receive Jesus Christ from the hands of priest Badia, Jesus said to her:—"I come to you, and you come not unto Me; I love you, and you love Me not; I serve you, and you serve Me not; I praise you, and you praise Me not as you ought. And what will you do, My daughter, amid such trials, thrown as it were into the midst of wolves? Truly I say unto you, I who have given help to the blessed Paul in his afflictions, I shall be with you; I who protected the blessed Gregory in trials and sickness, I shall be your guardian." Margaret answered:—"My God, Thou knowest all things before they exist, why dost Thou question this vile creature?" And our Lord:—"I was born of the pure and spotless bosom of that Virgin whose greatness lay in her profound humility, and I took compassion upon you, a light of a new life given unto the world, in order that he might imitate your repentance and be saved."

XLVI. The Saturday preceding the twentieth Sun-

day after Pentecost, Margaret devoutly received our Saviour. Her spirit was calm ; she immediately beheld Jesus upon the Cross ; He complained of finding so few tears, so little devotion, purity, humility, truth, and charity, and so much vain glory, envy, impurity, and solicitude for temporal concerns whence so many temptations arise. He said that those who are violently tempted are so frequently through their own fault, and He added :—“ If tears were possible in heaven, I would weep to-day with My Saints on the state of so many Christians, as I wept over Jerusalem, when I was received there in the midst of palms.” He also complained of the priests who could speak of Him only for an instant, and dryly, but much of worldly matters, and who preached not the gospel to His people ; again, of the prelates who sought not to restore concord and peace. “ If you had,” said He, “ a perfect charity, you would attach yourself not only to the paps of My consolation, you would weep over My injuries, and stay near your offended God ; you would consider at the same time that you deserved trials, not comfort ; the more so as you are a phial which must be cleansed by the waters of temptation, because it is destined that you shall hold most precious gifts.” Margaret answered :—“ O Lord, Thy sweetness attracts me, and I can never act in a contrary spirit.” She desired to communicate every day, and to see at her ease the ministers of God. On this subject our Lord made answer, that she could not find the fulness of comfort here below. “ You have in a great measure atoned for the past,” He said to her, “ by the victory you have gained in the humiliations which you underwent.” And she :—“ I have nothing that can please Thee.” Our Lord :—“ You might serve Me better if the fear, which saves

you from many falls did not lead your soul to wander over divers thoughts that you cannot prevent." At these words her fear again increased. Jesus Christ strengthened her and said:—"If you seek help to come to Me, pass not your time in worldly thoughts. Return to My Cross, there you shall find Me; there you shall taste your wonted comforts, and I will withdraw Myself less from you. When you confess your sins to those who hold My place, hide as far as you can the name of the persons who offend you. If you cannot, however, explain the circumstances without mentioning their names, I do not prescribe silence. Renounce as far as you can, all familiarity with seculars, and even with everybody that does not belong to the order of your Father's children. And I say unto you that even in consolation itself you shall find trouble." Our Lord showed her a fresh wound on His breast in the region of the heart. He told her that it was the work of so-called Christians, whom He had redeemed by the wound in His side. As Jesus saw that Margaret was frightened at the advice that He gave her on the necessity of returning to the Cross, and of absolutely rejecting all worldly thoughts, He again repeated: "If you wish for help, return to the Cross, and there you shall find Me."

CHAPTER VI.

ON HER ABUNDANT PRAYER AND ECSTATIC CONTEMPLATION.

I. MARGARET enjoyed, in preference to any other occupation, celebrating the solemn festivals of the saints, and recommending herself to their prayers. On the night of the conversion of Saint Paul, her spirit being united to God, she spoke thus:—"It is a thing just, reasonable, and proper, O my Saviour, that I serve Thee devoutly, that I serve Thee alone and do only what is pleasing to Thee ; Thy sovereign and ineffable Will, Thy Mercy has vouchsafed to come down even unto our littleness. Thou Whom the vast extent of the heavens are insufficient to contain, Thou Who wert concealed for nine months in the bosom of a virgin, Thou Whom the choirs of angels aid and serve in Paradise, Thou didst abase Thyself, for love of us, even to wash the feet of some poor sinners. It is then just that we should serve Thee, Whose life, in the humanity which Thou didst vouchsafe to assume, was only poverty, toil, and suffering, and that even unto death, the cruel death of the cross. By Thy inestimable mercy I entreat Thee, my God, to vouchsafe to make my heart and my life perfectly conformable to Thy love." No sooner had she finished speak-

ing, than our Lord said to her :—“ I am the Fountain of Life Whose sweetness you desire always to taste, though I tasted only bitterness for you. I am the Bread of Life with which you always desire to be refreshed and nourished, while I suffered hunger for your salvation. If you wish My divine wisdom to attend to your desires, neglect not to obey My commandments. I assure you, I assure every human being, that I shall not grant you, I shall not grant anybody, the gifts of My grace, if, according to My Gospel, they do not deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me.”

II. Jesus, the Author of all good ; Jesus, the Guide and the Love of those who love Him, wishing to guide Margaret on His footsteps, said to her :—“ You shall receive and you shall bear great troubles for love of Me ; you shall find yourself without spiritual consolation, and you shall remember what your confessor taught you, that in the thirst which you have of Me, I am with you. And who, pray, gives you interior light, fervour, the thirst of possessing Me, and your holy desires ? Who vouchsafes to protect you in your combats ?” Margaret answered :—“ No other than Thou, my Lord Jesus Christ.” And He replied :—“ Why then do you not show Me gratitude with all your heart ? You please Me more by your acts of thanksgiving, than by the joys which you ask for, and which I grant. Fear not, My daughter, and no longer doubt ; if you taste not the comforts that you long for every time that you seek Me ardently and with devotional tears, I am with you ; but you would wish to be filled always, though I lived in the world for you hungry and in want. Remember the words of your confessor, they are true ; he told you to strengthen you in great

afflictions, that I had filled every hair on your head with My mercy. Take courage and be glad, your sorrow and anguish shall be no longer continual ; when they shall have brought you to the borders of the abyss and you think yourself falling therein, I shall be with you, as I was with the blessed Paul, to whom I promised My grace. I shall grant you such great things that you cannot tell them to your confessor, who is, however, faithful in assisting and listening to you. And My sweetness, which has penetrated you, is it not great ?” “ O Lord,” returned Margaret, “ say not great ; it is ineffable, incomprehensible, infinite.”

III. On the vigil of the Purification, the tender Spouse said to Margaret who was bewailing His absence :—“ Fear not, My daughter ; if you observe My Gospel, if you entirely renounce everything under the heavens, if you abandon your son and abandon yourself with him, I shall never forsake you, and I shall call you My sister.” At these words full of sweetness and love, she experienced a delightful sweetness mingled with thirst, and she exclaimed aloud :—“ Neither our Lady, nor the Angels, nor the blessed, in the supreme enjoyment of God, can, on their divine sustenance, live without hunger and thirst of the sovereign God. O Lord,” she continued, “ in this hour I receive from Thee a sweet repose, and I hunger always for Thee.” And while she continued to pour forth her praises, at the same time shedding sweet tears, and burning with the love of God, our Lord, in the midst of her prayers, inspired her to invoke divers orders of the heavenly spirits and to invite them to her aid ; He performed for her untold acts of grace on each of the orders blessed of God, Who created them all. Margaret tasted the consolations of Jesus Christ

with such fervour, that she could not tear away from them, and was therefore obliged to delay her office. She was accustomed, however, to discharge this duty so devoutly that, notwithstanding her delicacy and numerous infirmities, she used to put off her meals and communion, if she had not fully completed the office beforehand. She employed nearly all her time in calling the God of her desires, in addressing Him with prayers and tears; and nevertheless, she used to say every hour forty *Pater Nosters* with as many *Ave Marias* and *Glorias*.

IV. One day she was praying and weeping in the oratory of her father, Saint Francis. Transported with fervour by the attractions of divine sweetness, she became animated with divine love. Many persons used to remain with her in prayer through devotion. Fearing that she had manifested the ardour which she could not conceal, she humbly besought Jesus with tears to withdraw her soon from this world of iniquity. "All-powerful Saviour," she cried, "if it pleases Thy infinite compassion, I would wish, without further delay, to go unto Thee, I fear so much that my frail spirit will offend Thee if I continue in this life." Jesus Christ, who had given her this desire accompanied with fear, commanded her to make up her mind to support patiently great bodily afflictions. She answered:—"I offer and deliver myself up gladly, O Lord, to suffer all for love of Thy Name; whatever brings me torments I count for nothing, because of the abundance of Thy love." But our Lord said to her:—"Could you by any word, sign, or expression assimilate to a known comfort the joy which you feel in this hour?" Margaret answered:—"Tell me not, O Lord, that I can compare it to anything. I am persuaded that the

blessed themselves in the kingdom of heaven know not nor could tell Thy sweetness. But, O my Creator, I acknowledge that it is through the Virgin Mary to whom you refuse nothing, that I have received such great favours."

V. On the night of St. Blaise she heard Jesus Christ say to her: "You would always wish to prolong the sweetness of My visits; but in the world you cannot obtain the fulfilment of your desire. The Apostles themselves who followed Me enjoyed not My favours uninterruptedly. Why do you wish to taste unfatigued the repose of My suavity? Why do you not constantly meditate on the union of my humanity with the Divine nature, on My profound humility, and on the course of My life and of My Passion? Remember My humiliations when Pilate sent Me bound to Herod, and when Herod sent Me back in derision to Pilate. If you ascend this ladder by steps you shall be united inseparably to Me, your Creator, in heaven and upon earth."

VI. The principal sign of divine grace in Margaret was her continual desire to hear the Holy Scriptures. I never found her in such a weak condition that on hearing the Word of God she was not strengthened by the joy of the Holy Ghost, and bathed in tears for her Maker, Jesus Christ. This excellent and well-cultivated garden received the seed of divine truth. Margaret used to say to me, her unworthy confessor:—"Brother, Father of my soul, speak to me of God, for His word immediately inebriates me with delight, it inflames me with happiness, enlightens and comforts me; it cures my body of disease, and, while it lingers in my soul, I no longer feel my infirmities." She bore indelibly impressed on her heart the Name of Jesus. If s^t

chanced to pronounce it in the beginning, the middle, or end of her discourse, she would cry out aloud, bursting into tears :—“ O sweet Name, above every other name, the virtue of which hath called me unto grace ; Name which redeemed me with its Blood, which drew me towards it by love, which brought me to attach myself to it alone.” To my questions concerning her prayers she thus replied :—“ Brother, after invoking, in the first place, the Most Holy Trinity, which is one living God, eternal and immense, I recommend me to my Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Redeemer, incarnate for us, to His blessed Mother, Mary, ever Virgin, our advocate, and to all the orders of Saints, beginning with the Seraphim, who burn with love for God. Then I return to our Lord Jesus Christ, conceived of the Virgin Mary by the operation of the Holy Ghost, to His childhood without sorrow, to the joy of the angels, to the adoration of the Magi, to the flight of My new-born Lord, to His laborious journeys. Then I meditate on His affable colloquy with the woman of Samaria, the defence of the woman in the temple, His mercy towards the daughter of the Chanaanite, towards the lepers and the blind, and towards the paralytic by the well. I then think on His feet, so pure and delicate without covering ; I see Him going through villages, burghs, cities, deserts, and walking erect upon the depths of the sea. I meditate on the accomplishment of His miracles, [on the sorrow of Matthew and Magdalene, on the wonderful resurrection of Lazarus and the others. In each of these situations, as they recur to Me, I address infinite praises to the Creator. I praise, also, in all the orders of the Saints, Him who hath made the blessed, and who grants me new and abundant favours on their

feasts. And continuing my prayers, though with weariness and distraction, I return thanks to our Lord for the benefits which He has bestowed upon me, without any merit on my part. Then, as far as God will permit, I fix my spirit in the secret Fountain of Life, Jesus Christ our Lord ; I dwell there fainting with thirst. My soul meditates on the kiss and the betrayal of Judas, the shameful boast he made of the incomparable treasure he was delivering up, the bloody sweat, the denial of the disciples, the blows, the ignominy of the spits, the insulting words, the anguish of the cross, the deep nails, His eyes bandaged, the false witnesses, the impiety of the judges, the perfidy of the Jews, the thief excusing our Lord, Jesus forgiving him, and His mother whom He recommends to the beloved disciple. Here, again, with bitter tears, I contemplate and meditate upon the drink of gall, the sun darkened, the rocks rent asunder, the graves open, and my Saviour, whose head is bowed, recommending His spirit to His Father. Overcome with sadness at the foot of the Cross, I long to die with the Virgin Mother, and to be pierced in spirit with her sword of sorrow. Weeping, I entreat her to allow me share in what she suffered in a manner ineffable, since it was for me a sinner, and for my redemption, that our Lord suffered death. I tell you these things, my father and confessor, in order that you may see whether my life is conformable to Holy Writ. I would never have mentioned them, nor would I ever tell you anything in the future, if I did not fear the deceptions of the enemy, ever wont to glide into souls under cover of the cloak of virtue. What was I, and what am I now, that such a gift should be granted me ? I deserve nothing but everlasting fire."

VII. On the feast of Saint Laurence, Jesus Christ appeared full of joy to Margaret in prayer. He showed her, in this ravishment, a throne which occupied a great portion of the heavens. Its splendour was magnificent, and the servant of God could neither understand nor describe its beauty. Enraptured by this superb throne, she beheld her blessed father Saint Francis sitting in the highest place. She understood by revelation that the first angel was expelled from this post,—seraphic, sublime, and glorious. Jesus Christ said to her:—"My daughter, you cannot yet fully understand the splendour of this throne, because you are not yet glorified, your state is still the imperfect state of mortal life." She was then raised to a more brilliant light and to a higher place near to the throne of the Supreme King, where the throne of the Divine Mother was shown to her. It was so brilliant that she could not bear its splendour, and she heard Jesus say to her:—"You cannot understand the beauty or the splendour of My Mother, because I have made her more like unto Me than any other creature. The large and magnificent aisle, in which you beheld My loved Son Francis, your Father, shall be filled with his Friars, after they have peopled My church, and imitated their Father's perfect faith."

VIII. One day when Margaret had piously received the Body of Our Lord, she heard him say:—"My faithful daughter, servant of God, praise and honour My Mother, so beautiful and pure. Neither the Scriptures nor the world express the excellence of her beauty. I have made this Mother and Mistress with a sovereign and eternal wisdom dwelling within her; for she was, at the same time, My

Daughter, My Mother, and My Lady; praise and honour her, I enjoin you, and make her praised and honoured so far as you can, since she is worthy of all praise. She is a vessel of purity, which I made Me, to save the human race; she is the Mother who gave Me light without sorrow, and fed Me on her virginal milk." Margaret answered:—"Lord, how great is Thy humility in deigning to recommend Thy Mother to a poor creature." And our Lord replied:—"If I could give in heaven more praise and honour to a creature, this blessed Mother would be the object of it, for she is worthy thereof. And do you, Margaret, praise Me, and not yourself; honour Me, and not yourself; for then you shall praise and honour Me, and I shall praise and honour you. Love Me, and serve Me only." Margaret answered:—"O Lord, Thou didst often pardon my sins." And Our Lord continued:—"Fear of the world, and your anxiety to shun it, not to give Me offence, kept you near Me. Be careful not to receive Me, when the priest holds Me between his hands, without previously acknowledging your guilt, and making a full confession of your sins. Your confessor has forbidden you to send for him to reconcile the great number of men and women, whom you have converted by your words and tears. He replied, that he could not clean so many stables in a day; tell him that, when he hears confessions, he cleanses not stables, but prepares in the soul of the penitents an abode for My reception."

IX. On the following day, an Angel came to Margaret, and said to her:—"When you can stay on your knees, and without a pillow, in the oratory prepared for you, hold your hands on high like the

priest in the Holy Sacrifice, or crosswise, after the manner of suppliants, devote yourself to prayer. When you are weak, rest for a little on a stool, and there keep your spirit lively, fixed and attentive to the word of God, while Mass is being celebrated. At the beginning of the Holy Sacrifice, you ought to make the sign of the cross, and take holy water. If you wish to receive your Lord and Creator every day, you have full permission from God to do so. You shall find in the Holy Sacrifice an increase of fervour; and the Lord shall be with you to strengthen and sustain your spirit."

X. Owing to her infirmities, Margaret was unable to leave her bed for some time. On the vigil of Saint Magdalen, she was raised in spirit and began to praise God; she immediately perceived her strength return with such force, that all the spectators wondered. In the joy which she experienced, she asked them to sing the holy canticles. Immediately she was ravished into ecstasy, during which Magdalen, the blessed apostle of Jesus Christ, appeared to her, clothed in a robe of silver; a crown, rich in precious stones, adorned her head, and the angels of heaven surrounded her. In this vision, Margaret heard Jesus address her thus:—"As My Father declared of Me to John the Baptist, *This is My beloved Son*; so do I say: *This is My beloved Daughter*. You wonder at the brilliant robe that Magdalen is wearing; know that she earned it in the desert cave. There also did she acquire the crown of precious stones by her victories over temptation, and by the penance which she imposed upon herself." After these words, the vision vanished, and left Margaret so weak that she could not raise her head.

XI. Another night, while she was praying and watching she was ravished in spirit; she beheld the companies of the blessed, and Jesus Christ seated on His throne, His countenance full of joy, looking down on her with tenderness. Instructed by an angel, Margaret cast herself in spirit into His embraces, and gave expression to these loving sentiments:—"O my Father, why dost Thou deprive Thyself of the embraces of a soul, which desires but Thee alone?" Our Lord replied:—"My daughter, I shall only consent to bestow on you such caresses, when you endure much affliction for love of Me." Margaret, who longed for the dissolution of her body, answered:—"O Lord, when shall this poor body be dissolved?" In a few minutes, an answer was returned by an angel in these terms:—"You have ardently longed for the dissolution of body, this time past, Margaret; and you shall see your wish fully accomplished before coming among us. I am bidden tell you these things from our Lord Jesus, Who not only created you and me, but also formed all creatures, even the angel who would not be good, or belong to Him by grace." At these words, with a cry like to that of a woman in labour, she shed abundant tears at the remembrance of the ineffable incarnation of the Son of God. He who changes into joy the sorrow of His elect, immediately appeared to her in the shape of a little Babe whiter than snow, lying in the manger, and leaning on His Mother's virginal bosom.

XII. Constant meditation on the benefits granted to mankind by Jesus Christ, lent a new impulse to the fervour of her soul. She had recourse to beads, to assist her memory in the recitation of her numerous prayers. For example, she used to say four hundred

Pater Nosters for the faults which she had already deplored, for so many years, with bitterness of heart; a hundred for the order of Saint Francis, to whom our Lord had recommended her; a hundred for all the orders of the Church, that they might persevere in virtue and grace; a hundred for the elect in the state of grace; a hundred for sinners deprived of grace; a hundred for her confessors; a hundred for her benefactors; a hundred for the needs of the Holy Land; a hundred for those who praise the Mother of God; a hundred for her spiritual children, and the souls united unto hers; and a hundred for the inhabitants of Cortona.

XIII. Ever more and more inflamed with divine love, Margaret began to say a hundred *Pater Nosters* for the love of God the Father; a hundred in honour of God the Son; a hundred in [honour of the Holy Ghost; a hundred in praise of the Mother of our Lord; a hundred for the parents of this divine Mother; a hundred in thanksgiving for the creation of all things visible and invisible; a hundred for the infusion of new spirits into the bodies of certain persons; a hundred for our first Parents, placed in Paradise; a hundred for their disobedience; a hundred in honour of the Annunciation; a hundred in honour of the coming of Jesus Christ within the period fixed by the will of His Father; a hundred in honour of the angel Gabriel, sent to the Virgin Mother; a hundred in honour of the answer, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord*; a hundred in honour of the visit of the Mother of our Lord to Elizabeth; a hundred in honour of the favour granted to Mary, of bearing the Son of God for nine months in her womb, a hundred in thanksgiving for the favour of having brought forth the Child without

pain and laid Him in the manger ; a hundred, in honour of Saint Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus ; a hundred, because Jesus Christ had no horror of a stable ; and a hundred, because He suffered Himself to be circumcised ; a hundred, for the adoration of the Magi ; a hundred, for our Lord's Presentation in the Temple ; a hundred, for His having vouchsafed to converse with persons in the world ; a hundred, because being immense He made Himself little, being eternal He became mortal ; a hundred, because His Father sent Him ; a hundred, because He became personally incarnate ; a hundred, in honour of the Holy Ghost, who wrought this work ; a hundred, for the flight of our Lord with His Mother into Egypt ; a hundred, because after three days He was found in the Temple among the doctors ; a hundred, for His vouchsafing to speak with sinners and the Chanaanite ; a hundred, for His receiving and praising Magdalen at supper ; a hundred, for the labours of our Lady ; a hundred, for the disputes of Jesus with the Scribes and Pharisees ; a hundred, for His resting by the well-side and suffering from fatigue and thirst ; a hundred, for His conversion of the woman and people of Samaria ; a hundred, in remembrance of His other sermons, and of His visits to the towns and villages ; a hundred, in remembrance of the places which He watered with His sweat ; a hundred, for all the injuries by which He was humiliated ; a hundred, for His vouchsafing to be seen and touched by men ; a hundred, in honour of the baptism of Jesus ; a hundred, for the calling of the apostles ; a hundred, because in presence of His apostles He broke with His sacred hands material bread ; a hundred, because to them and to us He gave and explained the Sacred Scriptures ; a hundred, for the abundant

knowledge that He communicated to the world ; a hundred, in remembrance of His eating with sinners ; a hundred, for His fast of forty days in the desert ; a hundred, because He was hungry and suffered Himself to be tempted ; a hundred, for His poverty at His birth, during His life and at His death ; a hundred, in memory of all the places where Jesus, the joy of the blessed, wept ; a hundred, for Mount Sinai, where He gave the law to Moses ; a hundred, for the transfiguration on Thabor ; a hundred, for the last supper which He kept with His apostles ; a hundred, for His admirable discourse to them at that time ; a hundred, in honour of His sacred Body, of which our Lord left to them the precious gift ; a hundred, for His washing the traitor's and disciples' feet, a hundred, because He fled not the spot where he was betrayed ; a hundred, for the blows, buffets, and derision to which He was subjected on that night ; a hundred, for the traitor's kiss received with such kindness ; a hundred, for His saying to Judas, *What you have to do, do quickly* ; a hundred, in honour of His crucifixion for us ; and a hundred, for the other works which He performed for the salvation of mankind ; a hundred, for the thief admitted, on the cross, into His kingdom ; a hundred, in remembrance of the testimony to His Passion rendered by creatures, and at different times ; a hundred, for the dolours of the Blessed Virgin during the three days of the Passion ; a hundred, in honour of Jesus' recommendation of His Mother to John ; a hundred, for His Mother's lively faith at that period ; a hundred, for the holy patriarchs brought out of Limbo ; a hundred, for the resurrection of our Lord ; a hundred, for His vouchsafing to appear to Peter, Magdalen, and the disciples ; a hundred, for His con-

descension in eating with them after the Resurrection ; a hundred, for His appearing to Magdalen, as a gardener, and calling her by name ; a hundred, for His appearing, as a pilgrim, to the two disciples ; a hundred, in remembrance of the Ascension of our Lord ; a hundred, for the sending of the Holy Ghost to the apostles ; a hundred, for all the works which He performed and is performing for creatures ; a hundred, for the coming of the general judgment ; a hundred, for the gift of the commandments to Moses, for our salvation ; a hundred, in honour of all the orders of angels ; a hundred, for the patriarchs ; a hundred for the prophets ; a hundred, for the assemblage of the holy apostles ; a hundred, for the constancy of the martyrs ; a hundred, for the holy priests of God ; a hundred, for the confessors ; a hundred, for the holy virgins ; a hundred, for the widows consecrated to God ; a hundred, for sinners unconverted to repentance ; a hundred, for the sacraments given by our Lord to His Holy Church ; a hundred, for all the temporal good granted to human nature ; a hundred, for the power of binding and loosing given to priests ; a hundred, for the continual mercy shown by Jesus Christ to souls ; a hundred, for the grace of learning granted to preachers ; a hundred, for the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost ; a hundred, for the four Evangelists ; a hundred, in honour of the late departure of the Mother of God from this world, profitable to our salvation ; and a hundred, for the miraculous assistance of the apostles at the time of her death and assumption.

Since matter for praise is never failing, the tongue of him who praises should never cease. Margaret also said a hundred *Pater Nosters*, because our Lord had delivered her from many dangers in the world, and had

fed her while in rebellion against Jesus Christ ; a hundred, for giving her the light of conscience ; a hundred for her disobedience to the divine commands ; a hundred, because God had called her to grace ; a hundred, because He had delivered her from the hands of her tempters ; a hundred, because He had forgiven her sins aloud ; a hundred, for the great public and private dispensation of His grace ; a hundred, for her ingratitude to God for His benefits ; a hundred, for the gates of paradise opened to the elect ; a hundred, for the blessed angels sent to guide us ; a hundred, for the sufferings of our Lord at the hour of matins ; and a hundred, for His sufferings in every succeeding hour.

The reader need not be astonished that he finds here the recital of facts such as are mentioned in Holy Writ. I wished to preserve the order of the happy Margaret as she told them to me.

XV. Margaret could not contain within herself the fire of divine love, she felt herself obliged to open her heart to her brethren. In her familiar colloquies with God, by means of her slender temporal resources, or by a watchful application to prayer, she was always careful to help her neighbour to the best of her power. When I questioned her on the distribution of her prayers, she answered me thus : " You must know that at the beginning, Father, I consider the littleness of my misery, and I have recourse first to the Mother of our Lord; then to each of the venerable orders of Saints. Having invoked their patronage, I entreat the Sovereign King, my Lord and my God, to take care of the children who are agreeable unto Him, and to vouchsafe, for their sakes, to look favourably upon, and mercifully to accept the prayers which I offer Him with tears. I return Him thanks for all the benefits He has be-

stowed on me ; then, according to my knowledge, I pray for the souls in purgatory, for our Holy Father the Pope, and for the sacred college assisting him ; for all the orders of the Church in every condition of life, that the most virtuous may persevere in grace ; that the weak may be protected, and never fall in the contest, and I pray for the legates of the Holy Sec, sent forth for the salvation of the faithful. I pray for the needs of the Holy Land, and that it may be recovered, as I ardently desire. I pray for Christian kings and princes, and for the governors of provinces ; for peace and the cessation of war ; I pray for the virgins, the married, the widow, and the orphans ; I pray for the afflicted and for the captives. I pray for Cortona, where the all-powerful God filled me with His grace. I pray for my confessor and superior ; for the whole order of Friars-Minors, to whose care Jesus Christ has entrusted me always and in all things. I pray for my benefactors, and for those who were the means of my salvation. I pray for sinners, that God may lead them to His grace ; for infidels and heretics, that they may be converted and walk under the guidance of our mother, the holy Roman Church. When I pray for Tartars, Saracens, and other infidels, I feel a new joy springing up in my heart ; if I come to the Jews, their ingratitude occurs to me, and my feelings of joy and fervour grow less. I pray likewise with fervent supplications for those who offended me publicly or privately, in word or deed. Then I return to Jesus, my Love. As He has given me the grace to do so, I rise to the embraces of contemplation ; the familiarity of the Most High infuses such sweetness into my soul, and attracts it so forcibly that I can no longer bear even the presence of my sor. Indeed I could not do so if I did not remember *

he will enter your order, as our Lord promised and revealed to me, and that he will be not only a religious, but also a priest and preacher of the divine word."

XVI. The humble servant of God believed herself wretched in all things. "My Lord Jesus Christ," she exclaimed, "does not my wretchedness cause Thee indignation at sight of my littleness and poverty of virtue? Wilt Thou not withdraw from me the promised gifts of Thy mercy?" Our Lord answered her:—"It has pleased otherwise My Father, the Holy Ghost, and Me, and My Mother, ever-Virgin, in whose womb I became incarnate for the salvation of mankind; you must praise her incessantly, for she prays for you; she asks that grace may grow in you and not be withdrawn, but that all My promises to you be fulfilled." Margaret replied:—"Lord, I am a vessel of pride, without humility, honour, patience, or charity, how is it possible that any of Thy gifts should be bestowed on me?" And Our Lord said to her:—"Are you not ever willing to conform to My pleasure? Do you not feel your affliction renewed, when you have been unfaithful to Me? Do you not generously avoid all creatures, through fear of offending Me? To clothe My poor, do you not strip yourself for love of Me, who was stripped upon the cross? Have you not chosen poverty in all things for My love's sake?" Margaret:—"Though I should have done all that, O Lord, thou knowest that I am not fervent, but an idler in Thy employment. And how wouldst thou communicate Thy gifts to such a wretched creature? Save me from every sin, and from the effects of idleness?" Our Lord:—"This station is a martyrdom contrived for you, in

order to increase your strength, and to make you grow in My grace." Margaret:—"How much, O Lord, have I offended Thee by my idleness?" Through fear of awakening in her a feeling of pride, or of throwing her into despair, Our Saviour made no answer to this question.

XVII. Father Ubaldo, the guardian of the Friars, took me with him, one morning, to visit Margaret. When he had spoken to her fervently on the Passion of Jesus Christ, she replied, overcome with sorrow:—"If I had been near my crucified Lord, I would have told Him to send me to hell rather than give up His beautiful body to such torments." At these words, which seemed contrary to Divine Providence, the father was surprised, and thought that Margaret was deceived by the suggestions of the enemy. "The Mother of Our Lord," he said, "loved Him more than any person in the world; she was near the cross, weighed down with grief; and she would have sacrificed herself for the salvation of the world, if it were opportune." He added, that Peter also was unwilling that Jesus should suffer, and that Jesus said to him:—*Get thee behind Me, Satan*. Then we took our leave; she was in ecstasy, and while we were returning to the convent, Our Lord addressed her:—"My daughter, tell the friar that what he taught you was true. But that word which so disturbed Father Ubaldo, I addressed not to Peter, who loved Me fervently; it was for Satan himself who sought to dissuade Me from enduring the torments of My Passion, which he looked on with aversion, because of the salvation which would bring into the world; while, on the other hand, his natural perfidiousness diligently sought

make My enemies annoy Me, and even put Me to death. The devil did not fully know Me, until he saw hell left empty ; at this sight, he was filled with such sorrow that he would die thereof, if it were possible to him to die. As to Peter, whose love was excessive, I loved him no less, because he had spoken that word which I was bound to notice. The Friars ought to have no doubt of the love of your heart, it has not ceased to be faithful, because it has lively experience of the inclination which I freely testified to men. If you had pronounced those words while I was on the cross, your faith, which is entirely pure, would have saved you. You are the flower which will make the dried-up plants re-blossom ; from you will flow water to make fruitful the roots of parched trees. You are My daughter, My sister, My companion ; and My Father has given you a grace which you shall never lose." At these words, the servant of God, seized with terror, answered :—"Suffer me not, O Lord, to be deceived, or illusions to lead me astray ; in myself I find no virtue from which I could expect such graces in the future, or which could allow me to possess them actually." Then Jesus crucified appeared to Margaret, and said to her :—"Put your palms in the place of the nails in My hands." As Margaret answered through respect :—"No, O Lord ;" the wound on the side of our blessed Jesus opened, and through the opening she beheld our Saviour's heart. In this ecstatic vision, she threw herself prostrate upon our crucified Lord, who transported her to heaven, saying :—"My daughter, you shall draw from these wounds what the preachers are unable to teach you. Father Ubaldo spoke the truth : My Mother, to

fulfil the law of charity, was willing to be crucified with Me, if that would suffice for the salvation of mankind. My answer to Peter was for those to come who will believe in Me; that they might remember, that not only did I take for them a passible and mortal flesh of the Virgin Mary, but that I also redeemed them at a high price, of My own Will. All that I did from the creation of your first parents to My death on the cross and afterwards, was done for love of man. Your old enemy, when he beheld Limbo deserted by the holy patriarchs, was struck with great envy; and he employed new arts for deceiving souls, for he can never, without poignant grief, contemplate their elevation to the heights from which he himself was cast forth. He turns them aside, as far as he can, by the voice of temptation, from My ineffable love. His suggestions brought only obduracy upon My people, redeemed by My Precious Blood, greater than ever was before from the time of My Passion up to the present. My Father would have struck this obduracy with a sentence of death, if I did not offer Him My labours and sorrows, by showing Him my wounds. After My example, the Mother of mercy, the compassionate advocate of mankind, humbly poured forth her prayers with the whole court of the blessed.

“Tell this also to the Friars-Minors, your Fathers: the resplendent throne which you have seen in the Order of Seraphim was Lucifer's, and your blessed Father Saint Francis sits there full of glory to-day. The vast space before this throne shall be filled by the Friars of his order, the imitators of his example. This order is great, and because of the immensity of its heart its humblest members shall see eternal life. I

not the Friars, then, fear to receive those who are willing to enter it. Though the postulants should have no other merit than perfect chastity and the recitation of the divine office, it is my pleasure that they be admitted, and though they should only remove themselves from the pastimes of the world, from homicide, perjury, robbery, usury, and carnal pleasures, I am content. I am now offended by the many, by all, even by those who are nothing, who can do nothing, who sell only trifles like hucksters; but as I extend my mercy to the obdurate, who hold aloof from me, so shall I extend my justice to punish them when the time comes. As for you, My daughter, be patient; your life shall be a martyrdom so filled with doubts and so hard that you would choose the sufferings of the saints in preference to the trials you have to endure. The afflictions which I made you feel up to the present are nothing compared with those that you shall experience from this trial in which there is nothing that can please Me." As the servant of our Lord was not afraid to suffer, but only to displease God, she answered:—"How shall I manage, O Lord, in these afflictions? I fear not troubles, but sin." And our Saviour:—"You shall receive assistance, my daughter, and from the bosom of tribulation you shall pass into My kingdom. You are My instrument, an instrument that shall be touched as often as I allow. I say unto you that peace shall be established between the Bishop of Arezzo and the people of Cortona. He who threatens that city with war from love of ruling trusts in the prayers offered up for him. He shall feel and he shall see the fruit to be drawn therefrom. Let it suffice for you to know that his conduct is displeasing to Me."

¶I. One Sunday after Pentecost Margaret re-

spectfully received the Body of Jesus Christ ; her joy lasted for a long time, then she began to speak :—
 “ Why, O my soul, dost thou seek not thy Spouse, the crucified Son of God ? ” She arose from the mat where she was praying and kneeling, took holy water to wash away her sins, and went forth from her cell with excessive fervour ; she began to cry aloud, asking for Jesus. Immediately she found herself in spirit at the feet of our Lord, she washed His divine feet and wiped them, and she besought the Most High to show His face to one who longed for it. “ You cannot see My countenance in all its beauty,” he replied, “ until I send you to the glory of the blessed.” Margaret answered :—“ My Lord, Thou leavest me to pass through long Lents without Thee.” And our Saviour :—“ As the quadragesimal time has been given you, so also are reserved for you the paschal feasts.” Margaret replied :—“ Lord, is it pleasing unto Thee that I speak of Thy remarkable favours to the people ? ” And our Saviour :—“ Since you hear not those who question you nor understand what you reply in your ecstatic colloquies, the gifts of My mercy are naturally made manifest, and it is My will that things be so.” At these words, Margaret, reassured, cried out :—“ Thou art My Father, the Author of my resurrection, My Spouse, My comfort, and the Joy of all joys.” And Our Lord said to her :—“ And you are My daughter, My companion, My elect.” Margaret returned :—“ How great is Thy love for me, O my Saviour ! My Beloved, send me not into the desert.” Our Lord :—“ I shall send you there as a sheep among wolves.” And Margaret :—“ My God, haste and destroy the structure of my body, that I may be worthy to come unto thee in the midst of tribulation.” Our Lord :—“ O

thy trials shall be great. The greatest, however, will proceed directly from Me ; for there is no greater trial than the sensible privation of My presence in a soul." Margaret answered :—" Thou, O Lord, art the Life of my life ; if Thou sendest me into the desert, I shall die there. Thou art my treasure, without whom all riches would appear supreme poverty to me." Here Jesus manifested Himself full of joy to His servant, bidding her again return to the desert. With the eyes of the spirit she beheld Our Lord seated on a radiant throne ; the Virgin Mary was on His right ; she was on a throne, wearing a crown, surrounded by all the choirs of angels, and she congratulated Margaret. The King Eternal invited her to the distinct vision of the different orders of the blessed. This call brought great joy to her heart, which seemed to open. She could scarcely answer and say :—" Lord, I love Thee alone, because Thou hast created me ; I long to behold Thee, who didst fill me with a joy of which I can never tire of speaking, yet never express." Returning to the Mother of Our Lord, she continued :—" Lady, I entreat thee to ask thy Son to allow me look upon the glory of His face." As Our Saviour dismissed her with joy, and told her again to go into the desert, she answered :—" Lord, if I return to the desert, it will be a cruel affliction for me." And Jesus :—" Remember, My daughter, that at the beginning of your consolations I told you that you should be suckled from the Wound in My side." Margaret answered :—" Gladly, O Lord, do I invite and offer myself spontaneously to every kind of torment for love of Thee. Thou knowest that I seek nothing but Thee, Who art indescribable sweetness ; and without this joy I would imagine myself in These and many other things occurred in this

ecstasy, and the servant of God came to the use of her faculties. Addressing herself to me, she said:—
 “Father, I no longer wish to keep any of the things given to me for food or clothing. I wish to suffer hunger, to nourish the poor; to strip myself to clothe them; to give away my new tunic and to clothe myself in rags; in fine, to live in absolute want that they may have plenty. O my Fathers, Friars-Minors,” she continued, “do no longer as you are wont to do hitherto; give nothing for me to any person whatever; I wish to run unimpeded to my soul’s Love, Jesus. If anything has been laid by for my wants, distribute it immediately to the poor of my crucified Lord, whom I bear in my heart.”

XIX. On the feast of the blessed Magdalen, Margaret put some questions to Our Saviour, who appeared to her with the stigmas of the passion. She asked Him if He would appear to all sorts of men at the end of the world and show them His wounds. Our Saviour answered that every eye should behold Him. “But these wounds, O my daughter,” He continued, “shall be a source of joy to the blessed, and an object of everlasting confusion unto the reprobate.” Margaret continued:—“Will not the blessed experience sorrow at the sight?” And Our Lord:—“Their perfect glory cannot be mingled with sadness; they will be unable to experience affliction; but, on the contrary, they shall partake of joy in Me, their Redeemer, by reason of their Redemption. If you wish,” continued Jesus, “I shall show you the gifts I propose to bestow on you.” And Margaret answered:—“No, O Lord, Thou art my joy; I wish to behold Thee only; Thou art the Life which I breathe, the Joy which fills me with delight, the Peace on which I rest; Thou art the whole

Good of my soul. O my God, I behold Thee wounded, and I acknowledge that Thou didst vouchsafe to suffer and to die for mankind. I entreat Thee not to suffer the creatures against whom I see Thee now so irritated, to separate themselves from Thee and go into everlasting fire. I know, Lord, that there is no greater sorrow than that of separation from Thee, the infinite Joy."

Our Lord was about to bless her by way of dismissal, when Margaret exclaimed:—"My God, I desire Thy blessing, but delay it, I entreat Thee, that I may remain yet a little while with Thee." As the fear of seeing so great a consolation coming to a close increased more and more, she turned towards the Mother of Jesus and said to her:—"Beautiful Mother and my Lady, entreat your only Son not to deprive me of the joy of His presence. I would wish never to see the end of this vision full of grace, never to be sent back into the desert of the world. If His divine will guides me hither, tell Him, O Mother of mercy, to give me some hope of returning to such happiness." Jesus Christ called her to enjoy the blessed vision of the Saints, and she answered:—"O Lord, Thou art the Holy of Holies, their Light, their Sweetness, and their Crown; I long to behold Thee only, and when I shall have seen and possessed Thee, I shall be in the presence of all; I shall have seen all." The Most High asked her to join her hands and to put them within His, bearing the indentures of His Wounds. She dared not do so through respect; nevertheless, she asked for a token of love and confidence. Our Lord answered:—"In token of My love and confidence, I command you never to speak but to Me." Margaret replied:—"My God, being unable to fulfil this command with-

out the help of Thy grace, I ask Thee for that help, and I shall willingly obey Thy mercy. Thou alone knowest my frailty ; hide me, then, from all creatures ; as I cannot speak, do not oblige me to make any communication to Thy people, or to any persons in particular." In this situation, like a daughter full of gratitude towards her parents, she questioned the Most High :—" My Lord Jesus Christ," she exclaimed, " the Splendour of the Eternal Father, how much dost Thou love my Fathers, the Friars, to whom you have entrusted me ?" Jesus answered :—" My daughter, they are greater and dearer unto Me than anything upon earth." She heard these words with delight, and asked the Eternal Priest, Jesus, for His blessing upon them all. He gave it, saying :—" My daughter, I bless all the Friars-Minors, in the Name of My Father, in My own Name, and in the Name of the Holy Ghost." This happy colloquy gave her still greater assurance, and she ventured to add :—" How shall it be with those fathers, Thy Elect, who, for love of Thee, are so diligent in my salvation ?" Our Lord answered :—" Let them always try to become better, for they are the earnest of eternal life." And Margaret :—" Why didst Thou suffer one of them to be burdened with the duties of superior ?" And Jesus Christ :—" Know that My enemies are multiplied for the temptation of the people, and the Friars-Minors, unto whom I have given the gift of preaching, are the bucklers of souls."

XX. Margaret was praying during the night to that holy virgin Saint Clair, when an angel with s^r appeared to her in her cell. His blessing with such love and interior joy, that she refrain from laughing. The angel renewe

prayers of Thy children." Our Lord answered:—"They are not prayers; it is only pride that urges them to work for earth. Sincere prayer requires a heart purified from every stain, humble enough to recognise its misery and My greatness, and the homage due to Me; it asks a heart freed from worldly affections, and from internal and external anxieties. As for Me, greater than all greatness, I made Myself unto all a servant and a subject, I made Myself humbler than all."

XXVIII. One day, Margaret was lost in prayer and meditation in her cell. She heard in spirit a voice that said to her:—"I am the Bread of Life come down from heaven; any person eating this bread shall live for ever." At these words she remained in great spiritual joy, and returned thanks to the Divine Goodness for allowing her to receive Him. In this ecstasy she saw the humanity of Jesus Christ, clothed in a white garment dotted with golden stars, and the Virgin Mary in a robe of gold and the heavenly colour. She asked the name of an angel of surpassing beauty present, and the Sovereign King told her that he was Michael, prince of the heavenly court, ever ready to obey the divine commands, and to fulfil unceasingly the Will of God. While she was contemplating the splendour of the King, He drew her towards the wound in His side; she longed to remain before His face, and she heard our Lord say to her, that He would put her on His right in order to give her a pledge of her future place in company of the blessed. "You think you will faint of weakness," He added, "and depart this life; but you shall not leave the world in the course of this, or of the following year. Your life shall last for as many years as My Will and

servant of God, that she could not tell me of them. Bursting into tears, she exclaimed:—"Lord, in the sorrow and the anguish caused by the absence of Thy sweetness, without which I cannot live, I cry unto Thee, and no answer is returned unto my soul." The Spouse so ardently longed for, heard her cry and sent an angel, who said to her:—"I am sent by the Lord, whom you call every day; I am sent by your Father and Redeemer." She was struck with fear at the great revelations and promises made her; nevertheless, she never ceased to return thanks; she praised the angel sent by God, God who sent him, and the angel in our Lord who gave him his mission. "Praise be thee, O angel of God," she cried, "thou hast favoured me with an abundant blessing and a lengthened colloquy. Thy words, however, frightened me; on this occasion, I doubt that the One longed-for of my heart is willing to speak to me again, since it is by thy medium that He has conveyed to me such mighty promises." The angel answered:—"Remember, Margaret, what our Lord said to you: even to the day of your death, you shall grow in My grace. Fear not the discontinuance of colloquies on the part of our Saviour; God will speak to you in a more exalted manner than He has hitherto done. Remember, also, that passage in the Gospel which your confessor has explained to you, on the love of your neighbour." Margaret replied:—"And who is that dearest and most intimate neighbour whom I am bound specially to love?" "He is," said the angel, "our Lord Jesus Christ, born for you and for all, and laid in the manger. But the Light was born in the darkness, and the darkness knew it not." Margaret began to meditate on the afflictions to which the infant Jesus was exposed on coming into the world.

CHAPTER VII.

ON HER PURITY OF CONSCIENCE, AND HER FRE- QUENT CONFESSIONS AND COMMUNIONS.

I. MARGARET, the flower of the Friars-Minors, and the servant of Christ, used to confess once a day, in the early period of her conversion, besides disclosing to her companions, with tears and sighs, the revolts of her secret thoughts. One time, however, she did more; she made a general confession to me which lasted eight days; she related with groans of sorrow, and in extraordinary terms, all that God had done and shown her on this subject in prayer; in this manner, she came to the fasts and prayers on the feast of Saint John the Evangelist. It was on this day, when the people had left, that she prostrated herself before the altar of the Blessed Virgin in the church of the Friars, a halter round her neck, her face bathed in tears, and her head uncovered; pale and trembling, she approached with profound respect to receive the Body of our Lord; and, after Communion, she became insensible, and fell in a faint into the arms of the assistants. The sweetness of the divine unction, however, began to make itself felt, and her face became calm and joyful. With an angelic smile, she exclaimed:—"Our Lord has this day prepared for me the inebriation of divine love, for which I asked Him on Christmas Day." Her eyes, gaping and immovable,

saw nothing exterior. Our Lord spoke to her heart and asked her, how great had her soul become on that day. "O God, my soul is now greater than the world, since Thou art therein, Thou whom the heavens and the earth cannot contain." She entreated with tears, that the presence of her Beloved be continued to her. She only feared the withdrawal of this sweetness, so much so, that she could do nothing but weep. Our Lord said to her:—"My daughter, be assured that you shall return to your cell with this fear."

II. Margaret prepared with supreme respect to receive the most holy sacrament of the Body of Jesus Christ. Before beginning prayer, she scrupulously brushed out her cell, for she said, that the road by which the priest came bearing the Holy Eucharist should be covered with pure gold. When she perceived Its approach, and held the taper in her hands, she began to melt away like wax. On the one side, the knowledge that she had experienced of the divine sweetness attracted her; on the other, she was confounded at the thought of her own littleness; humility checked her desire of frequent communion, and the ardour of that desire made more lively her fear of doing so. She wondered first at the contrast which she found within her, and weeping and trembling, she began to examine into the cause of so great a change.

Our Lord said to her:—"Fear not, My daughter, and be not surprised; every soul that aspires to receive so great a sacrament, should be cleansed of all its stains; it should be brilliant as the sun."

III. The servant of Jesus Christ, in gratitude towards God, said to the Lord in prayer, that He ought never to communicate with so vile a creature. Jesus answered that she had not been clothed in this

marvellous splendour for herself alone. The example of her extraordinary calling would give even the most despairing full confidence in the divine mercy. He added that the time would come, when she would be enriched with abundant graces ; when the faithful would piously long to hear her speak, and would wish to divide among them portions of her tunic ; and when persons would come from far and near to see, hear, and touch her, and be delivered from their infirmities.

IV. Margaret, careful to preserve above all things purity of conscience, used to moderate, or conceal before the assistants, the fervour with which she sought Jesus Christ ; He reproached her with this concealment ; and, besides, commanded His chaste spouse to confess at least once every day to that Friar [Father Giunta] whom she feared most, and who chid her more than the others. He told His servant, that He would reserve the gift of a special grace for the confessor who would employ towards her a special care. Such was Margaret, who frequently withdrew through humility from the communion of the Body of Jesus Christ, either from the consideration of the divine Majesty, or from the sight of her own unworthiness. The Most High inclined towards her by reason of her humility, and said :—“ My daughter, abstain not, as you have done, from the communion of My Body ; your heart is purified in such a manner that, not only do I allow you, but I even command you to receive me often. Accuse yourself frequently of your sins to your confessor, and speak less with persons in the world. Owing to your infirmities, you cannot bear the weight of prayer as hitherto ; nevertheless, court silence. If you can, confess always before meals, and never neglect to do so ; follow your

wonted custom of confessing your sins to the friar your confessor before taking food, when you go to the Church of the Friars-Minors. Always lay bare your life, so that no temptation or deceit may take you by surprise."

V. On the Annunciation of the Mother of God, she had recourse to Jesus Christ with tears, as was her custom. Enlightened by the splendours of the supreme comfort, she asked our Lord, if her soul was freed from the stain of its sins. He answered that no grave fault remained to be atoned for, nor anything offensive in the sight of His divine Majesty. "Wherefore," He added, "I bless you; and I wish you to guard yourself carefully against every imperfection, and to receive Me every day, if you desire." Fortified by divine grace, she besought the Most High to vouchsafe to fill her heart with every virtue, so that, in the future, nothing could find an entrance therein but God, and He alone. On the next day, she assisted at High Mass; the fervour of love increased to excess, and she could not refrain from speaking before all the people. She came to her confessor bathed in tears, and, stifled by sobs, besought him humbly to delay giving her the Body of our Lord; she hoped, by communicating after Mass, to be enabled to hide from the looks and praises of men the inebriation of her spirit. She was unwilling, before such a number of persons, to approach the Friars' altar with a rope round her neck, her head uncovered, and her face bathed in a flood of tears; she feared to be taxed with hypocrisy; she was then so ravished in God, that the assistants were certain that she saw the Creator face to face. When she had received the sacred Body of our Lord, God who loves to dwell in holy souls, spoke to her

and said :—“Have confidence, My daughter, thou art My beloved, I keep thee at My school, I shall preserve thee in grace, I shall defend thee in temptation, I shall comfort thee in anguish, and I shall conduct thee to eternal life. Dost thou believe that I am really God, equal to the eternal Father?” Margaret answered :—“Not only do I believe it, but I am surprised that my soul does not melt away entirely in Thy presence.” As she feared that she had received the Body of Jesus Christ with the stain of some faults still upon her soul, our Lord blessed her, and said that He had purified her. He bid her bear in mind His words to the blessed Paul :—*My grace is sufficient for thee.* It seemed to Margaret that this admirable sweetness was failing her ; she bowed her head upon her breast, and said :—“Where art Thou, O my Love, —my sovereign Love? Take, I entreat Thee, my soul from this body, that I may be freely with Thee.” Margaret besought with tears Him whose goodness disposes all things with suavity. He answered that He had established her in fear to prepare for the fulfilment of things predicted in relation to her ; and He foretold that she would lead her life and end it in fear.

VI. The fire of holy love was kindled in Margaret's breast. In public as in private, concentrated in divine sweetness, she cried :—“Lord, Lord, where art Thou?” Her confessor, ever zealous for her salvation, advised her to say :—“Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,” or “my Lord Jesus Christ.” She answered :—“When I say, Lord, I invoke the only and eternal God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” But she began to fear for having spoken thus, and our Saviour said to her :—“It is well, My daughter ; the manner you

have adopted is agreeable to Me, because your pious intention tends to make My dominion supreme. Thus to express the perfection of his state, My vicar, whom I have endowed with the fulness of My power, is not called Pope, but Holy Father; your manner of speaking is more becoming." Fearing, however, the deceit of the enemy, she said:—"Lord, my Saviour, I only seek Thee alone, my Redeemer." And she heard:—"I am Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, who redeemed thee with bitter torments." Margaret answered:—"Lord, how happens it that Thou seemest sometimes so far away from me?" And Jesus answered:—"Fear not, My daughter; when you think I have abandoned you, I am with you to guard you from temptation. And I shall be with you, in order that you may taste the repose of My sweetness."

VII. With the various afflictions that Margaret had to endure, she compared herself to corn under the flail; she exclaimed:—"My Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Eternal Father, who didst vouchsafe to be born of the Virgin Mary, may Thy mercy enable me to support my afflictions for the glory of Thy Name, that are agreeable to Thee; and to continue my abstinence and usual prayers, my fasts, and the tears which Thy goodness has had the grace to bestow on me. It is a comfort to me that Thou never forgivest my body. If Thy justice should treat me as I deserve, grant, I beseech Thee, that, as long as I live, I may serve Thee in all purity of body and soul, and never offend Thee in the future. Thus am I ready to undergo all afflictions." Jesus Christ inclined the ear of His mercy to these humble prayers, and said:—"My daughter, receive Me oftener. By the pious communion of My

Body, you have deserved to be raised high into favour; in It lies the great source of your salvation and comfort. Be not surprised if, after a short period of rest, you are sometimes more afflicted and tempted; if sweetness is withdrawn from you, it is that your faith may be put to a greater test. As long as you serve Me faithfully, no affliction shall pierce you; but if you think that I go from you, you shall fall into anguish. I am, however, always in you by grace, although it should seem otherwise when My sweetness is withdrawn. Bear your afflictions with perfect patience, since you know the reason of your suffering. What would you say, if I gave you only fear and love, temptation and suffering? In obedience to the commands of Father John, return without delay to that cell where, in perfect security, you can raise the voice of fervent prayer. This return seems to you to present a certain appearance of levity, and to furnish matter for the murmurs of certain people; bear this feeling of shame. You did not fully explain your wishes to the woman who invited you to take another cell; you only told her that you were prepared to dwell wherever the Friars, in charge of you, placed you. I say unto you, return to that cell, where the old enemy, in the guise of a serpent, shall afflict you. You know what great consolations you have received from My promises while residing there, whither you went in compliance with My Will. If you entertain doubts from the murmurs of men, remember that they murmured also against Me, the true and sovereign Good."

VIII. Margaret was eager to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ; on Fridays, she longed only

to taste sorrow and tears, and would not go to communion. Our Saviour said to her:—"Why do you refuse to receive Me on Friday, when you ought to run to Me more quickly than on My Nativity or Resurrection? Is not this the day on which I united Myself most closely to mankind by charity? Stretched on the wood of the cross, I embraced, with immense love, entire humanity, as a father embraces his only son."

IX. One day, a tempting angel entered Margaret's cell. He failed to execute on her the commands of the prince of darkness; afflicted and sad, he cried:—"Alas! alas! where shall I go? How can I bear the indignation of him who sent me? This woman triumphs over me in prayer." A little time after, he pretended to be restored to good spirits. He leaped about the servant of God with feigned liveliness, as she was praying and weeping, and he began to sing obscene songs. He asked Margaret to sing with him; but she burst into tears, and recommended her whole heart to our Lord. As he could not succeed in distracting her, he had recourse to more revolting onslaughts, and covered her with insults and maledictions. But Margaret was a sacred vessel bearing Jesus Christ; and she could do nothing interiorly offensive in the sight of the Divine Majesty. By prayers and tears, Margaret triumphed over temptation.

X. Our Saviour acquainted His servant with the obligation of receiving with respect the Body of Jesus Christ. "My daughter," said He, "I have great reason to complain of the irreverence of certain persons. There are many of them now, who touch Me every day without loving Me or knowing Me. If they

knew Me, they would know in truth, that it is impossible to find in created things a beauty comparable to that of the celebrating priest. They are not ashamed to touch Me with soiled hands, and to treat Me with greater contempt than the filth of the highway." At these words, Margaret was struck with fear, and answered:—"Why, then, O Lord, dost Thou invite me and compel me, unworthy as I am, to receive Thy Body?" Our Lord replied:—"The Son of the Eternal Father, born of the Virgin Mary, I have purified you, O my daughter, from all your faults; wherefore, I bless you in the Name of My Father, in My Name, and in that of the Holy Ghost, and also in the name of Mary, My ever-blessed Mother."

XI. One morning after communion, Margaret, stupefied by the admirable condescension of Jesus, said to Him:—"Why, O Lord, didst Thou descend to Judas and the others, since in Thy fasts Thou didst humiliate Thyself? Why dost Thou still humiliate Thyself in giving Thyself to us?" Our Lord answered His astonished servant:—"My daughter, there are to-day many like Judas; I allow them to treat with Me, and receive Me in this sacrament. As for you, you are entirely stripped and become poor for love of Me; I shall clothe you and enrich you with My grace. Fear not, therefore, in tribulation, it will unite you to Me, and make you agreeable in My sight by reason of My love." She received the accustomed blessing; then she heard great promises that she would not reveal, through humility, to Me, her confessor.

XII. On the octave of Saint Laurence, after communicating, she was filled with such great sweetness,

that in her desire to receive Jesus on the next day, she exclaimed:—"O Lord Jesus Christ, the infinite sweetness of my soul, I, Thy unworthy servant, burning with ardent love, invite myself to-morrow to receive Thy sacred Body." Jesus, who despises not the wishes of men eager to possess Him, gave her permission, in reply, to approach Holy Communion every day. "I have given you more," He added, "when, mortal and passible, I delivered Myself up on the Cross for you." Margaret answered:—"That was more, it is true, O Lord, that by the suffering Thou didst endure for us, Thou didst redeem us at such a price." Jesus Christ inclined towards Margaret, and said to her:—"You are My creature, and I am your Creator; you are My daughter, and I am your Father. You are the elect, and I am your Beloved chosen from amid all. I am your Lord; you are, I shall not say My servant, but My companion. In Me you are become white in innocence, and ruddy in love and charity. Fear not to receive Me every day; for you have humbly and devoutly prepared in your soul for Me repose."

XIII. One day, she received the Son of God, and was instantly filled with great peace. She cried aloud that she was enjoying the delights of God, and the beatific joys of Paradise. Jesus inquired if her spirit was refreshed. "O Lord Jesus Christ," replied she, "Thy joys are of such a nature, that those who taste them in heaven itself, I think, hunger through the growth of desire which Thy possession creates. Thou didst aid me with Thy strength, O newly-tasted Bread of Life, and my weakness has vanished; all infirmities have dis-

appeared from me ; I am filled with happiness." Jesus Christ said to her :—" Why, then, dost thou not receive Me daily ? In your soul I find a seat of perfume and repose." She began to fear that the fervour kindled within her by gifts and promised consolation, was visible to the by-standers ; and she besought all present, who were weeping through devotion, to leave her cell without delay. The true Light, communicated alike to all, said to her :—" I shall not speak to you, if you send away the assistants, for I have made you the mirror of sinners."

XIV. On the following day after communion, Margaret could not support the heavenly joy that filled her soul. This admirable sweetness had reached its height when Jesus, who moderates all things, said to her :—" My daughter, My elect, I bless you in the Name of My Father, in My own Name, in the Name of the Holy Ghost, and also in that of the Blessed Virgin, of whom I took flesh to suffer great torments. When I withdraw Myself from you, I punish and purify you, at the same time, of your offences. You shall learn secrets more profound than those you are acquainted with ; but you must first suffer very great afflictions. Withdraw from conversation with persons of the world, who come to you, as you have hitherto wished to do ; for the farther apart you are from their society, the nearer will I be to you. Tell your confessor to give you advice on your salvation, according to My Holy Scriptures. For your sake, let him carefully consider his suggestions, before offering them to you ; and let you receive and adopt them submissively. I recommend you to him as I recommended you to Father John, who is no longer on earth."

XV. On the eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost, one hour before day, she humbly received our Saviour's Body. She heard:—"My daughter, do you believe that I am the Lord your God?" And she answered:—"My Creator, My Father, and the true joy of my heart, why dost thou ask me?" Our Lord:—"My daughter, I am dead in most of the men of this age, as far as in them lies; for small is the number of those in whom I dwell by grace. Their offences are so great that, if sorrow could find entrance to Me their God, I would cry out and burst into tears at the sight of their horrible vices, when they communicate. They crucify Me again by receiving Me unworthily; and give Me a drink more bitter than that given Me by the Jews. Remember how I consented to be touched by the old serpent, and borne by him into the city and upon the mountain; hence, I now suffer the injuries of impious men who communicate and treat Me disrespectfully. Command the Friar, your confessor, in My Name, not to distribute My Body in the future, except to religious persons; It must be also given to seculars, if they have abjured all vanity of personal appearance, or are disposed to do so, in order to advance fervently in the observance of My counsels and precepts; but, as a rule, I am grievously offended in communion by persons in the world, and by their lives. Woe to the souls that sin unceasingly, and dare to receive Me without correcting their faults; there shall be a strict account for them at a future day. By the interior light of conscience illumined by My grace, you know the condition of many souls; Father Giunta has instructed you on this point. Prepare, however, for

trials ; you will be despised by many, and humiliation shall take the place of martyrdom, which now-a-days does not happen as formerly in the reign of tyrants. Through fear of offending Me, your little sorrows shall seem great. But fear not, My daughter, My companion, and My sister, if, before others, My comforts seem to you diminished. It shall be so, in order that you may be despised by the world, and that grace shall be surer to preserve you. Tell Father Giunta again, to observe order in the celebration of the Masses ; to be courageous under affliction, and to remember Mine ; and to study diligently to vanquish himself."

XVI. On the Nativity in the flesh of the Son of God, the Divine Babe, who accomplished all things by virtue of a word, said to Margaret:—"My daughter, you are in trouble ; ask Me what you will." Margaret answered:—"My Lord Jesus Christ, grant me never to offend Thee." Our Lord returned:—"Seek you not the Kingdom of Eternal Life?" Margaret:—"Grant me what I ask, to serve Thee always, and never to offend Thee, and send me whithersoever Thou wilt." This answer was agreeable to Him who was born of the Virgin Mary, and He said:—"You are My slave by past sins, My servant by repentance, My sister by My grace, and My daughter in the pledge of eternal glory."

XVII. Margaret remembered all her faults after that festival. With bitterness of heart, and an inconceivable abundance of tears, she continued the general confession already begun. Fears had changed her voice, and her sorrow was such that she tasted neither food nor sleep for eight days. She accused herself to

me, Father Guinta, of the least imperfections, and when she had finished her general confession, within the Octave of Holy Innocents, she received Jesus Christ, the Dispenser of all good. "Lord, Monarch all-powerful," she exclaimed, "I ask of Thy mercy, that my life may serve Thee, and that, by my example, all may praise Thee ; let me never offend Thy Majesty." Her fervour increased ; she left her cell to hear High Mass and the word of God ; she ran towards the church of the Friars-Minors, and would have gone thither, did I not chance to be near to guide her back to her cell. She thus answered our Lord, who asked her if she experienced great joy :—"O Lord, Thy joy is infinite and ineffable ; I cannot describe the liveliness of spirit that I obtain from Thee." Then she inquired of Him, if the mournful confession she had just made was agreeable to His divine Majesty. Our Lord answered :—"Your constant solicitude makes you worthy of new graces."

XVIII. On the Monday within the octave of the Assumption, after receiving Holy Communion from the hands of Father Badia, she heard, "I am the bread of life ; whoever eateth this bread shall live for ever." The voice spoke to her again :—"O my daughter ! worn out as you are with labours, temptations, and infirmities, and knowing not how to conform to them, why do you exalt yourself by making excuses, and why do you complain ? Your angel has had great joy this morning on account of your confession, because you acknowledged your faults plainly and simply. Know that in a soul which returns unto Me, the dispositions to continue good are a great help to grace. I have given you light to

acquire the knowledge of truth. Devote yourself to meditation; in this do I take more pleasure than in the studies of learned men; no discourse could be more agreeable to me than seeing persons walking in the path of truth and speaking unto righteousness."

CHAPTER VIII.

ON HER SWEET AND MATERNAL COMPASSION TOWARDS ALL, AND ON HER INDEFATIGABLE ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS.

I. FULL of piety and zeal for her neighbour's salvation, Margaret, possessed of motherly affection, watched with solicitude over the welfare of all. One day she was sick ; and seated on her stool, though in the depth of winter, she was clothed in a plain coarse woollen tunic over her haircloth. She understood by revelation that, in a village many miles distant, there dwelt a man, poor, and ashamed of being so ; that he had a large family of tender years, unable to earn their bread, and in want of the necessaries of life and clothing. Margaret was commanded by her beloved Jesus to send this poor man, without delay, the tunic, which she had received in charity for her own use. She obeyed with admirable eagerness, and stripped herself for the poor man. "Right willingly, O Lord," she exclaimed, "would I give Thy poor even to my heart, if it were allowed me so to do."

II. At the time when the French troops, reinforced at Boulogne, were preparing to march on Forli, the shedding of blood was thought to be imminent. I was there at the time ; I, the poor scribe, who am collecting these notes for the edification of my brethren ;

I was there by God's will, for Margaret's service ; I was filled with fear, and by ardent prayer entreated the unwearied advocate of sinners to pray specially for both parties. She prayed to God, and in her were verified the words of the psalm : *The just have cried unto the Lord, and the Lord hath heard them.* It was revealed to her, that an obstacle would be thrown in their way, and the parties, now preparing for war, would not meet in battle. In effect, shortly after, Pope Nicholas III., of happy memory, by an opportune interference, brought the war to a close. Thus, according to the divine promise, and by the disposition of the Most High, a cessation of hostilities came to pass between both parties.

III. This admirable lover of souls, united to the Infallible Truth, bore truth engraved upon her heart, upon her words and works ; she accused of lying a woman who committed this fault while conversing with her. She who had compromised truth before the servant of God, could not conceal from the enlightened eye of Margaret the vanity of her own heart ; she confessed with tears that, knowingly and against her conscience, she had uttered lying words. Such, my beloved, is this happy Margaret, who not only related to persons what they had spoken, but also read the secrets of their heart and their most hidden thoughts. She eagerly urged her friars to confess their sins. She even gave me, her confessor, some salutary advice in the interest of many, and said :—
“ This and that person, through ignorance or shame, has not yet confessed such and such a sin.” In order to extract such secrets from the conscience, I sounded carefully, and put prudent questions ; and by this

means discovered what confession had not given them the courage to disclose.

IV. Margaret was accustomed to pray for the general good, as her mother had instructed her in the world; she used to say:—"Lord, I entreat Thee to save those for whom it is Thy will that I pray." The fire of charity, however, increasing within her, she began to pray for all alike, without exception or limit. She feared she had neglected the method her mother had taught her. Jesus Christ answered reassuringly:—"My daughter, your mother did not instruct you well; you ought to pray for all, and your universal prayer is agreeable unto Me, for I came into the world for all mankind, and for all did I suffer death. As to your father, whom you have particularly recommended to Me, I say unto you, he is delivered from purgatory. Fear not for your past life; various are the sufferings of this place of expiation; those reserved for you are most afflicting, that you may be the more promptly purified. My daughter, say to your confessor, for whom you have solicitously prayed, to preach with care, and to hear confession with fervour, to re-establish concord among persons at variance, to be less pompous and more decisive, to abhor the praises of men, and not to hasten through the Mass."

V. Jesus Christ had spread the charity of His spouse to such an extent that persons came from the the most distant provinces, and even departed souls came forth from Purgatory, by divine permission, to ask for help. The souls of two murdered persons among others, said to her:—"We were unable to make a confession; but it was granted us to foresee our death, when the robbers led us from the highway, and conducted us into the depths of the forest. Our

Creator then gave us contrition, and patience to undergo the cruel death we suffered; He has delivered us also, by His mercy, from everlasting torments. Beloved of God, we were both shoemakers by trade; I who am speaking to you, did not observe the rules of justice as dictated by law, as I ought; I entreat you, pious mother, to use your influence with my parents to make satisfaction for me, especially to the mountaineers, and for my cousin-german here with me. We are suffering great torments in purgatory, I particularly, for having feigned benevolence by deceitful words of regard. Pray for us, then, O spouse of God."

Margaret prayed for those two souls, and for many others besides, suffering such anguish. Our Lord addressed her thus:—"Bid the Friars-Minors remember the dead. The souls waiting and suffering in purgatory are in such numbers, that the heart of man could scarcely conceive an idea thereof; they receive but little assistance from their friends. Tell My sons the religious, besides, that those who mingle in worldly matters suffer great torments in this place of expiation."

VI. On the feast of the virgin Saint Clare, the servant of Jesus Christ was praying for a person then in a state of bitterness and dejection of spirit. The Father of mercy commanded her to summon her servant immediately, and to tell him to urge the bishop to take pity on his subordinate, like, at that time, to a stone on the point of being hurled from on high down below. He added:—"If the bishop complains and says, that it is to me the injury has been done, let him remember what I said to Peter:—I bid thee not forgive sevenfold only, but seventy times

sevenfold. I wish to use full mercy towards this weak man; he shall then become afflicted in the depths of his soul by reason of the faults imputed to him." Our Lord continued:—"You have recommended Giglia * unto Me; know that by reason of your love and her good works, I shall put her among the cherubim in heaven."

VII. On the feast of Saints Chrysanta and Daria, after communion, Jesus spoke to Margaret, and said to her:—"Though your trials should increase, neglect not, however, to extirpate the vices of your neighbours, to sow and plant in the spirit of your friars, the germs of holy virtue; sow, O My daughter, and I will give you the seed; I will pour forth My grace into the teachings of your lips. If I speak to you more rarely, know that without a word I will give you light to teach according to the truth." Our Lord added:—"My daughter, be not astonished if your God, who is Innocence Immaculate, confers His gifts upon you; for you have become pure and innocent as the dove."

Margaret's simple innocence received from her confessor many lessons on the innocence of our Saviour, particularly on His seamless robe, the work of His divine Mother's hands. She congratulated our Lord on this point, and said to Him in the accents of a dove, that the monarch of the world was indeed worthy of such a garment. Jesus answered:—"Why did you not tell your confessor, that the Creator of all things is admirable in consenting, by His infinite mercy, to be clothed and stripped?"

VIII. When I was at Sienna, our Lord bade Margaret in prayer to write to me in His name, as follows:

* The companion and imitator of Margaret.

method of those preachers, and of the use that they make of My word in that city."

X. A secular lady had a great reputation for piety owing to her frequent confessions. She lived at rest, and believed that no grave sin remained upon her soul. As she was very careful about her health, as well as about the respect due to, and the necessaries of Margaret, the latter prayed fervently for her; our Saviour said:—"My daughter, acquaint your confessor of the failings of the person that you have recommended Me. When you begin to tell them to him, I shall describe them to you in order, so that he may write them down, and the soul profit thereby. Tell him, then, that your devout friend, who aspires to love Me, accuses herself of being arrogant, hasty, and unclean of heart.

"Let her bear in mind the man against whom, in time of great adversity, she bore false witness, and let her confess to having done what she could to procure an unjust sentence against him; in this matter she did not regret at all as much the infamy that fell on the accused, as the annoyance it gave her to pay out a sum of money to the Commune.

"Let her confess to having offended Me, when she was at court; she wished to rise above her companions, and to be admired for her beauty.

"Let her confess to having often accused, to great people, the inferior persons in her house; she professed for the aristocracy the most tender tokens of regard, and feigned an attachment to their interests, in order to be preferred by them to others. All the time she was insincere in her professions to those whom she pretended to respect; she respected nobody; she loved only her husband and her children,

and loved them too much. Let her tell how greedy she was of praise from the world, and how she never received Me worthily at the altar, because contrition was wanting to her, and her confessions were invalid. She frequented the church very much, but experienced little devotion in the mysteries of the Nativity, the Last Supper, the Passion, the Resurrection, and on the solemn festivals of the Virgin and the Saints. At such times, and even in Lent, she thought little about Me; she never said her prayers at the proper time, and her devotions were arid and tearless; in this manner she fasted without the spirit of the fast, and without the fervour of love. Let her confess her excessive appetite for food, and deplore her harshness when asked to give alms.

“Let her employ every effort to accuse herself of the use that she made of ill-gotten gains; let her think on this, and recall to mind her expenditure of them. The money that she drew from her husband's till was frequently obtained by violence, fraud, or gaming. I perceive that she was careful to satisfy, either directly herself, or by the medium of another, all persons that she was certain were cheated. In doubtful cases, she used not to consider herself free, but used to ask her confessor for advice. She did not restore her husband's gains, whenever she could; she must make ample restitution now from her own means. As mother of a family, she used to keep the household purse; she used to make many useless and superfluous expenditures, which were paid with ill-gotten money; here, too, is satisfaction to be made, for such is her duty.

“Let her confess to having, with dry eyes, beheld

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the destruction of her city, where she wished one party to rule over another. This ambition kindled secret envy in her against some relatives who did not co-operate with her husband in sedition; and she was keenly disappointed when the latter did not obtain the object of his desires.

“Let her also mention how she wished to be the mistress of her father’s house, a thing she would not permit in her husband’s sister. Let her examine her conscience, and accuse herself of the belongings of her husband that she failed to employ in restitution, and restore from her own money what had been spent with her consent.

“Let her also confess her parsimony towards her husband’s pupils; she owes them satisfaction as she owes the poor, for the injurious words spoken with or without truth, of the men and women of her household.

“Let her confess the sins she has committed in decking her person with vain ornaments.”

XI. The Lover of all perfection desired to cure entirely this soul redeemed by His Blood, and to purify it of the evil that had, for a long time, gained over it ascendancy. Addressing Margaret, He continued:—“Let her accuse herself to her confessor of slander, and of the rash judgments she formed of the high standard and goodness of his Friars as regards beauty; for she used to despise and rail at the qualities of others, recount what evil she knew of them, and acquaint persons therewith who were ignorant of it. If she knew of any good quality in her neighbour, she would remain silent, dissimulating in heart and tongue, and in her own mind accusing her rulers, who did not deserve such

reproach, of pride and other vices. And although she had not done the wrong here related, she ought not, at least, have murmured against her Friars. If she happened to meet an intimate friend, she would insidiously malign the absent, and flatter the persons present, heaping on them praise. She was eager to surpass everybody, and her pride induced her to look for praise from her birth and riches, while sorrow was never absent from her envious heart.

“Let her confess the wanderings of her spirit, the dissipation of her senses, and covetousness of the goods of others. Let her tell how often, when frequenting the churches, she had no heart for the Divine office, and thought only of speaking to other women in that holy place; if she kept silence, her heart would answer to outward objects. She sought to obtain information of persons consecrated to God, particularly the Friars-Minors; nevertheless, she did not profit by the odour of their example, and conformed not to their advice. Nay more, she murmured against their sermons and offices. If she met with anything touching in a sermon or in ceremonies, she immediately forgot it.

“Let her tell her ingratitude for My benefits; I have delivered her from many dangers into which she was on the point of falling. Notwithstanding, however, she could not give up the world, but became more attached thereto; and, at the same time, she did not try to recover lost time.

“Let her accuse herself of days of her past life spent in disgrace with Me. If she did anything that would be calculated to give Me pleasure, it was not entirely for love of Me, but through fear of

eternal torments, or actuated by some temporal motive; if certain of damnation, she would have served Me with sincere affection, but, as it was, she returned to wickedness in deceitful words.

“Let her confess to having praised certain persons for virtues which she knew they did not possess.

“She was full of other vices, though that did not prevent her from speaking loudest against persons who yielded to the same temptation; she condemned alike illegal gains, and ill-got goods; she ridiculed persons who used perfume, finery, or ornaments for the head; she declared that such costly things were unsuited to the position of those who owned and used them.

“She used to eat frequently to excess, and would exceed still more, if she were not prevented by motives of economy and avarice; and, at the very time when she was devoted to excessive eating, she condemned gluttony in others. If she gave to the poor in My Name, she desired and expected temporal, rather than eternal reward. Her prayers were the outcome of worldly desires.

“Let her confess her indiscretion towards the servants of her house, and her want of compassion in refusing to hold out a hand to these poor creatures for love of Me. She thought little of the poor on account of their manner of speaking, their tears, their laughter and joy, their food, their drink; she withdrew from them her own and others' alms by her insinuations. She wore double clothing, and neglected to provide for those who suffered from nakedness and cold. She hoarded up money, but never thought of offering them a morsel of bread. Let her confess to have wished to obtain for herself alone the name which belongs by

excellence to My Divine Mother, the name of Lady ; if others, nobler and better than she, received the title, she would turn them into derision ; she served nobody, and tried to be served by everybody. Let her confess to having offended Me in food and fasting, in solitude and society, in rest and walking, in time of adversity and of prosperity. She willingly surrounded herself with fine ladies, richly dressed and adorned ; self-love, however, made her long to be thought better and more beautiful than all. Let her confess to having offended Me her Creator, by adorning herself before a mirror, and looking therein complacently, directing her eyes to what ought to be called the source of the misery of the world, while she frequently envied beauty and symmetry in other women. Let her accuse herself of having thought much of her trivial afflictions, and little of the great afflictions of others ; and she spoke against those who suffered cruelly. She was not in reality afflicted, but rather rejoiced in homicide and the sufferings of her neighbours, though she used to weep with those who wept in their houses and in the churches.

“ Let her acknowledge her guilt in not allowing her servants to rest from fatigue ; she was very exacting towards them, not only when they were in good health, but also when they were sick ; when, too, they were in want of consolation, she overwhelmed them with reproach, and spoke of them in the house as gluttons and idlers, while she was not too delicate in her confinements. She kept silent on what she ought to say ; and, to convince others, said what she ought to have kept silent. Let her accuse herself of having, through human respect, shunned the society of loose persons ; she would neither admit them to con-

versation nor familiar dialogue, for she was filled with pride within and without. Let her always place her trust in Me; let her not delay to examine into her past life in her confessor's hands; and to recall her faults to mind, I shall endow her spirit with the light of My grace.

“To you, My daughter Margaret, who prayed to Me for this soul, and sought to obtain such great mercy, I say that she shall not fully comprehend the nature of this service.”

XII. The amiable peace-maker asked the Author of peace for concord among the inhabitants of Cortona. She deserved to obtain this answer:—“My daughter, tell your confessor to labour for their internal, in order to prepare them for outward peace. I shall call him to account for the cases on which he has not bestowed sufficient solicitude. Let him think of Me; on alighting from the boat, I found a man possessed by a legion of devils; and as these obtained permission, they entered some swine which precipitated themselves into the sea. The Gerasenians, on this occasion, bade Me depart from their territories, and I did so. A time shall come when the men and women of Cortona will remember your confessor's words better than they do at present. The hidden enemy seeks to prevent the reconciliation which his zeal endeavours to bring about; let him not give up on that account, but let him persevere in his efforts. Filled with My grace, and strengthened by My aid, he will await his end.”

At this time, as Margaret instructed me on behalf of our Lord, I endeavoured to pacify one inhabitant of Cortona. The enemy of peace and the destroyer of charity appeared to Margaret in a hideous form; all troubled, he said to her:—“I will deal hardly with

him who never ceases to labour for peace." His words were verified ; in a short time afterwards, I received a spiritual blow so sharp that, without the assistance of Christ, the Protector of those who trust in Him, I would have had much to fear. Margaret prayed for me, and Jesus, the Help of the weak, sent me His blessing as His son, at the same encouraging me to continue the work of pacification vigorously ; I was told that our Lord, from whom all good cometh, would be with me by His grace. The insidious serpent, the hidden dragon, desirous of spreading his venom at the expense of the elect, attacked me on the other hand. I saw the servant of God indiscreet in her devotions, and particularly in the excessive rigour of her penance ; he excited my soul violently against her, and I remained several days without visiting her. But she never ceased to pray to our Lord for me, in the sweetness of her soul. After receiving the Body of Jesus Christ, she heard :—"Tell your confessor that I wish from him an apostolic life ; let him fortify himself by My grace, for he shall see imprinted on My person his different trials ; I command him to be prepared to advise souls without pressing, or without fearing the judgments of men ; have not many boldly murmured against Me, their Creator ? Let him meditate upon what I said to them then ; many crucified Me at the time of My Passion, who afterwards adored Me sincerely ; and of those who renew the mystery of My death, many will come to better thoughts. Let him persevere in his efforts to the end. Tell him to apply himself diligently to the peace of Cortona, and I will be with him in all things."

XIII. Another day Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man, thus spoke to Margaret :—

“What would you say, O My daughter, if there came a time when the inhabitants of Cortona blessed the alms given them for your intention, because I have made you a voice in the desert? Preach peace to the men of this city; you are for them the apostle of peace; I have made you so, owing to the respect and devotion they show you because of Me and for My love. Tell your confessor to preach peace publicly at Cortona, and invite all the inhabitants of this town to unite in concord.” Margaret feared a trick of the enemy’s, seeking to delude her into some presumptuous illusion of spirit, under the admirable colour of virtue. She answered:—“My Lord Jesus Christ, the true Peace, do Thou Thyself perform this work, and proclaim it to Cortona by another than me.” Our Lord:—“Do as I bid you, My daughter, O voice of the desert; tell your confessor to invite confidently in My name the people to peace. Let him remind them that I, the Creator of all things and the Lord all-powerful, make peace with My persecutors; I made it, I say, unto you, with those who betrayed Me, turned Me into derision, stripped Me, scourged Me, spat upon My face, buffeted Me, gave Me a bitter drink, pierced Me with the lance; with those who denied Me; I made it amid the violence of torments, and when My humanity, overcome with sorrow, gave up the ghost. Wherefore, I command the inhabitants of Cortona to be reconciled, whatever may have been their differences; I do not wish, if they refuse to obey Me, to exercise against them the anger of My judgments.” Margaret answered:—“Lord, let not the dense cloud of my iniquities interpose between Thee and the prayers I address to Thee on their behalf.” Jesus Christ:—“Announce My word of peace, invite the in-

habitants of Cortona to peace, and your sins will place no obstacle to the fulfilment of the good that is prepared for them. I am your Redeemer, I have placed you in the deserts of the world like a voice crying out, and a trumpet sounding; your life in the world cried out against Me; do you cry now in the hour of your repentance, cry and call to penance; sinners will learn of you that I am full of mercy. Verily, you are the trumpet of My piety and fruitful mercy; this is already manifest in the example of many who have abandoned their sins on your exhortations, and are now raised to a sublime state of virtue. The graces I have given you, are not for yourself alone, but also for the souls for whom I am disposed to employ My mercy. Since the Redemption, the world has never been so much in want of My compassion as at present; men never cease to heap sin upon sin. I do not wish to lose those souls redeemed at so high a price, after making for them such sacrifices; wherefore, I have chosen you to be a new trumpet."

XIV. Margaret prayed for the peace of Cortona, and the King of peace, the Lover of concord, said to her:—"Learn, My daughter, that your confessor will conclude a peace on Friday. And though he shall succeed, nevertheless he will not please Me as much as he would, if he had obeyed Me when I commanded him. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, I was prompt in My Father's commands in the hour of My Passion, when I bade My apostles to arise and walk. If Christopher had done this, this day would have been for him like to the day of My Passion. My daughter, in this peace your confessor shall be in trouble, and by it he shall obtain My final mercy. By his means, also, the family of De Rossi will be reconciled. If he

is not in Cortona when the time comes, I shall signify to you when to send in search of him, since to him is given the grace of re-establishing concord. Let the inhabitants be grateful for My gifts, and for all the favours that I have in store for them." Thing admirable and worthy of being mentioned! I was at Sienna when this blessed daughter recalled me in all haste, owing to a new intrigue of the old enemy; and on arriving at Cortona, I concluded the peace of De Rossi with the towns.

XV. The daughter of the true Peace, peaceful Margaret interceded with the Lord for the union of her benefactors; she heard:—"My daughter, if the inhabitants of Cortona desire peace abroad, let them make it at home. Tell your confessor that the wary enemy of mankind is irritated against him, and seeks to overthrow his efforts, but let him not fear. In the promotion of concord he shall receive such aid that he will restore peace between family and family, and between state and state, as he has done between man and man. O My daughter, in this hour I do not wish you to leave Cortona; endeavour to restore order in the house of the Des Recabeni. As the inhabitants of this town are induced to oblige you for love of Me, I will grant them, in generous reward, some particular gifts of My grace. Tell your confessor to persevere; he and his Friars will be unable to treat of peace in such a way as to prevent the enemy from opposing greater strife, and becoming more watchful in brewing and hatching scandal; great, indeed, must be the solicitude of the Friars. What would you say, My daughter, if your confessor, for bringing about peace in Cortona, was made to undergo trials by the ungrateful?"

XVI. Father Philip was in doubt whether he ought to question penitents in confession, owing to persons who would put an evil interpretation upon such questions. Failing to do so, he feared, on the other hand, the consequences of shame, which often induces persons to conceal what they ought to accuse themselves of. He asked Margaret through me to obtain for him in prayer the solution of this doubt. Our Lord answered His servant:—"Tell him from Me to hear patiently and to question his penitents; for various are the graces given to the heart of man. To him, by reason of the purity of his heart and of his body, I have given the virtue of hearing and questioning. If he could hear a thousand confessions in one day, let him not miss one, and let him not neglect to question the penitents as often as it seems necessary for him to do so. Sinners do not make a full confession, because sin has made them spiritually blind. They can no longer see their faults; they are blind in such a sense that the infection of their iniquities does not allow them to receive the true light. The soul, purified by means of confession, is enlightened and discovers its vices; in disclosing, it deplors them and trembles thereat. Hence, My daughter, it is necessary that confessors question. By reason of this pious care and of their fervent zeal for souls, I love the Friars-Minors more than any other order; they have gained Me innumerable souls by their diligent exertions."

XVII. The daughter of the Most High, instructed by God Himself, knew that the old enemy never ceased to persecute saints; she strengthened by exhortation her son, separated from her for love of Jesus Christ, and wrote to him thus:—

"My son, be you blessed of the Lord in the service

to which you have consecrated yourself. If for love of Him, you fight valiantly in His army, I shall remain always affectionate to you; I will be your mother, if you observe faithfully the things that I teach you. First, I teach and exhort you for the love of Jesus Christ to plant in your soul profound humility, and obedience which is the fruit thereof; respect towards the Friars of your order, respect so watchful, that you shall serve each one according to his rank, without preference of persons in particular. Persevering in gratitude to God for the gifts He has bestowed on you, be always modest, respectful, virtuous, and guard yourself from murmuring. According to the prescribed usage of your holy order, be more distant than too familiar; virtuously avoid all useless conversation with worldly persons, and live always united to your Friars and to those men in whom the grace of God appears. O my son, let your prayers be pious and fervent; prepare by watchfulness for insidious and innumerable meetings with the enemy. Conceal not from your confessor the things that your soul ought to make known to him; the sick man cannot be cured, unless he exposes his wounds. Receive faithfully and in all obedience the advice of persons wiser than you, and esteem them as more profitable than the inspirations of your own heart. Recite your office respectfully before the Lord, without spiritual or bodily distraction; endeavour to accomplish it within the time prescribed by our holy Mother, the Church, and never abandon this custom. When a Friar reproaches you with your faults, disclose them to him immediately, and without manifesting impatience; confess your fault humbly upon your knees. Rejoice in all your trials at the recollection of your crucified Lord, and

submit cheerfully to the commands of your superiors, who hold the place of God. Oppose to the words of your mouth a wall of kindness and purity; be slow and circumspect of speech; speak in few words, and after carefully examining them, the thoughts of your soul as they come to you; and in all your undertakings, avoid giving offence to God. Guard the senses from every vice, that you may serve the Lord with a pure heart. Read over this letter frequently, and keep it with you until your death, endeavouring faithfully to fulfil what it contains."

XVIII. I visited the servant of Jesus, and celebrated Mass in her oratory, and I gave her the Sacrament of the Body of our Lord. After communicating with great respect, she began to pray and to say:—"O my God, give me back those admirable counsels that I was wont to receive from Thee." Our Lord:—"I give you what is the most opportune for your salvation; seek not, therefore, to have recourse to My former counsels. I reserve for others who are dear to Me, My intimate and familiar colloquies. In this town I lived in sorrow; My friends ought to desire to dwell there with Me; if they were not stricken by affliction, it is then that they would have cause to be sad; for sinners offend Me much on all sides. Let My servants be united; let them defend and teach My rights; they who act thus have nothing to fear, I shall be with them. Tell your confessor from yourself, to be fervent in preaching to the people the word of My Gospel, of the apostles, and of the blessed Paul, My elect; I shall give him a special gift of grace. Speak with assurance of everything that I shall henceforth manifest to you. O My daughter, know that simony has greatly increased in the world. Parents

present their sons to holy orders through greed to possess the good things of the world. Simony increasing, My Church shall be struck with troubles, and the Friars-Minors shall be grievously afflicted ; even though they performed no other penance than this in their whole order, it would seem to them sufficient. Speak these words also to your counsellor ; I have few soldiers that vigorously fight for the honour of My Name. I have chosen him for this end, to fight for Me ; let him always endeavour to bring to a satisfactory end the works that are agreeable to Me ; let him be before Me a light in his order. When engaged in occupation, he need not burthen himself with the recital of the whole office together. Tell Friar Sesto to devote his time with constancy to prayer. Whenever he can, let him abstain from conversation with his companions. His works have never been so agreeable unto Me, and he has never employed his time so well."

XIX. On the Monday of the first week in August, Margaret heard in spirit a voice speaking to her soul :—“I have placed you in the desert of the world like a rose amid thorns ; by your example, the thorns shall be cut and changed into trees bearing fruit. I, the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary, who speak to you, will fulfil all that I have promised.” The fervent lover of souls had humble opinions of herself ; she said :—“Lord, I am not worthy that in me Thou shouldst realise such great promises ; nevertheless, for the glory of Thy Name which I have offended, and for the much-wished-for salvation of the people, do what Thy grace hast vouchsafed to give us hopes of.” Our Lord :—“My daughter, you speak truly, and I shall give you efficacious remedies for the good of

drooping souls, not only in this city, but also in remote places and far-distant provinces ; I will do so for love of you." Margaret answered :—" Lord, I recommend to Thy goodness the inhabitants of Cortona ; vouchsafe to correspond to their faith in me for love of Thee." Jesus Christ :—" They have been liberal to you because of Me, and I will reward their faith. For every penny that they have sacrificed to your use, they shall receive a measure of gold in the gift of peace and concord that I will give them."

Margaret again said :—" I never prayed to Thee, O Lord, on their behalf, more fervently than I do to-day. I refuse from them praise and all temporal honour ; I seek only their salvation ; let those who labour for me in sight of Thy love, receive on this occasion a special grace." Our Saviour answered her :—" I will put them in such a happy state that they can say they have sold Me their wares at a high price. As for you, you shall live unknown until the time when men shall see what in this hour they know not ; then they shall hear what they never heard. You are My elect, My daughter, My sister, seek nothing but My love." Margaret :—" No creature has more offended Thy Majesty than I ; I am more miserable than the depths of misery itself ; how can I believe the great things that Thou dost disclose to me?" " Have you not testified," replied our Lord, " that you love nothing outside Me, and you only wish to serve Me alone ? Wherefore, I say unto you, you shall be established in such purity that you will never mortally offend Me. Your love, as counted by a creature's, shall be immeasurable, and hence it can be said of you, that you are infinite in a certain sense. You know that I am the ineffable joy of the elect ; but few in number

are they in whom I can delight as in your soul ; for My friends and My elect must be humble and pure of heart, that they may deserve to behold Me. When they finish their career, I will give them a loving embrace, and I will go before them in the company of the blessed."

XX. On the feast of Saint John the Evangelist, I, who write these things, assisted Margaret after communion, with Friar Renault and Friar Ubaldo, in the oratory of Saint Francis. Friar Renault, guardian of Arezzo, began to speak and to say:—"Picture to yourself that in this moment, when you are reposing in the sweetness of Jesus Christ, a fresh revelation shows you a soul full of sin ; it is certainly destined to eternal torments, unless you lead it unto repentance by advice and exhortation. God gives you a choice of two things ; either you must deprive yourself of the inebriating sweetness that you enjoy to pray for this soul until the hour of terce, and by this means lead it to grace ; or, if you are unwilling, and refuse to remove from such perfect contentment, the soul will go into the fires of hell. What do you choose?" Margaret:—"There is anguish for me on all sides ; on one side and the other, fear oppresses me ; if I abandon the ineffable sweetness of Jesus Christ, as I taste it in this hour, I shall incur the sorrow of a new death, and a very bitter death ; and, if I forsake the soul redeemed by Jesus' blood, I would offend my Creator. Wherefore, I shall leave this question unsolved. If the sweetness I receive at present, were to last always in my soul, I think I would live without feeling any pain, and without taking any nourishment."

XXI. Towards evening Margaret returned, trembling, to her cell. She passed the night sleepless, in prayer; she wept and sighed sorrowfully, questioning her Creator on the remission of her sins. The King of compassion, Jesus Christ, inclined sweetly to her wishes, and answered:—"I would not have called you My daughter on Saint John's Day, if I had not forgiven you your offences. As a sure pledge of the truth of this, now as then, I absolve you in the name of My heavenly Father, whose co-eternal and consubstantial Son I am, and of the Holy Ghost. Although your sins are forgiven you, you should never cease to examine your conscience, and never delay to tell your confessor the thoughts of your heart that have offended Me." Thing admirable and worthy of being related! On receiving these commands, Margaret's spirit was enlightened with the splendours of the Divine wisdom; all her confessed and unconfessed desires of the past were shown to her like a flash.

XXII. On the following night, Jesus Christ spoke to Margaret on the question put her by Friar Renault:—"You did well, My daughter," He said to her, "not to answer the Friar who proposed a choice between two opposite things. For without My presence, which I communicate to you as a favour, you think you could not live; and, on the other hand, you wish to deliver the soul whose sins drive it on in the course of eternal damnation. I have revealed to you many times how much I love souls redeemed at so high a price; and it is owing to their zeal for them that the Friars-Minors are more agreeable to Me than any other order in the Church; they are the most useful fishers of souls

that I have now upon earth. I, the Saviour of the world, founded and planted this order, and I expect its members to be strengthened by the bond of mutual charity; let them observe among themselves the strictest charity, and hold all, the great and the small alike, on a footing of perfect equality, without any exception whatever. That this excellent order may persevere in charity, I wish its heads to endeavour to abolish whatever ought to be abolished. The sea rejects all that stains her; let them do likewise. Let them be constant and fervent in their sermons; and let them in no way depart from the voice of truth, through affection, favour, or fear. If the murmurs of some are directed against their word, let them humbly remember that the envious answered to My teachings and miracles with reproach and perfidy towards Me, the Creator of all things. O My daughter," continued our Lord, "this order saves many souls from the death of sin; and I will give it a special grace in all its works." Margaret loved the order with her whole heart; filled with joy at the things she had heard, she answered:—"O my God, shall they all enter into the garden of Thy love?" Our Lord:—"They shall all enter therein, but they shall not all taste of its fruits alike. Nothing can please Me so much as love, and there is nothing so fine. If the whole world were given Me for My love, but without the flavour and fervour of love, I would allow, by My mercy, such an offering, that in itself it would be of little value as regards the pleasure I should draw therefrom. Nobody can come to Me but by the voice of love." Margaret:—"And why, O Lord, dost thou call the order of Friars-Minors a garden of love? Hast thou

no other garden of great charity?" Jesus Christ:—"In the world I have not a school of such great love. I gave and I give unto you this order for your instruction; therein you shall find the apostles unto whom I will make known what shall be granted to you." Our Lord showed Margaret His Mother, and added:—"She loves you." At these words, Margaret was filled with sweetness and delight to such a degree that she declared it could not increase. She besought our Lord to hide her from the world in such moments of consolation; for she could not endure them in silence, and she wished to avoid the praises of men.

XXIII. Margaret bethought herself of the three souls that were purifying their sins in the fires of purgatory, and asked that their troubles be lessened, at least to a certain degree. By the Divine permission, these souls appeared to her, and said:—"Pray for us, mother of mercy, that by thy suffrages we may merit a higher degree of supreme happiness."

XXIV. One day Margaret prayed for her spiritual fathers, and Our Lord answered:—"My servant,* who is dead, is already in glory; do you say to him † who is still living:—*Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God in the kingdom of heaven.* When he is taken up with his occupations towards men, let him return to Me in spirit, and refer his works to Me as the Author of all good; I will enlighten him so that he shall not offend Me; let him never desire the esteem of worldly men, nor fear the withdrawal of My favours; and let him instruct them by word of

* Friar John of Castigliona.

† Friar Giunta.

mouth against their vices in the use and teachings of the sacred truth. I say these things unto you, My daughter, although you would refuse to hear them, for the salvation of the human race, in order that men may indeed be drawn unto Me. Let them learn from you that a weak repentance can raise them subsequently unto excellent grace."

XXV. On the Monday after Pentecost, Margaret received the Body of our Lord, who told her to recite the *Hail Mary* as far the words *ventris tui*. When she had done so, our Saviour continued:—"If you refer all good to Me, Jesus Christ, and not to yourself, and if you always nourish the desire that such good may be profitable for the salvation of souls, the things you shall promise in My name, seeking not your own esteem, shall be fully accomplished. You shall heal, also, the souls of those who are devout to you, as you were promised. Nevertheless, all those whom you restore to health will not remain faithful." Margaret answered doubtfully:—"Shall I promise the freedom of Thy mercy, O Lord, unto all indiscriminately?" Jesus Christ:—"To the imperfect as to the perfect, provided that they wish to consecrate themselves to My service, My praise, and My love; for those who do not persevere shall be thunderstruck in hell by the splendour of your charity, and shall suffer the greatest torments thereby. As for those who persevere in following your counsels, I will communicate unto them the merits of My Blood, and I will give them the reward of glory in My kingdom. By means of your example they will follow Me, thank Me, and praise Me." Margaret remained stupefied. She was surprised, however, that she did not receive the sweet peace so often granted her. Our Lord answered on

this point:—"As I find you, so I give Myself unto you."

XXVI. On the Wednesday after Pentecost, Margaret respectfully received the Son of God at the altar, and she heard:—"Do you love Me?" Without waiting for an answer, our Lord continued:—"Say that you do not love Me. What is become of the early fervour of your desires; the time when, softly guided by the promptings of violent love, you sought Me continually, and bowed your inclinations to My will?" Our Lord continued to question Margaret on the subject of this love, and said to her:—"Love Me, my daughter, for I love you." She feared her spirit was affected in a manner to offend the sight of the Divine Majesty, and she answered:—"Give me to know, O Lord, if my soul hides anything displeasing to Thy will." Our Lord:—"My daughter, there is no mortal sin upon you; but the smoke of the worldly things that you have seen, the din of the conversation of your visitors, prevents your conscience from repose, and distracts your spirit from contemplating Me."

She prayed for a person exposed to a great trial, and heard:—"Know that I am with her by My mercy, which will save her from perishing; but the hardness of her heart puts an obstacle to the abundance of My consolations."

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE REVELATIONS MADE HER ON HER OWN STATE, AND ON THAT OF THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.

I. A NOBLE and pious lady had an only son at the point of death. She recommended him in tears to the servant of God, in the hope of obtaining life and health for the little child. Margaret made supplications to the Lord, touched either with pity for the mother, or with gratitude towards the lady, who had particular regard for her, and our Lord replied :—
“ You have greater compassion for the mother of this child, than you have for the shedding of My Blood. Know you not that adults do not seek to come unto Me, and that I adopt for the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, the children who leave the world without stain. Although I, the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary, seem to depart, I dwell with you.”

II. A friar, beloved of God, was eager to communicate every day. Nevertheless, a great fear restrained him ; he dared not go even at long intervals ; he dared not approach the august sacrament of the Body of Jesus Christ. He consulted the servant of God and besought her to obtain for him the gift of frequent communion. Our Saviour lent a favourable ear to the prayer of Margaret :—“ I have reckoned this

Friar," said He, "among the number of My elect, and I love this son of benediction. On account of the purity of his innocence I shall give Myself to him every day; but he must check the use he makes of his tongue. He must put a curb thereon, although he speaks very zealously; then, strengthened by My blessing, he may receive Me whenever he please."

III. Margaret, the servant of God, and the little plant of the Friars-Minors, carefully planted another of her own name in the garden of her father Saint Francis. As she recommended the new plant to our Lord, He found it agreeable, and said to her:—"This Margaret is a new phial in which I wish to rest the gifts of My grace; although she loves Me with her whole heart, she is not yet entirely purified by perfect confession; let her confess more fully and follow you, let her consider you as a new sun, and do you recommend her to Me as your daughter. I say unto you, she is My little plant; let her obey you, let her go to confession to her confessor, and let her put all things to rights as Father Philip directs her. I shall not impose upon her, as upon you, a rigorous abstinence, but prayer, watchfulness, and separation from persons of the world as far as she can. Let her observe rigid poverty, and keep nothing for herself on the pretext of practising charity. Let her with you obey the Friars-Minors; and woe to her if she departs from their advice. Tell Father Ubaldo that, owing to the homage he pays Me and the fatigues he joyfully supports, My Mother, the Queen of heaven, has prepared for him a radiant throne in the kingdom of My glory."

IV. On the feast of the Holy Cross, after communion, Margaret heard:—"I am the Lamb of God,

who take away the sins of the world ; whoever believes in Me shall receive eternal life." Then our Lord revealed to her the state of many souls ; she would disclose nothing thereof, because the faults of many persons were mentioned in this revelation, and she dared not even speak of it to me ; she feared that men and women would be troubled by this correction, and that the noise of these revelations would lead towards her more than the ordinary number of curious, timid, and devout souls.

V. On the Annunciation of the Mother of God, she had recourse in tears to Jesus Christ, as was her custom. Illuminated by the splendours of supreme consolation, she asked our Lord if her soul was freed from the stains of its sins. He answered that nothing grave remained for her to expiate, or nothing that could offend the sight of the Divine Majesty. " Wherefore, I blessed you," He continued, " and I wish you to be careful to preserve yourself from every imperfection, and to receive Me every day, if you so desire." Strengthened by divine grace, she besought the Most High to vouchsafe to fill her heart with every virtue, so that, in the future, nothing could find an entrance therein but God Himself, and He alone. On the following day, she assisted at High Mass, and the fervour of love increased to such an excess, that she could not refrain from speaking before all the people. She came to her confessor bathed in tears and suffocated with sobs, and humbly besought him to delay giving her the Body of our Lord, as she hoped by communicating after Mass, to be able to conceal from the looks and praises of men the inebriation of her spirit. She did not wish, before so many persons, to approach the Friars' altar with a halter round her neck, bare-headed,

and her face bathed in a flood of tears ; she feared to be taxed with hypocrisy ; she was then so ravished in God that those present were certain she beheld the Creator face to face. When she received the sacred Body of our Lord, God, who loves to dwell in holy souls, spoke to her and said :—“ Have confidence, My daughter, you are My well-beloved, I keep you at My school, I will preserve you in grace and defend you from temptation, I will comfort you in affliction and conduct you to eternal life. Do you believe that I am the true God, equal to the eternal Father ? ” Margaret answered :—“ Not only do I believe it, but I am surprised that my soul does not melt away entirely in Thy presence. ” As she feared to have brought some fault to the reception of the Body of Jesus Christ, our Lord blessed her and said that He had purified her. He bid her think of His words to the blessed Paul : *My grace is sufficient for thee*. It seemed to Margaret that this admirable sweetness was failing her ; she inclined her head upon her bosom and said :—“ Where art Thou, O my Love, my sovereign Love ? Take, I entreat Thee, my soul from this body, in order that I may be entirely with Thee. ” Margaret besought in tears Him whose goodness disposes all things with suavity. He answered that He filled her with fear to prepare her for the fulfilment of the things that were written concerning her ; and He foretold that her life would continue and end in fear.

VI. The fire of holy love filled Margaret's soul. In public as in private, wrapt in divine sweetness, she used to cry :—“ Lord, Lord, where art Thou ? ” Father Benignus, in name and deed, had doubts about celebrating Mass, and thought he ought not to say it so often. He deserved to receive this answer through Margaret's

means:—"Tell Father Benignus, who is excessively frightened about frequenting the sacrament of My Body, that it is My will that he celebrate often. But before approaching the altar, let him fully confess his faults and dispose his spirit to repose. Let him persevere unto the end in mercy, and be very attentive to the poor; He has made himself very agreeable in My sight by seeking the poor from house to house, and the weak and infirm, and in admitting them more willingly to the riches of confession." The Friar was in truth full of eagerness to meet the necessities of the poor; not only used he procure them whatever he could, but he used even deprive himself of necessaries and contract debts for their relief, all with the permission of his superior. "Tell him again," continued our Lord, "to leave only their clothes to those who have to make restitution for ill-gotten gains; let him show such persons no mercy. If penitents have really nothing with which to make restitution, and that they sincerely repent, he must urge them to acquit themselves faithfully when they have the means, and absolve them in My name."

VII. The Friars-Minor of the convent of Arezzo were greatly afflicted by the death of their guardian, Father Renault; a man of God, most useful to his order and to the people. To moderate their affliction in a Christian spirit, and in order to conform each one to the divine will, our Lord said to Margaret, who recommended to Him the dead friar, that we place too much confidence in men, and that we should hope and put our trust in Him, Jesus Christ. "The servants of God," He added, "should not conform to the custom of the world, for these persons mourn immeasurably the death of their relatives. If I invited Father

Renault to My kingdom, there is no room for regretting his absence upon earth." The servant of God, animated with the desire of being delivered from her prison here below, besought the Most High to reveal to her the day of her death. "I will not tell you now," answered our Lord, "because it does not please Me to do so. You must be first adorned with nobler virtues." She then set about considering and admiring those which God had planted in her soul; and our Lord continued:—"When I prepared you thus, I made you the mirror of sinners; by your means, they will abandon their vices, they will hope for pardon, and they will adorn themselves with virtues to resemble you." Margaret replied:—"Lord, by reason of the rapid change that Thou hast worked in me, without any merit on my side, the Friars-Minors to whom you have recommended me seem in doubt. They are slow to visit me; they hesitate and fear to be deceived through me by the enemy of salvation. Most Holy Father, my Master and my Lord, Thou didst reveal to me in advance the names of those that would doubt; I entreat Thy mercy now to banish all doubt from their hearts." And Jesus answered:—"I will make the Friars more attentive in visiting you; and for love of Me they shall assist you with fresh sweetness." Then I was allowed to visit her once a week, and still oftener if she was seriously ill and asked for me.

VIII. A man abandoned himself altogether to his passions; he was the willing victim of temptation; nevertheless, he recommended himself with lively devotion to the servant of God. While she was praying for him, she heard these words:—"He exposes himself deliberately to danger, and I do not choose to

prevent him falling through love for him ; but I shall do so through love for you, and because of My friends who have interceded on his behalf. If he again delays to purify himself in confession, and abandons not the suggestions of pride, he will fall into forgetfulness about his salvation." When Margaret related those things which she spoke in sobs, this abandoned man laid aside his evil habits, his pride fell, he was changed into a different being, and he promised to go to confession.

IX. There was a young man of the bishopric of Arezzo, very intimate with the Friars-Minors, and devoted to their order. Overcome with shame, he only confessed half his sins in the Church of the Friars at Cortona, and received unworthily the Sacrament of the Body of Jesus Christ. As I went to console the blessed daughter, she told me in tears, that this young man had concealed in confession such and such a sin, and that he had communicated unworthily. I became sensible of great interior sorrow at the offence committed against God, and the peril of my penitent ; I went in search of him, questioned him simply, and discovered that he had really concealed the sins indicated by the pious sister. However, by her merits, he accused himself immediately of them, and, by this means, was saved from the torments of hell.

X. A lady came to visit sister Margaret, and she, by divine inspiration, disclosed to her two mortal sins that she would not, and did not still wish to accuse herself of. She, however, obtained by prayer the grace for this lady to go to confession, and she made a perfect one.

XI. A Friar of the province of Tuscany urgently besought Margaret's suffrage, that he might not be

burthened with the office of superior in the future. The devout sister prayed for him, and heard the Prince of Pastors answer:—"Although this Friar pleases Me in wishing to avoid the rank of superior, he ought to remember that, through obedience, I suffered death, and that a religious should prefer this virtue to all others; let him, then, patiently obey his superiors; I will look down upon his resignation with true complacency, and the more perfect this resignation shall be, the more will I remit his sins."

XII. The devout sister was praying on one occasion for a Friar, and she heard:—"Tell him to maintain always great purity of heart, and to confess his sins and his thoughts. Let him not be scrupulous and fearful, but brave and constant; let him say Mass with calmness of spirit; let him not be over-choice in his sermons, but burning with charity, and let him maintain great interior peace; let him not neglect his preparation for the holy Mass, and let him not hasten in the celebration of it; let him avoid speaking to the Friars at such a time, and urge them to wait for a more fitting occasion to ask him to do so. Let him take a fervent companion with him, who can neither distract him by ignorance or by negligence while he is officiating. If it happens that he does not then experience the consolations he desires, he must not be put at defiance, nor suppose that My grace is decreasing in him; let him speak My word with solicitude, propriety, and force; let him draw the thread of his discourse fervently, fearlessly proposing to the people what he is directed so to do; if he should chance to have no effect upon the congregation

by his sermons, let him console himself with the assurance of eternal reward in the future. Let him study attentively to come to the assistance of sinners, not only in the pulpit of truth and in hearing confessions, but also in not neglecting to restore peace; and that, notwithstanding the difficulties caused by hardness of heart; for too often, when he sees his counsels despised, and finds spirits rebelling against his words, he is inclined to abandon his work, waiting for better dispositions, although he does not stand in need of them."

XIII. Margaret recommended to our Lord, Father John of Castigliona, and He said to her:—"Pray for him confidently, My daughter; I have given you to know his state better than any other person interesting himself with Me on his behalf. Remember My words:—*Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.* If he meditates on it attentively, I will give him the necessary light to hear it, in thought and deed, with a most lively penetration. Let him invoke Me, and I will give Myself to his soul. He has served Me in the past in the Office of the Inquisition; at present I ask of him purity of heart, constancy of spirit, mortification of the flesh, and diligence of prayer. He must not neglect the Divine counsels, care to be agreeable to God, and, above all, My commandments; there the soul finds purification; it will regulate its movements, enlighten it with infallible wisdom, and will grow in virtue."

Our Lord again spoke to Margaret in prayer:—"Tell My son * to remember Me, his Father, crucified not only once, but continually by sinners in these

* Father Giunta.

times. In proportion to the population, there is not a Christian city whence hell is peopled more than where he is.* Great is the presumption of the Friars; by their example it is multiplied, and speaks, not only in their homes, but even far beyond. My beloved son Francis obliged a lady addicted to vanity, to bear on her head through the streets of Assisi, the intestines of animals; women of the world should be compelled by their confessor to do the same in expiation of their pride. You complain that you do not experience the suavity to which you are accustomed; you cannot find it in Me; for, in your heart, dissipated by fears and many cares, I cannot find yourself. You have departed from My good pleasure, and I wish My son to correct you vigorously. Tell him again to preach impressively, with force of spirit and sweetness of expression, sermons taken from the Epistles of Saint Paul and from My Gospel; sweetness is the allurements which draws the hearts of the congregation to love the preacher. When he speaks of vice, he may safely employ a general tone, for the world is infected on all sides; let him say:—Every Christian person, in every state, ought to avoid such a sin. It ought to take for its model the Sacred Scriptures, and make supplications to God in incessant prayer. Let him pour forth his prayers in tears himself, and I will instruct him. I will illumine his heart for preaching. Let him present it to Me perseveringly; let him be careful to attribute to Me every good; let him attribute it to Me alone, who am the true Good, and let him carry everywhere with him the bridle of My fear. My daughter, the apostles

* Sienna.

doubted Me, and I kept you firm in the faith, so that you never felt a doubt. Tell your servant again, that I have made him the minister of My treasure, and that he should be more perfect in presence of his Creator. He loves My benediction ; let him then ardently announce My truth in his sermons, for I find to-day few apostolic workers who speak it as they ought."

XIV. On the vigil of the translation of her blessed father, Saint Francis, after communion, Margaret heard Our Lord say to her :—"I complain to you of the sins of worldly people." And Margaret, full of compassion for this poor world, answered :—"Lord, Thou knowest of what frail matter their body is composed, I entreat Thy Majesty to vouchsafe to hearken to their infirmity." Jesus Christ :—"If they knew all that is remitted through consideration for their weakness, they would be more grateful to Me. Tell your spiritual brethren to weep because I wept ; to fast, because I fasted ; to pray, because I prayed for them, in human shape, to My Father ; to do penance, for Mine was rigorous in this life, not for Myself, but for them ; though innocent, I bore their sins. Whatever you promise in My Name to those who believe in Me, I will fulfil. Alas ! misers have made Me, liberal though I am, avaricious like themselves ; hard-hearted people have hardened Me, mercy itself ; not that I am without doubt, or avaricious, or hard, but they deserve to find Me thus towards them. My daughter, salute My Mother ; say the Hail Mary as far as *fructus ventris tui*. Praise Me with the whole court of the blessed, with John the Baptist, who prays continually for you ;

recommend yourself to your holy angel who guards you watchfully. Assure your priest Badia, also, of the gift of My grace, if he follows My teachings and precepts." Our Lord, as usual gave His blessing to Margaret.

XV. On Septuagesima Sunday she devoutly received the Body of our Saviour; she then heard these words:—"My daughter, observe your confessor's directions to dwell in this cell; you shall remain there as long as it is pleasing unto Me. You have prayed to Me for the repose of the pastor of a village in your country; through your means, I will deliver him soon from the pains of purgatory." Margaret had compassion on this soul condemned to a place of suffering, and said:—"Lord, this pastor, in his simplicity, was almost always deceived. Why must he be punished?" Jesus Christ:—"It is true, My daughter, that he was more deceived than deceiver; nevertheless, his simplicity was not without malice, and, hence, he must be punished. I have shown you many souls, retained in great punishment, for whom you must not pray to Me at this time: My justice requires them to continue in a state of purification, in order that they may know Him whom they have offended."

XVI. On the octave day of the Ascension, after communion, our Saviour immediately said to her:—"My daughter, this false religious has here reported that you will not end your life in Cortona, and I assure you that there you shall die. For love of you this town shall receive a favour by which it will be known even in the most distant provinces. I am your Guide, your Help, your Lord and your Master; you shall be strong for Me, and you shall not fall, because I have inscribed you in the Book of Life.

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I will disclose the impostures of this deceitful and cunning man ; in token of which I bless you in the name of My Father, in My own Name, and in the name of the Holy Ghost, of the Blessed Virgin, My Mother, and of all the company of the Blessed."

On this morning, the Body of Jesus Christ was brought her to her cell from the church of Saint Mark ; she began to think that our Lord was offended at the tediousness of the journey ; but she heard His voice : — "Fear not, My daughter, for this priest bears Me with the greatest devotion. He has already received the price of the fatigue which he underwent for you ; for if, through love of you, I had not suspended My sentence against him, he would have fallen into the opprobrium he deserved."

XVII. A very learned man, and one well versed in law, implored Margaret's help in a time of some trial. He came to her earnestly, though quite infirm, from his country to Cortona. While Sister Margaret was praying for him, she heard our sweet Lord answer : — "Tell this man that, if he did not deserve the trial he is undergoing by reason of will to sin, yet he has been negligent, he has not been watchful over himself. When his enemy began to tempt him, he did not consent ; but, yet, he did not altogether avoid the occasion of sin. Hence bad thoughts took their rise in his soul, and prevented abundant graces, which were in store for him, if he watched himself with care. As to his dejection of spirit, tell him that he shall endure this, because, on entering My service, he boasted of the power of his memory, and of his contempt of worldly honours."

XVIII. On another occasion, as she was communicating, the servant of God heard the word of the Lord.

He bid her tell Father Badia to recite the Paternoster many times, and to think respectfully on the state to which the mercy of the Redeemer had called him. Our Lord added :—" Let him be confounded and groan in spirit ; let his heart expand in meditation on My Passion, and let him weigh carefully what he writes of My secrets."*

XIX. The Eternal Maker of the world, who has a clear knowledge of all things, even before they happen or come into existence, said to Margaret as she was watching and weeping :—" Be constant, for a great trial shall put the world to the test ; the next devil to Lucifer, who never left hell since he was banished thereto, will be the promoter of it. He shall go abroad throughout the earth, and prepare the way of Antichrist, as his precursor. So great shall be this trial, that many religious will quit their orders, and many nuns go forth from their convents ; then shall the order of Friars-Minors be greatly afflicted ; nevertheless, let them take courage of Me ; I will protect them and give them My grace. I have already given them more of it than any other order in the world. Let them be prepared ; trials will make them like unto Me ; I love them, hence, I wish their life to be in every respect conformable to Mine. If they find not consolation on the part of the Pope, I will give in that alone a singular token of affection ; by that means I will purify them and be with them."

XX. " This evil spirit will spread treason and homicide throughout the world ; he will raise armies of demons against mankind, as one city prepares its forces

* These secrets were the Lord's revelations to Margaret, which this priest was charged to note down in the absence of Father Giunta.

and ambuscades against another city. He will spread scandals in the Church, that the faithful may despise it and murmur against the divine service and sermons, so that My word might not be freely spoken. The Friars-Minors shall be grievously afflicted at this, in consequence of what may result to My offended dignity, and of the peril of souls."

XXI. On the Friday in Low week, I found the servant of Jesus in such bitter sorrow that she was bathed in tears. But while, as her confessor, I was relating to her some passages taken from the Gospel on the Resurrection, she was filled with joy, and was twice ravished in God before the Friars. In this ecstasy of spirit, she understood many things which she immediately acquainted me with, and which I could not take down, because I was pressed for time. I only remember this one circumstance. I was humbly questioning her on the virtues which a true Friar-Minor ought to possess; through humility, she would not speak on the subject; but our Lord asked her in prayer on the following night the reason of this, and added:—"Tell your confessor:—He is a true Friar-Minor, in whom, after the image of Me, who am the Truth Itself, truth abides; he is a Friar-Minor, who is pure of heart according to My word, *Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.* If he is not a priest, he devotes all his time to prayer; if he is preacher and priest, he employs it in preaching, in the office, in the Holy Mass, and in hearing confessions. I say unto you, the tears of him who preaches and prays, enlighten the spirit even more than reading the Scripture. He is a Friar-Minor, who loves poverty, who has grown old therein; he is a Friar-Minor, who is obedient, as I was to My Father, even to the death

of the Cross ; he is a Friar-Minor, who is disposed to undergo death and blows, and who, in the humiliations and the contempt to which he is subjected for My sake, is humble and always preserves spiritual joy in tribulation ; for I, your Creator, patiently supported bitter torments. Let your confessor tell N—— to make peace immediately with those who offended him, and I shall give him thereof at the hands of his enemies.”

XXII. The little plant of the Friars-Minors, eager to produce fruit agreeable to the order, one day prayed to our Lord for those who had brought her up. She heard :—“ My daughter, tell My Friars not to suffer their souls to delay in giving themselves up to Me through love, and I will give Myself to them by My grace. If they desire to advance therein, let them begin at My manger, and direct their meditations in sorrow of spirit, following this order even to the torments of My Passion. At every stage of My dolours, let them consider the burning charity of My Heart. By this means, they will be strengthened in tribulation. I will infuse Myself into their souls, and, by reason of their solicitude for praying and preaching, I will make them conform to My life and miseries.”

XXIII. In the month of May, the Wisdom of God the Father spoke to His servant and said :—“ My daughter, the evil spirit that I told you of, is already gone forth from hell, to the great peril of souls, with an army of demons. He is now, with his followers, in a vast desert, to which men have not access ; they would be annihilated by the enemy, if they approached. This dire legate of Lucifer feared to present himself to his chief, unless he succeeded in perfectly accom-

plishing the evils for which he was sent; Father Giunta told you of the same things concerning other demons. All persons under the heavens should seek to conform to the slightest instance of this priest; in order to obey him in every point, they should tell him distinctly and minutely, as to a worthy master, all the evils they commit throughout the world. This new and wicked instigator of evil is so clever in the art of making and suggesting it, that, from the beginning of the world, men never knew how to sin and to spread discord as they know now, and will know for the future. This pitiless and fertile author of treason shall work, in his own time, greater havoc on souls than now, when Antichrist will come, who is yet unborn. Antichrist, indeed, will surprise many souls, but will only retain few; this cruel spirit will bind many unto evil, and cause in the world the death of many. Tell the Friars-Minors to prepare courageously to combat against his malice; for he will cause them many afflictions. Let My order be reassured; I will be with it. Sinners shall transform their souls into so many stables; I wish the Friars-Minors to know that they should cleanse them by preaching, without leading any person into despair by terror. Nay more, if the sinner rejects the penance enjoined on him, it rests with the Friars to take it upon themselves so far as they are able, and to discover every root of vice in the soul by means of an exact and minute confession."

XXIV. There was a Friar beloved of God, named Conrad, who came from some far-distant province to visit the servant of Jesus and to recommend himself to her prayers. As she was praying for him, she heard these words:—"Tell him to celebrate the Holy

Mass as follows:—On Sunday, in memory of My Nativity and Resurrection; Monday, for the dead, and those who are afflicted in purgatory; Friday, in remembrance of My Passion; and Saturday, in honour of the glorious Virgin, My Mother. If he does this, he will be buried in the depths of My love; let him not regret the services which he rendered the Friars-Minors in the past now, when he can no longer do so. I impose nothing on him, except to serve others after Mass, as far as is advisable. Let him then return to his cell; he can sometimes take recreation with the Friars in speaking of Me; but let him not in fervour address himself to all. Let him never ask Me for an absolute gift; all that he can ask of Me in prayer is, to be left resignedly to the decision of My will. If he is faithful thereto, I will grant him special graces; let him know simply that he has never bought them in the past, at such a high price as he must pay for them in the future.”

Margaret wished to receive the corrections of our Lord for herself in token of grace. “My God,” she cried; “why dost Thou not reprove me like this religious, me who requires correction in everything?” Our Lord:—“I correct you, My daughter, in separating you from the common run of persons in the world, and in preserving you in diffidence to the things that are promised you.” On the following night, this Friar prayed for Margaret, and saw her in spirit all burning with the fire of divine love. He heard an angel’s voice which cried:—“Behold Margaret who desires and seeks for nothing, absolutely nothing, but our Lord Jesus Christ.”

XXV. On the feast of Saint Laurence, Margaret beheld our Saviour with great joy, and said to Him :

—“O Lord, who art Joy itself, why dost Thou not fill me with Thy joy, which I long for beyond all other things?” Jesus answered her:—“When you contemplate Me in joy, I show you what I am; and when you contemplate Me otherwise, you ought to meditate on what I became for the salvation of mankind.” At the same moment she beheld, with the light of God, many enemies fighting against the order of Friars-Minors. At sight of the combat, Jesus Christ turned His looks on the order of the ever-blessed Francis; He rejoiced in a marvellous degree, which the servant of God could not describe. Turning His eyes then on the persecutors, He seemed neither pleased nor troubled. In astonishment she said to Him:—“What is this, Lord? Do not all creatures belong to Thee? Why then, having looked with such sweetness on the Friars-Minors, does not Thy countenance manifest any uneasiness in turning towards their enemies; does not the conduct of these latter expose them to the danger of being lost?” Our Lord:—“My daughter, I enter into the joy of the former, because I reserve them to Myself, and I will make them a great place in the Church; but I take no trouble about the others; the admonitions, example, and teachings of the Friars bring many unto Me. Verily I say unto you, the persecution set on foot by envious persons shall not be pleasing to many of those who support it. Hence it was that, at the time of My Passion, there were many Jews who neither consented to it, nor took part therein, but who, nevertheless, took no steps to prevent it.”

XXVI. There came for Margaret a day of comfort and grace, the solemnity of the holy virgin Catherine. After the communion of the Body and Blood of our

Saviour, she besought with tears her companion to supplicate the Most High immediately to bestow Himself liberally on her, who was thirsting with the want to possess Him, and Him alone. She said that the soul, after tasting the sweetness of God, could henceforth only with difficulty support whatsoever it heard or felt beyond God. Our Lord sent His angel to her to bid her send forth her companion from her cell; she should not be a witness to Margaret's joys, lest she should speak of them abroad. When this woman had withdrawn, Jesus spoke to His servant and said to her:—"My daughter, your afflictions are agreeable unto Me; prepare yourself, then, they shall increase." Margaret answered:—"My Lord, tell me what these trials are?" The Lord:—"It is not fitting to name them all unto you; but I say unto you, you are destined to withdraw from the vices of the world those who are plunged therein. You are the light that shall snatch from the darkness those who are seated in its midst. You are an elect daughter, blessed of My Father, of Me His Son, and of the Holy Ghost; the Blessed Virgin My Mother blesses you also, with Catherine and all the heavenly court. The Blessed await the coming of your soul among them, and pray earnestly that your departure from the world may be hastened. For Me, I do not wish you to come before you experience and see what My apostles have experienced and felt." (Our Lord here made some allusions to certain Christian towns taken by Saracens across the sea.) He continued:—"Tell the Friars-Minors, moreover, that the time is coming when they must prepare themselves for considerable trials; they shall seem to be cast down from their first state, but I will be with them; in the world I will not have

a religion so beloved as theirs ; no order will serve Me like this order. O My daughter, you whom I will accompany, whom I will honour, you whom I will recommend, you whom I will confirm, why do you not communicate oftener ?” Margaret answered : —“ Lord, I am unworthy to receive Thee, and from the end of the world I do not deserve to raise My eyes to Thee, still less to receive Thee.” Jesus Christ : —“ I make worthy those who are unworthy, and I have fitted you to approach Me daily ; you have the pledge of eternal love.” Margaret replied : —“ I fear I offend Thee in affliction.” And our Lord : —“ If you offended Me, you confessed it, and have been absolved. I say unto you that, as drops of rain fall from the housetop in wet weather, so shall trials fall upon you. Tell Father N——* to console you for love of Me and to visit you, for great are the favours prepared for him for your sake. I will bless him for his labours, and I will make him great in heaven. Let him prepare to receive grace and to lay bare his sins interiorly, according to the knowledge of them that is given to his conscience. I will share with him a singular gift for restoring tranquillity, and in his confessions and in his sermons I will be with him. I wish his life to be the life of an apostle in constancy ; let him be united to Me in truth like a prophet, and let him never fall into doubt through any of the trials of this world. Let him be solicitous in saying the Divine office, which is necessarily divided by the course of his labours ; let him strive to lay the foundations of peace in Cortona by the humility of his words, the tranquillity of his soul, and the gravity of his manners ;

* Here as elsewhere, Father Giunta avoids mentioning his name through humility.

before interfering for a settlement, he shall require a full explanation of all the circumstances, and his words shall be winged and authoritative. Let him take courage in Me; for I will make him great as a priest in the glory of My kingdom. Know that his trials will increase, but My grace will grow with them; nobody can come unto Me without suffering tribulation.

“Fathers Giunta and John have known you well and been well known by you; for they have been your light on the earth, and you shall be theirs. If one or the other of them should happen to be betrayed into anger in his duties of superior and preachers, let his trouble be on his tongue and not in his heart. The former should conform to everything that has been written or commanded him; he is the blessed son whom I called to labour with you for the peace of Cortona. There is not a creature for whom you have prayed to Me, to whom I do not grant a special mercy. Whoever loves you shall be beloved of Me, and whoever spurns your love shall never taste of Mine. I wish you always to speak of Me; and in these colloquies My grace shall grow in you; if you converse on other subjects, you will displease Me.” Here the servant of Jesus Christ was seized with terror, fearing that she would be unable perfectly to obey the divine commands that she received; she besought the Creator of all things to deprive her of the power of speech, and not to allow her any other mode of expression than the language of the heart, and that with Him alone. She asked for abundant tears, and He answered:—“I will not grant you this gift owing to the affection you have for them; for

you should cease your endeavours to approach unto Me, if you were thus refreshed and plunged into delights."

XXVII. One night, overcome with sleep, the son of the servant of God did not rise with the Friars to say Matins. The guardian went to him and used a light rod with which he struck him gently like a father, to awake him. The young man, recalled to his senses by grief, began, in the terror which seized upon him, to cry aloud, and even snatched the rod from the guardian's hands; then, overcome with regret for his rashness, he scraped his face with the fastening of his tunic. At daybreak, and before the call to Prime, Margaret, interiorly enlightened, besought the guardian to send her son to her in all haste. Accompanied by Father Hubert of Alverne, he entered his mother's cell, and, at the same moment, heard her say with tears:—"My soul was by last night, when you cried, snatched the wand, and, childlike, scraped your face. Where is the solicitude which you ought to have, my son, for the divine praises? Where is your gratitude towards the Father of our salvation?" Instructed beforehand by revelation from on high, she sent back her son to his convent, thus admonished and repenting of his fault.

XXVIII. A religious, agreeable to God and to the Friars, was entirely devoted to prayer; all that he did besides was done with repugnance; he thought that all the time he failed to devote to prayer was so much time lost. He was exempt from prayer, from assisting at the divine office, and from the preaching of the Word. Above all, he longed to receive Jesus Christ once a week; nevertheless, considering the sublimity of the Divine Majesty and his own little-

ness, he dared not approach so great a sacrament without the assurance of the servant of God. After praying the Lord for him, Margaret heard His voice :—“ My daughter, you have told this Friar only to communicate once a fortnight ; I agree thereto. Nevertheless, there is no remarkable fault in him ; but it is good to grow in his soul the thirst and the longing to approach Me. If he should long for Me and not receive Me, let him remember the words of the great doctor :—*Believe and thou hast already eaten.* Tell him to prepare himself for new graces, to amend his life, and to atone for the sins he has committed in his walk of life. Let him keep My cross before him in the dormitory, the cloister, the kitchen, the refectory, outside and inside and everywhere, and let him crucify himself in Me. He shall draw from this fountain the graces he has hitherto desired, and those which he shall henceforth ask for with a view to his salvation. Tell him to take courage in Me ; a time shall come when I will give him to receive Me daily ; he shall be then free from the kitchen.” This happened as Margaret had foretold.

XXIX. This chosen soul remembered her servant in prayer, and Jesus Christ addressed her thus :—“ Tell him that I was unknown when I dwelt upon earth with My disciples ; he shall be likewise unknown in the places where he dwells both by religious and by seculars, as long as he lives among them ; but a day will come when all shall desire and seek him. I bless him in the name of My Father, in My own name, and in that of the Holy Ghost and the Blessed Virgin My Mother. Let him take courage, for I will reserve a new grace for him. Let him have recourse to My Gospel whenever he finds himself assailed by

trials ; let him respectfully read how I suffered and what kind of suffering I endured for him.

“O my daughter, say that not only your soul, but even the very marrow of your bones, is melting with the desire of calling Me to you. And I say unto you, all your bones, even to the marrow, and every hair of your head is sanctified in Me.

“Tell N. N. that their mother has suffered bitter torments in purgatory for her ingratitude and avarice ; but she is now in the glory of My kingdom. I have also mercifully received therein Father Benignus' mother. N. N. have recommended themselves to Me. Tell them that they have received the earnest of glory, and that they shall only lose it by the faults into which levity, vain-glory, and impatience make them prone to fall.”

XXX. The servant of God prayed for the soul of Gilia, her companion, who departed this life in death. The angel of the Lord said to her :—“My daughter, she must suffer light torments for one month in purgatory for being several times angry at works of zeal. Father Giunta would deserve the like punishment on your account if he did not check your indiscreet bodily penance.” Her body was, indeed, so attenuated and deprived of its natural heat, that she could not live without fire even in the hottest days of summer. Her great love for the poor was always sufficient to draw her from the fire to distribute to them the goods that were given her. Following the advice of Father John, I endeavoured to provide for her wants by secretly obtaining for her an alms from a pious lady. Margaret discovered it by the revelations of God, and we could not conceal it from her. She sent for me, and, in the fervour of her soul, told me with many sighs, that she

besought me never again to allow anything to be set aside for her. She was heard to express herself thus with tears in her cell, in our absence, while we were providing for her necessities :—" O my Fathers, why do you lay anything by for me at this time? Why do you not let me walk by the narrow road of poverty, for which I sigh with all my might?"

XXXI. On the Feast of the Purification of the glorious Virgin, the servant of God understood by revelation that the Lord had reserved to four angels the task of delivering her companion Gilia out of purgatory, to place her among the Cherubim, according to the prediction made her. The previous week, the angel had many times renewed to Margaret the promise he had made her of delivering Gilia on this feast. Margaret deemed herself unworthy of divine revelation. After communion she questioned Him who spoke in her soul, and asked Him if He was Christ, the Creator of all things. Our Lord said to her :—" I am Jesus who speak to you, and whom you have just received in your soul; I am the Son of God, who vouchsafed to take flesh of the Virgin Mary, to lay Myself to sleep in the manger, to suffer the Magi to adore Me; to-day I presented Myself respectfully and was received in the Temple; I am your Jesus, who promised the water of Life to the woman of Samaria, and who forgave Magdalen; I am He who restored sight to the blind, healed the weak, cleansed lepers, restored the widow's son to life; I am your Redeemer Jesus Christ, who suffered death for the salvation of mankind, who robbed hell and arose on the third day, who ascended into heaven in presence of the disciples, and who will come to judge the living and the dead. Doubt not, O daughter already strengthened in grace; you shall

be no longer deceived in what has been promised you, if you deprive yourself not of grace. Rejoice to-day with Father Giunta over Gilia, his spiritual daughter, for, as I promised, she is among the Cherubim. My daughter, the people of Cortona have been liberal to you with bread and wine; the time will come when, in this city, they shall sell bread and wine in abundance through your means. Know that Antichrist is not yet born."

XXXII. Jesus Christ continued :—" You have earnestly recommended me this morning three dead persons, Margaret; they are not damned, as is thought, but they are suffering cruel torments, and are brought to such an extremity, that they would think themselves damned if they were not visited by two ministering angels. Their heirs should celebrate for them a great anniversary, by contributing to erect a new oratory to Saint Francis, in order that the tears here shed may alleviate the suffering of the three souls, and obtain for them the remission of the sins they have committed by unlawfully obtaining wealth. My justice allotted to them to suffer until the day of judgment, but, owing to your prayers, I will only keep them there for twenty-five years. At the end of that time, on this day consecrated to My Blessed Mother, they shall be freed from suffering and admitted into glory. Tell My Friars to have no scruple about the enlargement of the new oratory; they require this space to weep in prayer, and to pour forth their orisons in secret. As to the former spot,* know that a sinister intention in the founder displeased Me in its very beginning; nevertheless, the Friars must not allow it

* The church was built by Father Elias in 1245 with magnificence. It is thought that this is the spot here mentioned.

to be taken from them. Know that the world shall be again afflicted for the sins that are committed therein in such great numbers. The iniquities of this age have so increased that I am afraid, if I can so speak of Myself, to pray to My Father for them; and My Mother, the Advocate of men, fears to recommend them to Me, her Son."

After this revelation made to the servant of God, the Saracens obtained a victory; and great evils and dangers were felt at Rome, in Tuscany, Sicily, England, France, and in many other provinces.

XXXIII. "Know, besides, My daughter," continued our Lord, "that even as the Friars' cells are distinct, so are the pains of purgatory diverse and in different places. Many souls are purified in the depths of darkness; some by running waters, others in a burning fire. Where you have seen the three souls for whom you have prayed to Me, there are found, a prey to torments the most nearly approaching to those of the damned, traitors, lawyers, and corrupt judges, and men stained with the nameless vice; but they ended their life in sincere repentance, and with the firm intention of renouncing their sins. Besides this pain, there is in purgatory that of souls stamped with My character,* and this is the most cruel of all."

XXXIV. Another day, after receiving the Body of our Saviour, Margaret heard our Saviour speak to her:—"Tell Mazinazia that her husband has been released from purgatory by means of My apostle Bartholomew, and the ever-blessed Francis; tell her, also, that I am disposed to use My mercy towards the Count her son, if he makes a general confession; and let her thank and praise Me; let her trust in Me, for I gave her a

* The character of the Holy Orders.

great gift of My grace when I allowed her to suffer temporal tribulations in this life ; I wish no affliction to dishearten her ; but let her give Me her whole heart, and never cease to bless Me in her anguish." These things were faithfully fulfilled by the pious lady to the end of her life.

"And you, Margaret, My daughter," continued our Lord, "love Me, because I will make you loved ; serve Me, because I will make you be served ; praise Me, because I will make you be praised. Now recite the Hail Mary in full. Know that you will make Me loved by those who love Me not, and by your means cold hearts shall be made warm, and rebellious men shall submit to Me, their Lord and their Master. Say that the excommunication pronounced on account of the indulgence granted to the Church of Saint Mary of the Angels shall be punished and no longer observed. Verily, for love of you I will grant a special gift of My grace to whomsoever loves you."

XXXV. On the night of the second Sunday of Advent, towards the hour for matins, the servant of Jesus Christ was praising God, when she beheld above her cell an angel all on fire with six wings. He blessed the cell and herself with sweetness and joy. Feeling herself communicate the ardour of this brilliant angel, she invited all her companions present, within and without, to bless the Lord who had vouchsafed to send her such an angel. They praised in him the Creator of all the heavenly spirits, and were obliged, for a considerable period, to support in their arms Margaret, who seemed deprived of life, transformed and absorbed, as she was, in the love of God, her Beloved : one of these was Isotta Bacialla. Margaret's body became insensible, but she heard in spirit

Jesus who said to her:—"Why do you fear and hesitate to tell your confessor, Father Giunta, what I say to you? I will give you such exalted gifts as no heart is capable to understand. I, Jesus, born of a Virgin, wish all My friends to have purity in their soul, truth on their lips, chastity in the flesh, mortification in the senses, and perfect and indivisible charity. I, the Lord of all things, abased Myself below My creatures; hence My servants shall think themselves the vilest and shall desire abasement. If they are white with the gleam of chastity, and on fire with love, I will make their praises heard in My presence; they shall obtain from Me, the Dispenser of all things, the most abundant graces, and shall in truth be called My elect. I complain to you of hypocrites and double-dealers, whose works offend rather than honour Me. I complain to you again, as I have done many other times, of kings, princes, governors of provinces, judges, notaries, officers, and receivers of men chosen as arbitrators. I complain of foolish virgins, married people, and widows; of business men who cheat, an infinite number of usurers, whose plunder shall be severely punished; those whose sufferings are delayed in this world shall be sure to be more severely chastised at a time and in a place where they can no longer plead their own cause, nor be helped by the suffrages of others. Why, then, do My people offend Me, O my daughter, after I suffered willingly for them, as you know, and that in order to cancel the sentence of their condemnation? I complain to you, too, of the inhabitants of Cortona, they offend Me every day so gravely that they deserve to be submitted to severe trials. I have given them great graces on your account, and I shall give them after your death to those who

neither expect nor believe in them. Prepare yourself, notwithstanding, for all manner of afflictions as long as you are on earth."

XXXVI One Sunday our Saviour spoke to Margaret as she was praying and weeping; He said to her:—"Father Ubaldo of Colle is dead, and he has entered into the joys of Paradise." A little time after, another dead person appeared to her in prayer and said:—"Pray for me, O beloved of God; I am sent into the torments of purgatory because the older I grew the less disposed was I to enjoy the sweetness of God. I offended God in worldly matters; I sinned by the ornaments in which I gloried before men, and by unlawful miserable liberties. O beloved of God, tell my wife to despise the world and love her Redeemer above all things." After this prayer, our Lord spoke to her again:—"Bear patiently with those who murmur against you; and, on entering your cell, I will tell you how pleasing to Me is patience. Know that you shall obtain it with many comforts and many trials. I propose Myself to you as the Model of patience. On account of My sweats, and of the insults offered Me, My apostles used to murmur oftener than the Scriptures relate; they used to say:—"With whom are we? or, to whom are we come?" Hence, I repeat it again, bear patiently with those who murmur against you."

XXXVII. A young nobleman, seriously ill, refused to confess his sins. His mother came in tears to recommend him to Margaret, that, by her prayers, she might deliver him from this hardness of heart. The servant of God delayed not to comfort her on her son's impenitence. "Go," said she, "and take my spiritual father to him, for to him will he humbly confess him-

self." In effect, the young man received the priest with the greatest respect; he went to confession and was absolved. His sickness increased, yet the young man did not ask for the Viaticum. His mother again went to the pious Margaret to entreat her to obtain for her son the grace to receive worthily, before his death, the sacrament of the Body of Jesus Christ. The sister began again to pray for him, and she heard:—"This woman, who has made supplications to you with such faith, on her son's behalf, is not worthy to have her petitions heard; she has not answered to the gifts of mercy heaped so abundantly upon her. Nevertheless, I will grant her, on your account, what she asks." The mother returned to her son, and he, urged on by her, asked to receive the Body of Jesus Christ. Our Lord again said to Margaret:—"If My servant desires to hold no familiarity with persons in the world, let him bear in himself nothing that can give rise to it. Let him have intercourse only on My service with certain persons, and let Me be the sole object of his thoughts, of his words, and of his hearing."

XXXVIII. When the servant of God thought that she was soon about to receive the token of some new consolation from the Lord, she used to say within herself:—"What gift will the Lord bestow upon me now?" Our Saviour reproached her for this reflection, and said:—"Why do you try to measure and submit infinite Wisdom to your judgment? Do you dare to set a limit to My works? Be careful to touch them on no side to examine them. If you wish to attain the object of your desires, go the Way of the Cross; it will conduct you in safety to the greatest gifts that you have wished for. For the rest, I have not abandoned you in the simplicity of your thoughts, for the

thirst for My grace which possesses you, is your excuse. It would please Me if you gave every day a special homage of praise to the ever-blessed and virginal Saint Joseph, My most generous foster-father. Do it with this thought: *Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.*" The good works of mankind were then shown to Margaret; she beheld them tepid, unfinished, filled with faults and neglect. She understood that, notwithstanding their imperfection, God accepted them by an inclination of His mercy. And Jesus said to her:—"Why do you not adorn in your soul the place where I wish to make My abode?" Margaret:—"Lord, I know not, I cannot without Thee prepare such a place. This is Friday, the day on which I ought to feel what Thou didst; I must devote Myself to meditate with sorrow on the Wounds Thou didst bear for me." Jesus Christ answered:—"As long as I was on earth, I did not enjoy, in My Body, one day of perfect consolation; on the contrary, I often make My friends experience on earth paradise and repose." Margaret answered:—"Why is this, O Lord? My spirit cannot remember the sublime gifts Thy munificence has bestowed upon me." Jesus Christ:—"It happens thus on account of the thirst that compels you to go in quest of fresh consolation. I find it agreeable," He continued, "and I command you constantly to praise My Mother, the immaculate Virgin. To-day I have not shared with you My torments, as you desired, but rather the joy with which I founded man on this day by the redemption purchased for them at the price of My Blood. This has been the happiest of days for man." Our Lord again continued:—"I wish you to groan over the time when you offended Me." And Margaret:—"My God, if

my body became as large as the world, was all bathed in tears and in a bloody sweat at my sorrow for the sins I committed against Thee, I could not even then satisfy Thee for the least of my faults. Nevertheless, I groan and I always desire to groan, as much as Thy grace will vouchsafe to permit me." Here Margaret was instantly filled with such suavity, that she exclaimed in transports:—"O Lord, how can the legions of the blessed who are in Thy presence in Thy Kingdom, support Thy sweetness?" The Lord:—"I give them strength. This degree of grace," He continued, "is, in a measure, like to the condition of John the Evangelist, when he beheld ineffable things. He then kept alive a light which enabled him to teach nations, and to write copiously on Me to all the Churches. This was granted him by My gratuitous bounty, since at the time of My Passion he mistrusted Me." Margaret answered:—"I never heard in sermons, O Lord, that this was to be found in Thy Scriptures." Jesus Christ:—"If My Scriptures were to relate all the doubts of My disciples, whatever advantages some souls may derive therefrom, it would yet be fraught with danger to a great number." As our Lord showed His servant that He wished to end the colloquy, she exclaimed:—"My God, suffer me not to separate myself from Thee." Jesus Christ assured her that she would never be separated from His grace, and she was filled with a new odour of sweetness which made her soul feel, as it were drawn, towards heaven. "Lord," she cried, "I humbly entreat Thy majesty to fill the hearts of all men with Thy sweetness; for if Thou didst give them once to taste thereof, they would never dare to offend Thy majesty again."

XXXIX. After the Purification of our Lady, Mar-

garet, having communicated, heard Jesus Christ say to her:—"In your longings you devoted yourself to labour; and I also laboured; but your fatigues shall not be fully known as long as you live. After death your works shall be examined and bear fruit, and they shall produce for you a glory that the heart of man cannot conceive. Tell My servant, your confessor, not to mistrust your return to the cell near the citadel. The murmurs launched against you on this point, taxing you with levity, shall serve you instead of prayer; I will be with you, and I will grant you suitable light without pronouncing the accustomed words. Tell My servant, also, never to identify himself with great works of restitution, except for the purpose of giving advice."

XL. About this time, she received one morning the Bread of Life, and she heard in her soul Jesus Christ complaining of the offences of sinners:—"I groan with you," said He, "over the nameless vice, which was chastised by My Nativity. I groan over those who make criminal use of marriage, and who ought to be called adulterers rather than married people. I groan over the vain fashions in clothes and jewellery recently introduced; they are the medium of ill-gotten gains, and the occasion of mortal sin to those whose looks are attracted to them, thereby filling the imagination with impure thoughts. Yes, I am often mortally offended by the use of lace, frivolous ornament, and curls; for those who wear such things bear on their countenance the impress of pride and the insignia of Satan, as they conceal in their heart the works of the most detestable of guides, the demon tempter. Not only are their thoughts, words, and deeds referred to him, but also I can find no pleasure in their prayers,

their pilgrimages, their alms, their fasts, and other good works. I groan over the princes and governors of countries who are wanting in their mission, and who turn themselves not to God with the eye of good intention; separated from the right path, they have in view only their own glory and the acquisition of material riches; I do not find one out of a hundred individuals who are just one to another without some ulterior motive, whether from the nature of the thing itself, or because they are interested therein for their own or their neighbours' good, they study the law and invent new arguments to deceive and oppress the innocent. I groan over notaries; they offend Me by adding, changing, diminishing or altering the dictation of testators in their wills, or other contracts; hard and irritable, they have no compassion on widows, orphans, or wards. They seek only to amass gain; hence, they offend Me by preparing deeds for usury and unlawful gains. I groan over the evil counsellors who, seduced by particular and private friendships, hinder the public good, or do not seek to protect it; they seem to speak for the common weal; they work, to all appearances, in good faith; but only to acquire praise and reputation. Their words, painted in becoming colours, at times overpower and confuse even their colleagues. They manifest the greatest attachment to law for the general good, without definitely applying it to any positive or particular use. I groan over the procurators and referendaries of the courts, for they are like those who stripped Me at My Passion; they defend the true and the false; they have no mercy for widows, the poor, wards and orphans. I groan over the greedy merchants who seek gain in falsehood, and observe not the least honesty in their prices. They fraudulently conceal

the defects of their merchandise, and turn their attention even to damaged herbage. I groan over those who sell bread and wine, wax and oil, cloth and thread, and many other things, because they maliciously deceive their neighbour, as over those who deal in bad and infectious provisions, giving them as good and sound. I groan over the seed merchants, and those who sell salt and oil; over workmen and all those who deceive in weights and measure. I groan with you chiefly over the wretches who are envious of buyers and sellers, and who hate those who patronise others in preference to themselves. If all these sinners do not amend, their difficulties shall multiply in such a manner that they will scarcely be able to measure them, and this will be justice. For I, the Son of God, bore for them insults and blows, and they are unwilling to suffer for Me a slight reproach. Oh! why is this? Because they are careless in thinking about Me, their Mirror and their Model; they disdain to hear My word; and they become the imitators of the old enemy, whose example they follow and whose will they accomplish!

“Say to the great and learned Florentine who complained to you of his pusillanimity:—The Lord has permitted this, not only to subdue your pride, but also to dispose you to meditate on His Passion and to receive an increase of grace. Let him have no excuse for not working for My glory, for I did not refuse serious fatigues for him.”

XLI. The happy servant of Jesus Christ was united in love to Him who sees all things. In a short time she understood the hearts of the wicked though absent. She saw them under the appearance of boiling and infectious wells, from the openings of which there issued incessantly jets of black and putrid water; it

was revealed to her, at the same time, that this was particularly the state of misers. For the rest, this sight was like unto God's, in so far as the creature can be said in his acts to approach the operations of the Creator ; at this time it was spoken to Margaret :—
“ You are in Me, and I am in you. Advise priests, from Me, to be exact and perfect, in prayer, mercy, and justice.”

XLII. On the vigil of Saint John the Baptist, after receiving the Body of our Saviour, she heard :—“ I say unto you, I am the Good Shepherd ; I watch and I know My sheep. Rejoice, O Daughter of Jerusalem, with your Friars already introduced into the City of Glory, and who are gladdened by your speedy approach. In eternal life, I say unto you, you shall be a mirror for sinners, for it behoves My mercy to be manifest in heaven and upon earth. On the Day of Judgment the just shall be separated from the unjust, and a distinction shall also be made between the innocent and sinners who have obtained the grace of final repentance. On that day, all who embraced penance through your means or in your presence, shall rejoice in the labours and torments you are now undergoing. You are an incredulous woman to doubt that I could make you a pure vessel.” Margaret answered :—“ I am certain, O Lord, that nothing is impossible to Thy wisdom, Thy power, and Thy goodness ; no creature whatever, I am persuaded, can correspond to the brilliancy and magnificence of Thy goodness towards me, who am only darkness.” The King of Compassion, Margaret's Master, replied :—“ Even this can be performed by My mercy, and you are not the first whom I have freely endowed therewith.”

XLIII. On the 5th May,* after the communion of the Body of Jesus Christ, Margaret heard these words:—"I command you, My daughter, to tell the bishop of Arezzo to stop the pensions payable out of the Church funds for these funds belong to the poor. Let him withdraw from the factions that divide Tuscany; he ought to be the Father of the community and of peace. Let him abstain, for the future, from the expenses he has hitherto encountered for his maintenance at the Court of Rome. Let him abandon his relatives' counsels, to which he has hitherto deferred too much, and come humbly to you; I will give you for him right and fitting counsels. Let him regulate the unlawful gains accumulated at his court, which ought to be the house of God and where things ought to be given and received lawfully. Tell him to retire from the wars waged by his family, with whom he connived. He thinks to extend the rights of his bishopric; he could not do this, nor even preserve his present rights, if he were to walk in opposition to My will. He is for a long time imbrued with war, because long since he has grown old in My disfavour. Let him diligently examine the rules of life to be observed by every bishop, and he will find that to none of them has he been faithful; he has not attended to matters of justice and of duty. On his account, mothers with their children, redeemed at a high price by My Passion, have been burned. Tell him this, and let him not delay until I permit the fire to enter into the palace of his heart; it would then be too late for him to retrace his steps; let him make peace with men without delay."

XLIV. On 11th May, Margaret received the Lord, and our Saviour, who wishes not the loss of a creature,

* Probably 1289.

addressed her in these words:—"My daughter, tell the bishop of Arezzo besides, that the castles of his bishopric ought to be consecrated to peace and to My praises. Let him seriously think of the strife resulting from the battle between the cities and burghs, and let him hasten to conclude peace. Bid him recall to mind the price he received from the Siennese, which was the occasion of the loss of so many souls. He must now accept My frequently-tendered invitation; if he should refuse, a day will come when he will long for peace and be unable to procure it."

XLV. Many things that might be inserted have been omitted. This must be attributed to Margaret's humility, expert at concealing God's secrets, as well as to the absence of her confessor, the writer of this life, for seven years.

We now come to the fulfilment of the desires of the servant of God which she never ceased to pour forth in tears before the Lord, the Source of all mercy. At length He heard her, and not only did He give her to know the year and month, but even the day of her death long beforehand; nay, more, He vouchsafed to notify to her the happy and joyful hour in which she would come to Jesus Christ before the dawn, accompanied by a numerous retinue of souls drawn from the pains of purgatory by her prayers. She began by losing strength in all her limbs, and could take no earthly food for seventeen days. At the end of this time, life became entirely extinct. On February 22d, 1297, the Feast of the Chair of St. Peter the Apostle, she passed joyfully to heaven, her face illumined with angelic light. The assistants, at the same time, experienced the scent of a marvellous perfume; they felt an abundance of

interior delight, and they declared that Margaret was in truth a vessel of holiness containing the heavenly gifts of grace. At the same hour, another excellent soul was taken to God, in ecstatic contemplation at Città di Castello. She beheld Margaret's happy spirit rising to heaven with ineffable joy, and accompanied by a multitude of souls delivered from purgatory. From that day forth she called Margaret *the second Magdalen of Jesus Christ*. The news of this glorious death spread through Cortona. The Council-General of the town immediately assembled, to the praise and glory of the Supreme King, to repair to the Church of St. Basil. There the saint's body was surrounded with aromatic spices, clothed in purple, and encircled by lights, after which they gave her a solemn burial, in presence of the clergy and religious, in a new sepulchre, where Margaret, according to the Divine promise, shone by her miracles.

Truly wonderful were the miracles with which God Almighty vouchsafed to glorify His servant, and which were worked then, and do not cease to be worked even at the present day. May the God of all glory grant the grace of faith and enlightenment to all who, like Margaret, walked in the shadows of sin, that, like her, they may become white in chastity and ruddy in love, and may reign with Him, the Father, and the Holy Ghost, in that kingdom which has no end. Amen.

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