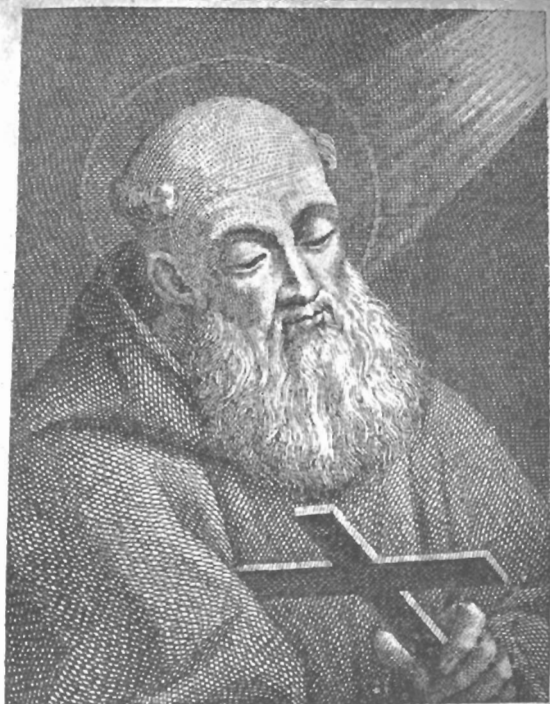


LIFE OF
ST. LAWRENCE OF BRINDISI



S. Laurentius a Brundisio Capuinus

ST. LAWRENCE OF BRINDISI, CAPUCHIN.

Frontispiece.

LIFE OF
SAINT LAWRENCE
OF BRINDISI
APOSTLE AND DIPLOMAT

BY
FATHER ANTHONY BRENNAN, O.S.F.C.

NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO
BENZIGER BROTHERS
PRINTERS TO THE HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE

1911

Nihil Obstat.

P. CUTHBERTUS, O.S.F.C.,

P. DANIEL, O.S.F.C.,

CENSORES DEPUTATI.

Imprimatur.

P. GULIELMUS A. MOATE, O.S.F.C.,

VICARIUS PROVINCIALIS.

CRAWLEY,

Die 13 Decembris, 1910.

Nihil Obstat.

P. OSMUNDUS COONEY, O.F.M.

CENSOR DEPUTATUS.

Imprimatur.

EDM. CAN. SURMONT,

VICARIUS GENERALIS.

WESTMONASTERII,

Die 3 Januarii, 1911.

TO
THE FATHERS AND BROTHERS
OF THE
ENGLISH CAPUCHIN FRANCISCAN PROVINCE
THIS LIFE OF THEIR PATRON SAINT IS
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

PRAYER

O GOD, Who didst bestow on Thy Confessor, Blessed Lawrence, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, enabling him to execute arduous undertakings for the glory of Thy Name and the salvation of souls, grant us in the same spirit to know our duties, and by the aid of his intercession to perform them. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

“Roman Seraphic Breviary,” July 7.

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LIFE OF ST. LAWRENCE OF BRINDISI

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- II. Lives of the Saint: (1) Life by Father Bonaventure—its qualities; (2) the Commentary; (3) the present life and its sources.
- III. Difficulties of portraying St. Lawrence: (1) The correspondence not available; (2) the praise of his biographers.
- IV. Reason of the present work.

LAWRENCE OF BRINDISI flourished during the latter part of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth—a period which has left indelible marks on the Church and on civil society. Europe was then, to a great extent, in a state of ferment; several countries of the North—Great Britain, Holland, Norway and Sweden, and not a few of the German States—had definitely broken away from Rome and adopted the so-called Reformation; whilst the issue of the struggle for supremacy between the old and the new religion remained still undecided in France and in the hereditary dominions of Austria. Ignorance, error, and corruption spread dark clouds over the firmament of Christendom, yet from between these clouds shone out a magnificent

galaxy of stars, relieving the general gloom. Perhaps at no era in the history of the Church have Saints been more numerous or more conspicuous. To select only a few of those who have since been beatified or canonized, we may mention St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits ; St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, reformers of the Carmelites ; St. Charles Borromeo ; St. Philip Neri ; St. Francis of Sales ; St. Vincent of Paul—each of whom founded and left behind him a religious Congregation. The Franciscan family contributed its quota. Numerous children of the seraphic patriarch shed their blood for the Faith in Great Britain and Ireland, in Holland, and in distant Japan. Whilst St. Peter of Alcantara was restoring Franciscan austerity in Spain and in the kingdom of Naples, the Capuchin reform was made illustrious by such brilliant lights as St. Felix of Cantalice, St. Seraphin of Montegrano, St. Joseph of Leonessa, St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen, the protomartyr of Propaganda, Blessed Bernard of Corleone, and Blessed Benedict of Urbino, the fellow-labourer of Lawrence in Bohemia. Amongst these lights of sanctity, few, if any, shone with greater lustre than the last-mentioned Saint, as we believe will be readily admitted by those who follow him in his wonderful career.

He belonged clearly to that class of “instruments raised up by Almighty God for the accomplishment of His purposes . . . men of acute and ready mind, with accurate knowledge of human nature, and large plans, and persuasive and attractive bearing, genial, sociable, and popular, endued with prudence, patience, instinctive tact and decision in conducting

matters, as well as boldness and zeal.”¹ Hence it was that he loomed so largely in the eyes of his contemporaries.

The first Life of the Saint was written in Italian by Father Angelus Mary Rossi of Voltaggio, a Capuchin, and was published in Rome, 1710. On the occasion of the Beatification in 1783 a more complete Life was brought out by Father Bonaventure of Coccoaleo, also a Capuchin. It is dedicated to Pope Pius VI. by Father Erard of Radkersbourg, the General of the Capuchin Order.

The author informs us that the work is founded on the most respectable documents—namely, the local Processes and the subsequent Process instituted by the Sacred Congregation for the cause of Beatification; also on what is entitled “A Little Commentary” (*Commentariolum*), composed by the Saint himself, giving a condensed account of his labours in Germany from 1599 to 1611. Besides these, Bonaventure tells us he had access to other authentic memoirs, of which he made use. The work bears the impress of sound criticism. A quotation from the preface will show the view taken by the writer, who, it is well to remember, was a contemporary of Voltaire and his fellow-encyclo-pædist :

“As we live in times when incredulity and misbelief are rampant amongst certain spirits, who, in their weakness, boast of being strong-minded, and who attribute to simplicity and fanaticism whatever is most religious and edifying in the annals of the Church, the author has himself verified the docu-

¹ Cardinal Newman : “Historical Sketches : St. Basil,” p. 28.

ments and given in the margin references to his quotations. Further, he has reproduced the exact language of the witnesses, even when the style is unpolished—nay, occasionally, barbarous. It is hoped that this scrupulous fidelity will meet with general approbation, and will ensure from the prudent and intelligent that human credence which is accorded to historical facts when described with an impartial pen.”

The “Commentary” above mentioned has lately been published for the first time in the “*Analecta*” of the Capuchin Order. Prefixed to it is an extract from a letter of the Saint to the Procurator-General. The letter is dated July 9, 1612 :

“In compliance with your Paternity’s injunctions, I have stolen a little time (from other work) in order to put down something that may serve for the chronicles of the province of Bohemia and Hungary ; but, to tell the truth, I have done so, not without much self-confusion, since in it there is question of hardly anyone besides Brother Lawrence. And, as your Paternity suggested when I was in Rome, I have composed it after the manner of Cæsar’s ‘*Commentaries*.’ You will judge if, with the blessing of the Lord, it is to the purpose ; otherwise burn this paper which I have written with my own hand, so that others may not see it ; and, indeed, I am ashamed of it myself.”

The following Life is based chiefly on the work of Father Bonaventure ; however, we have consulted a Life in French by Father Lawrence of Aosta, and a recent one in German by the late Father Norbert

of Tux, in the Tyrol. The "Annales Capuccinorum," commenced by Boverius, and continued by Father Marcellinus of Pisa, have likewise been laid under contribution. Finally, we have been fortunate in having access to most important letters preserved in the Vatican archives, and hitherto unpublished. Some of these were recently discovered by the Most Rev. Father Louis Antoine, ex-Definitor-General, who kindly supplied us with copies when we were in Rome for the General Chapter, May, 1908. Since then others have been unearthed by the Very Rev. Father Edward of Alençon, archivist of the Order, and are now appearing in the aforesaid "Analecta." These, besides confirming the facts related by his biographers, throw much fresh light on the Saint's diplomatic and apostolic labours.

Such are the materials at our disposal, but we confess our disappointment at not being able to reach some others which we consider most valuable—namely, the writings of Lawrence himself. In the archives of our monastery at Vienna are kept in manuscript his polemical and didactic works, which were examined by the Sacred Congregation, in view of his Beatification, but which have never been published. It is certain that he wrote many letters on the most important matters, yet, with the exception of one letter addressed to Maximilian, Duke of Bavaria, and published by Father Bonaventure, and a few others lately printed in the "Analecta," the majority of them have so far not been brought to light. Let us hope that some day they will be found—possibly in the Vatican archives—for they

would afford the best insight into the Saint's personal character. Cardinal Newman observes: "I want to hear a Saint converse,"¹ and the absence of the Saint in person is best supplied by "that kind of literature which more than any other approaches to conversation, I mean correspondence."² In this we have "the unstudied self-manifestation" which tells more of the real character than all the comments of biographers. In the case of St. Lawrence we are forced to admit that his biographies are greatly deficient in details as to his natural and human, as distinguished from his supernatural and divine, life. It would, for instance, be interesting to know more about his struggles with temptations, his efforts to overcome evil inclinations, to subdue his passions; about his victories over natural defects and weaknesses, concerning all which we are left more or less in the dark. In short, we cannot help feeling that only one side of the Saint is presented—the supernatural side—and that the history of his life is too much of an apotheosis. The publication of his correspondence would go a long way towards completing our view of his personality.

So far, however, as the available materials go, nothing could be more reliable, as is evident from the nature of the sources already indicated. Contemporary documentary evidence abounds, and, for the supernatural occurrences in particular, we have the official records of the sworn depositions made by eye-witnesses belonging to every grade of society.

A word of explanation as to the appearance of the

¹ "Historical Sketches: St. John Chrysostom," p. 220.

² *Ibid.*, p. 221.

present work may not be out of place. When the English Capuchin province was canonically erected in 1873, the Superiors at Rome, regarding England as still a missionary country, placed the new province under the patronage of the most famous missionary of the Order, who was then Blessed, and was not canonized till 1881. As scarcely anything is known about the Saint amongst our fellow-countrymen, the need of his Life in English has long been felt. In attempting to meet such need, all that we can pretend to have accomplished is the collection of materials for someone possessed of literary talent and experience, who may be induced to present the English-speaking public with a Life more worthy of our patron's noble and saintly character, and of his splendid and beneficent achievements. In any case, we are encouraged by the words of a master-writer : " Nothing would be done at all if a man waited till he could do it so well that no one could find fault with it."¹

¹ Cardinal Newman : " Present Position of Catholics in England," lecture ix., § 7. *Circa finem.*

CHAPTER I

BIRTH AND EARLY EDUCATION

- I. Brindisi—Position and historical associations.
- II. Family of Rossi, from which Lawrence sprang.
- III. Birth and baptism.
- IV. Child of benediction—Pious dispositions—Childhood—
“ Little Angel ”—First school—Testimony of his tutor.
- V. Lawrence as a boy preaches—Wonderful effect of his sermons—Sought after as a preacher.
- VI. Lawrence's first great trial—Father's death.

BRINDISI (Latin, *Brundisium*) is an ancient city of Calabria in Italy, situated on the Adriatic coast. It has a small bay, with an excellent harbour, from which the Romans formerly sailed for Greece. As a port it still maintains its importance, and, since the opening of the Suez Canal, it has acquired prominence as the chief station on the mail route to Egypt and the East. The Dover of Italy, as it has been called, Brindisi was the terminus of the Appian Way, the queen of roads, and is 374 miles from the Eternal City, the journey from which has been graphically described by Horace.¹ The name is supposed to be derived from a mythological personage, Brindo, son of Hercules, its reputed founder. At first governed by kings of its own, it was conquered by the Romans 267 B.C., and

¹ “ Satires,” book i., S.v. “ Brundisium longæ finis chartæque viæque est.”

colonized by them 244 B.C. Here was born Pacuvius, the poet ; and here Virgil died 19 B.C., on his return from Greece. In Christian times it has been rendered still more famous by the great number of distinguished prelates and religious whom it has given to the Church. According to tradition, St. Leucius, Bishop,¹ first planted the Faith here A.D. 160, and is said to have baptized in one day as many as 17,000 of its inhabitants, on the spot now occupied by the Capuchin church, which is dedicated to "Our Lady of the Fountain."

In this venerable city the subject of the present story saw the light July 22, 1559. His father was William Rossi, and his mother Elizabeth Masella, both pious Christians, and descendants of ancient and noble families. The Rossis were related to the illustrious Spanish House of Mendoza, and several of them held high offices in the State, the Army, and the Church. The family had been established at Venice from 1418, but, owing to political troubles, it had removed to Brindisi about sixty years before St. Lawrence was born.

In baptism the infant received the double name Julius Cesar, most probably after the two martyrs, St. Julius and St. Cesarius, apostles of Terracina.² The custom of naming children after the martyrs and other canonized Saints dates back to the earliest

¹ "Roman Martyrology," January 11.

² According to the writer of the "Annales Capuccinorum," he was called after the conqueror of Britain, whose famous saying, *Veni, vidi, vici*, is ingeniously applied to him. He *came* to the Order, he *saw* the life, he *conquered* his spiritual enemies, and was crowned with *laurel*, the symbol of victory, receiving the name of *Lawrence* ("Annales Capuccinorum," t. iii., Vita et Gesta P. Laurentii a Brundusio).

ages of Christianity. Theodore writes : “ Christians give the names of the martyrs to their children, with a view of obtaining for them thereby safety and protection.” The observance of this custom the Church strongly recommends, not only that we may have as our patrons heavenly protectors, but also worthy models for our imitation. Hence she reprobates the conduct of Christian parents, who too often in our days give ridiculous and unseemly names to their little ones—names taken from pagan and profane sources, from heathen mythology, from popular novels, and from persons or places of ephemeral fame.

Soon after the child’s birth the proud father wrote to his brother, Peter Rossi, a secular priest at Venice, “ Heaven has sent us a son, and what a son ! His countenance is so wondrously beautiful that one cannot help recognizing in him a child of benediction. Nor must you imagine that such language is prompted by parental fondness. All who have seen your little nephew are agreed that he is more like an angel than a human being.” Very soon indeed he began to exhibit what we so often read in the Lives of the Saints : “ *Futuræ sanctitatis indicia* ” (“ The tokens of future sanctity ”). His actions and his words gave evidence of the interior graces that adorned his soul. Grace seemed to prevent Nature, and from the time he could lisp he appeared to recognize his dependence in the Supreme Being and to dedicate himself to the Divine service. Thus he grew in age and wisdom and grace before God and men. The care bestowed by his parents in cultivating the germs of piety in

his mind and heart was fully recompensed by the development of excellent dispositions, and by the veneration and obedience which he paid to them. Serious and thoughtful compared with other children, he was called by the neighbours "the little angel." Amongst the religious houses at Brindisi was a monastery of the Conventual Friars Minor, some of whom regularly visited the Rossi family. The child took a special fancy to the habit, and begged hard to be made a Franciscan. William Rossi, seeing that the fancy was not a mere passing one, recognized in it the beginning of a religious vocation, and when Julius was four years of age he placed him at school with the Conventual Friars. In the monastery was gratified his craving for the religious habit, but he was given one different in form and colour from that worn by the professed and by the novices. The privilege of wearing such a habit was granted at that period by the Sovereign Pontiffs for the encouragement of tender aspirants to the religious state.¹

Young Rossi's tutor was the celebrated preacher, Father Virgilio Giaccone, who soon discovered the rare talents of his pupil—a quick intelligence, a marvellous memory, and a judgment beyond his years. The angelic modesty of the child, apparent in his whole demeanour, his recollection in church, and his fervour at prayer, made him a great favourite with the religious, who were reminded of the words said of another child: "What an one, think you, will this child be?"²

It was the custom then in many Italian cities, as it is the custom still in some places, for little boys

¹ Clementina II. de Regularibus.

² Luke i. 66.

to learn by heart and preach a discourse in the churches during the Christmas season. Father Giacone, being well assured of Julius's talents, arranged for his first attempt on Christmas Day, 1565, and the discourse was to be delivered in the cathedral at Brindisi. The boy-preacher (he was only six years of age) mounted the pulpit with the confidence of an experienced orator, and spoke with such fervour and unction as to arouse the enthusiasm of his audience, some of whom, in their excitement, cried out, like the woman in the Gospel: "Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps that gave thee suck."¹ The preacher's success being noised abroad, his appearance in other pulpits was eagerly sought. George Rossi, his uncle, who lived at Brindisi, and who survived him, has given us his recollections in the Process of Beatification: "My nephew preached not only at Brindisi, but also in other cities of Calabria. From all sides crowds flocked to hear him, and his language was so touching, so fervent, so persuasive, that it deeply affected the hearers, stirring up in the good the fervour of devotion, and drawing from the eyes of sinners tears of compunction. One and all blessed the Lord for the favours bestowed on the child, who was evidently influenced by the spirit of wisdom, which 'opens the mouth of the dumb, and makes eloquent the tongues of infants.'"²

The boy continued his studies at the monastic school, and made rapid progress in learning and piety, till he was twelve years of age, when he experienced his first great trial in the death of his father.

¹ Luke xi. 27.

² Wisd. x. 21. See "Summary of Process," pp. 34, 35.

CHAPTER II

SEMINARIST AT VENICE

- I. Opposition of his mother to his entering religion—Departure for Venice.
- II. Character of Lawrence's uncle, Peter Rossi—Lawrence enters a seminary—His Franciscan habit—His cousins' reverence for it.
- III. His mortified life at college—Fasts and wears a hair-shirt—His fervour at prayer—Ecstasies.
- IV. His influence, charity, and tact in conversation—His companionship with a certain student—Their piety on Sundays and holidays—His fervour towards the Blessed Sacrament—"The Angel of the Lord."
- V. Miraculous calming of the sea at Venice.
- VI. Longing desire to enter religion—Attracted to Capuchin Order—His intimacy with the Friars—Provincial tries Lawrence and his companion, and is satisfied with them—Makes trial of the Capuchin life in 1574.

ELIZABETH MASELLA, now left a widow, turned in her bereavement to her only child as her one source of human comfort, and, notwithstanding her genuine piety, she wished Julius to abandon the idea of becoming a religious, which, perhaps, she regarded as a mere boyish fancy, and to take his place by her side at the domestic hearth. To this end she exerted all her influence, employing prayers, tears—all the means suggested by motherly tenderness; and undoubtedly his filial love and anxiety to please her would have yielded to her entreaties, had not an interior voice, stronger than that of Nature, and

more imperious than that of human affection, called him to a higher state. The struggle was hard and violent, but grace obtained the victory. Turning to the pleading mother, the boy said: "You know, mother, how much I love you, but you cannot complain if I love God still more. Now God wills that I should dedicate myself to His service, and His will I may not resist." Wonderful answer for one so young, and no doubt divinely inspired! Elizabeth's eyes were opened, and, being assured also by the Conventual Fathers of her son's vocation, she made no further efforts to dissuade him from entering the cloister. Julius, however, fearing she might change her mind and renew the attempt to shake his resolution, conceived the project of leaving Brindisi, and of placing himself under the direction of his paternal uncle, Don Peter Rossi, at Venice. The religious at the monastery approved his design, and, moreover, persuaded the mother to give her consent. Such is the motive assigned by Father Bonaventure for his departure, though, according to another account, the departure was occasioned by a Turkish invasion of Southern Italy, which forced Elizabeth Masella, accompanied by her son and her brother-in-law, George Rossi, to seek an asylum at Venice with their clerical relative. We are inclined to accept the former account, as we find no trace of the mother's or uncle's presence in that city, although another branch of the family, as we shall see, is mentioned. From this time we lose all sight of Elizabeth, who, in all probability, predeceased her son, whilst, as already stated, the Uncle George survived him.

The sea voyage from Brindisi to Venice was accomplished without any recorded incident. Disembarking at the Piazza of St. Mark, Julius providentially met a youth, of whom he inquired the way to his uncle's house. "Why, he is my master," replied the youth, "and I shall be pleased to accompany you." Don Peter Rossi was an ecclesiastic, remarkable no less for his talents than for his virtues, and was entrusted with the education of the clerics belonging to St. Mark's Basilica. He afterwards became parish priest of *San Giovanni in Bragola*. Welcomed with the utmost cordiality by his uncle, the nephew found him all he could desire—an affectionate father, an enlightened and trusty guardian. Don Peter, accustomed as he was to read the character of youths, formed at a glance a correct estimate of his young relative, and shortly realized for himself the truth of the eulogies he had heard of him. It was now decided that Julius should enter the seminary directed by his uncle. In order to conform to the regulations, it became necessary to lay aside the Franciscan habit, which he had retained up to the present, and to put on the soutane worn by the secular students. In connection with this habit an edifying story has come down to us. A widowed aunt of Julius, with her two daughters, was living with her brother, Don Rossi. These girls, who entertained a high idea of their cousin's sanctity, held the habit in much veneration. One of them—Prudence by name—was of the same age and stature as Julius. Out of devotion she was accustomed on great festivals to wear this habit under her ordinary dress,

as St. Anthony, Abbot, was accustomed at Easter and Pentecost to wear the tunic of St. Paul the Hermit. The other sister, we are told, also wore it occasionally, and both of them prized it more than the most costly worldly ornaments.¹

In this second period of his life the future religious practised with increased fervour the austerities already commenced at Brindisi. It has been remarked with truth that he was a penitent before he could have been a sinner. Having now attained an age when the passions wax strong, he realized the necessity of keeping them in subjection by bodily mortification. Accordingly, he observed rigorous fasts, kept long vigils, and tortured his flesh by painful disciplines. His pious cousins have left on record that he always wore next his skin a rough hair-shirt, the very sight of which made them shudder; that he took the discipline every night, and fasted regularly three days a week, his ordinary food being bread and vegetables, and his only drink water. But it was chiefly on communion with God in prayer that he relied for the victory of the spirit over the flesh. The same witnesses often discovered him at prayer in his oratory, his face bathed in tears and his whole body in a state of perspiration, even in the depth of winter. They would then compassionately wipe off the tears and sweat and lift him to his feet, but, being wrapt in ecstasy, it was only by shaking him that they could recall him to his senses.²

The good influence he exercised over his fellow-

¹ "Annales Capuccinorum," t. iii., Vita et Gesta P. Laurentii a Brundusio.

² "Summary of Process," pp. 35 and 37.

pupils was remarkable. Speaking little himself, whenever the conversation approached dangerous ground, he cleverly changed the subject, and, without the slightest flavour of cant, managed to season his remarks with maxims of piety, which were received by his companions with pleasure and profit. Amongst the students at the seminary was, as stated, the youth who had met Julius at the landing-stage, and by reason of their congeniality of character there grew up between them a most intimate friendship. They took the same views of life, they had the same tendency to virtue, the same leaning to the religious state, and Don Peter, encouraging such virtuous attachment, was accustomed to send them out in the city as companions. On Sundays and holy days they repaired in the morning to the Jesuit church, where they served Mass and approached the Sacraments, and in the evening to the Capuchin Church,¹ for the

¹ This was the old church, which is still standing. In 1575 a plague, introduced from the East, broke out in Venice, and carried off 40,000 of the citizens. Spreading to the mainland, it raged there four months. To obtain its cessation, the Senate made a vow to erect a church in honour of the Most Holy Redeemer, and to rebuild the Rialto—a vow faithfully kept. The new church, *Il Redentore*, was offered to the Capuchins, in recognition of their self-sacrificing charity towards the plague-stricken. This offer the Friars at first declined to accept, because they considered the building too grand for them, being out of harmony with the simplicity and poverty of the Order. In the end, however, they were obliged to yield, for the Senate had recourse to Gregory XIII., who, in 1578, declared that the Capuchins might take the church with a safe conscience. When Venice was placed under an interdict by Paul V., the interdict was observed only by the Theatines, the Jesuits, and the Capuchins, all of whom were in consequence expelled. On the restoration of peace the Capuchins were at once allowed to return.

purpose of hearing a sermon. Young Rossi was on these occasions so fervent at prayer, especially after Holy Communion, that the people were struck by his devotion, and would kneel close to him and piously kiss his garments, calling him amongst themselves "the Angel of the Lord." One of these visits to the Capuchin Church was followed by an incident which must not be passed over in silence.

Venice, as all the world knows, is built in the sea on a cluster of small islands, and in its streets the sound of horses' hoofs or carriage-wheels is never heard, the chief means of communication being the numerous canals that intersect the city. Now, the Capuchin Church is built on the Giudecca, which is separated from the Piazza of St. Mark, where Julius resided, by the Canal della Giudecca. The canal, which is here very wide, and resembles an arm of the sea, is often so rough in stormy weather, by reason of its exposed position, that the crossing in a gondola is dangerous. It was the Feast of the Ascension, the day on which the Doge annually celebrated his espousals with the sea. Standing on the *Bucentoro* (the State vessel), surrounded by the senators arrayed in purple, and by the Patriarch and clergy in gorgeous vestments, the Doge proceeded to the port *Due Castelli*. Here the prelate blessed a small cask of water, which he poured into the sea, whilst the Doge threw after it a precious ring, with the words: "We espouse thee, O sea, in token of true and perpetual dominion."

This spectacle was witnessed by an immense concourse of people, many of them strangers to the

city, who had come in from all parts of the Republic. To escape the noise and excitement, and in accordance with their custom, the two young friends, together with Julius's aunt and cousins, attended Vespers at the Capuchin Church. On their return they were overtaken in the centre of the canal by a furious tempest, which sprang up suddenly, and threatened every moment to swamp their tiny barque. The women screamed, the gondolier himself lost courage, and excited crowds on either bank gave them up as lost. Rossi alone remained calm, and encouraged the others, assuring them of escape from their present peril. At the same time, taking an *Agnus Dei* which he wore, he made the sign of the cross with it over the angry waves. The storm at once ceased, the waves were stilled, and the catastrophe which seemed inevitable was averted, the whole party landing in safety. The sudden cessation of the storm, with the rescue of all from what appeared certain death, was put down as an undoubted miracle, both by his companions and by the crowds who witnessed it, and was unanimously attributed to the lively faith with which he made the sign of the cross and invoked the Divine assistance.¹

Spotless and mortified as had been the life hitherto led by the seminarist, it by no means satisfied him. Something, he felt, was wanting. He longed to carry into execution the generous sacrifice which he had contemplated from childhood, of consecrating himself wholly and irrevocably to God in a religious Order. There were several

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 39.

Orders at Venice, but it was towards the Capuchins that he felt the strongest attraction, by reason of the rigid poverty of their institute. On opening his mind to his companion, Julius was delighted to find that he, too, was animated by the same sentiments. Henceforth their visits to the Capuchin Church became more frequent, and they asked and obtained permission to go inside the monastery, where they conversed familiarly with the Friars. This closer intercourse consolidated in the hearts of the youths their holy resolution, which they shortly afterwards manifested to the religious, and begged to be instructed in the steps necessary to put it into effect. In due course they were introduced to the Provincial, at that time Father Lawrence of Bergamo, a man of much prudence and discernment. Notwithstanding all the praises he had heard of the two candidates, the Provincial determined to examine them himself, and test their dispositions. Passing over in silence the advantages, in particular the peace and happiness of the Franciscan life, he painted in lurid colours the austerities and sacrifices which it imposes — total detachment, absolute poverty, frequent and rigorous fasts, and such obedience as knows no limit but sin, and requires the subject to leave himself, according to the striking comparison of St. Francis, like a dead body at the disposal of his Superior. Being satisfied that they were duly impressed by this description, he led them to one of the cells, showed them its bare floor and walls and scanty furniture. Julius, who had been long inured to penance, made answer for both : “ Father, there will be nothing difficult here,

provided we have a crucifix." The Provincial, touched by such heroism, accepted them as postulants. As, however, they had not yet attained the canonical age for admission to the novitiate, they spent the remainder of that year (1574) at Venice. Meanwhile they continued their studies at the seminary, but passed their spare time at the monastery, where they were granted the rare privilege of occasionally taking their meals, together with the religious, in the refectory, and of even spending the night and assisting at the midnight Office and meditation. Thus were they afforded an opportunity of trying their fitness for the duties which they were so desirous of undertaking.

CHAPTER III

NOVICE AT VERONA

- I. How he entered the Novice House at Verona—Clothing, February 18—Fidelity and fervour of the new novice—Testimony of fellow-novices.
- II. His entire surrender of self—At recreation—His love of penance.
- III. Trying ordeal for the young novice—Serious illness—Miraculous cure—Profession.

THE day so eagerly awaited at length arrived. Early in 1575 the postulants received a message from the Provincial to proceed at once to the Novitiate House at Verona. Julius, full of joy, communicated the news to his relatives. The uncle was somewhat disappointed, as he had hoped his nephew would become a secular priest. Still, being a man of solid piety, he bowed to the designs of Providence, and encouraged the youth to follow his vocation, and prove himself a good religious. Preparations for the journey were soon made, and the companions, on February 17, set out for Verona. Beholding in the distance the embattled towers of that city, where their ardent desires were to be satisfied, they alighted from the carriage and intoned the *Te Deum* in thanksgiving. At the monastery they were received by the Provincial himself, who had preceded them from Venice, and who next

day (February 18) clothed them in the religious habit. As a mark of special esteem, the Provincial gave his own name to Julius Cesar Rossi, calling him *Brother Lawrence of Brindisi*, by which name he shall be henceforth known. The name borne in religion by his fellow-novice was *Brother Andrew of Venice*, who became an exemplary priest, and is honourably mentioned in the chronicles of the province.

A pupil now in the school of perfection, Brother Lawrence was determined to neglect no means of attaining proficiency. St. Jerome's advice to the Roman virgin Demetrius he applied to himself: "Obliviscere omne præteritum, et quotidie inchoare te puta" ("Forget all the past, and consider that each day you are only beginning"). And so he reckoned that he was but now starting in real earnest the work of his sanctification. The most prompt in obedience, the first in choir by day and by night, the most cheerful in performing penances, the most diligent at manual work—in a word, the most exact in everything pertaining to regular observance—he applied himself to the duties of his new state with the utmost fidelity and fervour. During meditation he was so intent on the contemplation of the Divine mysteries that from beginning to end he remained motionless as a statue, and often, when the allotted time had expired, his fellow-novices had to shake him violently before they could arouse him and withdraw him to other duties. His companions in the novitiate afterwards testified that "Brother Lawrence was the most devout, the most modest, and the most observant of all the

novices, and was, moreover, as simple as a child and as pure as an angel.”

Though deprived of the same leisure for prayer as he had enjoyed in his uncle's house, his peace of mind was not on that account disturbed, for he was not one of those who come to religion with the false notion that they will be at liberty to satisfy their devotion by spending whatever time they please in church and on their knees; he understood that obedience is better than sacrifice, and that it is chiefly the renunciation of one's own will which is required for sanctity. “Nothing,” says St. Bernard, “is so contrary to sanctity as one's own will, which has nothing in common with the will of God. Whenever self-will desires anything, it is not for God's honour or our neighbour's welfare, but solely for ourselves. Instead of seeking the Divine pleasure, we think only of our own gratification.”¹ Actuated by the spirit of self-renunciation, Lawrence entered heartily into the recreations allowed to the novices, still without ever forgetting what is in keeping with religious decorum. He took special delight, we are told, in fondling a pet lamb which a benefactor had given to the monastery. This trait in his character exhibits him as a genuine son of St. Francis, who cherished all God's creatures, and made them so many steps by which he ascended to the Creator. Thus were his days passed in innocence, peace, and happiness, full of heavenly consolations. So far nothing had occurred to trouble the serenity of his soul, but towards the end of the novitiate a severe trial overtook him. The rigorous austerities of

¹ Letter 42 to the Archbishop of Sens.

the Order were not enough to satisfy his craving for mortification, and his excess of fervour in practising others had frequently to be moderated by the master of novices.

Eventually, however, his health gave way. An affection of the chest became so troublesome that he could not sleep at night. Weak and emaciated, he kept on his feet only by sheer strength of will. Every day his condition grew worse, and caused much anxiety to the religious. Unless a marked improvement took place, he would be absolutely incapable of bearing the burdens of the Franciscan life. Some of the Friars were even bent on sending him home, but God willed otherwise.¹ When the votation for his admission to profession was held, he passed by a majority of one vote, on the understanding, however, that the profession should be delayed for a few weeks, the better to diagnose the complaint, and in the hope that meanwhile he would regain sufficient strength. Nor were the religious disappointed. The fervent novice, aware of the danger that threatened him, applied himself more earnestly to prayer, and, without giving up the austerities prescribed by the Rule, got rid of the alarming symptoms, and in a brief space became as well and as robust as when he entered the novitiate. Accordingly, on the Eve of the Annunciation (March 24) he was allowed to pronounce his solemn vows.

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 38.

CHAPTER IV

STUDENT AT PADUA

- I. Promotion to studies—His sense of the responsibility imposed on him.
- II. His facility in learning—His willingness to help others—Supernatural illumination—His attitude towards the Bible, and his desire to acquaint himself with the original texts—An instance of his thoroughness—His perfect mastery of Hebrew—Miraculous mode of acquiring proficiency in this language—His knowledge of other ancient tongues.
- III. His mastery of European languages—His wonderful memory—An instance of its power—Learns the Bible by rote—His almost universal information on matters sacred—“Another Thomas Aquinas.”
- IV. Secret of success—Natural talents—A spirit of prayer—His constant cultivation of the Divine presence—The relation of piety to science—His industry in study.
- V. Suspends study on account of illness—Goes to Oderzo—Miraculous cure by Our Lady—Returns to study—Gratitude to Our Lady.

THE Capuchin statutes lay down that the newly professed clerics should not be promoted to the higher studies of philosophy and theology for two years after their profession, so that they may be better grounded in humanities, and be more and more confirmed in the religious spirit. In Lawrence's case, however, an exception was made by the Superiors, who, satisfied with his proficiency in learning and virtue, sent him without delay to com-

mence his philosophical and theological course at Padua. Fully realizing the responsibilities of an ecclesiastical student, he resolved to make the best use of his opportunities in qualifying for the future work of the ministry. A soldier of Jesus Christ, chosen to defend His interests and those of His Church, he determined to arm himself with the weapons of science as well as of piety, "embracing that faithful word which is according to doctrine, that he may be able to exhort in sound doctrine, and to convince the gainsayers."¹

With the ample field before him for the display of his extraordinary talents, he surpassed the highest expectations of the Superiors. His intellectual powers being now developed, he was able to grasp the most difficult scientific problems, and to solve them with facility. Not only did he find time to learn his own lessons, but also to charitably assist his companions with theirs. Father Hippolytus, of the Roman province, a celebrated preacher, frankly confessed that, as a fellow-student of Lawrence, he learned more from him in private than from the public lectures of the Lector, Father Francis of Messina. Neither was this any reflection on the latter, who, we are assured, was a man of solid learning and great ability in training youth, and to whom Lawrence owed not a little of his success. What seems at first sight almost incredible is the fact that he studied less than his companions, whom, nevertheless, he left far behind, but he devoted himself to prayer, during which his mind was illumined by the Holy Ghost, so that he

¹ Titus i. 9.

easily mastered questions which to others were impenetrable.¹

Besides philosophy and theology, he made a special study of sacred Scripture, so useful and necessary at all times, but more particularly in the sixteenth century, when the inspired Word was so flagrantly abused by the Reformers, who wrested it to their own and to others' destruction, and to the subversion of revealed truth. Regarding the Bible as an inexhaustible source of wisdom and knowledge, containing the most profound mysteries, and given us for our instruction by God Himself, Lawrence held it in such supreme veneration that he was wont to kneel down whilst reading and studying it. The better to penetrate the sense, he felt the necessity of an acquaintance with the original texts, and for this purpose applied himself to the acquisition of Hebrew, Syro-Chaldaic, and Greek.²

Hebrew he knew so perfectly, and spoke with such a correct pronunication, that the Jews at first

¹ "Annales Capuccinorum," t. iii.

² In 1610 Paul V. issued a Bull prescribing the study of Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic in all religious Orders of men, mendicant and non-mendicant. In compliance with this prescription, the Capuchin General Chapter of 1613, at which Lawrence assisted, established chairs for the Oriental languages at Rome, and decreed that the same should be done in other centres. In Paris, where these studies were continued up to the Revolution, our Fathers formed a society entitled "The Royal Society for Oriental Languages." This consisted of thirty Friars, who divided between them the study of Greek, Hebrew, Chaldaic, Armenian, Samaritan, Arabic, Coptic, Georgian, Ethiopic, Chinese, Hindustani, and Siamese. Amongst several works on Scripture, which the members published, is one of thirty volumes, highly commended by the famous Hebrew scholar, Drach, who declares that it deserves a place in every ecclesiastical library. The sovereign Pontiffs Benedict XIV., Clement XIII., and Pius VI., praised them, and encouraged them in their labours.

believed he was born of Jewish parents, and the most learned of the Rabbins admitted that he knew and spoke it better than themselves. For this wonderful mastery of what is generally regarded as a difficult language he himself confessed his indebtedness to the Mother of God. Preaching on her prerogatives in the Church of the Holy Ghost at Naples (1605), he says: "I know a man still living and speaking, who received the gift of Hebrew from the Blessed Virgin. Wishing to acquire a perfect knowledge of the Scriptures, and particularly of the Virgin's greatness, he besought the Virgin herself to instruct him in the Hebrew tongue. Then, having fallen into a light sleep, he found himself, on awakening, a perfect master of it, so much so that the Jews inferred from his pronunciation that he belonged to their own nation."¹ It will have been noticed that he employs the third person, but this he does, like St. Paul, out of humility, for there can be no doubt that the "man still living and speaking" is no other than he himself. Neither as a secular nor as a religious had he the opportunity of studying the language under a Hebrew professor, for though, when he first went to Padua, a Hebrew professor was teaching at the University, he left shortly afterwards, and was not replaced in Lawrence's time.

The writer of the "*Annales Capuccinorum*" affirms that, besides Hebrew, his knowledge of Syriac, Chaldaic, and Greek was also Divinely infused. Indeed, he appears to have been an earlier Mezzofanti. Through intercourse at Padua with

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 56.

the University students of different nationalities, he gained some knowledge of most European languages—French, Spanish, German, to say nothing of Latin and his native Italian. There is, however, no evidence for believing the statement made by some of his biographers that at this time, with the exceptions aforesaid, he mastered foreign languages so perfectly that he could converse and preach in them, even in the dialects. He himself informs¹ us that, when he first went to Prague, he preached in Italian, and Archbishop Spinelli, Nuncio at Prague, writing (June 25, 1601) to the Cardinal of St. George, Papal Secretary of State, mentions, amongst other reasons for retaining him there, that he had *now* acquired a sufficient knowledge of German to be understood by the heretics. Without doubt his marvellous memory rendered the study of languages an easy task, for he learned quickly, never forgetting anything that he heard or read. On one occasion at Verona he was present during the delivery of a sermon by the celebrated Dominican, Father Ebreto, and, being struck by the force of the arguments and the beauty of the style, he sat down on his return to the monastery and wrote out the whole of it, just as it had been preached.² Later, the manuscript, being passed round, came into the hands of the Father Guardian, who showed it to the preacher next time he met him. The latter, not a little surprised, and somewhat indignant, began to surmise who could have stolen his sermon. The Guardian allowed him to rate on for a while before undeceiving him. Then he smilingly assured him

¹ "Commentary."

² "Summary of Process," p. 55.

that the theft was a very innocent one, committed by a religious of the community, whose only fault was a faithful memory, which enabled him to commit to paper what he had heard from the pulpit. At such a feat the good Dominican was still more surprised, and, on closely examining the manuscript, he found that it corresponded word for word with what he himself had written.

This memory he employed to splendid advantage, not merely in learning languages, but in getting off by heart the whole of the Bible from beginning to end, so that he could quote with ease and without hesitation any text, giving book, chapter, and verse, just as if he held the Bible before him, and were reading it.¹ Several times he remarked in confidence to an intimate companion, not through boastfulness, but through genuine simplicity, that, should the Sacred Scriptures happen to be lost, he fully believed that, with the Divine assistance, he could rewrite them in the original tongues.² Nor was his knowledge of Holy Writ confined to the mere letter. Father Rufinus, of Naples, who had been for many years Lector of Theology, acknowledged that, though in arguing on theological questions in general he could almost hold his own with Lawrence, when it came to Scripture he found himself simply nowhere. But, indeed, on all subjects—at least of a clerical nature—Lawrence was deeply and widely informed, and had few equals amongst his contemporaries. Whilst making the visitation of the Barcelona province during his Generalship, he

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 51.

² "Summary from Neapolitan Process," p. 40.

assisted at a public disputation, in which a thesis for the Doctorate of Theology was being defended by the students, and, entering the lists, he displayed such powers of reasoning and such treasures of erudition that he was proclaimed by all who heard him as another Thomas Aquinas. The Sacred Congregation, after a most careful examination of his writings, declared that he could indeed be reckoned amongst the holy Fathers of the Church.¹

What, it may be asked, was the secret of his success? Natural talents and application account for much, but not for all. The writer of the "Annales," as we have seen, assigns another cause—the spirit of prayer, which, in accordance with the mind of St. Francis, must never be neglected on account of any study whatever. This spirit, so far from retarding scientific progress, does but accelerate it. Pointing to his crucifix, this brilliant student might with truth have repeated St. Bonaventure's reply to St. Thomas: "Behold my teacher!" Living, as he did, in the Divine presence, he kept his mind raised at all times to the Father of Lights, and sought the solution of difficulties from Him Who is the Master of all sciences. In fact, he again and again avowed that this Heavenly Master had taught him whatever he knew, and, in his humility, he attributed the reception of such supernatural favours to the prayers of his pious cousins at Venice.

Lawrence rightly regarded science as the gift of God, and piety as the condition of attaining it: "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord."²

¹ February 13, 1734: "Vere inter sanctos patres potest enumerari."

² Ps. cx. 9.

Yet he did not, on that account, make light of human means, for he knew that not even the prophets, though specially illuminated by the Holy Ghost, were dispensed from investigating the sense of their message : " Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and diligently searched."¹ Hence he spared no effort to equip himself for the office of Apostolic teacher, employing as much assiduity in study as if he derived no help from prayer. Prayer and study should, therefore, always go hand in hand, and their union has, in fact, produced the most enlightened men in all ages. How absurd and unfounded, in the face of history, is the charge levelled against ecclesiastical colleges and seminaries, whether secular or regular, that these houses of prayer and of study are the houses of " obscurantism, enclosed by high walls, the windows buffed, the doors barred, the chinks stopped," the more effectually to shut out the light of science.²

Before completing his course at Padua, Lawrence was again attacked by the chest complaint which had threatened to cut off his career in the Order, and, under medical advice, he gave up all study and work of every kind. In the hope of deriving benefit from change of air, he went to Oderzo, where he spent most of his time praying before a picture of Our Lady in the church. One day he was heard to burst into sobs, and was observed to shed copious tears. The religious, asking him what was the matter, received no answer ; but next day, when questioned privately by the Guardian, he replied :

¹ 1 Pet. i. 10.

² See *Hibbert Journal*, January, 1908, p. 253.

“I wept for joy, because the Blessed Virgin has cured me.” Such was, indeed, the case. The cure was real and complete, and he at once returned to finish his studies. Henceforth he undertook to fast every Saturday in honour of Mary—a practice which he continued (with the exception of a brief interval to be hereafter related) during the remainder of his life.

CHAPTER V

POPULAR PREACHER

- I. Examination for office of preacher—Difficulty of age—Dispensation—His fitness for the office.
- II. Select preacher for Lent at Venice—Effect on his audience—Sources of this influence—Natural graces of an orator and supernatural zeal of a Saint—An instance of his wonderful power over his hearers—Becomes a favourite with Venetians, and his fame spreads beyond Venice.
- III. Characteristics of his preaching—His proximate preparation by means of prayer and Scripture-reading—His appearance all earnestness—His eyes all soul—His gift of tears—Examples of the supernatural visibly affecting him at Mantua and at Genoa—His indifference to time, and the device used by the lay-brother companion to make him conscious.
- IV. His profound sense of his own unfitness for the august dignity of the priesthood—His prompt obedience to the command of authority to be ordained—Ordained priest in 1583.

LIKE other ecclesiastical students, the Capuchins, on finishing their course, are required to undergo a rigorous examination, and not until they have given a satisfactory account of themselves are they licensed to preach and hear confessions. As was to be expected, Lawrence went through the ordeal without difficulty, passing in all subjects with honours, and was at once appointed preacher by the General. This appointment is made as a matter of course on the recommendation of the Provincial

Superiors, who, nevertheless, do not allow the actual exercise of the office till they are satisfied that it can be sustained by the new preacher with befitting dignity. An insuperable impediment seemed to militate against Lawrence, who was still too young to be ordained priest, being only twenty-three years of age, and very few are permitted to preach before receiving the priesthood. But again the general rule was dispensed in his case, the Superiors being unwilling to allow his extraordinary talents to remain any longer buried.¹ His wonderful memory, his gift of tongues, his profound knowledge of philosophy, theology, Scripture, and the Fathers; the elegance of his style, the fluency of his diction, his rich and musical voice, his grace of action, the dignity of his bearing, his imposing and attractive presence—all conspired to mark him out as an accomplished orator. In Italy, as in France, it is customary to have a Lenten course of sermons delivered annually by a special preacher, and for the Lent of 1583 the Capuchins were requested to supply one for the Church of *San Giovanni nuovo* at Venice.² The choice fell on the young deacon, Lawrence. No more striking proof of the confidence which they reposed in the abilities of their inexperienced subject could have been given by his Superiors. Venice the beautiful, the Queen of the Adriatic, was then at the zenith of her power, and grandeur, and prosperity; the centre of commerce, of wealth, of civilization, with her wonderful palaces of marble and porphyry, built in the sea by her

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 36.

² So says Father Bonaventure, but, according to others, it was St. Giovanni in Bragola where Don Rossi was parish priest.

merchant princes, where they entertained those proud dames, those renowned beauties, for whose gratification their ships brought from the ends of the earth the most precious treasures, the gold and pearls of the Indies, the sweet perfumes of Araby the blest. In such a city, and before such an audience, Lawrence made his *début*. The apparently risky and imprudent selection was amply justified by the result. From the first its very novelty attracted many to see and hear him ; curiosity gave way to surprise, and surprise to astonishment. Every day his fame spread and his hearers increased, till all Venice, every grade of society, was eager to sit at the feet of the new Apostle. Neither did his youth detract from the effect, which, on the contrary, it heightened. The beard, already long and full, imparted to him a venerable appearance, and the audience were rapt in admiration at such ripeness of mind in so green an age. They were struck by the sublimity of his thoughts, the boldness of his figures, the cogency of his reasoning, the clearness of his exposition, the terseness and nervousness of his style. Now all fire and zeal, he would fearlessly denounce the licentiousness of the age, and now all sweetness and mildness, he would allure his listeners to the practice of virtue, till he succeeded in captivating all hearts, and stirring up within them lively sentiments of fear and compunction. It will suffice to notice here one instance of the fruit gathered. A certain fashionable lady of noble family, but of loose morality, who, generally speaking, was too much taken up with amusements, not always innocent, to

attend church and listen to sermons, hearing the name of the young Capuchin on everyone's lips, was drawn out of sheer curiosity to *San Giovanni*.¹ Lawrence was treating one of those subjects which are calculated to arouse serious thoughts in the minds of even the most frivolous, and the matter and the manner of the orator at once made an impression upon her. She had her eyes opened, and was confronted with a vivid picture of her past life ; all her sins, with the minutest details, rose up before her, and this sudden enlightenment filled her with such terror that, before leaving the church, she went and cast herself at the knees of a confessor to make a general confession. From that day she was a changed woman, and she persevered in a life of penance. In this account, which she herself confided to a religious, she admitted that, after the Divine mercy, she owed her conversion to the young preacher.

The remarkable success of this first course caused him to be engaged for the next Lent in the same church,² and ever afterwards he was a special favourite with the Venetians. Later, about 1593 and the following years, he preached in the Churches of St. Jerome and the Holy Apostles, and twice in St. Mark's before the Doge and Senate. From Venice his fame spread rapidly throughout Italy and Germany, whose chief cities vied with each other in offering him their pulpits.³

Before proceeding with the sequence of our story, it will be convenient to make some further remarks

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 248.

² *Ibid.*, p. 54.

³ "Annales Capuccinorum," t. iii.

on the characteristics of his preaching. In the first place, the manner of preparation was unique. The remote preparation by study and composition he did not neglect, as is evident from the large number of sermons left behind him in manuscript, but for the proximate preparation he retired to his room, and there, kneeling before a picture of the Blessed Virgin, with the Bible open on a table in front of him, he spent three, four, and five hours praying, sighing, weeping, till it was time to go into the pulpit. Then, like another Moses coming down the mountain from conversing with God, his face shining with heavenly light, he delivered the law to the people from a heart all on fire with charity. The following description is supplied by one who saw and heard him in the Church of St. Francis at Pavia : " He seemed wholly melted with the love of God, and his zeal and earnestness in denouncing sin touched the inmost hearts of his hearers, and drew from their eyes abundance of tears. So bright was his countenance that one could not bear to look at it, and his eyes sent forth a flame of severity and sweetness that at once terrified and attracted. Copious tears and perspiration ran down his cheeks, and the people were so moved by his words that they implored aloud forgiveness of their sins."¹ Once at Mantua, on Good Friday, he began his sermon with such a flood of tears that the people whispered to each other that he could not proceed. Nevertheless, he recovered himself, and finished the sermon without breaking down. At the end he carried the cross to the place prepared for the adoration. At

¹ " Summary of Process," p. 223.

Genoa, about the middle of his discourse, there appeared over his head a resplendent halo, which remained visible for a quarter of an hour, to the amazement of the audience. He was generally so absorbed in his subject that he was liable to forget time, and he instructed the lay-brother companion who always sat behind him on the pulpit steps to pinch his heels when he was getting too long. The good brother would do what he was told, but often the preacher was so carried away that ordinary pinching had no effect, and sometimes the brother drew blood before he could make him feel. No wonder that the preaching of this extraordinary man everywhere produced abundant fruit, and resulted in the conversion of innumerable sinners.

When Lawrence reached the canonical age, he was notified by the Superiors to prepare for ordination. Others, less worthy, are impatient to receive the dignity of the priesthood; it was quite otherwise with this humble religious. Strange as it may seem, he pleaded earnestly to be excused, having in mind the example of the Seraphic Patriarch, who, being instructed by an angel that the soul of a priest should be purer than the clearest water, remained all his life a simple deacon. The disciple held back from the priesthood through a similar motive, and yielded only to a formal precept of obedience. His ordination probably took place in the second half of 1583, when he had entered on his twenty-fifth year.

CHAPTER VI

OFFICES IN THE ORDER

- I. Appointed Lector of Divinity—Composed two works on preaching—Appointed to the important Guardianship of the Giudecca Monastery in 1587—How he received the appointment.
- II. His conduct as Guardian—How he practised obedience—His approachableness as Superior—His fatherliness—His prudence in dealing with delinquents—A maxim of government.
- III. Election to the Provinciate of Tuscany in 1590—His virtuous opposition to the honour—His humble obedience to the will of the General—The general appreciation of his worth as an administrator.
- IV. Returns to Venice—Received amid general rejoicings—Elected Provincial of Venetian province—Composes his “Four Letters on the Observance of Seraphic Rule”—Works miracles during his Provinciate of Venice—Cures a blind man—Casts out a devil from a demoniac—Weakens demoniac power in a woman—Restores a doctor's wife to health from an incurable malady—Miraculous cure of cancer and of epilepsy—His humble devices to avoid applause.
- V. Elected Custos to represent the Province of Venice at the General Chapter in 1596—At General Chapter elected Definitor.

SOON after completing his studies, Lawrence was appointed Lector of Theology and Sacred Scripture at Venice, and he very likely held this office whilst preaching at *San Giovanni*. We are told by Father Bonaventure that he fulfilled the charge with the utmost fidelity, and trained a goodly number of

preachers, who shed lustre on the Venetian province. Two works which he may have composed at this period are found among his writings. One is entitled : " A Treatise on Preaching for Beginners ; " the other : " Plans and Matter for Sermons. "

The Lectorship was but the first step in his ascent to the highest dignities of the Order. The Provincial Chapter of 1587 elected him Guardian of the Giudecca Monastery, a most important post, both because the community was a large one, and because its Superior was brought into contact with the chief personages of the city. For these reasons it was usually conferred only on a religious of mature age and experience. Still, no doubt was felt that Lawrence would fill it to the advantage of the Friars and the edification of Seculars. To himself the election afforded anything but pleasure. He was aware that, as Guardian, he would have many cares and distractions, which would withdraw him from prayer, and that, moreover, he would have fewer opportunities of practising his beloved virtue—obedience. In order not to remain altogether deprived of the merit of this virtue, he chose as Superior for himself a saintly lay brother, Michael of Bologna, the future companion of his travels, on whom he enjoined to tell him frankly anything amiss in his private conduct or in his domestic administration. The brother, nothing loath, did as instructed with respect and discretion ; he kept a sharp eye on the Guardian, reminding him when it was time to finish his prayers or leave off study, that he might attend to business or his corporal necessities ; and the Guardian, as a child, would promptly

obey. Neither could the brother, with all his vigilance, discover anything more serious, since the exemplary pastor, *forma factus gregis ex animo*, preceded everyone in the duties of regular observance. A stranger to that pomposity assumed by too many when raised to dignities, and especially unbecoming in an Ecclesiastical Superior, he treated all his subjects with kindness and consideration. As a father, he provided for their wants, and sympathized with them in their trials and difficulties. At the same time he failed not to correct faults when occasion demanded, but in the manner prescribed by the Constitutions of the Order—that is, he tempered the wine of justice with the oil of mercy, eschewing undue indulgence and excessive severity. Thus gaining the hearts of the brethren, he succeeded in leading them to the perfection of their state. The same wise policy he pursued in the various offices which he held in after life, never sparing himself any labour or fatigue necessary to relieve the temporal and spiritual necessities of those committed to his care. Often when tired and worn out in fulfilling such duties he would say to his companions: “One should not accept an appointment unless one is prepared to discharge at all costs its obligations.”

The reputation of Father Lawrence as a prudent and able administrator evidently spread into other provinces, for he was elected Provincial of Tuscany in the Chapter held at Cortona, January 16, 1590. This was all the more remarkable, since he was exceptionally young for so high a dignity, and was personally unknown to the electors, who, besides, had many capable and worthy men amongst them-

selves. The news fell like a thunderbolt upon himself, and he steadfastly refused to accept the office till forced by an express command of the Father-General. Bending his shoulders under the yoke of obedience, he proceeded to Florence, where he was welcomed with demonstrations of sincerest joy. The more intimately known he became, the more was he appreciated, and his administration was characterized by the same prudence, kindness, and firmness which he displayed as guardian of the Giudecca. He left behind him in Tuscany the happiest memories, and rendered signal services to that Province.

As soon as the three years of his Provincialate were over, glad to find himself once more in the position of a simple religious, he hastened back to Venice. Venice, which had educated him, and had applauded his first oratorical efforts, now informed of his return, prepared to receive him with every mark of honour and affection. Numerous boats accompanied the gondola that bore him, and on all sides arose the joyful shouts: "Il Padre Lorenzo! Il Padre Lorenzo!" ("Father Lawrence! Father Lawrence!"), and he was obliged to submit to these ovations till he reached the monastery.

The tranquil and peaceful life, free from responsibility, which he had promised himself proved of short duration. His own province, annoyed and ashamed at having been forestalled in recognizing the worth of its now illustrious subject, determined to make up for its tardiness, and elected him Provincial of Venice that same year (1593).

If he laboured so zealously for the Province of

Tuscany, we may be sure that he did not spare himself on behalf of his Alma Mater. His "Four Letters on the Perfect Observance of the Seraphic Rule" are evidence of his pastoral solicitude. During this period God was pleased to manifest the sanctity of His servant by the exercise of those miraculous powers which henceforth rendered him so famous. Of the prodigies recorded, we shall select a few, as we meet them on our way. Persons of all classes came to pay their respects to the popular Provincial, and to beg his blessing and prayers. One day there was in the crowd a blind man, led thither by his friends, in the hope of obtaining from the holy prelate the recovery of his sight. Unable to get near, he called out, asking to be taken to Father Lawrence. The latter, touched by the appeal, went to him, and made over him the sign of the cross. That salutary sign, which nineteen years before had calmed the waters of the Adriatic, now opened the eyes of the blind man.¹ The enthusiasm of the spectators knew no bounds, and the report of the miracle brought every day fresh crowds to the monastery. Thoroughly disliking this publicity, the Provincial decided to leave Venice at once, and commence sooner than he had intended the pastoral visitation of the province.

Spite of himself, his fame preceded him, and caused him to be received everywhere with popular ovations. Between Padua and Bassano he met a number of people in charge of two women, who were possessed and tormented by devils. Having looked attentively at both the unfortunates, he

¹ " Venetian Process."

gave one of them his blessing, saying: "May the Lord God and the most holy Virgin deliver thee!" Immediately the woman was freed from the diabolical possession. Turning then to the other, he blessed her likewise, but added that God, for His own secret designs, willed to leave her a little longer under her affliction, and he recommended her to practise devotion to the Blessed Virgin, through whom she would in due course obtain deliverance. From that moment the attacks of the evil spirits diminished in violence, and in a short time, without any other exorcisms, ceased entirely.

At Verona¹ he cured the wife of a doctor, who had tried in vain all remedies known to the medical profession. The husband had himself but little faith in the supernatural, but, urged by his family, he had recourse to Father Lawrence, who visited the invalid, and, placing his hands upon her, effected a perfect cure. Full of joy and gratitude, the doctor, no longer a sceptic, proclaimed amongst his friends that the Capuchin Provincial had recalled his wife from the grave, since, the disease being incurable and in its last stage, she must in the course of nature have died in a few days.

In the same city was a woman who was wasting away with a cancer, but, being blessed by the holy man, she was immediately freed from all traces of the fell disease. Another woman, who was subject to frequent fits of epilepsy, enjoyed permanent immunity after eating a portion of a loaf of which Lawrence had partaken.²

Thus did this true follower of Christ go about

¹ "Process of Verona."

² *Ibid.*

doing good, and scattering blessings on every side. The demonstrations with which he was universally greeted seriously embarrassed the humble religious, and, to escape observation, he made a practice of avoiding the main thoroughfares of the towns and cities, making his way to the monasteries by back streets. Sometimes he disguised himself as a brother questor, not always successfully. For instance, at Padua, wishing to pay his respects to the Patriarch, Cardinal Vendramino, he set out from the monastery with the Capuce pulled over his head, and a wallet on his shoulders, hoping in this guise to pass unrecognized through the streets; but the would-be questor was followed to the Patriarch's palace by a crowd of people, crying out: "Ecco il santo! ecco il santo!" ("The Saint! the Saint!"). Truly he had to pay the penalty of greatness.

When he had finished the visitation of the province, which was then very extensive, the time of his Provincialate had almost expired, and, returning to Venice, he convoked the Chapter. Being chosen Custos to represent the Province in the General Chapter to be held the same year (1596), he proceeded to Rome, and was elected Definitor-General.¹ The new General, Father Jerome of Sorbo, rejoiced to have as one of his assistants a man of such ability and experience, and relied on him to lighten considerably the burdens of his office. It is stated that he commissioned Lawrence to draw up a "Directorium Juris," a handbook of Canon Law,

¹ There are six assistants called "definitors," who, with the Minister-General, govern the whole Order.

for use in the Order.¹ The Pope also had his eye upon him, and had planned a very special work for him, as we shall see in the following chapter.

¹ See "Life," by Father Norbert of Tux (French translation), chap. iv., p. 42.

CHAPTER VII

APOSTLE OF THE JEWS

- I. Policy of the Church towards the Jews—Milman on this policy—Franciscans and Jewry in England—Motives of this policy.
- II. Lawrence entrusted with the mission to the Jews by Clement VIII.—Once by Gregory XIII.—Preached in other cities, as well as in Rome and Ferrara—Pope and Margaret of Austria in the audience—Bishops invite him to preach to Jews—Plot against his life—Jews' appreciation of him at Mantua—Obtains a ghetto for them—Christian toleration of them at Casale.
- III. Public disputation with Jews at Prague.
- IV. Method of preaching to the Jews—How the Jews welcome him to Rome.

THROUGHOUT the chequered history of dispersed Israel the Church, whilst exerting her influence to protect her own children from Jewish imposition and rapacity, has consistently striven to secure justice for that people, and to shield them from the blind fury of their enemies. Herself the victim of persecution, at times also from the Jews, she has always condemned Jew-baiting, and has endeavoured to put it down. This much is acknowledged by even those historians who are prejudiced against her. Thus Milman writes: "Of all European Sovereigns, the Popes, with some exceptions, have pursued the most humane policy towards the Jews. In Italy, and even in Rome, they have been more rarely molested than in other countries. They

have long inhabited in Rome a separate quarter of the city, but this might have been originally a measure at least as much of kindness as contempt, a remedy against insult rather than an exclusion from society.”¹ He blames the anti-Pope, Benedict XIII., who legislated chiefly with a view to the conversion of the Spanish Jews, but he admits that “probably the deposal of Benedict annulled this law.” The only legitimate Pope he mentions as opposed to them is Sixtus IV., who empowered Ferdinand and Isabella to establish the Inquisition, which took cognizance of Jews as well as of heretics. He adds, however, that the Pope, alarmed at the severe measures enforced, “wrote to the Sovereigns complaining that the Inquisitors exceeded their powers.”

The children of St. Francis, always loyal to the Holy See, distinguished themselves by their solicitude for the welfare of this hated race. Under Edward I. in England, as Green relates, during the terrible storm which eventually swept every Jew out of the country, their best friends were the Friars Minor, who themselves suffered in consequence. “Fanaticism (*sic*) met fanaticism, and the first work of the Friars was to settle in the Hebrew quarters and establish their convent houses. But the tide of popular fury was rising too high for these gentler means of reconciliation. When the Franciscans saved seventy Jews from death by their prayers to the King, the populace angrily refused the brethren alms.”²

¹ “The History of the Jews,” book xxiv., p. 537.

² “A Short History of the English People,” p. 198 (edition of 1875).

The motives which influenced the Church in her policy towards the Jews are easily understood. Jesus Christ, her Divine Founder, the Blessed Virgin, His Mother, and all the Apostles, belonged to that nation, and from Jerusalem the Gospel spread throughout the Gentile world. Moreover, the very preservation of the race is the fulfilment of prophecy, and a standing argument for the truth of Christianity; and just as Christ and the Apostles preached first to the Jews before turning to the Gentiles, so the Church, considering herself a debtor also to them, has ever taken a keen interest in their conversion.

Clement VIII. in particular had this Apostolic work very much at heart. Aware of Father Lawrence's wonderful knowledge of Hebrew and of his zeal for souls, the Pontiff now resolved to utilize his talents and accomplishments for the enlightenment of the Jews residing in Rome. According to Father Bonaventure, Clement was not the first Pope who confided to him such a mission, for Gregory XIII., who died in 1585, had already summoned him to the Eternal City for the purpose of teaching the Christian truths to the Jews, to whom he preached every Saturday in the Church of St. Bartholomew on the Island of the Tiber. His sojourn, however, on that occasion must have been brief, whereas, now residing in Rome as Definitor-General, his Apostolate amongst the Jews extended to three years. It appears that, at the Pope's request, he preached to the Jews also in other cities. For instance, in 1598 we find him preaching to them at Ferrara, where they were very numerous, the

Pope himself being present during the sermon. Clement had come to that city in order to take formal possession of the State on its restoration to the Holy See.¹ In the audience was another distinguished personage—the young Princess Margaret of Austria, daughter of Archduke Charles, then journeying to Spain to marry Philip III. It is stated that the preacher was introduced to her on this occasion, and that, on account of the favourable impression left, he found this early acquaintance most advantageous in his subsequent dealings with the Spanish Court.

Bishops also and other prelates invited him at different times to address the Jews in various places, and they easily obtained his consent. Thus he preached to them at Padua, Verona, Venice, Mantua, Casale, etc. The Rabbins of Venice, unable to refute his arguments, were so incensed that they plotted his assassination. At Mantua, during a Lenten course, he instructed the Jews each Saturday, and he so gained their good-will that at the end they thanked him and expressed their regret at his departure.

Before leaving, he obtained for them a favour which they much appreciated. Till then the houses inhabited by the Jews were scattered about the

¹ Alphonsus II. of Este, Duke of Ferrara, died without issue October 27, 1597, and Ferrara, being a Papal fief, lapsed to its feudal lord. Cæsar of Este claimed it for himself against the Pope, who was supported by Henry IV. of France. Help from Spain was expected by Cæsar, but Philip II., being unwilling to break with Rome, refused to interfere. Recognizing the futility of resistance, Cæsar accepted the terms of a treaty, signed January 12, 1598, and Clement entered Ferrara May 8 of the same year.

city amongst those of the Christians, with whom they often came into conflict, resulting not seldom in bloodshed. Lawrence persuaded the Duke to assign them a *ghetto*, and the Bishop caused all the emblems of Christianity to be removed, so as to save them from insult. Nowhere, perhaps, was a more profound impression produced than at Casale.¹ Here the Bishop, Tullio Carretta, acting in concert with the Governor, assembled all the Jews in the cathedral. The procession through the streets was guarded by a body of soldiers. The men marched two abreast, and each woman was escorted by a Catholic gentleman. Lawrence, as usual, spoke in Hebrew, except when he explained in Latin or Italian certain telling points for the benefit of the Christians present, and we may judge of the effect produced from a remark made by one of the Rabbins on leaving the church: "Never did any man speak like this man."

At this time he was making the visitation of the Genoese Province as Minister Provincial, and Father Arsenius of Venice tells us that he exercised the same ministry amongst the children of Israel in all the other cities which he visited. We must not omit to narrate what happened at Prague.² The account is furnished by Father Philip of Parma, who was stationed there at the time. Monsignor Spinelli, the Nuncio, desiring to test Lawrence's reputed ability, invited the Rabbins to meet him in public conference.³ The Rabbins came armed with Hebrew Bibles; Lawrence brought only his

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 51. ² "Neapolitan Process."

³ "Summary of Process," p. 60.

Crucifix. Although three or four of the Rabbins spoke and objected at once, the Christian champion, without ever losing his self-possession, taking them in turn, had a complete answer for each ; then from their own books he read out text after text in proof of the Christian religion, and so discomfited his adversaries that they refused to continue the conference, nor could they afterwards be prevailed upon to resume it. Great was the confusion of the Jews, and proportionately great was the joy of the Nuncio and of all the Catholics at the triumphant vindication of the Truth.

In preaching to the Jews, he always carried into the pulpit the Hebrew Bible, from which he read passages relating to the Messiah ; then, explaining them, he showed how all the prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. Addressing them, as he invariably did, in their own language, and speaking it as correctly as they themselves, he easily fixed their attention, aroused their admiration, and secured their esteem ; the more so since he never had recourse to reproaches or denunciations, but treated them with courtesy, tenderness, and charity, calling them his well-beloved brethren, and evincing an unfeigned interest in their welfare.¹

We have seen how they appreciated his discourses at Mantua, and we have also the record of a very pleasing incident that occurred at Rome. On his return from Germany, after his first mission there, as he was passing through a street near St. John Lateran, he was accosted by some Jews, who recognized him and expressed their delight at seeing him

¹ " Summary of Process," p. 59.

again. Next day the Rabbins and their chief men waited on Lawrence at the monastery to congratulate him on his return, and at the same time they begged him to visit and console them once more, as all were eager to see and hear him. Whether he acceded to this request or not does not appear, as we are left without further information. Unfortunately, too, details are wanting as to the number of conversions which he effected. St. Vincent Ferrer in Spain, as Milman relates,¹ “converted 35,000 Jews to sincere Christians,” but all we know of Lawrence’s converts is what he himself frequently told his companions—namely, that many had their eyes opened by his preaching, and, renouncing Judaism, embraced Christianity.

¹ “History of the Jews,” p. 566.

CHAPTER VIII

MISSION TO GERMANY

- I. The Capuchin Order at its beginning—*Ranke's* opinion—Its hard fortune at the hands of Paul III.—Its spread in various countries—Testimony of various historians.
- II. Invitation to the Tyrol—Request to labour in the Emperor's dominions—Action of the Archbishop of Prague—The Minister-General ordered by the Pope, Clement VIII, to meet the Imperial wishes—Lawrence chosen as Superior of the Mission.
- III. Await the return of the Governor of Vienna—How they were entertained—Miraculous preservation of flowers—Proceeds to Prague—Ill-treatment in public from the heretics—Attack on their lives by ruffians—The climate very trying—Freedom of the Friars from the plague.
- IV. Trials of the Friars at Vienna—Providential escape of Brother Julius from death—Lawrence desires to go to Vienna—Remains at Prague—Description of Prague and its bridges—The Capuchin monastery at Hradschin—Building of this monastery—Erection of monastic cross.

THE Capuchin reform of the Friars Minor, formally approved by Clement VII. in 1525, had by this time developed into one of the most important and influential Orders in the Church. *Ranke*, the Protestant historian, writes : "The Capuchins determined on reviving the regulations of their Founder : the midnight Office, prayer at stated times, the discipline and silence, the life imposed by their original Institute—that is to say, in all the extremes of its austerity. We may be tempted to smile at the

undue importance attached to mere trifles, but it cannot be called in question that these monks comported themselves on many occasions in compliance with all the rigour of their duties—as, for example, during the plague of 1528, when their courage and devotion was most exemplary.”¹ Again: “Cardinal Ludovico Ludovisi, nephew of Gregory XV., considered his office as Protector of the Capuchins the most important patronage in his possession.”²

Violently opposed and virulently persecuted from the beginning, the Order seemed at one period doomed to total extinction. Its third General, Bernardine Ochín,³ a man of austere life and a celebrated preacher, throwing off the habit, went over to the Protestants, and then wrote an insolent letter to the reigning Pontiff, Paul III. The Pope, irritated beyond measure, would have visited the offence of an ex-member on the whole body by entirely suppressing it had he not been dissuaded from such a proceeding by certain Cardinals. The Order, thus spared, being thoroughly orthodox, soon vindicated its right to existence, and made wonderful headway, not only in Italy, where it was founded, but in other countries. The same Pontiff, at the instigation of rivals, jealous of their success, had forbidden the Capuchins to establish themselves

¹ “The History of the Popes,” by Leopold Ranke, vol. i., p. 130 (Bohn’s edition).

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 203.

³ In the records of the Fifth General Chapter of the Order we find it stated that Ochín, like Brother Elias, was reconciled to the Church before his death: “Ad quam (orthodoxam fidem), orationibus fratrum suorum mediantibus, ante obitum reversus.”

beyond the Alps ; but Catherine de Médicis, consort of Henry II. of France, got this prohibition revoked by Gregory XIII. in 1574, and henceforward the Institute spread rapidly in France,¹ Switzerland, the Netherlands, and the German States.

Historians of that period hold up the Jesuits and the Capuchins as the chief opponents of the new heresies. "The Capuchin monks worked hand in hand with the Jesuits, animated by the same enthusiasm for the salvation of souls. Between the two Orders brotherly relations were kept up uninterruptedly, and they frequently coalesced in holding popular missions, which were regarded as one of the most powerful means for the revival of Christian life among the people."² In the triumph of Catholicism in France, Ranke declares that the Capuchins took a prominent part. "All Poitou and Languedoc were filled with the missions of the Capuchins." And, speaking of Belgium, where they arrived in 1585, the same writer relates : "The most important results followed. They transformed Belgium, which had previously been half Protestant, into one of the most decidedly Catholic countries in the world. They produced a powerful effect even on the different religious communities, insomuch

¹ The Cardinal of Lorraine brought back with him from the Council of Trent a few Capuchins, to whom he gave a temporary house at Meudon, but on his death they were obliged to leave. In 1574 the Capuchins returned to France under Father Pacificus, of San Gervaso, and settled in Paris. The following year they were established at Lyons, and shortly afterwards at Caen, Rouen, Marseilles, Toulouse, and Verdun. See Ranke, vol. i., p. 501.

² "History of the German People," by Johannes Janssen (English translation), vol. ix., p. 347. Published by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co. 1906.

that the Pope¹ found it needful to restrain the other Franciscans from adopting the reformed rule of the Capuchins."² "In Switzerland," writes Darras, "the Jesuits and the Capuchins laboured with great success. The Nuncios could not sufficiently praise the services of the Italian Capuchins."³ Even Green⁴ takes cognizance of the influence exercised by the Jesuits and Capuchins in accounting for the decline of Protestantism. "New Religious Orders rose to meet the wants of the day. The Capuchins became the preachers of Catholicism, and the Jesuits became not only its preachers, but its directors, its schoolmasters, its missionaries, its diplomatists. Learning gradually passed over to the side of the older Faith. Nobles and scholars alike forsook Protestantism."

Catholic Princes and prelates, anxious for the welfare of their subjects, encouraged the introduction into their territories of these two religious bodies, still in the full vigour of youth. They realized that their members were best qualified by their learning and exemplary lives to combat the prevalent errors and corruption. The House of Hapsburg in particular favoured the Capuchins.⁵ It was the Archduke Ferdinand, Sovereign of the Tyrol, who invited them into that country, and in

¹ Paul III. Briefs dated December 18, 1534, and January 12, 1535.

² Ranke, vol. i., pp. 474, 475.

³ "Universal Church History," vol. xxxvi., p. 211.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 462.

⁵ Hence it was only in keeping with the traditions of his illustrious House that a Hapsburg, the eighth Earl of Denbigh, founded at Pantasaph, North Wales, the first permanent monastery of the Order in Great Britain.

1594 built their first monastery at Innsbrück. The noble benefactor laid the foundation-stone, and the Archduchess, attended by her Maids of Honour, carried the mortar with which it was set. Now they were to be requested to labour in the dominions of the Emperor. The first move was made by the Prince Archbishop of Prague, Zbinek Berka, who wrote (February 10, 1597) to the General, Father Jerome of Sorbo, begging him to send a colony of Capuchins to that capital. He mentions that he is acting with the consent and at the desire of His Imperial Majesty, Rudolph II. Later in the year (May 4) he addressed letters with the same purpose to Cardinals Camerini and Paravicini.¹ No further steps, however, seem to have been taken till the approach of the General Chapter, 1599. Just before the Chapter His Grace renewed the application in a letter to the Pope, Clement VIII., who requested the new General, Father Jerome of Castelferretti, to meet the wishes of the Archbishop and the Emperor.² It was then decided to despatch forthwith a body of missionaries to Germany. Lawrence, who had been re-elected Definitor, was chosen Superior of the new mission, with the title of Commissary-General. His fellow-labourers were religious selected from various Provinces of the Order. The following is the list of these pioneers, as given in the Life by Father Bonaventure:

Priests.—James and Matthias of Salo, Francis of Taranto, Gabriel of Innsbrück, Ambrose of Florence, Gaspar of Bergamo, John of Venice, Amadeo of Verona, and Philip of Parma.

¹ "Bullarium Capuccinorum," t. iv., p. 171.

² "Summary of Process," p. 87.

Lay Brothers.—Julius of Venice and Michael of Bologna.

Blessed Benedict of Urbino is also included by his biographers amongst Father Lawrence's fellow-missionaries in Bohemia, where it is stated that he laboured for three years, but he probably went there later.

The Commissary set out as soon as possible with his little band of helpers, and reached Vienna August 28, 1599.¹ Just then the Archduke Matthias, Governor of the city, was in Hungary repelling an invasion of the Turks, and as the religious had instructions to present themselves to him on their way to Prague, they awaited his return. For the first few days they were hospitably entertained by their brethren, the Conventual Fathers.² Meanwhile, a modest house was prepared for them through the charity of certain Catholic Barons in the quiet suburb of St. Ulrich, where they took up their residence till the arrival of the Governor.

A simple and charming anecdote may here be inserted. Father Lawrence had brought with him from Italy a small statue of the Blessed Virgin, packed in a box with some flowers, and on reaching Vienna he opened the box in the presence of a companion, to whom we owe the account. To their surprise the flowers were as fresh and as fragrant after the long journey as when first gathered, and remained so for several months. May we not recog-

¹ Under date July 7, 1599, Cinthius, Cardinal of St. George, informs the Archbishop of Prague that twelve Capuchins were about to start for Bohemia.

² "Summary of Process," p. 87.

nize in this a token of Mary's pleasure at the devotion of her client ?

As soon as the Archduke returned, the Commissary waited upon him. Matthias, who was delighted at the arrival of the religious, provided them with more comfortable lodgings in the city, and requested Lawrence to leave behind him six of the brethren to labour in Vienna. To this request he acceded, and after the Octave of All Saints proceeded with the rest to Prague. Here they were cordially welcomed by the Archbishop, a prelate who proved himself a staunch friend of the Order, and who immediately gave them accommodation in the hospital which he himself had built near the bridge of Old Prague. The Emperor, with his Court, was then residing at Pilzen, whither he had removed by reason of the plague, which had broken out in the capital.¹

The coming of the Friars to Prague, whilst rejoicing the hearts of the Catholics, was resented by the heretics, who, taking advantage of His Majesty's absence, subjected the missionaries to every kind of abuse and insult. In the streets of Prague, where the Capuchins had not been seen before, crowds would gather at the strange sight of these men, clothed in loose coarse habits, wearing long beards, and shod only with sandals. Hence the nickname *bosacci* (barefoot) given to the Friars by the heretics

¹ Philip Spinelli, Nuncio at Prague, writes June 7, 1599 : "The plague has broken out in the hospitals and in the lower districts of the city, and His Majesty is thinking of withdrawing from Prague." Also, February 21, 1600 : "The plague is again raging. God help us ! I begin to fear that I shall never more see Italy."

of Prague. The latter, indeed, regarded them as monstrosities, beings from another planet, and would sometimes pull their hoods, and insult them in other ways.

Occasionally the hatred of the fanatics went still farther. A Catholic Princess, Maria of Prenestein, had invited the Commissary to meet at her house certain Protestant Baronesses, whose conversion she had much at heart. On the way back, as he and two companions were crossing Charles's bridge over the Moldav, they were set upon by a band of ruffians, who pulled their beards, threw them to the ground, and brutally kicked them, and probably would have murdered them had they not been rescued in time. Fortunately at that moment there appeared at the head of the bridge the Nuncio's nephew, accompanied by two lusty youths, who, observing what was taking place, rushed with drawn swords upon the assailants, and put them to flight. Raising up Lawrence, who had been more severely maltreated than the others, they inquired if he was much hurt. "Ah simplicita!" he replied; "what harm have they done me?"¹

The strangers had certainly much to suffer during those early days, not only from the heretics, but also from the intense cold of that climate, so different from their own sunny Italy. Still, God was with His servants, and gave them unmistakable proofs of His protection. Though the plague was carrying off large numbers of the inhabitants, and the Friars were continually ministering to the stricken in the

¹ "Ah simplicita!" ("O simplicity!") This was his favourite exclamation ("Summary of Process," p. 88).

hospital and in the city, they all escaped its contagion, as did likewise those who attended the hospital chapel to hear the Commissary preach. Lawrence mentions in particular that the son of the Governor of the hospital sickened and died of the plague, and that, although the boy had spent nearly all his time with the religious, not one of these caught it from him.

The Capuchins at Vienna had an experience similar to that of their brother-missionaries at Prague. The heretics furiously persecuted them, and even attempted their lives. One evening several shots were fired through a window of the room where the Friars, seated around a table, were studying German, and if Brother Julius had not providentially moved from his place a bullet would have pierced his head. Before Christmas Lawrence received letters containing a report of these outrages, and, moved with compassion for his brethren, he wished to go at once to Vienna. His companions, however, so they themselves testify, dissuaded him from undertaking the long journey over roads almost impassable at that season on account of the snow. They represented, too, that his absence just then would put in jeopardy the good work begun at Prague, and that he could write a letter of sympathy and encouragement, and go later on. To this advice he yielded, though reluctantly, and postponed his journey to Vienna till after Easter.¹

Prague, the capital of Bohemia, is situated on the Molday, which is here of considerable width, and divides the city into two parts. These are con-

¹ "Venetian Process."

ected by several bridges, the chief and most magnificent of which is the stone bridge built by Charles IV. in 1357 to replace the wooden one rendered famous by the martyrdom of St. John Nepomucene. The parapets on each side of the bridge are adorned with statues. One of these is a fine Pietà; others are those of St. Luitgard, St. John Nepomucene, and St. Francis of Assisi, the last-mentioned having been erected in 1861 by an Archduke of Austria. The actual spot from which St. John was thrown into the river is marked by a marble slab let into the left parapet. The bridge is flanked by two towers celebrated for many a bloody encounter in bygone days. Rising somewhat abruptly from the river to the left is the hill on which is the district called Hradschin. Here on the summit of the hill is the Castle, or Imperial Palace, which commands a view of the entire city. On both sides of the river the buildings are truly superb, and the streets, especially on the right, are wide and well laid out. Few thoroughfares in any part of the world can compete with the Ferdinandova Trida (Ferdinand Avenue). Altogether, Prague is a most interesting city, and has not without reason been styled the Rome of the North.

The site of the Capuchin monastery is in the Hradschin, not far from the Imperial Palace.¹ Father Lawrence² says that it was given by the Archbishop, who seems to have had some difficulty in obtaining the consent of the Emperor on account of its proximity to the royal gardens. An objection was raised also by one of the chief Ministers,

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 89.

² "Commentary."

who probably owned property adjoining. The Nuncio, after relating these facts, adds: "Thanks be to God, all opposition has been overcome." When Father Lawrence returned from Vienna, the building was commenced without any loss of time. It is customary on the Continent to erect a cross in front of every Capuchin monastery, and the ceremony was performed with much solemnity on Whit Tuesday, 1600. The Capuchin Fathers, carrying the cross, were followed by the Ambassadors and the principal officials of the kingdom. The novelty of the ceremony drew together an immense concourse of people, Catholics and Protestants. The latter, however, being present as mere sightseers, and in a holiday mood, refrained from creating any disturbance. After the erection of the Cross the Nuncio celebrated Mass in a pavilion put up for the occasion.

A little later, June 14, the Nuncio, who supplies the above description, again writes: "The building of the monastery proceeds with much haste, and I understand that His Majesty, in granting the place to the Fathers, expressed a wish that the work should be carried out as speedily as possible." Rudolph himself gave 2,000 thalers to make a start.¹ In a short time a large room, having been completed, was fitted up as a chapel, where Mass was celebrated, and where the Commissary preached with great freedom against the heretics. Contrary to what was generally feared, no one molested him.²

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 88.

² "Commentary." The cell occupied by St. Lawrence has been converted into a chapel, where, amongst other relics, is

In July of the same year Lawrence erected the cross for a monastery at Vienna, where the church was dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi.¹ He next went to Gratz, in Styria, at the earnest request of Archduke Ferdinand, who gave him the site for a monastery, and laid the foundation-stone (August 10) in the presence of the Nuncio, Monsignor Jerome of Portia, and the chief members of the nobility. The church here was placed under the patronage of St. Anthony of Padua. These three monasteries, founded by the servant of God in Lower Germany, became the mother houses of three Provinces still flourishing—Bohemia with Moravia, Austria with Hungary, and Styria.

preserved the original document appointing him to the German Mission in 1606. This document is signed by Paul V., and by several Cardinals, including Cardinal Bellarmine.

¹ "Commentary."

CHAPTER IX

PERSECUTION

- I. Character of Rudolph—Melancholy disposition of the Emperor—His hallucination respecting the Capuchins.
- II. Lawrence foretells persecution—The first attack by the heretics—Action of the Archbishop in behalf of the Order—Chief agents of the trouble, Machowsky and Tycho Brahé—Brahé reads the Emperor's horoscope—Lawrence's advice—Lawrence decides upon quitting the city—The noble act of justice on the Emperor's part and its reward.
- III. The end of Tycho Brahé—Conversion of his son-in-law—The end of Machowsky after a career of crime.

MEANWHILE, the plague having ceased at Prague, the Emperor returned, June 6. Paying a visit to the new monastery, he expressed his satisfaction with the progress of the work and his pleasure at the coming of the Friars. But how fully justified are the words of the Psalmist: "It is good to trust in the Lord, rather than to trust in Princes."¹ This Prince, though professing the Catholic religion, was too indolent and irresolute to defend it. He neglected the duties of State,² and allowed the heretics to increase in strength and boldness till they became

¹ Ps. cxvii. 9.

² "After he has spent a short time in business of State, he becomes worried and anxious" ("Duke Albert of Bavaria," Janssen, *op. cit.*, vol. viii., p. 374). "As time went on he withdrew more and more from affairs of State" (*ibid.*, vol. ix., p. 274).

a grave danger to the throne. Another formidable enemy confronted him in the Turks, who were ravaging Hungary and menacing the Empire.

In this critical condition of affairs, demanding all his vigilance and energy, what was Rudolph doing? He was, as Schiller informs us, dabbling in the sciences, more especially in chemistry and astronomy, which in those days were mixed up with alchemy and astrology. The time that should have been devoted to public business he spent in the laboratory or in the observatory. The astronomers, Tycho Brahé and Kepler, he invited to his Court, and was flattered by having the astronomical tables of Tycho Brahé named after him *Rudolphine*. It must, indeed, be admitted that he was a sincere patron of the arts and sciences, and he enriched the city with a most valuable collection of artistic works, expending on them, we are told, no less than 17,000,000 florins, and to his taste and munificence Prague owes not a little of its architectural magnificence. Here he almost constantly resided, and left his brother Matthias to exercise practical sovereignty over Austria and Hungary. But he paid for his carelessness, since from his own experience he learned what every other selfish ruler has discovered—namely, that in shirking responsibility and in flying from trouble man can find no genuine happiness. Disturbed on the one hand by the internal dissensions fomented by the heretics, and on the other by the invasions of the Turks, his health gave way, and he fell into a state of profound melancholy.

Reference is made to this sad condition of the

Emperor by the Archbishop of Salzburg in a letter dated March 2, 1600. The Nuncio also writes, October 23, 1600, that His Majesty is daily growing worse, and gives unmistakable signs of insanity—nay, of demoniacal possession. At the same time he confesses that the august invalid has lucid intervals during which his memory and judgment regain their sway.¹ One of these lucid intervals he was evidently enjoying when he came back from Pilsen. Father Lawrence, however, informs us that not long afterwards his benevolent dispositions towards the Capuchins underwent a complete change. During the Commissary's absence the malady returned. Haunted by the most frightful hallucinations, Rudolph could obtain no rest by day or by night. In his misery he frequently addressed himself for help to Baron Dietrichstein,² one of the few noblemen in whom he retained confidence. The Baron suggested that the patient should see Father Lawrence, in the hope that the servant of God, by

¹ Evidence has of late been brought forward showing the similarity between Rudolph's illness to that of King Louis II. of Bavaria. Stieve, who draws the comparison, remarks: "This disease did not impair the patient's thinking powers, and it never reduced him to the point of intellectual incapacity for government; but it was undoubtedly the cause of the frenzies which so often took possession of him." Dr. Hirshl observes: "No mental aberration belonging to any of the usual categories of mental disease is demonstrable in Rudolph" (Janssen, *op. cit.*, vol. ix., p. 274 note).

"Unversagt declares: 'It is manifestly the work of the Evil One'" (*ibid.*, p. 276 note).

The Nuncio in the above letter (October 23, 1600) declares that he considered it advisable to have recourse to exorcisms, and that his opinion was shared by the Commissary of the Capuchins, by Karl Lichtstein, Hormestein, Castellano, Althan, and Rosburgh.

² "Summary of Process," p. 89.

his words and his prayers, might afford him some relief. To this suggestion His Majesty gladly consented, and despatched a courier to Vienna to bring the Commissary back in all haste. Scarcely, however, had Lawrence reached Prague, when the Emperor began to complain that these Capuchins were the cause of all his trouble, and to the great regret and mortification of Dietrichstein he refused to see the religious who had so promptly responded to his call. Being informed of Rudolph's altered dispositions, the servant of God warned his companions to prepare for persecution. "Brethren, get ready for a serious struggle."

The heretics, annoyed at the presence of the Friars, profited by the Emperor's illness to poison his mind to their prejudice. They represented that as foreigners they had no legal standing in the country, having come in without the approval of the States and the Diet.¹ They even spread the report that they came without His Majesty's knowledge, and were there against his will.² The Diet being then sitting, a resolution for their expulsion was introduced before Christmas. Writing December 18, the Nuncio reports that, as the Catholic representatives were rather weak, it was feared the resolution would be carried. Father Bonaventure³ affirms that a Decree to that effect was actually passed by the Diet, but that, when presented with

¹ The Archbishop wrote to the Emperor a long letter (November 5) refuting this objection, and pointing out that the Capuchins were *more perfect* brethren of the ancient Franciscan Order, introduced into Bohemia many years previously by his predecessors.

² "Summary of Process," p. 89.

³ Vita, Libro i. p. 70.

other documents. His Majesty, without reading or knowing its purport, refused his signature. A second Decree of the same tenor was passed in the session after Christmas, and met with a similar fate.

Who can fail to recognize in all this the overruling hand of Providence? The Sectaries, as it afterwards transpired, had entered into a conspiracy that in the event of the Decree being signed, they would set fire to the belfry of St. Nicholas's Church, and in the confusion attack the adjacent house of the Jesuits, then that of the Capuchins, and murder the religious. But though the nefarious plans miscarried, a serious effect was produced on the Emperor's mind by the false representations made to him. He suspected the Capuchins as spies of the Pope, and complained that they were inciting His Holiness against him. He declared that he could get no rest so long as they remained, and he issued orders for their expulsion to the Archbishop, who, regarding them as unjust, refused to execute them.¹ He next commissioned a certain Steremberg, a judge of the realm, who, though a Catholic, was a very indifferent one, to find means of sending them away, else he would be forced to find means himself.

Several Protestants, including another Steremberg, a Calvinist, offered their services to His

¹ Unversagt, in a letter to Archduke Ferdinand, dated "Prague, October 19, 1600," relates: "The Capuchins cannot be at all endured: their prayers are looked upon as witchcraft. . . ." Rudolph wanted to banish the Archbishop from Prague for refusing to expel the Capuchins, and it was only through the remonstrance of Unversagt that he was allowed to remain (Janssen, *ibid.*, p. 276 note)

Majesty, and expressed their readiness to get rid, not only of the Capuchins, but of all the priests and religious of the kingdom. Monsignor Spinelli, in describing a long interview with the Catholic Storemberg, who was a near relation of the Calvinist, states that the judge was hand in glove with the heretics, and that he fomented the whole trouble. The two chief agents, according to Father Lawrence,¹ were a Chamberlain named Jerome Machowsky, a bitter Calvinist, and the famous astronomer already mentioned, Tycho Brahé. This man, a native of Denmark, had been banished from his own country on account of his intrigues, and had settled in Prague from 1598. Here he posed as an oracle, and pretended to foretell by means of his knowledge of astrology future events, and he succeeded in deceiving the populace, like another impostor of whom it is written: "To whom they all gave ear, from the least to the greatest, saying: 'This man is the power of God which is called Great.'"²

Welcomed, as we have seen, by the Emperor by reason of his scientific fame, he proved himself a fit instrument for the wicked designs of the heretics. Being himself imbued with the errors of the Reformers, and with hatred of the religious, he seized every opportunity of arousing and fanning the suspicions of Rudolph. One day in particular, finding His Majesty more agitated and depressed than usual, he ventured to play his trump card. "Your horoscope," he began, "portends something terrible—nothing less than death at the hands of a monster."

¹ "Coramentary," also "Summary of Process," pp. 44 and 90.

² Acts viii. 10.

“What monster?” demanded the Emperor in alarm. “I have seen nothing more monstrous than the Capuchins,” came the cunning reply; then leading the trembling monarch to a mirror, a horrible scene is presented—a Prince between two assassins armed with daggers, in the act of striking him. (The picture had, of course, been placed so as to be reflected in the mirror.) No wonder that the terrified Emperor insisted on driving these murderous Capuchins from his dominions.¹

Fully aware of all that was going on, Father Lawrence remained perfectly calm, and admonished his brethren to pray fervently and put their trust in God. “Brothers, the devil is let loose against us, but fear not; we have One Who fights for us.”² Though their enemies were powerful, the Friars had influential friends. The Nuncio, the Archbishop, the Chancellor, Barons Dietrichstein, Lichtenstein, Althan, Rosburgh, also the Emperor’s physician, interested themselves in their behalf, and employed their diplomacy to avert what would have been a serious blow to the Catholic religion.

The agitation lasted six months. However much the Emperor’s frenzy would abate, it would break out at the sound of the midnight bell calling the Capuchins to Office and Meditation.³ His health was visibly failing, and grave fears for his life were

¹ See Series August, p. 215; also “Summary of Process,” pp. 90 and 91.

² “Summary of Process,” p. 89.

³ He accused the Capuchins of Prague of having bewitched him in 1600, and he used to set off raving whenever he heard their bells ringing for prayer in their monastery near the Castle. Tycho Brahé, he said, had predicted from the stars that he would be murdered by a Capuchin (Janssen, *op. cit.*, *ibid.*, p. 276. note).

entertained. At last the Catholics themselves came reluctantly to the conclusion that the departure of the Friars offered the only hope of their Sovereign's recovery. It was therefore resolved to advise them to leave quietly of their own accord, and a deputation waited upon the Commissary for this purpose. At once Father Lawrence expressed his willingness to comply with the request, and having conferred with his companions, decided to leave the following Monday. On the Sunday he preached as usual to a large congregation, composed of the common people and of the nobility, including many courtiers, and not a few Protestants. Having finished the subject of his discourse, he took occasion to bid good-bye to the audience. "It has come to our knowledge," he said, "that His Majesty is bitterly incensed against myself and my companions, and persistently demands our expulsion; yet we came here at the express orders of His Holiness, Clement VIII., the common Father of all Catholics, and by desire of the Emperor himself. Nevertheless, we are quite ready to meet His Majesty's wishes, and will leave immediately." He went on to thank them all for their charity, and prayed God to reward them. His farewell words produced such an impression on his hearers that all burst into tears, and were overwhelmed with sadness.

The same day, whilst the members of the Court were seated at table, the Emperor, contrary to his custom, inquired how they had spent the morning. They answered that they had been to hear a sermon by the Capuchin Commissary. Questioned as to the subject treated, they gave an account of the sermon

as far as they remembered, and also of the farewell to the audience. Rudolph, who had listened attentively, next asked what arrangements the Capuchins had made for the conveyance of their luggage. "They have no luggage," was the reply, "for the Commissary declared that, just as they came into the country bringing only a crucifix and a staff, so with these only would they leave it." Hearing this, the Emperor remained silent for a time, then he said emphatically: "I will not send them away. There is One more powerful than I Who will not have it."¹

An account of what took place at His Majesty's table was related the same day to the Capuchins by four of the courtiers—Peter Molart, John Sasochi, Henry Colobrot, and Signor Salvata.

With this act of justice Rudolph recovered health of mind and body, and from that time forth never again spoke of expelling the religious. Thus they were enabled to finish the building and to remain in peace at Prague.

Father Lawrence adds that *Divino justico* soon overtook the two chief instigators of the persecution. The astronomer, Tycho Brahé, met with a premature death, brought on by a drinking-bout. According to the "Commentary," "he burst open, and, dying suddenly, went to keep company with the rich glutton." As regards the suddenness of his death, there appears to be a mistake. The Commissary was absent from Prague, and was probably misled by an exaggerated report. Peter Gassendi, in his life of the astronomer, asserts that Tycho Brahé contracted a mortal disease through exces-

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 90.

sive drinking, and that he lingered for ten days in terrible agony.¹ He died October 24, 1601. The circumstances of his death were detailed to the Capuchins by his son-in-law, who, seeing in them the hand of God, became himself a Catholic.

Machowsky, the favourite Chamberlain, fell into disgrace, and, being tried for various crimes, was convicted on fifteen different counts, the chief of which were that he forged the Emperor's signature to documents and accepted bribes from Protestant Princes to disclose State secrets. He was deprived of his possessions and condemned to imprisonment for life.

The foregoing events surely prove that the meek and lowly are in God's safe keeping against the most powerful, and that these, when opposed to His servants, He will rule with a rod of iron, and break in pieces like a potter's vessel.

¹ "Incidit Tycho in lethalem morbum ob retentam in convivio urinam. . . . Ille morbus ex uberiore computatione occasionem habuit." The astronomer is buried at Prague in the Tein Kirk, which at that period was in the hands of the Protestants, but has since been restored to the Catholics. On the floor near the first pillar on the right is a plain slab, with the name, "Tycho Brahé." On the pillar is the erect figure of a knight in armour, with the inscription: "Anno MDCL. die xxiv. Oct. obiit illustrissimus et generosus Dominus Tycho Brahé."

CHAPTER X

ARMY CHAPLAIN—BATTLE OF STUHLWEISSEMBOURG

- I. Motive for Battle of Lepanto—How Rudolph met the Mussulman—Papal contribution to Christian forces.
- II. Political mission of Lawrence—Acquaintance with Dukes of Bavaria and of Mercœur—Appointment of chaplains—Lawrence criticized—His view of the case.
- III. Meeting of Imperial forces at Alba Reale—Council of war—Lawrence votes for war—Skirmishes—Lawrence addresses the troops—Effects of his discourse—The battle itself—Miraculous sign of the cross—Victory for the Christians.
- IV. Renewal of encounter at Tzokaki—Effect of Lawrence's presence upon the Christians—Regarded as a magician by the Turks—Narrow escape—Result of another encounter.
- V. Further details—Personal experiences—A flash of humour—Testimony to Lawrence's miraculous influence—"Lawrence the cause of the victory"—Power of the cross used against a blasphemer.

By the fall of Constantinople the Turks became a standing menace to Europe. Before their organized and fanatical prowess stronghold after stronghold fell—Cyprus, Rhodes, Buda, Belgrade; but at the call of Pius V. Catholic Christendom rose up in its might, and in the Battle of Lepanto gave the death-blow to the Ottoman maritime power. "The Battle of Lepanto," remarks Alison, "arrested for ever the danger of Mohammeden invasion in the South of

Europe."¹ The land forces had, however, still to be reckoned with, and for nearly a century and a half continued to harass the exposed position of the Empire.

Mahomet III. had succeeded his father Amurat, and in order to strengthen his hold on the throne commenced his reign by ruthlessly slaying twenty-one of his brothers and eight of his predecessor's Sultaneses. This monster, instigated by hatred of the Christian name and by lust of conquest, raised a formidable army, which he threw into Hungary with the object of subjugating the whole of that country. Rudolph, unable single-handed to cope with the Ottoman forces, appealed for assistance to Pope Clement VIII. and other Italian Sovereigns, as also to the German Princes. The Pope contributed towards the expenses of the wars against the

¹ Alison's "Europe," vol. ix., p. 95. It was at Lepanto that the Capuehins took part for the first time in the wars against the Turks. The Pope appointed thirty Capuchin Fathers as chaplains under Father Anselm of Betromolaria. The Fathers were imparting the General Absolution and the Papal Blessing when the first shot was fired from the Turkish Admiral's vessel, October 7, 1571. While the fight was raging one of the Capuchins climbed the topmast of the vessel he was on, and in a stentorian voice shouted: "Victory, victory!" The Turks, seeing him, sent a shower of bullets about his head, but not one struck him. The vessel bearing Father Anselm was surrounded and boarded by the Turks; the Christians gave way, and the vessel seemed lost. The Father seized a scimitar from a Turk, and seven of the enemy fell beneath his blows. The Christians recovered, the Turks were driven back, and the vessel was saved. At the same moment the flagship of the Turkish Admiral was captured, and the day was won. After the war Father Anselm, being troubled with scruples of conscience, and afraid of having incurred canonical censures by shedding the blood of the Turks, had recourse to the Pope for absolution. Pius reassured him: "You have no need of absolution; you deserve all praise."

Turks large sums of money, a portion of which he raised by a tax on the Italian clergy. From 1595 he had supplied several contingents, and for the campaign of 1601 he mobilized a force of 8,000 strong, which he placed under the command of his nephew, John Francis Aldobrandini.¹ To this force he attached as Chaplains twelve Capuchins, under Father Gaspar of Bergamo.²

In order to obtain the co-operation of the electors, the Emperor, who had now learned his real worth, despatched Lawrence to plead his cause at the various Courts. This mission, which he discharged with ability and success, was the beginning of the Saint's diplomatic career, and it made him acquainted with one of the noblest and most striking personalities of that age—Maximilian, Duke of Bavaria, deservedly styled "The Defender of Germany." The acquaintance ripened, as we shall see, into the most intimate and enduring friendship.

We may be permitted to introduce here another splendid character with whom Lawrence was brought into contact on his return to Prague, and who played an important part in the war against the Turks. This was the Duke de Mercœur and de Ponthieu, Philip Emmanuel of Lorraine, and brother of Louise de Vaudemont, widow of Henry III. Anxious to take part in the defence of Christendom against the Infidel, he set out from Brittany, of which he was Governor, with the Count de Chatigny and a select brigade of cavalry raised at his own expense. Arriving in Styria about the end of 1600, he went to

¹ Muratori, "Annali d' Italia," vol. xv.

² Decree, May 25, 1601. See "Annales Capuccinorum," t. ii.

the relief of Konissa, then invested by the Turks. Though unsuccessful, his gallant exploits reached the ears of the Emperor, who invited him to Prague, and loaded him with favours. Mercœur, who was deeply religious, conceived for Lawrence the highest esteem and veneration, and they became warmly attached to each other.

Preparations for the campaign went on all through the spring and summer of 1601. Two of the chief officers—Harmann Rosburgh, Prefect of the Imperial forces, and Colonel Adolph Baron Althan—wishing to secure the Capuchins as Chaplains, applied to Rome for two Fathers each. From the Nuncio we learn that both obtained Briefs granting their requests. The Brief to Althan is dated May 26, that to Rosburgh August 18.

The letters of the Nuncio to the Cardinal of St. George will bear quotation :

“ PRAGUE,
“ *May* 7, 1601.

“ Colonel Althan, one of the chief Barons of Austria, is a most valiant soldier, and stands high in His Majesty’s favour ; but what is still more estimable in him is the great zeal which he has, irrespective of human considerations, shown for the Catholic religion on all occasions. Although he has, since coming here, been one of the most intimate with His Majesty, and, as Captain of the Guard, has slept for many months in the Emperor’s private apartments, nevertheless, during the troubles of the Capuchins, he has incessantly urged the Councillors not to allow the Fathers to leave, and has himself spoken to His Majesty on the subject—a thing

which no one else would have dared to do. All this I mention because he has written the enclosed letters to His Holiness and Your Eminence, in which he asks to have a Capuchin Father for his own regiment and another for the army, and for the reasons already stated he deserves to have every favour shown him."

On June 11 the Nuncio acknowledges the receipt of the Brief for Althan, who was then absent from Prague mobilizing the army.

He again writes, September 3 :

" Last week Your Eminence sent me a letter from Father Monopoli,¹ addressed to the Father Commissary-General of the Capuchins, and in case of absence to his *locum tenens* at Prague. The letter directed that two priests should be sent to Hungary with Colonel Althan, such being the command of His Holiness."

He proceeds to relate that as the Commissary was then at Gratz, he delivered the letter to the Father Guardian at Prague, and left in his hands the choice of the Chaplains. The Guardian called together the Community, who elected Father Gabriel of Innsbrück and Father Francis of Taranto.

" These, cheerfully accepting the office, set out with Rosburgh, the military Prefect. But in Vienna they found the Commissary on his return from Gratz. The latter would not allow them to go any farther.

¹ Father Anselm Marzato of Monopoli was the first Capuchin Cardinal. He was raised to that dignity by Clement VIII., June 2, 1604.

and wrote me a letter, of which I enclose a copy. This action of the Commissary I do not like, and it appears to me that the more learned and virtuous a religious is, the more ready he should be to execute what is commanded him, especially in the name of the Pope, to whom the difficulties raised must have been made known by Father Monopoli. At present I know not what will happen, but although the Father is such as I have described to Your Eminence on other occasions, I think that in this matter he has set too high a value on his own opinion," etc.

Father Lawrence, in the "Commentary," simply states that he received from the Pope two Briefs instructing him to supply four Fathers for the army, and, having few suitable Fathers, he decided to go himself with three others. As his letter to the Nuncio has not been found, we cannot tell what were the difficulties urged, but we may believe they were serious enough. Possibly, too, he may have been annoyed at what had been done in his absence and without his knowledge, but he gave in at once on receiving the Briefs, and took with him also the two Fathers who had been elected at Prague. The third—Father Berthold, or Bertrand, of Udine—he selected from the religious at Vienna. Brother Michael of Bologna was associated as companion to look after the material wants of the Chaplains, and Father Ambrose of Florence joined them later, towards the end of the war, as we learn from himself.

The army started from Vienna under the Archduke Matthias, Commander-in-Chief, and marched

through *Ungarische Altenburg*,¹ thence to *Gran*,² and on to *Stuhlweissebourg*, the ancient *Alba Reale*.³ Here they joined another Imperial force under the Duc de Mercœur, Lieutenant-General, who had already captured that fortress before the arrival of Matthias.⁴ The same day that the Christian army arrived from Vienna there appeared also a Turkish army, which had been summoned to the relief of the beleaguered garrison. Informed of the enemy's superior strength, Matthias pitched his camp between seven and eight miles from Stuhlweissebourg. Having chosen what he considered a favourable position at the foot of some hills, he awaited the advance of the Turks, who were expected to pass that way. The Turks, changing their plans, managed during the night to occupy the hills at the back of the Imperials, who next morning found themselves out-manceuvred and in a desperate predicament. The Commander-in-Chief was on the horns of a dilemma; a retreat or a battle appeared equally dangerous. In these straits he called a council of war, to which he invited the Head Chaplain. The officers were divided, but the majority favoured a retreat.

¹ We give the German names in the text. Altenburg the Saint calls *Ghiavarino* (Latin, *Ovarinum*), Hungarian *Magyar-Ovar*.

² The "Commentary" has *Strigonia*, Hungarian *Esztergom*.

³ Hungarian, *Szekes-Fehevar*. *Alba Reale*, so called because in former days the kings of Hungary were crowned there and were buried in the cathedral.

⁴ Half a century before, the Sultan Soliman the Magnificent, at the head of 200,000 Janizaries, laid siege to the city, which was almost undefended, yet it was only after three months that he succeeded in taking it. The garrison yielded on condition that the lives of the citizens were spared, but three days afterwards all were put to the sword. Since then two unsuccessful attempts had been made to wrest it from the infidels; the glorious achievement was reserved for Mercœur.

Lawrence urged them to fight, promising them the Divine assistance, and offering to go himself in front of the army. The officers took heart, and Colonel Preyner volunteered to take the lead with his regiment and attack the position of the Turks. Lawrence affectionately embraced the brave officer, and confidently assured him of victory. Some skirmishing took place the first day (October 9), and on the morning of the 10th it had almost developed into a battle, when the Turkish General sent a herald to challenge the Christians to a formal engagement. Before going into action, the Archduke begged the Commissary to address some words of encouragement to the army drawn up in battle array. This he willingly did, taking as his text, "O Juda and Jerusalem, fear ye not, nor be you dismayed; to-morrow you shall go out against them, and the Lord will be with you."¹ Having described the glorious victory obtained by a small army of God's people over a formidable host of infidels, he foretold that they, too, fighting the enemies of the Cross, would overcome them with the help of the God of Hosts. Further, to inspire confidence, he publicly renewed his offer to advance himself in front of the army, bearing in his hand the cross of Christ. The discourse had a marvellous effect on the soldiers, completely dispelling the fear that had seized on them. And, indeed, the fear was well grounded, for the Turks, besides being in a most advantageous position, were vastly superior in numbers—more than 80,000 against less than 20,000 Christians.²

¹ 2 Paralip. xx 17.

² Rohrbacher says 18,000 ("Universal Church History").

No further fighting took place that day, but on the 11th the Turks, having got their guns in position, opened fire on the Imperials, who were forced to leave the trenches and come out into the open. Now it was that the servant of God was to astonish the infidels and the Christians alike. True to his word, he advanced holding aloft the cross, and followed by the troops, who were heartened by his example. From above the enemy poured down a withering fire; the noise was deafening; balls and bombs from the batteries came flying and hissing through the air, but Lawrence, well ahead, was making the sign of the Cross in the direction of the guns,¹ and, wonderful to relate, the balls and bombs either fell halfway in their course, as if striking a wall of brass, or dropped harmlessly in front of the Imperial lines. He himself states that on this day not one of the Christian soldiers was injured. Advancing steadily, the cavalry and infantry gained the heights, driving the enemy before them, and, having silenced and captured their guns, completely routed the infidels. It was late in the evening when the Imperials regained their trenches, and they were fully convinced that God had indeed been fighting for them. The enemy's losses during the day are put down at 30,000 killed, besides wounded and prisoners.

Mehemet Pasha, the Turkish General, humiliated at his defeat by forces so inferior to his own, set about collecting and reorganizing under cover of the night his scattered and disheartened Janizaries. Although he had a force still superior in numbers,

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 96.

he deemed it advisable to give his men a rest before again trying his fortunes. Next day, accordingly, there was no renewal of hostilities, and Matthias occupied a position near Tzokaki at a shorter distance from the Mussulman camp. On the morning of the 14th, which was a Monday, the two armies came face to face. The batteries on both sides opened fire, and skirmishing commenced between the outposts. Again the Commissary appeared on horseback,¹ holding the cross in his right hand. Riding through the ranks from squadron to squadron, from regiment to regiment, he encouraged the troops to fight manfully the battles of the Lord. The Protestant soldiers, who, before witnessing the prodigies recorded, had treated him with contempt, and made him a butt for their coarse jests, calling after him in German,² "Volf! volff! minich volff!" ("Wolf! wolf! monk wolf!"), to-day changed their attitude entirely. They manifested their pleasure at seeing him, and greeted him with reverence; many even knelt down for his blessing. The Catholics, too, pressed round him to be blessed and to kiss the cross. He remarks that all attributed to the virtue of the cross the failure of the Turkish artillery to do any damage, whilst the Imperial artillery wrought frightful havoc amongst the Turks. These, seeing the Capuchin exposed all the time to the fire in front of their guns, regarded him as a magician.

About midday the engagement became general.

¹ He was suffering from gout in his feet ("Annales Capucienorum," t. iii.).

² "Commentary."

The Turkish right made a furious rush on the left wing—the weakest part—of the Imperial army. The Commissary was once more in the front, flying hither and thither, cheering the soldiers, hearing the confessions of some, regardless of danger, always where the fight was thickest, passing right under the eyes of the infuriated Turks. At last, carried too far by his charger, he got mixed up with a body of the enemy,¹ and, owing to the swerving of his horse, the Saint was providentially saved from the cut of a Mussulman's scimitar. The Turk turned to aim another blow, but again the horse swerved, and Lawrence escaped a second time. Whilst the Turk was preparing for the third attempt, some of the Christians shouted to Rosburgh and Althan: "They are killing the Father; they are killing Brindisi!"² Althan rode up just in time to fell the Turk as his scimitar was raised to deal the fatal blow. Both officers cried out to Lawrence to go to the rear; the front was no place for him. "Yea, yea," he replied; "this is just my place. Forward, men—forward!" he shouted. "Victory! victory!" Fired by his words, the Imperials rushed upon the Mussulmans. These gave way before the attack, and retreated, leaving behind them their guns. The Christian casualties were very slight—thirty men killed, according to Father Bonaventure; but Meynert, who compares Lawrence to St. John Capistran, puts them at about 1,000.³ The Turks lost 20,000 killed, amongst whom were three of their principal officers,

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 92.

² *Ibid.*, p. 93.

³ "History of Austria," t. v., p. 259. See Janssen's "History of the German People," vol. ix., p. 346 (note).

including the Commander-in-Chief.¹ It is recorded that during that day Lawrence wore out five horses. The Turks, thoroughly disheartened, made no attempt to renew the conflict, and so the campaign was brought to a close. The Christians returned fervent thanks to God for their victory, which they attributed to the sign of the Cross made by the Commissary. Several of the Protestants fighting in the Imperial army, reflecting on what they had witnessed, became converts to the Catholic religion. One of these, a Lutheran Baron,² who held the rank of Captain in the army, publicly acknowledged that his conversion was due to the wonders wrought by the Capuchin, whom he ever afterwards revered as a Saint. When the officers after the victory surrounded Lawrence to thank him for his miraculous aid, he held up to them the cross as their Commander-in-Chief and the real conqueror.³

The foregoing description is taken substantially from the "Commentary," with a few additional details from other authentic sources. Some further details may prove interesting. Lawrence⁴ supplements his account in a sermon preached at Naples, 1605. As usual, he employs the third person: "I know a man still living and speaking, who through devotion to the most holy Cross of Christ and to the most holy Virgin stopped cannon-balls and

¹ "Commentary."

² "Summary of Process," p. 94.

³ "Annales Capuccinorum," t. iii. This cross, which had been given him by the Duke of Bavaria, contained many precious relics, including soil from Calvary, stained with the blood of Christ. From this time till his death the Saint always wore it suspended from his neck.

⁴ "Summary of Process," p. 100.

bombs and arrows, which did not go beyond his horse, against the Christian army; and, a greater miracle still, one large ball fell on the saddle-bow of this man, who still lives and speaks; and though the Turks were much more numerous than the Christians, they were all put to flight, and a great number of them killed; whilst the Christian army, much less numerous, and tired and worn out by continual fighting, remained miraculously victorious." The Father, wearing his habit and holding the cross, was, as we have seen, fully exposed to the view of the enemy, and made an excellent target for their sharpshooters. Once a bullet aimed at his head stuck in the hair beneath the tonsure. Lawrence, taking hold of it, patted it gently, and then, throwing it to the ground, he said playfully: "Simplicità! so you meant to kill me!"¹ Brother Michael, who witnessed the occurrence, picked up the bullet, which he kept as a souvenir. The Turks were amazed at seeing the balls and bullets which they aimed at the servant of God graze and even strike his habit without injuring him. No wonder they believed him to be enchanted.²

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 95.

² "Utrunque resonantibus tubis Laurentius Catholicos omnes præcedens Turcis effusis ac in nostros magno impetu irruentibus obviam processit et toto spectante exercitu admirabile prodigium edidit. Cruce namque extensa contra locum, ubi disposita erant bellica Turcarum tormenta, ea inutilia reddidit, unde stupentibus iisdem Turcis quod suum non sortirentur effectum, innoxios globos explodebant. Quin etiam ipsæ hostiles catapultæ paucis vel nemini ex nostris mortem conscivere, nostra vero secus tormenta suas feliciter pilas hostium capita per catervas demetentes emittebant. Quodque magis stuporem mentibus angebat, erat videre Turcas in Laurentium

An officer, Philip Bevelacqua, gives his own experience :¹ "Father Brindisi, with a cross in his hand, was in front of our squadron. Whenever a shot was fired or the smoke was seen issuing from the cannon's mouth, he would make the sign of the Cross in the direction of the artillery, and at the same time would utter words which I could not understand. Though the balls reached the squadron, they killed no one, except, I believe, two or three horses. I also remember seeing a young man, belonging to the house of Lichtestein, who, feeling somewhat faint, took off his helmet and held it in his hand, and, to steady himself on his horse, rested his elbow on the saddle-bow. A cannon-ball struck the helmet out of his hand without injuring either himself or, more wonderful still, any of those behind him."

The Duc de Mercœur, who, on account of his military science and prowess, directed the operations, would take no credit to himself for the victory. On his return to Vienna, he visited the Capuchin monastery and frankly confessed to the Friars that "Father Brindisi did more during the war than all the soldiers," and that "the victory, which was truly miraculous, was, after God and the Blessed Virgin, due to the Capuchin Commissary."²

catapultas dirigere, nullas tamen glandes inde excussas, quamvis servum Christi veste sacra tenus attingerent, offendere potuisse, statim enim velut habitu repercussæ in terram absque ullo damno ei illato excidebant ("Annales Capuccinorum," t. iii.).

¹ "Bassano Process," and "Summary of Process," p. 96.

² See funeral oration on the Duke by St. Francis of Sales.

Some years afterwards, probably in 1612, when making a visitation of the German houses of the Order, the Saint had occasion once more to manifest the power of the wonderful cross. Travelling through a Protestant district, he was obliged to stop at an inn for refreshments. "Several Protestants happened to be dining inside when Lawrence entered, and one of them began making all sorts of rude remarks and coarse jests at the Friar's expense. The man spoke in German. Though the language was perfectly understood by Father Lawrence, the insults were ignored by him. One of the Protestants rebuked the speaker, and said: 'This Father is a holy man, and he it was who with the cross gained the Battle of Stuhlweissenbourg.' At this the other began blaspheming and cursing the cross. Such insult to the symbol of our Redemption the servant of God could not endure in silence, and, seizing the cross, he held it up to the heretic, saying: 'To vindicate the honour of this cross which you have blasphemed, may God punish you!' Immediately the wretch dropped down dead, his tongue, swollen and livid, protruding from his mouth. His companions, frightened beyond measure, had their eyes opened to the truth, and embraced the Catholic religion. On hearing of the incident, the Duke of Bavaria caused a stone with a suitable inscription to be erected on the spot."¹

The prodigies we have here recorded are not, of course, matters of Divine faith, inasmuch as they rest on merely human testimony, but they are supported by as strong contemporary evidence as can

¹ "Neapolitan Process" and "Summary of Process," p. 61.

be adduced for other historical facts which command universal assent.¹

¹ Once more a Capuchin played an important part in saving Europe from Mohammedan barbarism. When, in 1683, the terrible cry went forth, "The Turks before Vienna!" the Emperor Leopold summoned Father Mark of Aviano to Krems. The Father advised a forced march on Vienna, and prophesied victory to the Christian arms. On the memorable September 12, like another Lawrence, he went about amidst a hail of bullets, holding up the cross, and repeating: "Ecce crucem Domini, fugite partes adversæ"; and fly they did. In a few hours John Sobieski, King of Poland, routed the Turks, who left all their tents and baggage in the hands of the Christians. Next year Father Mark was recalled by the Emperor to join the troops besieging Buda. He found the Generals at variance, and, unable to reconcile them, he left in disgust, predicting their disastrous defeat. The following year he returned, and, being fortunate this time in settling the differences, urged the successful assault on Buda and Eszeek. In 1688, summoned afresh by Leopold, he strongly counselled, contrary to military expert opinion, the assault of Belgrade. The city was taken by the Imperial forces after having been 168 years in possession of the Turks. The Capuchin then finally retired to his monastic cell in Italy. The cause of his beatification is now proceeding, and his writings have been approved by the S.C.R., December 1, 1908, and by Pius X., December 9, 1908.

CHAPTER XI

MINISTER-GENERAL

- I. Summoned to Rome—Negotiations to have the summons revoked—Sets out from Prague, 1602—Loreto—Papal audience—Elected General.
- II. His humility—His visitation of the Order—His example on a point of the Rule in spite of ill-health at Liège and Ancona—Cheerful and confident—His confidence repaid.
- III. His punctuality—His example in monastic life—His administrative virtues: Characteristic virtues—Zeal and poverty—Examples of his love for poverty.
- IV. His hatred of publicity—Ovation in Flanders—Enthusiasm of the French at Burgundy, at Marsilles, and at Toulouse.
- V. Italy, 1605—Naples—Wonderful effect of his preaching on public morals—His great charity—Gives away his mantle—Returns to Rome—Visits the new Pope, Paul V.—How the Pope receives him.

As early as June, 1601, Father Lawrence received notice from Father Anselm of Monopoli, Procurator-General, to attend the General Chapter to be held in Rome the following year. This notice, we learn from the Nuncio, created something like consternation at Prague. Spinelli, in a long letter dated June 25, 1601, beseeches the Cardinal of St. George to get the order revoked by the Pope. No words of his, he declares, could convey any adequate idea of the good work the Father was doing—work which had gained him the esteem and veneration of all classes. To remove him for any reason whatever,

or for any period, however brief, would be simply disastrous. The Nuncio begs, moreover, that Father Lawrence be released from the office of Commissary, which entailed visiting the houses of the Order in other places. This letter, he says, was written at the earnest solicitations of the Barons, the Ambassadors, the Imperial officials, and others. In a letter of July 30 he returns to the subject: "For the reasons already alleged, it would be impossible to overestimate the necessity and importance of retaining Father Lawrence of Brindisi in this city. Could not his superiors be satisfied with a written statement concerning his administration in Germany? for to remove him now would endanger in great measure the fruit of his labours. And, with regard to his visitation of the houses, other Fathers might well be deputed in his stead, especially as Germany is very unlike Italy, the places to be visited being far apart, and much time spent in travelling." But all this eloquent pleading failed to move the authorities at headquarters, and in the spring of 1602 Lawrence left Prague for Rome. On the way he visited Loreto, where he had an opportunity of satisfying his singular devotion to the Mother of God.¹ After Easter he continued his journey, and, on reaching Rome, he gave an account of his work to Clement VIII., who had watched its progress with keen interest. The Capitular Fathers assembled from the different provinces showed their appreciation by electing him Minister-General.²

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 265.

² The title actually borne by the supreme head of the Order up to that time, and for some years afterwards, was *Vicar-*

Thus, at the comparatively early age of forty-three, he found himself elevated to the highest dignity in the Order. No one, however, understood better than he the tremendous responsibility involved, and, regarding himself as the debtor of all his brethren, he prepared faithfully to fulfil his duties as their minister or servant.

As soon as possible, therefore, he commenced, like a good shepherd, the visitation of his vast and scattered flock. At Milan¹ he first learned of the death of his friend the Duc de Mercœur, whose funeral oration was preached by another Saint, Francis de Sales, in the church of Notre Dame, Paris, April 27, 1602. Pursuing his journey, Lawrence passed through Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, France, Spain, visiting the provinces of the Order in these several countries.² The third and last year of his office he devoted to the visitation of the Italian provinces. Thus he traversed during his Generalship the greater part of the continent of Europe. What strikes us most at the present day is the fact that he was able in the space of three years to cover all this ground, travelling as he did always on foot, except on the few occasions when he could go by water. The Rule, it is true, forbids riding, but adds, "unless in cases of manifest necessity"; and surely the necessity here was sufficiently

General, because the Capuchins were still nominally under the Conventuals. The title of *General* was conferred by the Constitution, *alias felicitis recordationis* of Paul V., January 23, 1619, and the first to assume it was Father Clement of Noto. The heads of provinces, hitherto styled *Vicars-Provincial*, became henceforward *Provincials*.

¹ *Vide* Analecta Ord. Cap., June, 1909.

² "Summary of Process," p. 272.

“manifest.” Besides, we are told that the Pope had granted him special dispensation. He would not use it, however, because he wished to set a good example to others. The next General Chapter decreed that for the future the General should be allowed to ride in making the visitation of the provinces, and in a subsequent Chapter the term of the office was extended from three to six years.

Long distances, bad roads, infirmities, perils to life¹—none of these things could induce the exemplary pastor to depart one iota from the Rule. His companions assure us that often in crossing or fording torrents they were in danger of being drowned. A great part of the time, moreover, the General was troubled with gout and stone. The latter complaint laid him up at Liège in Belgium, and at Sinigaglia in the marches of Ancona. At Liège he was so ill that his life seemed to be in jeopardy ; but, having rested awhile and obtained some relief, he was off again, still on foot, notwithstanding pressure brought to bear upon him by the religious and by seculars to accept a conveyance. We may imagine the discomforts he must have endured in countries so different in climate, over all sorts of roads, through mountains and forests and desert places ; in wind, rain, hail, and snow, not seldom, especially in Protestant districts, without the necessaries of life. Still, he was invariably brave and cheerful, and never complained, no matter what happened ; nor did his confidence in God ever fail him. Let one instance of this confidence here suffice. We shall relate it in

¹ “Summary of Process,” p. 259.

the words of his fellow-traveller :¹ " Once in particular, about twenty-two years ago, on Easter Monday, we were going from Pulignano to Bari, a distance of twenty-five miles (Italian). It happened, God so disposing, that our two lay-brother companions brought nothing to eat, the one relying on the other. Having travelled some miles, I said to Father Lawrence : ' When shall we take luncheon ? ' ' As soon as you please,' he replied. I called the Brothers telling them to prepare it under an olive-tree. Then they discovered that they had none, and when I reprimanded them they began throwing the blame each on the other. Observing not far off what looked like a religious house, I proposed to Father Lawrence to send the Brothers there in order to beg something to eat, since we had still a long journey before us. To confound my want of faith, Father Lawrence made answer : ' Brother, let us go on ; God will help us.' Shortly afterwards I espied a secular man carrying a small basket, and, on coming up to us, he stopped and asked if we would have something to eat. Without hesitation we consented, and he made us enter a hut close by, where we found bread and wine and eggs, and so we all ate. And the secular, who was dressed like a farmer, might have been an angel, for he spoke all the time about spiritual things."

The General always notified to the local Superiors the day of his arrival, nor did he ever fail to keep his appointment, at whatever cost to himself, lest he should cause the slightest inconvenience to the religious. Often, in order to arrive at the specified

¹ " Neapolitan Process," and " Summary of Process," p. 109

time, he was obliged to walk twenty-five, sometimes even thirty, miles in a single day. Reaching a monastery late in the evening, tired and worn out, he always rose at midnight with the Community. He ate at the common table, and contented himself with the ordinary food supplied to the members of the family ; and though special dishes were provided by the Superiors, who generally received them from benefactors, he merely tasted them in order to encourage his travelling companions, who, he considered, had need of extra nourishment. Never was he heard to make any remark about the food, being quite indifferent whether it was well or badly prepared, tasty or insipid. At Marseilles the refectorian, by mistake, put vinegar before him instead of wine, and he drank it during the meal without any comment or sign of repugnance.¹

As General, he displayed at their best his administrative qualities—judgment, prudence, tact, sympathy, charity, zeal for regular observance—but in a very special manner the observance of poverty. Just as he evinced sincere pleasure when he found everything in keeping with the simplicity of the Rule, whether in the style of the buildings, or the size of the cells, or the quality of the furniture and the clothing, so did he manifest strong disapprobation whenever he came across anything approaching grandeur or luxury. In the latter cases his zeal prompted him to adopt the severest measures for the reform of abuses. Entering a church of the Order in Catalonia, in Spain, the General stood aghast at beholding a magnificent mausoleum, sur-

¹ " Summary of Process," p. 272.

mounted by a marble figure, which had been erected by an ecclesiastical dignitary of much authority and influence. Justly indignant at such a flagrant violation of the Rule and Constitutions, he sharply rebuked the Superior for allowing its erection. The latter tried to excuse himself by urging the danger of incurring the anger of the prelate, who had even threatened the intervention of the Government in case of refusal. The General shrugged his shoulders, and said no more for the moment. Some days afterwards, addressing the Superiors at the Provincial Chapter, he commanded them, in virtue of holy obedience, either to get the monument removed or abandon the church and monastery, regardless of consequences. The religious were quite ready to comply with the command by leaving the place altogether, had not the prelate, learning the state of affairs, and edified too by the General's zeal, removed of his own accord the cause of offence. In another part of Spain he had occasion to display similar zeal. A certain monastery which he visited was in his eyes a glaring outrage on Franciscan simplicity. Its richness and magnificence were all the more striking by reason of the contrast with the church, which was excessively poor and mean, and badly appointed. Shocked at such a spectacle, the servant of God inquired who had put up the building, and was informed that the individual had already departed this life. With bitter tears the General wept over the fault of the deceased, and prayed God to forgive him. The Community being assembled, he strongly condemned such a monstrous irregularity; then, evidently inspired, raising his voice, he exclaimed: "Ill-starred monastery, unfitted

by your sumptuousness to be the dwelling of these religious, professors of the most rigid poverty, I, in the Name of Jesus Christ, of His most poor servant Francis, whose unworthy vicar I am—*I curse you.*”¹ He paused, motionless and absorbed in thought, whilst the Friars remained terror-stricken. Then, in a changed tone, he resumed: “As for you, my dear children, fear no harm; only wait, and you shall witness the effect of our holy Father’s just indignation.” Having said this, he took his departure. What happened? A few days later news reached him that whilst the religious of that family were all absent, taking part in a public procession, the building collapsed from the top to the bottom, even to the foundations, nor could any natural cause be assigned for the catastrophe. The poor church alone remained intact amidst the ruins. A report of the occurrence soon spread throughout the Order, and not only increased the esteem of the Friars for the holy General, but made the Superiors more careful for the future with regard to the poverty of the buildings. On this question of poverty he was exceedingly strict, and would suffer no delay in the execution of the orders given. In the province of Otranto he had to find fault with certain parts of the buildings, and, going himself with pick in hand, he commanded the other religious to assist him in demolishing what he condemned.

A cause of serious annoyance and embarrassment to the Servant of God was the extraordinary enthusiasm which his presence evoked, not in Italy alone, but in every other country through which he

¹ “Neapolitan Process.”

travelled. It has been truly said that the man who knows himself suffers more under praise and honour than he could possibly suffer under censure and insult. Self-knowledge fills one with a keen sense of one's own littleness and unworthiness—that is with humility, which is based on truth. Hence we can understand how painful to Lawrence, so profoundly humble, was the respect universally paid him. All the precautions that he took proved useless ; in vain did he enjoin on his companions to refrain from showing him any sign of deference ; in vain did he caution the Guardians against notifying his coming ; for though his injunctions were strictly observed, he was everywhere recognized, and crowds of people eagerly awaited his arrival. We shall allow one of his companions to describe what he witnessed :¹ “ In Flanders the people welcomed him as a Saint, singing the *Te Deum*. The inhabitants of a certain village were assembled to accord him a public reception, and the bells were ringing a merry peal. Hearing the bells in the distance, he guessed what it meant, and he turned aside to another village some distance away, arriving after midnight. What was his surprise to behold the clergy and people with torches coming in procession to meet him ! How they got word God only knows. Another surprise was in store for him. At daybreak next morning, going to the church to say Mass, he found it filled with the congregation from the other village, who, with their parish priest, had travelled a good part of the night, and he had the consolation of administering Holy Communion to 500 of these

¹ “ Summary of Process,” pp. 295 and 306.

devout pilgrims." The French were no less enthusiastic: "From the monastery of Dole in Burgundy the Father set out very early in the morning with the object of avoiding ovations, but it was all to no purpose. Scarcely had we started when the townspeople came running across the fields to the road in front of Father Brindisi. I saw, amongst others, many of the nobility, who in their hurry had not put on their boots, and came running barefoot through stubble fields, so as to get before us and obtain the Father's blessing."

At Marseilles (1603), where he restored speech to a dumb man in the crowd, he was almost carried in triumph to the monastery. "The citizens of Toulouse, in their devotion and eagerness to receive his blessing, threw themselves on their knees in the mud."¹ It would take up too much space to describe the many similar scenes enacted in other places.

At the conclusion of the visitation in Spain he took ship for Marseilles, whence he made a pilgrimage to La Sainte Baume in order to visit the grotto of St. Mary Magdalen, for whom he entertained a tender devotion, having been born on her feast. Here he celebrated Mass, and gave Holy Communion to his companions. Having visited the Italian provinces, he spent the Lent of 1605 at Naples, where he preached in the Church of the Holy Ghost twice a day—in the morning on the Gospel and in the evening on the prerogatives of Mary. Many dissolute youths and loose women of the city were converted by his fervent appeals to transfer their affec-

¹ "Summary of Process," pp. 296 *et seq.*

tions to Him Who alone is worthy of love.¹ During the course he was requested to recommend to the charity of the faithful the needs of some Poor Clares who were in sore distress.² This he did with much earnestness, and, turning to the Brother on the pulpit steps, he called for his mantle, which was handed up. Taking hold of it, he threw it amongst the audience, saying: "I, as General of my poor Order, have nothing besides this mantle to bestow in alms, but it may be some little help towards the relief of these good Sisters." "At the end of the sermon," relates his companion, "seeing that he was bathed in perspiration, I offered him my mantle lest he should catch cold, but, declining it, he walked thus through the church to his room, in order to move the people by his example to compassion for the nuns. Later a priest brought the mantle to the monastery, but he refused it, saying, 'I have given this mantle as an alms,' and so the priest returned it to the Mother Abbess. The Provincial then sent him another mantle, much worn and patched, which he used during the remainder of the Lent."

The time for the General Chapter was now approaching, and from Naples, Lawrence directed his steps to Rome. Clement VIII. had died March 3, and was succeeded April 1 by Leo XI., who by his death, April 27, left the Pontifical throne again vacant. Cardinal Borghese was then elected, and took the name of Paul V. It was during the last Conclave that the General reached the Eternal City, and as soon as the election was announced he

¹ "Annales Capuccinorum," t. iii.

² "Neapolitan Process," and "Summary of Process," p. 249.

hastened to pay his respects to the new Pope. Paul V. had long known and esteemed Lawrence, and, wishing to show him special honour, he received him with the etiquette observed at the reception of Cardinals. The General Chapter, May 27, was opened by the outgoing minister in a discourse full of unction and salutary advice. Then, kneeling before the Fathers, he acknowledged his faults with such humility and sincerity as to draw tears from all present. In the first scrutiny Father Sylvester of Assisi was elected General, and as such followed in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor.

CHAPTER XII

VENICE—MANTUA—AVERSA—AGNONA

- I. Returns to Venice—Ovation—Miracles: Cures a blind boy, a paralytic girl, a priest.
- II. Mantua—Peacemaker—Foretells the Duke the evil consequences of retaining ill-gotten property.
- III. Aversa—Lenten preacher.
- IV. Agnona—Confessor to Poor Clares—Pious theft of his mantle and skull-cap—Miraculous power of mantle—Miracles wrought by means of it: Cure of two nuns; of an ecclesiastical student at Agnona—How pious robbers were robbed of St. Lawrence's calotte.

REJOICING in his freedom from the cares of office, the ex-General returned to Venice, where he hoped to enjoy a well-earned repose, passing his time in prayer and study. Though he arrived late at night, and gave no notice of his coming, the vicinity of the monastery had been taken possession of by an enthusiastic multitude, who received him with cries of "Viva il Padre Santo!" Several miracles signalized his stay on this occasion. One day a man brought his six-year-old boy, who was totally blind, and implored the Saint to have compassion on the child.¹ Lawrence having then made the sign of the Cross over the child's eyes, the little fellow cried out: "Daddy, I see you! I see you! I see everybody and everything!" A girl of seven, whose limbs were paralyzed, being presented by her mother,

¹ "Venetian Process."

was blessed by the holy religious, but apparently without result. Next day, however, her playmate, another girl of the same age, said to the invalid : “ Agnes ”—such was the name—“ since the holy Capuchin has blessed you, why don't you stand ? Why not take courage and walk ? ” At this the paralytic sprang to her feet, and discovered that she could stand and walk as if nothing had ever ailed her, and she ran and threw herself into the arms of her delighted mother.

The following is the story of a secular priest of Venice :¹ “ I knew Father Lawrence of Brindisi at Venice, where he enjoyed a great reputation for sanctity and miracles. Suffering acute pain in the ankles, which prevented me from walking more than a few steps at a time, I resolved to visit the Monastery of the Redeemer at the Giudecca. It was in summer ; the precise date I cannot recollect. The Capuchins told me that Father Lawrence would come to pray in the old church about six o'clock in the evening. Some thirty or forty others besides me were waiting, and on seeing him coming we all knelt down. As he passed me, I kissed his mantle, and with lively faith said to him, ‘ Father, I am not well. ’ Without speaking, he laid his hand upon my head. Immediately I felt my ankles straighten which before were twisted, and at the same instant all pain left me. Then I began to weep for joy, and also through a sense of my unworthiness of the favour received. Since that time I have continued quite well without any return of my complaint. ”

About this time there arose an unpleasant diffi-

¹ “ Venetian Process. ”

culty, which puts in bolder light the character of Lawrence. The Duke of Mantua, Vincenzo I., arbitrarily seized a Marquisate, whose possessor, being a royal favourite, sought redress from the Emperor. Rudolph, wishing to avoid an open rupture which might result in an appeal to arms, entrusted the affair to Father Lawrence, whose tact in such delicate matters he well knew. To please His Majesty and to obtain justice for the injured, the Servant of God consented to negotiate, and for this purpose proceeded to Mantua. Here he had several interviews with the Duke, to whom he represented the Emperor's wishes and their justice, the wrong done to the owner, the scandal to the people, and the offence against God ; and hence the obligation of making restitution. The Duke, however, who had tasted the sweets of possession, deaf to all arguments, refused to disgorge the ill-gotten property. The envoy, who had hitherto maintained a respectful and persuasive attitude, now changed his tone. He gave warning that obstinacy would bring the Duke nothing but misfortune. "And," continued the Saint, "know that before long you will restore, at your peril and against your will, what to-day you could to your own credit and advantage renounce."¹ Without further parley he departed. A few months later the populace rose in a body against the Duke (for what reason has not been ascertained), and drove him to take refuge in the citadel. In self-defence he was obliged to direct the guns against his own subjects and call in the aid of foreign mercenaries. Remembering in

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 234.

these straits the words of the Saint, he ordered the immediate restoration of the usurped Marquisate. The sedition at once ceased, and public tranquillity was re-established. Paying a visit to the Capuchin Monastery in the city, the Duke acknowledged that the insurrection, which nearly cost him his State, had been a chastisement of God for turning a deaf ear to the counsels of Father Brindisi.

Previous to his departure from Rome, Lawrence had been engaged by Cardinal Spinelli to preach the Lenten course of 1606 in the Cathedral of Aversa, of which His Eminence was now Bishop. No doubt the task was a pleasant one, as it afforded the Saint an opportunity of proving his gratitude to a dear friend, who, as Nuncio at Prague, had stood by himself and his brethren during a period of storm and stress. At Aversa he preached twice a day, morning and evening, during the whole of Lent, drawing, as usual, immense congregations. On his way back after Easter he stopped to preach at Agnona, and whilst there acted as Extraordinary Confessor to a convent of Poor Clares. Here he was the victim of a pious theft.¹ Having finished the confessions, he went to give Holy Communion to the Sisters. Before vesting in cotta and stole, he placed his mantle and calotte (skull-cap) on a small table at the Epistle side of the altar within view of the grille. At once the nuns saw their opportunity for securing souvenirs of the holy man, and whilst Lawrence's back was turned they beckoned to the sacristan to pass the articles into the enclosure. The function over, mantle and calotte were missing, but there

¹ See "Life by Father Bonaventure," book iii., chap. x., p. 401.

was no doubt as to who were the thieves. In vain did the victim plead and remonstrate; the thieves clung to the articles without the slightest trouble of conscience. Soon these articles became famous in the town and district by reason of the numerous cures of which they were the instruments.

The nuns and others, who spoke from personal experience, attest on oath that the miraculous effect of the mantle was ordinarily preceded by a sign on the person to whom the relic was applied. If on application the sick person began to perspire, it was a sure sign of recovery; if no perspiration took place, death ensued within three days. A few of the cures effected may here find a place. Sister Dorothy of this convent, a professed religious, being seriously ill in the winter of 1757, was several times advised by Sister Mary Angela Ruggieri to swallow a thread of the mantle in a little water or broth. The sick nun again and again refused, being afraid that the perspiration might not follow, and that she should in such case die within three days. At last, recognizing that she could not live much longer, as she was every day growing worse, she asked for the thread in some water. The medicine, being promptly administered, at once produced the desired perspiration, and in a few days the Sister regained her former strength and health.

In 1767 Sister Clorinda, a member of the same Community, was attacked by an internal malady, which was pronounced incurable, and which brought her to the verge of the grave. The other Sisters, pitying her condition, had recourse, as usual, to their heavenly physician, and encouraged her to drink some water, in which had been put a thread

from the mantle. This she did, and in the presence of the religious began to perspire. In a brief space she completely recovered. Out of gratitude she made a vow to have a Mass celebrated each year, as long as she lived, on the feast of the Saint, and to fast on the vigil as soon as he should be raised to the honours of the altar.¹

Vincent Sabolli of Agnona went to Naples in 1772 to pursue his studies for the priesthood, and, whilst there, contracted a disease which baffled the skill of the physicians. These, unable to do anything more, advised a change to his native air. At Agnona, instead of improving, his case became desperate, and the last Sacraments were administered. On the evening of October 24 he appeared to be in his agony. Then Sister Dorothy sent by the hands of her brother, Father Joseph Mendolla, a thread from the mantle, which was with difficulty given in some soup to the dying youth by Father Louis of Agnona, a Capuchin. No sooner had the soup been taken than the auspicious perspiration appeared, and continued till six o'clock the following evening. After this all symptoms of the disease vanished, and Vincent was restored to perfect health. We may mention that the skull-cap, which had the same virtue as the mantle, was lent by the nuns to a certain Joseph Rinaldi of Agnona when he was dangerously ill; but, having been cured by its application, he refused to part with the relic, which was afterwards preserved with great veneration in the Rinaldi family. The conduct of Joseph could hardly be complained of by the Sisters, considering the nature of their own title to the relics.

¹ The cause of beatification was then proceeding.

CHAPTER XIII

RECALL TO GERMANY

- I. Emperor's zeal in securing Lawrence's services—Papal faculties to Lawrence—Commissary-General of Order in Germany.
- II. Relations between Turks and Empire—Rebellion of Protestant subjects—Treaty of Vienna, 1606.
- III. Sets out for Prague—Incidents on the way—Providential supply of wine—Attacked by a mob—His influence on behalf of the Benedictine Fathers—Restores the Catholic religion—The origin of the Protestant Union in 1608.

RUDOLPH II., mindful of the immense good resulting from Lawrence's previous sojourn in Germany, sought to secure again the holy missionary's services as an efficacious means of stemming the destructive advance of heresy in the Imperial dominions.¹ It was whilst the Saint was preaching at Aversa that the Imperial Ambassador at Rome, Prince Francesco Gonzague, was instructed to make known the Emperor's desire to Paul V. The holy Father, pleased with the royal zeal, readily entered into His Majesty's designs. Nor did it require much persuasion to induce the zealous religious to undertake a mission which, however arduous, opened a wider field for truly Apostolic work. Repairing to Rome, he received from the Pope ample missionary facul-

¹ See "Commentary."

ties, including authority to preach without hindrance throughout the whole of Germany, and to act as Chaplain to the forces in the wars against the Turks. These faculties are contained in two briefs dated respectively May 12 and May 28, 1606.¹ At the same time he was reappointed Commissary-General to look after the affairs of the Order in the German States.

Mahomet III., furious at the shameful defeat of Stuhlweissenbourg, spent all his energy in raising a still more formidable army, which he sent against Hungary. To meet this fresh attack the Emperor received further reinforcements from the Pope and from other Christian Sovereigns; still he sustained serious losses. Strigau was abandoned, Papa and Montgraty fell, and more disasters were threatened. Meanwhile, however, the Ottoman tyrant rendered himself odious, even to his own subjects. The Janizaries of Constantinople mutinied; the Governor of Asia Minor raised the standard of revolt; and the Sultanness, the mother of the heir, conspired to have the father deposed and the son placed on the throne. The conspiracy was detected by the Sultan, who put mother and son to death, but he himself was carried off soon after by the plague. Achmet, who succeeded, finding his hands full at home, deemed it expedient to enter into a truce of twenty years with Rudolph, and, as a consequence of this truce, Lawrence was not called upon to exercise his office as military chaplain. The Turks were not the only source of trouble to the Empire. Out of hatred for the Catholic religion, the Protestants of Hungary.

¹ " Bullarium Ord. Cap.," t. i., pp. 51, 52.

deaf to the claims of patriotism and Christianity, refused to take part in the wars against the common enemy. They went even farther, as in 1604 they openly rebelled, and called to their aid the Calvinist Stephen Bocskay of Transylvania. It was not till 1606 that peace was concluded by the Treaty of Vienna. Such was the position of affairs when Lawrence was called back to Germany.

In the company of two priests and a lay brother he took the direct route to Prague. On the way two noteworthy incidents occurred—one related by a companion, the other by himself. We give the companion's account in his own words:¹ "Whilst travelling through the Tyrol in the direction of Bolzen, after we had walked twenty miles, we were very tired and exhausted, by reason both of the journey and of the great heat (it was the month of June). I told the Father Commissary how we felt, half dead from fatigue and thirst and hunger. (There were Father Gabriel of Gratz, Brother Francis of Foza, and myself.) He inquired: 'Have you anything to eat?' 'Brother Francis,' said I, 'has two small rolls, and nothing else.' 'Praised be Jesus Christ,' he replied; and, taking the rolls from Brother Francis, he blessed them and divided them amongst us. Having eaten our portion, we felt as much strengthened as if we had had a substantial meal. 'Now that we have eaten,' said I, 'what shall we drink?' He answered: 'Jesus Christ will provide.' At that moment we saw a man of ordinary stature with a red beard and a pleasant countenance. He was driving a cart (but

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 166.

quite different from any used in that country) drawn by two oxen, speckled white and red. Smiling, he approached us, and, having saluted, invited us to drink. The Father, also smiling, said, 'Praised be Jesus Christ,' and the man gave him a tap, which the Commissary handed to me. Adjusting it to one of the two barrels on the cart, I slaked my thirst with excellent wine. The others slaked theirs in like manner. The Commissary thanked the man, and they separated, both well pleased. Then the man with the cart suddenly vanished, and we saw him no more. This disappearance seemed to me so extraordinary that I asked the Father two or three times who that man was with the beautiful cart, but he only replied: 'You are too inquisitive; didn't I tell you Jesus Christ would provide?' And so we went on our way rejoicing."

The other incident, described by himself in the "Commentary," was much less pleasant. After leaving Augsbourg, they had to pass through Donauwörth, an Imperial free city, situated on the Danube, and at that time almost entirely Protestant. Lutherans replaced the Catholic officials, whom the Sectaries had deposed, and they forbade the exercise of Catholic worship, and deprived of the rights of citizenship all who refused to attend the Protestant service. All this was directly opposed to the terms of the Augsbourg Religious Peace (1555), by which, in the Imperial free cities, Catholics and Protestants were guaranteed equal rights and privileges. Scarcely had the Commissary and his companions entered the gates of the city, when they were greeted with shouts of derision by a knot of loafers.

These in a few moments were joined by others, and gradually the crowd swelled to such a number that nearly the whole population was aroused. The missionaries were surrounded by the mob, who cried out "Capuchins! Capuchins! thief! thief!" The latter appellation was an allusion to an infamous calumny circulated some years previously at Augsbourg. Holding in his hand the cross of Christ, in the midst of its enemies, he was, to use his own expression, escorted by this most honourable procession through the city. At last he reached the Benedictine Abbey, almost the only vestige left of the Catholic religion. Here Lawrence and his companions were hospitably received by the sons of St. Benedict, who themselves had suffered severely at the hands of the fanatics, and were there like lambs in the midst of wolves. Only a short time before, whilst holding the customary Rogation Procession on St. Mark's Day (April 25), they were set upon by the mob, instigated by the Protestant ministers; the cross was smashed, and the religious were beaten, and barely escaped with their lives. Profoundly shocked at hearing this account, the Commissary sympathized with the victims, whom he encouraged, as best he could, to bear up under persecution, and promised at the same time to use his influence in obtaining for them redress and protection. Nor did he fail to keep his promise. On reaching Prague he spoke about the affair to the Nuncio and to the Imperial Ministers. As the dastardly outrage received no official notice, on several occasions Lawrence from the pulpit complained of the lack of zeal in high places for the Catholic reli-

gion. In the end he succeeded in arousing public opinion and shaming the officials into action, so that the following year the ban of the Emperor was threatened against Donauwoërth, and its execution was committed to the Duke of Bavaria. As the Protestant citizens refused to make reparation and restore freedom to the Catholics, the city was seized, December 17, 1607, by the Duke in the name of the Emperor. The Protestant preachers who had instigated the populace took to flight, and the Catholics were reinstated in the same civil and religious rights as their non-Catholic fellow-citizens. A force of 300 men was left to hold the city for the Emperor till the expenses of the military expedition should be defrayed.¹ These measures were denounced as high-handed and unjustifiable by the Sectararies throughout Germany, and gave rise to the formation in 1608 of the Protestant Union. Profane and ecclesiastical historians, whilst relating the main facts connected with Donauwoërth, omit to mention, as far as we have read, the important part played by Father Lawrence. Yet it was well known at Prague that, had it not been for his intervention, nothing would have been done.²

Monsignor Cajetan, Archbishop of Capua, who was Nuncio at Prague, thus reports the affair to Cardinal Borghese: "August 27, 1607. For some time past at Anevert (corrected to Donauwoërth in a subsequent letter), a place near Bavaria, the heretics impeded the Catholics in the exercise of their religion, and in particular caused a disturbance

¹ Janssen, *op. cit.*, vol. ix., pp. 447-466.

² "Commentary."

at a procession of the most Blessed Sacrament.¹ But lately there has been obtained an order from His Majesty against the heretics threatening them with the Imperial Ban, and committing its execution to the Duke of Bavaria. The Protestant Princes have tried to hinder it, but without effect.”

¹ According to Father Lawrence, it was a *Rogation* procession; also Janssen, *loc. cit.*

CHAPTER XIV

CATHOLIC CHAMPION: PUBLIC APPRECIATION

- I. The object of his German mission to defend the Faith—How he studied the objections of adversaries to the Church—His logical closeness and clearness of exposition—Behaviour towards opponents—His influence and its cause—The part due to him in the Catholic revival of Germany.
- II. His encounter with a Lutheran preacher—Opposition from the prudent—Lawrence's determination—How he answered the objection that our Bible was not in agreement with the original texts—How Laiser took his defeat—A fresh imposture—Composes his "Dissertatio Dogmatica"—Anxiety of ecclesiastical superiors for its speedy publication—Reason why it was not published.
- III. Another encounter in 1610 concerning Catholic devotion to Our Lady—A lesson in the logic of religious bigotry—How Lawrence meets his opponent.
- IV. His courtesy towards non-Catholics in social intercourse—The religious motive of his courtesy—An incident of how courtesy changed an enemy to a friend.
- V. Efforts to retain him at Prague made by the Nuncio and the Cardinal Archbishop—Lawrence's election as Provincial of Otranto in consequence was cancelled.

THAT celebrated controversialist, Cardinal du Perron, was wont to say: "If you would have a heretic or an infidel *convinced*, bring him to me; but if you would have him *converted*, take him to the Bishop of Geneva, Francis of Sales." Du Perron was eminent in knowledge, Francis of Sales in holiness. Lawrence combined in a high degree the qualities of both, and in consequence his elo-

quence was irresistible. At that period the Reformers were already split up into various sects, fighting amongst themselves and contradicting each other ;¹ yet they were all united in assailing the Church which they had left. The chief object of Father Lawrence's mission in Germany was the defence of the Faith, and he neglected no means of qualifying himself for the task. To become thoroughly acquainted with the position of the adversaries, he attended their meetings, listened to their discourses, taking note of their arguments, particularly of the texts of Scripture which they distorted from their proper meaning, and by the aid of his extraordinary memory he was enabled subsequently to repeat in his own sermons the exact words of the preachers. For clearness of exposition and cogency of logic he was unrivalled. The former gift enabled him to show the genuine meaning of those texts which the heretics misinterpreted. His logical mind almost instinctively perceived the sophisms on which his opponents based their contentions. He would never stoop to abuse or invective, and, unless forced by necessity, he would not even refer

¹ Green writes: "The progress of Protestantism gradually ceased. It wasted its strength in theological controversies and persecutions, above all, in the bitter and venomous discussions between the Churches which followed Luther and the Churches which followed Calvin. It was degraded and weakened by the prostitution of the Reformation to political ends, and by the greed and worthlessness of the German Princes who espoused its cause, by the factious lawlessness of the nobles of Poland, and of the Huguenots in France. . . . The success of Socinianism in Poland severed that kingdom from any real connection with the general body of the Protestant Churches, and these, again, were more and more divided into two warring camps by the controversies about the Sacrament and free-will" ("Short History of the English People," pp. 461, 462).

to individuals. No doubt his charity would not allow him to act otherwise ; and this virtue, with his transparent sincerity, secured him a respectful hearing from even the most obstinate. If these qualities and virtues account for the immediate success of each sermon, they can scarcely explain the wonderful force and influence of St. Lawrence, as a power for good, upon that wide audience, whom he reformed, and many of whom he led to the true Church. The cause of this influence lies in that spotlessness of life which put his character beyond reproach. His private life would bear the closest scrutiny, and the fact that his very opponents, who often spied upon him, were convinced of the integrity of his personal character is the most eloquent and most conclusive proof that his doctrine and his deeds were in full accord. No wonder that such a preacher attracted crowded audiences, which were composed of the leading Catholics, and even of many Protestants, who were drawn, some by curiosity, and not a few by the desire of discovering the truth. Hence he and his companions had the consolation of reconciling large numbers to the Church. In fact, the Capuchin missionaries must be reckoned among the chief agents to whom is due the Catholic revival of Southern Germany.¹

¹ "Southern Germany, where the Austrian House, so long lukewarm in its faith, had at last become zealous in its defence, was the first country to be recatholicized" (Green, "History of English People" p. 462). In connection with the work of the Capuchins in Germany, Menzel, another Protestant historian, pays the following tribute : "The Capuchins distinguished themselves by their great purity of life, by their disinterested activity for the salvation of souls, and by their extreme austerity. The people felt drawn towards these men, who travelled about on foot

Father Lawrence's most famous encounter was with a Lutheran preacher, Laiser Polycarp. This man had been brought to Prague by the Elector of Saxony, Christian II., who, with other Princes, had come to transact affairs of the Empire. Anxious to display his eloquence and learning, Laiser in a sermon attacked the Catholic religion, and propounded the Lutheran doctrine. The sermon was preached in a wing of the Imperial palace, where the Elector and his suite were lodged. This conduct was not only an abuse of the Catholic Emperor's hospitality, but was also an act of audacity, since,

from place to place, from country to country, and dwelt in their midst in the meanest of houses. Having renounced in their own persons all the pleasures and conveniences of this earthly life, they exemplified the words of the Gospel that the kingdom of Heaven belongs to the poor. The doctrine that the Christian should crucify his flesh, and, as a pilgrim and stranger, fix his eyes on his heavenly country, sounded most convincing in the mouth of a bearded and barefoot monk, who wore but one garment, and slept on a plank. A most profound impression was produced by such a one when he preached the consoling truth, that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to come. The favour which Ferdinand showed to the Capuchins, and the large number of houses which he built for them, greatly furthered his plans for the conversion of his subjects" (Menzel, p. 324, quoted by Rohrbacher, "Universal Church History," vol. xxiv., p. 714).

Under Archduke Charles, Styria was reconverted to Catholicism. At the consecration of the Capuchin Church at Laibach there were 20,000 people present (Hunter, iv., pp. 13-17). After the external process of Catholic restoration had been accomplished, it was the Jesuits and the Capuchins who were the chief agents in effecting the inward conversion of the people; they performed this work with zeal and self-sacrifice that are unparalleled. For the conversion of the lower classes of the people, the poorest of all the religious orders—that of the Capuchins—laboured indefatigably. In the short period from 1600 to 1615, settlements of these true lovers of the people were found in Gratz, Bruck, Cilli, Marburg, Radkersburg, Pettau, and Laibach" (Janssen, *ibid.*, p. 414).

at that time, the only two religions publicly recognized in Bohemia were the Catholic and the Hussite. The Catholics were much annoyed, and especially Father Lawrence, who, dreading the consequences to religion, betook himself at once to the Nuncio, and offered to refute from the pulpit the errors of the Saxon preacher. The Nuncio at first discouraged the proposal, being afraid of increasing popular resentment and of advertising the purveyor of falsehood. But the latter, emboldened by the silence of the Catholics, ventured three days afterwards to deliver another discourse, which was attended by a large number of Protestants, and by even some Catholics, drawn by the novelty of the proceeding. This proved too much for the Nuncio, who concluded it was high time to take action.¹ At his request, the Commissary undertook to answer the Lutheran, and issued an invitation to all who cherished their religion. Opposition to the Friar's undertaking now broke out in other quarters. News of the Capuchin's proposed appearance against Laiser being spread throughout the city, some of the most powerful officials took alarm, and hastened to the monastery in order to dissuade the Servant of God from his design. They represented the danger of engendering bad blood and disturbing the peace and good feeling happily reigning amongst

¹ Writing July 16, the Nuncio states that the Lutheran preacher, besides attempting to prove that justification is effected by faith alone without good works, and an incidental attack on indulgences, gave utterance to an infamous calumny against the late Emperors, Charles V. and Ferdinand, asserting that they died in the Lutheran creed. From this letter it is clear that other Catholic preachers of the city took up the defence of the orthodox teaching, and that a most favourable impression was produced even on the heretics.

the different sections of the Community, but more especially of wounding the susceptibilities of the powerful Elector. Lawrence, having listened respectfully to all they had to say, calmly refuted their objections, proving with unanswerable arguments the necessity of silencing the impudent impostor. But when these worldly-wise politicians persisted in their opposition, he lost all patience with them, and, raising his voice, exclaimed :¹ "Mother of God ! Mother of God ! Is this your zeal for the Catholic Faith ? Is this your zeal for the holy Roman Church and the salvation of souls ? Know, then, that I am determined to preach against this individual and publicly expose his sophisms, and if anyone offers further resistance, I will denounce him to His Holiness." They had had enough, and retired in confusion.

The very next day, after the Lutheran's second sermon, the reply was delivered. The Capuchin Church was filled with a distinguished audience,² the Nuncio, the Imperial Ministers, the foreign Ambassadors, and several even of the Saxon Court, all eager to hear the challenge taken up by the Catholic champion. Lawrence took for his text those stinging words addressed by St. Paul to the magician Elymas, who imposed on the Proconsul Sergius : "O full of all guile and of all deceit, child of the devil, enemy of all justice, thou ceasest not to pervert the right ways of the Lord."³ He laid special stress on the words "enemy of all justice," because Laiser in both his sermons had contended

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 46.

² *Ibid.*, p. 43.

³ Acts xiii. 10. See "Commentary."

with Luther that good works, works of justice, are not necessary for justification, and are not meritorious, whereas the very opposite is taught by the sacred writers and by the Fathers of the early Church, as the Commissary proceeded to prove with a series of quotations. Having established the Catholic position, he produced a profound sensation by one of those dramatic strokes which few orators can execute with effect and dignity. The Lutherans constantly assailed, as full of errors and corruptions, the Vulgate Edition of the Bible, approved and used by the Roman Church, and they appealed to the original texts, Hebrew, Syro-Chaldaic, and Greek, texts from which the Saxon preacher professed to quote. Lawrence had brought with him copies of the Bible in these three languages, and, holding them up to his hearers, he continued : " That you may know, gentlemen, the character of this man who has had the effrontery to impugn the Catholic religion under the roof of His Majesty and of his Court, under the eyes of the Apostolic Nuncio, and of the Archbishop and other prelates of the Church in this kingdom, in the presence of so many theologians and preachers of the Catholic Faith, and who, as another Goliath, hath come forth to defy the hosts of the living God, take these Bibles in Hebrew, Syro-Chaldaic, and Greek, on which he pretends to take his stand, and by which alone he professes to abide—take them to him, and you will find that he cannot even read them." So saying, he cast the books amongst the audience and quitted the pulpit. As a matter of fact, Laiser was totally ignorant of the languages in question, and of this

Father Lawrence, who was himself an accomplished Oriental scholar, was perfectly aware. Baron Barbissi picked up the Bibles with the intention of taking them to the Protestant minister and testing his learning.¹ Meanwhile the Saxon courtiers, returning to the Palace, informed their oracle of all that had transpired. Mortified and disgraced by the exposure of his ignorance, the latter departed from Prague, "more mute than a fish," to use Lawrence's phrase, and returned to the more congenial atmosphere of Saxony. In this safe retreat, far removed from the terrible Friar, he regained his courage, and, hoping to repair his damaged reputation, he published the two discourses, with notes, in which he attempted to bolster up his exploded arguments, and "complained like the wolf, because the dog had barked."² Copies of the publication were circulated by his agents in Prague, and one of them fell into the hands of the Capuchin. Lest the weak and the ignorant should be scandalized and misled, the Commissary from the pulpit exposed this fresh imposture, and, the more effectually to counteract it, he started forthwith to write a full and systematic refutation, with a view of having it published. The work is entitled: "*Dissertatio dogmatica contra Lutherum et Laiserum.*" At the same time a similar work was undertaken by one of the Jesuit Fathers. So urgent did the necessity of an antidote appear to the Nuncio and to Cardinal Dietrichstein that each of them applied through Cardinal Borghese to the Pope to have the works examined by theologians at Prague, in order to obviate such delay as

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 46.

² "Commentary."

would be incidental to having the works submitted to the censors at Rome. The Nuncio remarks that Father Brindisi is a man of great learning and zeal, and that his work is certain to be worthy of publication.¹ From a letter of Cardinal Dietrichstein, dated January 20, 1608, it appears that His Eminence was commissioned by the Pope to examine Father Lawrence's writings, but, as the Cardinal was then at Olmutz, he referred the matter to the Nuncio. Notwithstanding all this anxiety for its speedy publication, the work never saw the light, and to the present remains unfinished in manuscript. The reason is given by Father Lawrence himself in the Commentary. Before it was completed news of Laiser's death reached Prague, and consequently it was not published, as the writer, to quote his own words, "did not wish to appear contending with the dead or making war upon shadows."

Three years later (1610) the Saint had an encounter with another preacher, also from Saxony. The German Princes were again assembled at Prague to bring about a reconciliation between Rudolph and his brother Matthias. This time the Elector of Saxony was accompanied by his Court Chaplain. The Augsburg Confession had meanwhile been recognized in Bohemia, with permission for the free exercise of Lutheran worship. Taking advantage of this concession, the Saxon minister, desirous of rehabilitating the credit of his sect, so badly damaged by his luckless countryman, resolved to enter the lists against Catholicism. The subject chosen was the favourite one with Protestants—namely, the

¹ September 27, 1607.

devotion paid by Catholics to the Mother of God. This devotion he inveighed against as sheer idolatry, worship rendered to a creature that is due only to the Creator. To support his contention he relied on the Psalter of the Virgin composed by St. Bonaventure, and he clinched his arguments, as he fancied, with the following syllogism: "The Papists, in reciting the Psalter of David, profess to adore God; therefore, in reciting the Psalter of the Virgin they are convicted of adoring her as they do God Himself." This glaring sophistry the devout client of Mary could not suffer to pass unchallenged, and the refutation was the easier because he was better acquainted with the writings of St. Bonaventure than was the Lutheran. With the works of the Seraphic Doctor in his hands he ascended the pulpit and made clear to the dullest intelligence the real nature of Catholic devotion to Mary. He showed that the Mother of God is indeed praised and invoked, but always as a creature, and never with the titles proper to the Godhead. In the Psalter she is simply implored to intercede for her clients, and after the Psalter St. Bonaventure places the Litany with the repeated invocation: "Ora pro nobis" ("Pray for us"). All his points he made good with quotations from the work itself. His summing up was masterly and vehement. "What," he asked, "was the inference to be drawn? The minister stood convicted of either downright ignorance or diabolical malice. If the former, he was beneath the notice of the intelligent and the learned; if the latter, he deserved the condemnation of all right-minded men."¹ This

¹ "Commentary."

castigation was duly reported to the Saxon Chaplain, who, conscious of his weakness, made no attempt to reply.

Though uncompromising in dealing with false teachers from the pulpit, Lawrence was invariably courteous and friendly in his social intercourse with non-Catholics, treating them, both in public and private, with every mark of respect. Asked on one occasion why he behaved thus to the enemies of religion, he replied that he hoped by this means to pave the way for their conversion, and, in fact, not even the most rabid could resist the charm of his personality. It was but natural, of course, that his exposure of heretical error, and his vindication of orthodox truth, should draw down upon him the hatred of the Sectaries. One gentleman in particular, Baron Ghinzich,¹ was so incensed by the defeat and disgrace of the Saxon ministers, that he swore he would take the Capuchin's life. Warned by a friend of the murderous threat, the Commissary, having thanked his informant, at once determined to beard the lion in his den. Calling the brother questor of the monastery to accompany him, he set out for the residence of the fire-eating Baron. The porter announced two Capuchin questors who desired to see the master of the house. At the moment the Baron was at dinner with his friends, some Protestants, some Catholics, and he ordered the visitors to be shown into the dining-room. At Lawrence's entrance the guests rose and respectfully saluted him, and Ghinzich could hardly believe his eyes. The Father, however, quite at his ease,

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 47.

advanced and accosted the host with his usual affability, and made such a favourable impression that the Baron, whose bark, as it proved, was worse than his bite, invited Lawrence to sit next to himself at table, and could not do enough to show him honour and deference. This personal acquaintance entirely changed the dispositions of Ghinzich towards the Commissary, whom he sent away with a generous alms, and a promise of becoming a regular benefactor of the monastery.

On the occasion of Father Lawrence's recall to Italy in 1602, we have seen how highly he was appreciated, and what efforts were made to retain him at Prague. Such appreciation was fully maintained during his second sojourn, as can be perceived from the following incident : Early in 1608 his native Province of Otranto elected him Provincial, and the election was confirmed by Father Michael Angelo, the Procurator of the Order, acting in his capacity of Commissary-General. Alarmed at the prospect of losing Father Lawrence's services, both the Nuncio at Prague and Cardinal Dietrichstein, Archbishop of Olmutz, made a strong appeal to Rome against his removal. The Nuncio describes¹ to Cardinal Borghese the remarkable work which the Father is doing for religion and the public welfare, and represents the serious detriment that the interruption of such work would involve. He adds in a postscript that the letter is written, not at the suggestion of Father Lawrence, who is quite indifferent in the matter, but because Cardinal Dietrichstein and the writer deemed it advisable for the public good. Cardinal

¹ May 26, 1608.

Dietrichstein, who writes on the same date to the Pope, declares that the departure of the Commissary would be an incalculable loss to the cause of Catholicism. His example, his learning, and his prudence, are truly wonderful, and he directs all His Majesty's Councillors to the great advantage of religion.

Borghese, in reply to these representations, informs¹ Dietrichstein that he has requested the General of the Capuchins to leave Father Lawrence undisturbed in his work at Prague, since his presence in that city is supremely necessary. His election as Provincial of Otranto was accordingly cancelled.

¹ June 2, 1608.

CHAPTER XV

THE CATHOLIC LEAGUE

- I. Competition for the Duchy of Cleves—War inevitable, involving German States and Low Countries.
- II. Catholic League founded against the *Union* — Weakness of Catholic League owing to domestic quarrel in House of Austria—Adhesion of Philip III. of Spain sought—Lawrence's account of the League—State of Spain at the time—Macaulay's statement—Lawrence selected as messenger by the members of the League—Motives for the choice—Pope's interest in the Friar—Lawrence privately informed of the state of Papal Treasury.
- III. Letter of Borghese to Lawrence at Munich—Autograph letter of Paul V. to Philip—Pope's letter to Duke of Lerma—At Genoa—Lawrence acknowledges Borghese's letter—Cardinal's reply.
- IV. Anxiety at Rome and Prague respecting the mission of Lawrence—Letters from Borghese to Nuncio at Prague—Letter to the Spanish Nuncio—Another autograph letter from the Pope to the King—Letter from Borghese to Spanish Nuncio.

EVERY day, more especially since the formation of the *Union*,¹ the attitude of the Sectaries became more and more threatening ; the concession of religious liberty merely whetted their appetite, and encouraged them to increase their demands. In Bohemia they took up arms against their Sovereign, and, though the rebellion was suppressed at the time, it broke out some years afterwards, resulting in the 'Thirty Years'

¹ See Chapter XIII.

War. Several rich Bishoprics were confiscated by the Protestants, and their revenues applied to the advancement of the new religion. Matters were brought to a head by the dispute over the succession to the Duchy of Cleves and Jülich. In this Duchy, as Ranke¹ confesses, Catholicism had been restored under Duke John William, who died without issue, March 25, 1609. The succession was claimed by various competitors, chief amongst whom were the Lutheran Dukes of Neubourg and Brandenburg, who in all haste took possession of the territories, and became known as "Possessioners." The claims of the Lutherans were supported by the other German Protestant Princes, by the Dutch, who had embraced Lutheranism, and were then in rebellion against their legitimate Sovereign, His Catholic Majesty of Spain, and by France, Savoy, and Venice, who were jealous of the House of Hapsburg. In this conjuncture a war, in which the whole of Germany, the Low Countries, and France would be involved, appeared inevitable, and the Duchy was in grave danger of reverting to Protestantism.²

The Catholic Princes, hitherto inactive, waking up at last to the serious danger that menaced, not their religion only, but their States as well, perceived the necessity of opposing the Protestant *Union* by a similar combination, which was realized in the

¹ "History of the Popes," vol. ii., p. 177. See Janssen's "History of the German People," vol. ix., pp. 348-357.

² In 1614 the territory was eventually assigned by the treaty of Xanten to Sigismund, Elector of Brandenburg, who was married to a niece of the late Duke ("Encyclopædia Britannica," Cleves).

Catholic League. The task was not easy. Formidable forces were arrayed on the opposite side, and were working in harmony—Catholics, on the other hand, were not united, and the chief source of weakness amongst them was the family quarrel in the House of Austria. The other Princes of that House, regarding Rudolph as incompetent, wished to depose him, and place Matthias on the Imperial throne.¹ Although this design was not realized, Rudolph was forced to yield up to his brother Austria, Hungary, and Moravia. Matthias, assuming the title “King of Hungary,” fixed his Court at Vienna.² Notwithstanding this arrangement, strained relations continued to exist between the two brothers, whose disagreement constituted the greatest difficulty in the establishment of the Catholic League, from which both stood aloof. In fact, each of them intrigued against the other with the Protestant Union.³ From the beginning the promoters of the League felt the supreme importance of securing the adhesion of Philip III. of Spain, who likewise belonged to the House of Austria. Here is Lawrence’s account: “In the year 1609 the Elector of Brandenburg and the Palatine of Neubourg, instigated by several allied Protestant Princes and also by the Dutch, took up arms for the seizure of Jülich and Cleves. Under these circumstances divers Catholic Princes of Germany resolved to unite in like manner, so as to

¹ See treaty, signed April 25, 1606. Janssen, *op. cit.*, vol. ix. p. 443; also statement in “*Analecta Ordin. Cap.*,” December, 1909, p. 354.

² Matthias joined the Protestant League of Pressbourg, and in 1608 marched an army into Bohemia to enforce his demands. Janssen, *ibid.*, pp. 502-509.

³ Janssen, *op. cit.*, vol. x., p. 497.

stand on the defensive, lest they should be attacked unawares, and, the better to strengthen their position, they cast about for help and encouragement, especially from the King of Spain.”¹

Under Philip II. Spain had reached the zenith of her power and prosperity, which she was still enjoying under his son, Philip III. To give an idea of her flourishing condition, we cannot do better than transcribe Macaulay’s description : “The empire of Philip II. was undoubtedly one of the most powerful and splendid that ever existed in the world. In Europe he ruled Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands on both sides of the Rhine, Franche Comté, Roussillon, the Milanese, and the two Sicilies. Tuscany, Parma, and the other small States of Italy were as completely dependent on him as Nizam and the Rajah of Berar now² are on the East India Company. In Asia the King of Spain was master of the Philippines, and of all those rich settlements which the Portugesue had made on the coasts of Malabar and Coromandel, in the peninsula of Malacca, and in the spice-islands of the Eastern Archipelago. In America, his dominions extended on each side of the equator into the temperate zone. There is reason to believe that his annual revenue amounted in the season of his greatest power to a sum ten times as large as that which England yielded to Elizabeth. He had a standing army of 50,000 excellent troops at a time when England had not a single battalion in constant pay. His ordinary naval force consisted of 140 galleys. He held, what no other Prince in modern times has held,

¹ “Commentary.”

² 1833.

the dominion both of the land and of the sea.”¹

No wonder that the goodwill and co-operation of such a power was eagerly sought by the Catholics of Germany. But how was Philip III. to be won over, and who was to be entrusted with the mission? The choice fell on the Capuchin, who simply states that “the members of the League considered Brother Lawrence of Brindisi a suitable person. Accordingly, with the permission of the Pope, he was sent by the Duke of Bavaria, head of the Catholic League,² with letters from the other allied Princes, in order to treat with His Majesty concerning this business, which was of such vast importance for the good of Catholicism.”³

The Archbishop of Capua, Nuncio at Prague, supplies the special motives for selecting Father Lawrence⁴—namely, “To avoid arousing suspicion or causing commotion, and, moreover, because the said Father, besides his inestimable zeal and piety, is exceedingly well-informed on the state of affairs, and is a great confidant of the Duke of Bavaria, in whose hands is placed the whole machinery of the League.” The Nuncio reports that he found the Father quite willing for the enterprise, and awaiting only the consent and blessing of the Pope. From the first His Holiness evinced a keen interest in Lawrence’s mission to Spain, as is evident from his autograph notes respecting the answer to

¹ Essays: “War of the Succession in Spain,” pp. 238, 239.

² “Summary of Process,” pp. 42 and 43.

³ “Commentary.”

⁴ Letter to Cardinal Borghese, May 18, 1609.

Capua's communication : " To the Archbishop of Capua must be written a letter acknowledging the receipt of his respecting the mission of Father Brindisi to Spain. This mission is to be undertaken with the authority of Don Balthasar of Zuniga, Ambassador of the Catholic King, and for the purpose of representing to His Majesty the miserable state of affairs in Germany, and say that we are pleased with the undertaking. Moreover, let the Archbishop of Capua tell the Father from us to set out with our blessing, and let His Grace supply him with whatever instructions and memoranda as are deemed expedient. This letter is to be written at once, and sent by Cardinal Borghese to Don Francesco, who has promised us to forward it by a courier to Germany." The letter written in accordance with these instructions is dated June 6, 1609, but before its delivery at Prague, Lawrence, accompanied by the Grand Chancellor of Bavaria, had left for Munich. No doubt he wished to confer with the Duke, who, as the Head of the League, was the most interested in the mission. Lawrence states that he was sent by the Duke himself, but the Nuncio's letters¹ affirm that the mission was formally and officially entrusted to him by Don Balthasar, from whom he received full written instructions. Capua is careful to state that, though the mission was undertaken with his own full knowledge and consent, he was giving no instructions to the Envoy, as he had received no orders on the matter from the Pope. However, he privately told Lawrence to let the Duke of Bavaria know that,

¹ June 15 and 23, 1609.

owing to the lavish expenditure of Clement during the war in Hungary, the Apostolic Treasury was in a state of depletion. This information was conveyed in order to discourage undue expectations of financial aid from the Holy See, and that the Pope might retain a free hand. In forwarding the Holy Father's permission to Munich, the Nuncio instructs Lawrence to proceed in the Name of God as soon as possible. In acknowledging Borghese's letters, he remarks: "I have added nothing to Balthasar's instructions, which contain all the essential points, and the Father himself is acquainted with everything that has happened at this Court during the last ten years. I have also given Father Brindisi a commendatory letter to the Archbishop of Damascus, Nuncio at Madrid, whom I expect your Eminence to instruct in forwarding the mission. What has chiefly influenced myself and the Ambassador in this affair is the impossibility of reconciling the Emperor and his brother. To this reconciliation every avenue is closed."

Borghese, having heard from the Duke that Lawrence had arrived at Munich, wrote as follows :

To Father Lawrence of Brindisi of the Capuchin Order.

"Having learned from the Duke of Bavaria that you have reached Munich on your way to Spain, according to the arrangement made with Don Balthasar of Zuniga, Our Lord the Pope has decided to recommend earnestly the business to the Catholic King and to the Duke of Lerma. At the request

of His Highness (of Bavaria) the Holy Father is writing with his own hand letters to both, and he does so most willingly since Religion is in question. Enclosed is a letter from myself for the Archbishop of Damascus, whom I ask to assist you and do all that he deems necessary and expedient for the service of God and the public welfare, and to forward the negotiations with all speed and secrecy. I am sending your Paternity a letter also for the King from Count Castro, his Ambassador here, in favour of the business you have to transact.

“*July 4, 1609.*”

The following is the autograph letter of Paul V. to Philip :

To the King of Spain.

“**MOST BELOVED IN CHRIST,**

“The Catholic Religion in Germany is exposed to dangers which increase to such an extent that we have grave fears of its ultimate extinction, and that too in a short time, unless help is speedily forthcoming. Since we have nothing more at heart than the preservation and propagation of this Religion, with all earnestness we recommend it to your Majesty, and in the interests of your own house, which are very considerable, and for the honour of God, we beg of you to apply a remedy proportionate to the need. On the state of affairs, and in particular on the union and conspiracy of the Protestant Princes and of other powerful heretics in those parts against the Catholic Religion, you will obtain full information from Father

Brindisi, Capuchin, who is now on his way from Prague with the concurrence of Don Balthasar of Zuniga, your Majesty's Ambassador to the Emperor. Our mind is well known to Father Brindisi and to our Nuncio. We wish to add only that the reports we have from our ministers and the Duke of Bavaria make us greatly fear that, if remedial measures are delayed, it will be impossible to maintain Religion and the Empire, and that the evil will extend afterwards to Italy. Wherefore we again beseech you to weigh well the importance of the case which in proportion to its gravity is the more worthy of your royal patronage. May the Divine Majesty bless and keep you !

“Given at Rome the 4th day of July, 1609.”

*Letter of the Pope to the Minister, the Duke
of Lerma.*

“Brother Lawrence of Brindisi, Capuchin, a religious of great virtue and zeal, is on his way from Prague to Spain with the concurrence of Don Balthasar of Zuniga, Ambassador of the King at the Cesarean Court. He comes for the purpose of representing to His Majesty the miserable state of Germany, and the necessity of saving the Catholic Religion from extermination at the hands of the heretics, who are all united in a conspiracy against it. We recommend this state of affairs to His Majesty, the refuge and protection of Catholics everywhere, and confiding exceedingly in your Excellency's piety, we have thought well to engage likewise your good offices. By extending your

favour to the person mentioned, and to the business entrusted to him, and by bringing about its speedy and successful issue, you will gain merit with God, and will greatly oblige us. Father Lawrence and the Nuncio will supply you with all useful details, and in particular will make clear the urgent need of applying such a remedy as the gravity of the case demands.

“Praying the Divine Majesty to prosper and protect you.

“ROME,
“July 4, 1609.”

These two Papal documents were despatched to Madrid in order to pave the way for the Envoy. On reaching Genoa, Lawrence found awaiting him Borghese's letter with the enclosures, which he acknowledged before embarking. The Cardinal's reply is dated August 13 :

“I am very pleased to hear that you have arrived at Genoa, and are to continue your journey in the vessel conveying the Marquis of Altona, and I am glad to know that you have received the despatches sent you for Spain. I shall also be pleased to hear when you have got to your journey's end, and to obtain information in due course concerning your negotiations.”

Feverish anxiety seems to have prevailed at Prague and at Rome from the time that Lawrence set out on his momentous journey. In answer to an inquiry from the Nuncio at Prague, Borghese betrays excitement which prevented him from

making due allowance for the time requisite to cover the distance between Munich and Madrid :

“ We have no fresh news about Father Brindisi, and perhaps the business demanded more expedition than can be expected from a Capuchin. Whilst many people are discussing the League, what most troubles His Holiness is the fear that either the League will not be established at all, or, if established, that it will be too late, and will fail to produce the intended effect, especially as the Princes of the House of Austria are so little united amongst themselves. Besides, the private interests of others may militate against it. Still, it was necessary to try what could be done.”¹

On the same day² that the Cardinal wrote to Lawrence, he despatched the following letter to the Spanish Nuncio :

“ Don Francesco of Castro is sending to Madrid a courier in all haste, with news about the miseries of Germany, so that the King may be induced to succour the Catholic Religion and his own House before these are utterly destroyed. The Holy Father also writes with his own hand to His Majesty and the Duke of Lerma, as you will see from the copies enclosed. Since His Holiness could not forward the business more than he has done, he wishes you to recommend it with all earnestness to His Majesty and His Excellency, and to procure that the negotiations are carried on without delay.

¹ August 1, 1609.

² August 18.

The danger is indeed most evident, and, unless a remedy is applied soon, is inevitable. The question turns on nothing less than the preservation of Religion and the Empire. As the House of Austria is in imminent peril of losing the kingdom of Bohemia, the interests at stake could not be greater. No one understands these things better than Father Lawrence of Brindisi, who is with you; but it is necessary to know that the evils have increased since his departure from Germany, both with regard to Bohemia, where neither respect nor obedience is any longer paid to the Emperor, and with regard to Austria and the provinces of Ferdinand. You yourself are not to propose any particular measure, because this His Holiness leaves to the King and his Council, and requests only that it be speedy and effectual. However, in order to remove any difficulty or hesitation, you can let it be understood that the quickest and least expensive measure would be to assist with a substantial sum of money the Duke of Bavaria, the Head of the League, who has undertaken to defend the hereditary provinces of the House of Austria, including Bohemia. This you will do unless Father Brindisi thinks otherwise, and you are to consult him in everything. You may also mention in conversation, by way of facilitating and expediting matters, that to organize an army to march into Germany would be a serious and expensive undertaking, and would require considerable time. Moreover, His Holiness's Treasury is depleted. Still, make it clear that the Holy Father is prepared to do all that lies in his power."

A further proof of the Pope's solicitude for the success of the mission is afforded by a second autograph letter to the King,¹ whom he addresses as :

“OUR MOST BELOVED SON IN CHRIST.”

Although his Majesty must have already learned from Father Lawrence of Brindisi and others the deplorable condition of Germany, His Holiness wishes to emphasize the evils affecting the House of Austria and its hereditary dominions. He fears the almost certain loss of Bohemia, which carries with it an electoral vote. In this kingdom “the heretics have constrained the Emperor to grant them the most exorbitant concessions to the prejudice of Religion, and by force of arms have seized the reins of Government. . . . In Austria, where Religion is already degraded by similar concessions, the heretics intend in the new Diet, which opens next month, to abolish it altogether ; and in the States of Ferdinand disturbances are beginning to make themselves felt, so that the outlook is most menacing.” The Holy Father once more implores the King “to protect and favour with his whole power the Catholic cause in so urgent a need.”

The next communication is from Borghese to the Spanish Nuncio, September 15 :

“It would be advisable to give Don Balthasar ample authority from Madrid to deal according to his discretion with all points to which His Majesty is not opposed, as by this means something might be saved from the wreck. The Duke of Bavaria is

¹ August 14, 1609.

concentrating his attention on the League, and has got the articles of agreement signed by eight German prelates, who are also Princes.”

The Cardinal encloses a copy of the articles, but cautions the Nuncio not to let others see it, “lest the King and the Ministers might resent the Duke’s taking so much upon himself, and might fancy that the House of Austria was being ignored and slighted.” His Eminence’s opinion of that House is not at all flattering, for he attributes all the evils with which it is afflicted and threatened to the discord amongst its own members.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CATHOLIC LEAGUE (*continued*)

- I. Arrival at Barcelona—Resides at Italian Hospital—Removes to St. Giles's—His statement of affairs in Germany—Meeting of the Ministers and result.
- II. Miracles: the cure of a lady-in-waiting, appearance of blood-drops on a corporal touched by a relic of Calvary.
- III. His influence for the benefit of his own Order—Two monasteries founded, one at Madrid, the other at El Prado—Refuses Order of "Grandee of Spain."
- IV. Interest at Rome touching the negotiations at Madrid—Letters from Borghese to Damascus, to Lawrence—How shocked the Pope is at some of the conditions which are suggested.
- V. The nature of the promised assistance by Spain—Letter from the Cardinal to the Nuncio at Prague—Demands of the Spanish Cabinet.
- VI. Letters from Borghese to Spanish Nuncio—From Damascus—Letters from Lawrence and from Queen to Duke of Bavaria—Lawrence is said to have overstepped the mark—Borghese seeks for news.
- VII. Lawrence goes to Rome to see the Pope—Agreeable audience with Holy Father—Goes to Munich to act in concert with Duke of Bavaria—Effect of his presence in Bavaria—Pope's joy at the news—The ultimate constitution of the League—The assistance rendered by Spain—The effect of Lawrence's mission criticized, and the object of ill-founded censures—Attempts to injure him in the esteem of Ferdinand.

LAWRENCE landed at Barcelona, where the Guardian of the Capuchin Monastery deputed a lay brother to accompany him as far as Madrid. He reached the Spanish capital before September 20, as we

learn from Damascus, and on September 22 he himself reported to Rome an account of the negotiations. The Envoy took up his residence at the Italian Hospital, where some Italian Capuchins were looking after the spiritual needs of their countrymen. Here the Nuncio paid him a visit and offered him hospitality, which, however, he declined, preferring to stay with his brethren. But he was not to have his own way. The Duke of Lerma called in person to welcome him in the name of his Sovereign, and insisted on his removing to the monastery of St. Giles, which, being nearer the Court, was more convenient for the transaction of business. The Fathers of St. Giles, who belonged to the Alcantarine Reform, were delighted to receive him as their guest, and he was much edified by their austerity and poverty, and praised them as true sons of St. Francis. Philip had already heard of Father Lawrence from Don Balthasar, and also from the Queen, who, as related, had made his acquaintance at Ferrara. His credentials, however, were enough of themselves to bespeak him an honourable reception. On his first visit to the Court he was obliged, much against his personal inclination, to submit to the etiquette observed towards an Envoy from foreign Sovereigns. At this visit, which was quite formal, he simply presented his papers, and briefly explained to the King the object of his mission. In subsequent audiences the question of the League was discussed at length. Lawrence, whilst representing the serious state of affairs in Germany, delicately touched on the rebellion of His Majesty's Dutch subjects, who would become more and more

troublesome by the triumph of the Protestant cause. These representations had their intended effect upon Philip, who undertook to place the matter before his Ministers. The meeting of the Ministers lasted three hours, during which the question was debated in all its bearings. The result of the conference was that Spain gave its adhesion to the League, with a guarantee of substantial support.

Two miracles which the Saint performed at Court conduced not a little to enhance his reputation, and to ensure, as we may believe, the success of his mission. One was the cure of a lady-in-waiting, who for ten years had been stricken with paralysis. At the request of the Queen, Lawrence blessed the invalid, and she was instantaneously and completely freed from her infirmity. The other, which took place in the presence of the King and Queen and other distinguished personages, produced a great impression. The pious Queen asked the Envoy for a relic as a souvenir, and taking from the wonderful cross (which he always carried with him) a few particles of the soil stained by the Saviour's blood on Calvary, he placed them on a corporal. No sooner had he done so than drops of fresh blood appeared on the corporal, to the astonishment of all present.

Before leaving Madrid the Friar embraced the opportunity of doing a good service for his Order. At Barcelona he had met the General, Father Jerome of Castelferretti, who begged him to use his influence at Court for the establishment of the Capuchins in Castile, where hitherto they had been unable to obtain a footing. With this object the

General himself had had an audience of the King, but without result. The Saint was more successful. Philip granted the request, and at once sanctioned the foundation of two monasteries, one at Madrid, the other at El Prado. On November 12 Lawrence had the consolation of erecting the cross for the monastery at Madrid in the presence of their Majesties, the members of the Court, the clergy, secular and regular, and a large concourse of representative citizens. The King wished to confer upon the Envoy the title "Grandee of Spain," which, however, he refused, but which was bestowed on the first General of the Capuchins who next visited Madrid, and up to the Revolution was continued to his successors.¹

All this time there was being carried on between Rome and Madrid, and between Rome and Prague, a correspondence, from which we can see with what interest the negotiations were being watched. Borghese tells Damascus² that "His Holiness is most anxious, and feels keenly his own responsibility in safeguarding our Holy Faith." To Lawrence himself the Cardinal writes:³ "Knowing Your Reverence's zeal for the Catholic religion, the Holy Father is well satisfied with the good work you are doing. I would only ask you to enlist the services of the Queen in urging His Majesty and the Ministers to take prompt measures. His Majesty alone can render the requisite aid." By November 13 the Roman Court regarded the success of the negotiations as already assured. On the above date

¹ "Bullarium Capuccinorum," t. v., p. 351.

² October 13.

³ November 10.

Borghese writes to the Spanish Nuncio: "His Holiness considers that you and Father Brindisi have excellently managed the affairs of the League." The Pope, however, resented certain conditions which the Spanish Ministers wished to impose upon himself. The Cardinal continues: "The Holy Father is shocked, so to speak, at the pretensions of the Duke of Lerma and of Don Juan Idiaquez, that the Holy See should first declare what assistance it will give, before the King undertakes to do anything. It is well known that the temporal resources of the Apostolic See are a mere nothing compared with those of His Majesty, and besides, the Papal treasury has been exhausted by the expenses of the war in Hungary, expenses equal to the total expenses of the King for the war in Flanders. Again, it is evident that the Catholics of Germany have placed all their hopes in the power and prestige of His Majesty's forces. The Duke of Lerma and Don Juan are aware that Father Brindisi went to Spain, not from here, but from Germany. For these reasons, and from the well-known fact that the Pope is ready to do all he can, you must decline to discuss any previous engagement. In the past, when leagues for the public benefit were organized, the Kings of Spain did far more than the Pontiffs, who usually lent merely their moral sanction. Find out the views of the Court on the selection of the Duke of Bavaria as head of the League, but without giving the impression that the Pope has any opinion on the point. I must tell you that the assistance for Germany promised to Father Brindisi is not considered equal to the needs;

still, you are not to break off negotiations or refuse to accept whatever may be offered."

The first indication as to the nature of the promised assistance we find in a letter of the Cardinal to the Nuncio at Prague :

" *November 28.*

" We have received news from Spain that Father Brindisi has got a definite promise from the King to supply 300,000 scudi. This sum is to be placed at the disposal of Don Balthasar, for the purpose of providing one regiment of cavalry and two regiments of infantry."

It was precisely this form of assistance that the Cardinal had himself suggested, but he was evidently dissatisfied with the amount, as well as with the conditions which the Spanish Court sought to impose. Of these conditions Lawrence seems to have been kept in ignorance, and was subjected in consequence to a certain amount of adverse criticism. The promises made to him by Philip he accepted without suspicion, and reported accordingly to Rome and to the Duke of Bavaria, but the Spanish Cabinet continued its efforts to extract from the Pope a definite pledge, and insisted, moreover, that the Princes of the House of Austria should also join the League.

Borghese to Spanish Nuncio.

" *December 8, 1609.*

" Count Castro has recently presented to the Pope a letter from the King seeking to draw from

His Holiness a declaration as to what he on his part will do for the League."¹

On March 15, 1610, Damascus relates that in an interview with the Secretary Prada he learned that "His Majesty will join the League only on condition—that the Princes of the House of Austria do the same," and he was informed by the Lord High Constable that "His Majesty will assist the German League when it is seen that the other Princes will also co-operate."

A courier from Madrid delivered letters from Lawrence and the Queen of Spain to the Duke of Bavaria at Munich, whence he proceeded to Prague with a packet of papers from the King to Don Balthasar. The Saint's account as to the result of the mission the Nuncio at Prague received from Maximilian, and discovered that the instructions to Balthasar did not bear it out. "The Duke's letters," he says,² "are too sanguine," for he states that "His Catholic Majesty has consented to join the League without any reservation or condition, and has undertaken to provide two regiments of infantry and one of cavalry. . . . In this matter Father Brindisi has somewhat overstepped the mark . . . by representing as decided what is not so. . . . The fact is that, as Balthasar has told me, the help intended by the King has not been finally settled. However, the ambassador expects the money soon, and will then be better able to gauge His Majesty's intentions."

¹ The Pope at length promised to contribute 8,000 florins monthly to the funds of the league (Janssen, "History of the German People," vol. x., p. 473).

² December 7, 1609.

On January 5, 1610, Borghese presses the Spanish Nuncio for definite news : " His Holiness is anxious to know for certain what is the final decision of His Majesty in a matter of such vital importance to our Holy Faith, to the House of Austria, and to His Majesty's own reputation and dignity."

Father Lawrence from Madrid hastened to Rome to acquaint Paul V. with the result of his mission. Having spent a few days at Florence, where we find him on January 5, he arrived in the Eternal City before February 5, on which date the Cardinal informs Damascus that " Father Brindisi has had a most agreeable audience with His Holiness, to whom he has given a full account of the negotiations, which corresponds with what he had related to yourself, but not with the information of Castro here and of Balthasar at Prague. According to these, the assistance for the League is being reduced to very small proportions, and is made dependent on certain conditions." The same day His Eminence complains to the Nuncio at Prague that the Spanish help for the League was meagre, and far short of what Father Brindisi had led them to expect.

As far back as November 12, 1609, the Duke of Bavaria had applied to Paul V. for permission to have Father Lawrence with him at Munich for a few months on his return from Spain, and had obtained the favour in a brief dated December 12. Hence Lawrence proceeded from Rome to Munich, where he co-operated with the Duke in placing the League on a firm basis. On July 5, 1610, the Nuncio at Prague informs Borghese that " Father Brindisi's presence in Bavaria has produced the desired effect,

since the Duke has sent here his High Chancellor to bind together and finally establish the League. . . . In the two conferences held on the 3rd instant, we have agreed upon the articles which I enclose. These, you will understand, are subject to modifications, as the Chancellor requests time to give an account to his Sovereign, and we must also await the return of Ferdinand from Vienna in order to secure his consent, which will no doubt be given." Borghese replies July 24: "Our Lord the Pope is very glad that Father Brindisi's journey to Bavaria has borne some fruit. His Holiness desires that, all obstacles being surmounted, the League should be established, and that the necessary deliberations should be held as soon as possible with the view of opposing the invasions of the heretics, who continue to advance against us." On August 14, 1610, an agreement was concluded by which Philip III. pledged himself to a monthly payment of 30,000 ducats under the sole condition that Archduke Ferdinand should be Vice-Protector in the place of the King, with the title of Co-Director and Commander of the League.¹

The League met at Munich, August 22, and decided on a vigorous plan of campaign. On September 7 an ultimatum was despatched to the Protestant Union, with the result that the Union sent an

¹ Janssen, *op. cit.*, vol. x., p. 477. As late as 1620 we find a Spanish army on the Rhine co-operating with the League in suppressing the rebellion of the Bohemians, and it was the fear of displeasing Spain that prevented James I. of England from giving aid to his son-in-law, Frederick V., the Elector Palatine, to whom the rebels had offered the crown of Bohemia. Green's "Short History of the English People," p. 475.

embassy to Munich to sue for peace.¹ The general effect of Lawrence's mission we are told by himself in the Commentary. The Envoy returned to Germany before the Protestants had succeeded in capturing Cloves and Jülich, and by assuring the League of Spanish support, encouraged its promoters to oppose the forces arrayed against them. "And indeed," he continues, "the success of the mission was the work of God. for if the heretics had come back victorious from that enterprise, they would have wrought untold mischief on the Catholics in the various provinces. As it was, hearing that the League was backed up by Spain, they desisted from their project, and even sent an embassy to the Duke of Bavaria with proposals of peace and of a general disarmament, to which the Duke consented."² Hence, notwithstanding Rome's misgivings and unfavourable criticisms in other quarters, Lawrence's efforts were productive of the happiest results. This was handsomely acknowledged by the Duke of Bavaria himself. "All Germany," he declares,³ "and all Christendom owes an eternal debt of gratitude to Father Brindisi. because through him was established the Catholic League, from which, as is evident, so much good has ensued."⁴

Before concluding this chapter we may mention that, besides the criticisms above referred to, Father Lawrence was the object of censure based on false

¹ Janssen, *op. cit.*, vol. x., pp. 478, 479.

² The treaty was signed October 24, 1610. See Janssen's "History," vol. x., p. 479.

³ "Summary of Process," p. 47.

⁴ See Brief of Paul V., October 28, 1610. "Bullarium Cappuccinorum," t. ii., p. 289.

reports. He was accused of having spoken unfavourably about Matthias, the King of Hungary, and even of having cast suspicion on his orthodoxy. Placidus Marra, Bishop of Melfi, Nuncio at Vienna, writes to Cardinal Borghese, October 24. 1609 : " The mission of Father Brindisi is much discussed here. Monsignor Klesl in particular tells me that the King has received letters to the effect that the Father is injuring His Majesty's reputation at the Catholic Court." Again, on December 4. he states that two of the royal councillors have requested him to acquaint the Pope and His Eminence with the reports of Father Lawrence's indiscreet talk about Matthias. Melfi conjectures that the Father was voicing the sentiments of " another Prince." The other Prince was Maximilian, who was regarded with jealousy and suspicion by the House of Austria, and who, it was known, stood very high in Lawrence's estimation. The Duke has left on record his own conviction that Melchior Klesl, Bishop of Vienna, was the author of these reports, which His Highness stigmatizes as absolutely false, and which, he affirms, were spread by Klesl with the object of sowing dissension between the King and himself (the Duke).

Paul V. had too good an opinion of the Capuchin to credit the accusations brought against him, and had the following reply made to Melfi :

" December 26, 1609.

" As regards Father Brindisi, you can tell those Ministers who are complaining of him that our Lord the Pope did not send him to Spain, and that

His Holiness finds it very difficult to believe that he has spoken disparagingly of the King, since the said Father is noted no less for his prudence than for his piety."

Till Lawrence arrived in Rome he knew nothing of the charge against him, and at once denounced it as a calumny. On March 6, 1610, the Cardinal informs the Nuncio at Vienna: "Father Brindisi, who is here, is very much annoyed at the report made to the King that he has spoken against His Majesty, especially with regard to his religious sentiments, and he most emphatically denies having done so." Two months later, May 1, 1610, Melfi is able to assure the Cardinal that "Klesl has changed his tone towards Father Brindisi, praising the zeal of the Father and no longer accusing him of imprudence." At the same time the Nuncio mentions that the King has received from Philip and Queen Margaret assurances of their esteem and affection.

Attempts had likewise been made to injure the Friar in the opinion of the Archduke Ferdinand, as we learn from the Bishop of Sarzana, Nuncio at Gratz. The Archduke had long revered Lawrence, and was accustomed to seek his advice. As recently as November 28, 1609, the Nuncio reports: "His Highness has written to the said Father to call here on his return to Germany in order to discuss certain most important matters with him." By April 12, 1610, according to the same correspondent, the Archduke's attitude had altered: "His Highness laments that Father Brindisi has given offence to the Emperor and to the King of Hungary by speak-

ing too freely about matters that do not concern him, and in particular has been intriguing to get the Duke of Bavaria elected ' King of the Romans ' to the exclusion of the House of Austria." This last charge was as baseless as the others, and Ferdinand, like Klesl, discovered before long that he had been misinformed.

CHAPTER XVII

NUNCIO APOSTOLIC AND SPANISH AMBASSADOR

- I. Anxiety of friends on account of his health—Permission to return from Germany to Italy.—Appointed Nuncio Apostolic and Spanish Ambassador—Takes up residence at Munich—Chaplain to Bavarian army.
- II. Letters from Borghese to Nuncio at Prague—Letters of dispensation from fasts to Lawrence.
- III. Previous visits to Munich—Miraculous cure of the Duchess—Personal devotion of the Duke of Bavaria to Lawrence—Example of this devotion.
- IV. Fortunes of the League—"A laughing-stock for heretics"—Pope anxious—Pope praises Lawrence's beneficent influence—Internal disunion in League itself—Example of self-seeking—Lawrence declines the task of being arbiter—Peace broken as Lawrence foretold—Archbishop of Salzburg defeated—Lawrence pleads for mercy—Conduct of Duke.
- V. Lawrence strives to bring about a marriage by means of which the League would be freed from much friction—Displeases Rudolph—Expulsion from Munich whispered—Indifference to criticism—Success promised, yet afterwards impeded—Matthias marries his cousin—Lawrence gives a prophetic hint.

ON Father Lawrence's return to Prague, the state of his health gave serious cause of uneasiness to himself and to others. From experience he knew that another winter in Germany would severely try his constitution, and he communicated his fears to the Nuncio, who wrote on his behalf to Cardinal Borghese :

“ *August 9, 1610.*

“ Father Lawrence of Brindisi suffers very much from the cold of this region, so that often his limbs are so benumbed as to be powerless and motionless. Hence he dreads, not without good reason, the German winter, especially as his Order does not allow those remedies against cold which are available for others. He has spoken to me on the subject, and he wishes that a discreet and capable Father be sent from Italy to take his place before the cold season sets in. His object is not to prolong his life, which he is most willing to spend in the service of his Order and of religion, but he is reluctant to see himself condemned to live as a useless and crippled member. By reason of his merits and of the love I bear him, and also for the sake of the Capuchin Order, to which the life of such a subject is most important, I felt constrained to make known his case to your Eminence.”

The Cardinal replies :

“ *August 28, 1610.*

“ Although Father Brindisi himself does not worry about his health, to which, on account of his delicate constitution, the cold of that climate is most injurious, yet, his life being so precious, it is proper that others should speak for him, and not allow him to remain there during the coming winter. I have therefore talked the matter over with the Father-General, who has promised to write this evening to the said Father, leaving it entirely to his own desire, either to return to Italy or to remain in Germany. If he decides to return, the General will at once appoint a Commissary to succeed him.”

From another letter of the Cardinal¹ it appears that the Pope was also consulted in the matter: "Father Brindisi has been given to understand that he is at liberty either to remain in Germany or to return to Italy. His Holiness is only anxious to consult his health, endangered by the severe winter of that country."

Notwithstanding this permission from the General and from the Holy Father, the servant of God was destined to remain a few years longer in Germany, in order to continue his labours in the cause of religion. Whilst the above correspondence was proceeding, the promoters of the League came to the conclusion that a representative of the Holy See and of Spain should be appointed to the Bavarian Court. Accordingly, as the Saint relates, Monsignor Cajetan, Archbishop of Capua, and Don Balthasar of Zuniga, represented to the Pope that Father Lawrence should be selected for the two-fold office of Nuncio Apostolic and Spanish Ambassador to the Duke of Bavaria. No more suitable selection could have been made, for, besides being a most intimate friend of His Highness the Duke, he was a natural subject of Spain, and was held in the greatest esteem by Paul V. Philip and the Pope readily bestowed the post upon the Capuchin, who, by order of His Holiness, removed from Prague and took up his residence at Munich, in order, as he himself says, "to attend to the common benefit of the Catholic religion."² At the same time the Duke of Bavaria secured from the Pope the appointment of Lawrence as Chaplain to the Bavarian army.

¹ October 2.

² "Commentary."

Nor was the state of his health forgotten, as appears from the following letters :

Borghese to the Nuncio at Prague.

“ROME,
“October 23, 1610.

“It is but right to satisfy the Duke of Bavaria, who wishes to have Father Brindisi, Capuchin, as Chaplain of his army. A Brief has accordingly been despatched some days ago to the said Father through the Duke’s agent. His zeal in placing the service of religion before even his own health is much appreciated, and he has been granted dispensation from the Lents and Fasts of the Rule. This dispensation is contained, not in the Brief, but in a separate letter.”

Here is the separate letter of the same date :

“To Father Lawrence of Brindisi, Capuchin.

“His Holiness is well pleased with your Reverence’s labours for the Catholic religion, and blesses the zeal which you display in not declining the charge of Chaplaincy to the army, undertaken at the request of the Duke of Bavaria. For this the Holy Father has granted you the requisite permission, and, as the Lents and Fasts of the Rule are frequent, and your health but feeble, and also for other reasons, he dispenses you from them, so that your conscience may be at ease and free from scruples. Such dispensation he grants in virtue of these presents.”

Before these documents left Rome, the Saint had already gone to Munich, where, of course, he was no stranger. Besides the two visits which he paid to that city on his way to Spain, and on his return, he spent several months there in 1606. He went at the request of Maximilian, who, in a letter of September 25, 1606, begs the Pope's permission to keep him some time longer for the purpose of concluding the business for which His Highness had called him from Prague. The letter is sent in all haste by a courier, because, as the Duke says, Father Lawrence had scruples in prolonging his stay without leave of His Holiness. In another letter, dated October 29, Maximilian asks to have the Father's stay further prolonged, as the business was not yet finished. His first visit to the Bavarian capital appears to have taken place some years previously, at a time when the Duchess was suffering from a mysterious malady which baffled the Court physicians. The Duke, who had great confidence in Lawrence's sanctity and miraculous powers, sent a messenger for him to Southern Germany, where the Commissary was visiting the houses of the Order. The Saint came without delay, and blessed the Duchess in the palace chapel. At the time the cure was only partial, but the Servant of God assured the Duchess that on the following Feast of the Immaculate Conception she would be completely restored. The prophecy was fulfilled.

Another cause of sore anxiety to the Duke, and, in fact, to the whole State, was the fact that up to that period there was no issue of the marriage. Her Highness, now restored to health, became

enceinte, and in due course gave an heir to the throne. When, therefore, the Father was officially accredited to the Court of Bavaria, we can understand how acceptable and gratifying was the appointment to his old friend, who had come to honour him as a sage and to venerate him as a Saint. Henceforth the Duke did nothing without consulting him, and confided to him his innermost thoughts and aspirations. So strong was Maximilian's attachment to Lawrence that His Highness seemed unwilling to lose sight of him, and would with difficulty allow him to be absent from Munich even on business.

At the beginning of 1611 the Minister-General commissioned the Saint to visit certain provinces of the Order, but the Duke at once¹ appealed to Cardinal Borghese, representing his own need of the Father's services, whose wretched state of health, moreover, rendered practically impossible the performance of the duties imposed upon him by the General. To the Bishop of Sarzana, now Nuncio at Prague, the Cardinal states² that His Holiness has intimated to the General his desire that Father Lawrence should be left at his post during the still disturbed state of Germany, so that the Father may do as much good as possible. "The General," adds His Eminence, "has written this evening relieving Father Lawrence of certain charges that had been given him."

What were the fortunes of the League whilst the Saint remained at Munich? Letters of Borghese make it clear that the machinery did not always work as smoothly as could have been wished:

¹ February 2, 1611.

² February 19, 1611.

“ From the copy of Father Brindisi’s letter, enclosed with yours of February 21, we can see the state into which the affairs of the League have fallen. The troubles which begin to manifest themselves make the League a laughing-stock for the heretics.”¹ On the same day he writes to Lawrence : “ The disturbances in Germany and the news about the soldiers of Passau are calculated to grieve all who have any zeal for the Catholic religion. His Holiness, who is unspeakably distressed at these misfortunes, has written Briefs to the Emperor and to the whole House of Austria, as also to the Duke of Bavaria, exhorting all to concur in extinguishing the flames before they increase, and, if possible, to restore tranquillity. We are confident that you, too, who are so beloved and esteemed by those Princes, will not be wanting, and in the name of the Holy Father I earnestly beseech you to do your best.”

About this time a body of soldiers, who had been mobilized at Passau by the Archduke Leopold, being defrauded of their pay, raided Bohemia, pillaging and destroying a large number of religious houses, both at Prague and elsewhere. As neither the Emperor nor the King of Hungary seemed inclined to take measures against the raiders, the Nuncios at Prague and Vienna had recourse to Father Lawrence, who induced the Duke to write a letter to the States of Bohemia, deploring the excesses of the soldiers, and urging their punish-

¹ March 12, 1611, to the Nuncio at Prague. For the history of the League from this period till the outbreak of the Thirty Years’ War see Janssen, “ History of the German People,” vol. x., pp. 480-484, 514 *et seq.*

ment. At Father Lawrence's suggestion, the Duke wrote also a similar letter to Matthias. For this action Maximilian is warmly thanked by the Pope, who takes occasion to praise the Saint for his beneficent influence.¹

Unfortunately, the members of the League were not always united amongst themselves, and, as is often lamented by Rome, were too much taken up with their own interests to consult the common good. We have a striking example of this in the quarrel between Maximilian and Wolf Dietrich von Raittenau, the Archbishop of Salzburg. Both Princes asserted claims in connection with certain salt-mines, and the Archbishop prepared to vindicate his alleged rights by force of arms. To prevent the scandal that would result from war between two Catholic potentates, at a period, moreover, when agreement was of the utmost importance, the Pope unsuccessfully endeavoured to bring about a settlement. "The information given by Father Brindisi," writes the Cardinal,² "concerning the disturbance caused by the Archbishop of Salzburg is very serious, showing as it does the danger of a rupture between him and the Duke of Bavaria. Hence His

¹ See correspondence : Bishop Melfi to Borghese, May 2, 1611 ; Borghese to Melfi and Father Lawrence, May 14, 1611 ; Borghese to Sarzana, June 8, 1611. Compare also Janssen, *op. cit.*, vol. x., pp. 487-495.

Matthias hastened to Prague with large military forces, and the soldiers of Passau, having been paid, were disbanded, and withdrew from the capital March 11, 1611. On March 24 Matthias entered Prague, and, supported by the Bohemian States, compelled Rudolph to cede the crown of Bohemia. Matthias was solemnly crowned King of Bohemia the following Whit Monday (Janssen, *ibid.*).

² August 21, 1611.

Holiness, who is concerned for both these Princes, and foresees the injury to the Catholic religion that would result from their dissensions, has commissioned the Nuncio at Gratz to persuade the Archduke Ferdinand to intervene." Again,¹ "His Holiness learns that Father Brindisi declines the task of settling the differences between the Duke of Bavaria and the Archbishop of Salzburg. It therefore becomes necessary to send some other religious of standing and capacity, who shall either manage the business himself or induce the disputants to refer the question to a mutual friend—for instance, the Archduke Ferdinand." Lawrence knew perfectly well that reconciliation was impossible, as the Archbishop was bent on war, and, in fact, he was the first to break the peace.

"We have received news from the Duke of Bavaria himself that the Archbishop of Salzburg has already broken the peace, as Father Brindisi had foretold. The Holy Father regrets this all the more since the breaking out of hostilities makes a settlement more difficult."² From the beginning the fortunes of war went against the prelate. One of his principal fortresses was reduced by the Bavarian troops, and, as the garrison had obstinately held out, and had violated the rules of legitimate warfare, orders were issued that no quarter should be given. Lawrence, however, who was present as Chaplain, pleaded for clemency, and the lives of the soldiers were spared. By the fall of this fortress the road was cleared to Salzburg, which opened

¹ September 3.

² Cardinal Borghese, November 5, 1611.

its gates to the victorious Duke. Having taken the Archbishop prisoner, the conqueror behaved with magnanimity towards the citizens. He forbade his troops to commit any depredation, and he referred the case of the prisoner to the Sovereign Pontiff. Even before negotiations were concluded, he gave up the conquered State to the Cathedral Chapter, retaining as security only two fortresses, which he relinquished as soon as terms of peace were arranged. The bellicose Dietrich was deposed, and the Canons elected as Archbishop Marx Sittich, Count of Hohenembs. Though his brother Ferdinand was a member of the Chapter and a candidate for the Archbishopric, the Duke, to his credit, refrained from using any influence in the election. Ferdinand afterwards became Elector Archbishop of Cologne.¹

For the first five months of his residence at Munich Father Lawrence was engaged in trying to realize a project which, notwithstanding his diplomacy, was doomed to failure. The House of Austria, as we have seen, entertained towards the Duke of Bavaria feelings of jealousy on account of the prominence into which the headship of the League had brought him. These feelings were detrimental to the interests of the League, tending as they did to make Austria slow to join it and indifferent to its success. Aware of this state of things, the Pope was anxious to knit the two families together by a marriage between Matthias

¹ "Commentary." Archbishop Sittich summoned the Capuchins as missionaries to Salzburg in 1613 (Janssen, *op. cit.*, vol. ix., p. 414, note).

and Magdalene, the sister of Maximilian. When, therefore, Lawrence was leaving Prague, he was requested by His Holiness to use his influence at Munich for this object. It appears that Matthias had been desirous of the marriage for some time, but his overtures were unfavourably received at the Bavarian Court. Two years previously,¹ Cardinal Mellino, Papal Legate at Prague, wrote to Borghese : " It is said that Archduke Matthias desires to marry the sister of Duke Maximilian, but His Highness has written to Father Brindisi, Capuchin, in whom he places special confidence, that he does not wish to give her." Lawrence understood well the difficulties of the task now imposed upon him, but he undertook it in view of the advantages likely to result from the proposed alliance. Amongst the correspondence on the subject have been discovered five letters addressed by the Saint to the Bishop of Melfi, Nuncio at Vienna. These letters show that at the very first interview Lawrence gained the good-will of Maximilian, but he failed for some time to win over the old Duke William and the Princess. The real secret of the opposition was the attachment of Magdalene to another lover, the Archduke Leopold, brother of Ferdinand and the Queen of Spain. Leopold also was Duke William's favourite, and his suit was, moreover, promoted by the Emperor, who promised him the crown of Bohemia. For the part he was taking in the affair the Capuchin incurred the severe displeasure of Rudolph, who complained that a certain friar, instead of remaining in his monastery, busied himself with match-making on

¹ July 21, 1608.

behalf of His Majesty's brother Matthias. There was even talk at the Imperial Court of having the meddlesome friar expelled from Munich. The Archbishop of Capua conveyed all this information to Lawrence, who remarks to Melfi:¹ "You know how reluctant I was to intervene in this business. . . . At the threats from Prague I can afford to smile, seeing that in this world the tiniest flea can do as much as a great elephant. Having entered into the business, I mean to continue, and, provided I can effect what is judged best for the service of God and the public welfare, people may say what they please."

In the end the Servant of God succeeded in securing the consent of both father and daughter. Melfi informs the Cardinal:² "Father Brindisi writes that the Munich affair presents no further difficulty, since the Princess has decided to follow the advice of her father and her brother." The decision, however, was too late. From the beginning, Klesl, Bishop of Vienna, discouraged more or less openly the Munich alliance, and when Matthias discovered that another suitor was in the way, he abandoned the idea of marrying the Bavarian Princess, whose affection he doubted, and turned his attention elsewhere. On November 27, and again on December 4, 1610, the Cardinal, on the part of the Pope, instructs Melfi to promote the marriage of the King with Anna, sister of Archduke Ferdinand, and on February 5, 1611, Borghese sends the Nuncio a Brief granting dispensation for Matthias to marry his cousin. The marriage took place shortly afterwards. After all, Princess Magdalene gave her

¹ December 6, 1610.

² January 15, 1611.

hand, not to Leopold, but to the Duke of Neubourg,¹ and she who might have been an Empress had to be content with the title of Duchess. Rudolph dying without issue, January 20, 1612, Matthias was unanimously elected Emperor at Frankfort, June 13 of the same year. Just then great hopes of an heir were entertained from the Innsbrück marriage, as it was commonly reported throughout Germany and Italy that the Empress was in the sixth month of her pregnancy, and, in fact, preparations were already in progress for the interesting event. But, as in the case of the late unfortunate Queen Draga, the report proved to be false. One day, when the Duchess of Bavaria spoke to Lawrence about the preparations, he smilingly assured her that they would not be required. It is, of course, matter of history that Matthias had no children, and was succeeded by his cousin Ferdinand.

¹ Duke Wolfgang Wilhelm became a convert from Lutheranism to Catholicism in 1613.

CHAPTER XVIII

MISSIONARY LABOURS IN GERMAN STATES— PROVINCIAL OF GENOA

- I. Munich too small for Lawrence's zeal—Sets out on missionary work in German States—Military escort—Desire of martyrdom.
- II. A penance and a miracle—Reads the heart of an officer.
- III. Scenes of his labours—No respecter of persons in high places—An instance of this—An example of God's special providence—Lawrence's prevision—Returns to Munich.
- IV. Reaches Rome in 1613—Welcomed by Paul V.—Elected Definitor-General May 24—Appointed Commissary to Genoese province—Elected Provincial by special concession—Piedmontese affair—Lawrence hampered by the Duke.
- V. Visitation of the province—Public ovations—Popular devotion to him—Preaches whenever invited—Casale and its incidents—Pavia and its enthusiasm—Influence upon students from the University—Prisoner for some hours—At Mantua in 1614—Miraculous cure and prophecy.

ONE would have thought that the duties of Papal Nuncio, Spanish Ambassador, and Chaplain to the Army, would have been enough to satisfy Lawrence's passion for work. Such, however, was not the case. Finding Munich too small for his activities, he resolved on a missionary expedition into various German States. To this expedition Maximilian was strongly opposed, because he was unwilling to be deprived of the Father's presence and counsel, and more so because he trembled for his safety amongst the heretics. The zealous

missionary, nevertheless, remained unshaken in his resolution, which he maintained was in conformity with the Divine Will. The Duke yielded, but on condition that the Saint accepted a military escort for his personal protection. Such a proposal the apostolic man at first refused to entertain. "What, Prince!" he exclaimed. "Does God's work stand in need of soldiers and arms? Was it thus the Apostles went forth to preach the Gospel? God surely will take care of His own!" But on this point the Duke refused to give way, and Lawrence only succeeded in getting the escort reduced to twenty-five horsemen, instead of fifty who were offered by His Highness. The command of the little cavalcade was entrusted to Francis Visconti, a Milanese, who held the rank of Colonel in the Bavarian army. To this officer the servant of God expressed his ardent desire of martyrdom, but added: "I know for a certainty that I shall not be martyred, and that no harm shall come to me on this mission." In making arrangements for their departure, the missionary advised the Colonel to prepare by a good confession for the holy work in which they were about to engage.¹ Visconti, who was a devout Catholic, readily consented, and made his confession to Father Lawrence. For his penance, the officer tells us, he was required to serve on his bare knees the confessor's Mass, and for this purpose he repaired the previous evening to the Capuchin monastery, where he slept. At midnight he was called by the Father, and arose to serve the Mass. Unaccustomed to such a penance as kneeling with bare

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 227.

knees on the hard pavement, the server soon felt very uncomfortable, and was sorely tempted to abandon his post. It was some relief when he had occasion to rise at the offertory for the purpose of ministering the wine and water. In presenting the cruets, he received a severe look from the celebrant, who raised his finger in warning reproof. Conscious that Lawrence read his thoughts, the Colonel felt confused and ashamed, and returned to his former posture. At the Memento of the Living the Servant of God became rapt in contemplation, in which he continued so long that Visconti nearly fainted from exhaustion. Wondering what was the cause of the delay, he ventured to look up, and then noticed, to his astonishment, that the celebrant was raised between two and three feet above the predella, and he remained in that position for the further space of an hour and a half. This sight encouraged the server to persevere to the end of the Mass, which on that occasion lasted over *ten* hours.

Afterwards, in the sacristy, when Lawrence had finished his thanksgiving, he accurately described to the officer all the thoughts and temptations, that had passed through the latter's mind during the Holy Sacrifice, and exhorted him to keep the salutary resolutions he had made. Then, having admonished him to give good example and maintain discipline amongst his men, he directed him to get ready for the journey without delay. All that had happened the Colonel detailed to the Duke, who, more than ever impressed with the sanctity of the Father, inculcated special care of his person during the dangerous expedition.

Taking with him as companions two fellow-religious, the missionary set out, and evangelized, in the first instance, the whole of Bavaria. He next preached in several of the Imperial Free Cities, and then in the Palatinate and in Saxony, everywhere scattering the good seed, enlightening the heretics, and confirming the Catholics in the Faith.¹ His preaching, as usual, was characterized by great freedom and zeal, not only in refuting heresies, but in denouncing the public vices of Catholics without respect of persons. He condemned unsparingly the irregularities of those in high station, knowing that the example of such is especially calculated to influence the common people. In a certain important city² the missionary learned that the Prince, though a Catholic, was leading a life entirely at variance with the principles of his religion. Preaching to a numerous congregation, the Prince being present, the Father dwelt on the very vices to which it was notorious His Highness was addicted. These vices he stigmatized in the strongest language, and, though he did not descend to particulars or mention any names, the hearers were in no doubt as to the person for whom his words were intended. So far, however, from the Prince taking in bad part what was said, he conceived a high opinion of the

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 50.

² It is to be regretted, from the point of historical precision, that Visconti, from whom we take the account, does not furnish the names of the city and the Prince. The editor of the documents concerning St. Lawrence states that in 1611, when passing through Salzburg, the Saint preached in presence of the Prince Archbishop, Wolf Dietrich, and with apostolic freedom denounced the notorious scandals of the Court ("Analecta Ord. Cap.," April, 1910).

preacher as a man of God, and, inviting him to dinner at the palace, showed him every mark of esteem and even affection.

The following incident illustrates the Providence of God over His servant, who, instead of needing the protection of his bodyguard, proved the means of saving their lives. They arrived at a village inhabited wholly by Protestants. "The Father, having finished his devotions," says Visconti, "was conversing in a room with myself and his companions whilst waiting for dinner. All of a sudden he turned to me, and said: 'Order the men to mount quickly. The heretics are coming, and mean mischief.' In a few moments we were all on horseback, and I said to Father Brindisi: 'Which way must we take?' He pointed out the direction. When outside the village in the open country, we descried in the distance a great multitude, some on horseback, others on foot, all armed, coming against us. They were, as we learned afterwards, heretics gathered from the mountains and the neighbouring districts by order of the village Squire, a bitter Protestant, who had also instructed the villagers to assist in cutting us to pieces. My soldiers were only a handful (twenty-five), and the heretics numbered about 700. Father Brindisi took hold of the cross which he always wore round his neck, and I gave orders to sound the charge for battle. The heretics, seeing us advance, were seized with panic, and fled in all directions. Father Brindisi then told me not to pursue them, but to return. This I was reluctant to do, since a return to the village seemed like walking into a death-trap. But

the Father assured me we had nothing to fear, and when we re-entered the village not one of the inhabitants raised a finger against us.”

During the expedition one of the soldiers belonging to the escort fell into a grievous sin, for which the Saint charitably reproved him, and had him corrected also by the Colonel. But as the delinquent did not repent or show any intention of amendment, Lawrence caused him to be dismissed, not wishing, as he remarked, to have in his company men who offended God, even whilst engaged in His service.

The mission had lasted eight months when the missionary, with his escort, returned to Munich.

The outlook in Germany gradually cleared, at least for a time, thanks in no small measure to the League, which inspired the Protestant Princes with a wholesome fear. As a consequence, Father Lawrence's presence in that country was no longer considered necessary, and it was decided that he should leave for Italy. Whether he was recalled at the instance of his religious superiors or at his own request we have not been able to ascertain. He reached Rome in the spring of 1613, and was most cordially received by Paul V., for whom he bore a letter from Maximilian. Acknowledging this letter, His Holiness writes to the Duke: “Most welcome to us was the arrival of our beloved son, the pious and prudent Lawrence of Brindisi, who delivered to us your letter.”¹

At last the Apostolic labourer might have hoped for rest and privacy, after his arduous public career

¹ “ Bullarium Capuccinorum,” t. iv., p. 154.

in Germany, but once more disappointment awaited him. The General Chapter, May 24, 1613, elected him Definitor, and the new Minister-General, Father Paul of Cesena, soon afterwards appointed him Commissary to visit the Genoese Province. This province was at that time very extensive, including Piedmont in the Duchy of Savoy, and numbering no less than 734 religious. An agitation for the erection of Piedmont into a separate province was going on amongst the Piedmontese Friars, who were backed up by the Duke of Savoy, Charles Emmanuel. The Commissary, having acquainted himself with the state of affairs, convoked the Provincial Chapter, which was celebrated at Pavia under his presidency.¹ Acting on instructions from the General, he directed the capitular Fathers not to elect the Provincial either from their own or from any neighbouring province. This departure from the usual procedure was taken in consequence of the agitation above mentioned. The President being then asked if he would consent to be himself elected, strongly objected, alleging several reasons, but principally two—his infirmities that prevented him travelling on foot, and the ordinance of the Constitutions, prohibiting a Commissary visiting a Province, other than his own, to be elected Provincial. He next forbade the electors to vote for him, and the scrutineers to accept or count votes, in case they were given for him. But the outgoing Provincial, Father Zachary of Manorola, and several other Fathers begged him to leave the electors free, and he reluctantly consented. The

¹ September 13, 1613.

first scrutiny resulted in the election of Father Lawrence by eighty votes out of eighty-nine.¹ Immediately the Friars intoned the *Te Deum*, which the newly-elected Provincial vainly endeavoured to stop, reiterating his objections. At once he wrote beseeching the General to withhold the confirmation of the election, chiefly because of the impossibility of making on foot the visitation of the Province, as prescribed by the Rule and Constitutions. The question was deemed of sufficient importance to be referred by the General to the Cardinal Protector and to the Pope. The answer came that Lawrence should accept the office, and for the visitation could make use of a horse or vehicle, the Pope remarking, "A good head is better than two legs." Rome had spoken, and the obedient religious applied himself with his customary zeal and energy to the discharge of the duties laid upon him. During his Provincialate the Friars of Piedmont, in a memorial to Rome, and through the Duke of Savoy's Ambassador to the Holy See, renewed their petitions for a division of the Province, and in July, 1615, the Provincial and other Fathers were called to Rome in order to discuss the question. Father Lawrence, it appears, opposed the division, deeming it inopportune, and he succeeded in having the resolution of the previous General Chapter confirmed—namely, that no division should take place. Nevertheless, the Piedmontese had their way in the end, for the division was decreed by the General Chapter of 1618. The Saint's administration was somewhat hampered by interference on the part of the Duke,

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 310.

who would not allow the Houses of Piedmont to be visited except by a Piedmontese Father. The following letter also reveals the Duke's influence at the Roman Court.

Cardinal Borghese to the Provincial of Genoa.

“September 13, 1614.

“His Holiness directs that Father Andrew Scalenghi be removed (from Nice), and a zealous and discreet Piedmontese Father appointed in his place. This you will be good enough to do, in order to meet the wishes of the Duke of Savoy.”

Clearly the patronage of the great is not always an unqualified blessing !

With the exception of Piedmont, Father Lawrence visited the whole of the Province. Wherever he went the people were stirred to an extraordinary degree by his presence. The popular ovations which characterized his visitation as General were renewed, but with increased excitement. As he travelled from place to place, the inhabitants of the country districts and of the villages and towns turned out *en masse* to greet him. Farmers and farm labourers left their work in the fields ; sentinels were posted on eminences to give notice of his coming ; and when he arrived at a monastery, the cloisters, the church, and the gardens, were filled with enthusiastic crowds. Whenever possible he went by water, and on these occasions his companions assure us that it required all their efforts to force a passage to the boat. Even when he reached it, many men, and women also, waded into

the water after him, whilst the seashore or the river-banks were lined with people, kneeling for his blessing, and remaining in that posture till he had gone out of sight. To an age of religious indifference as is ours, such popular commotion is simply unintelligible. The nearest approach to it is that aroused by a visit of royalty, or, at a political crisis, of an idolized leader, like the late Mr. Gladstone.

At Pontremuoli, the first place to be visited, men and women surged round the Saint to kiss his hand and his habit, to obtain his blessing and secure some article of devotion. "We who were with him,"¹ deposes a companion, "said to each other, 'Lord! who has told all these people that the Father was to pass this way?'" The guardian of the monastery begged the Provincial to bless from the high-altar the people in the church, but as soon as one crowd dispersed another took its place, so that the process had to be repeated again and again.

On arriving at the various cities, Bishops and parish priests requested him to preach to their flocks in the cathedrals and parochial churches, and as he was always willing to comply with such requests, the visitation was converted into a kind of improvised Mission. At Casale he preached twice in the cathedral, once to the faithful, and once, as related, to the Jews. For two days the Bishop entertained him at the palace. On the first day the large square in front of the palace was thronged with an eager crowd clamouring to see the Father. The Governor had taken the precaution to post a

¹ Genoese Process and "Summary of Process," p. 310.

body of soldiers at the gates, and the Bishop, fearing a catastrophe, asked the Saint to show himself on the balcony and give the people his blessing. The humble man excused himself, saying: "It is for you, monsignor, to bless them, not for me, who am but a simple religious."¹ But the prelate insisted, and Lawrence was obliged to yield. As soon as he appeared the air was rent with cries of "The Saint! the Saint! Bless us! bless us!" Having addressed to them a few words, he imparted his blessing, and all quietly dispersed, consoled and satisfied.

The Chapter of Pavia invited the Servant of God to preach in St. Michael's, the collegiate church, and the people assembled from the city and from the surrounding districts. The Bishop, Monsignor Bilia, and the Governor, Louis Taverna, seeing how the crowds in the streets were struggling and fighting their way to the church, became afraid lest the Father might get hurt in the throng, and accordingly they went themselves to the monastery and conducted him under a military escort. When the church was reached it was with difficulty that the soldiers cleared a passage for the preacher to the pulpit, and, as for the Bishop, it was quite impossible for him to reach his place in the sanctuary, so that he had to remain standing all through the sermon. For the following day it was arranged that Lawrence should preach in the Church of St. Francis, the largest in the city. The people came before day-break to secure places, and waited patiently seven or eight hours. Even this building proved too small,

¹ Genoese Process and "Summary of Process," p. 311.

and the windows and doors were thrown open for the benefit of those in the streets. His sermon, which lasted an hour, produced numerous conversions, especially amongst the University students, many of whom, by their disorderly conduct, had given great offence and scandal to the citizens. One of the most remarkable conversions was that of a noble youth who subsequently entered the Capuchin Order and became known as Father Francis of Vigevano. Several of the students, encouraged by the preacher's kind words, sought counsel from him in private, and not a few of them joined the Order. Difficult as it was to reach the church, it proved still more difficult to get back to the monastery. One of the students, taking in the situation, invited the Father to his house close by, and there rest whilst the people dispersed. But to get so far was no easy matter, and it needed all the strength of the guards to protect him from the indiscreet devotion of the crowd. When he had got inside the house, the Governor and the Warden of the Castle, with a body of noble students, strong and athletic youths, had to guard the door to keep off the people, who, seized with a sort of pious frenzy, used violent efforts to force an entrance. For several hours Lawrence had to remain there as a prisoner, and when the pressure relaxed he had still to be protected on his return to the monastery.

In 1614 he preached the Lenten Course at Mantua, and it was on this occasion that he devoted the Saturdays to the instruction of the Jews. It would take up too much space to describe all the miracles which the Saint performed during his sojourn as

Provincial in the Genoese Province. Let one here suffice. At Genoa, Magdalene Pastori was dying of fever, and had already received the last Sacraments. One of the religious at the monastery, a cousin of the woman, begged the Provincial to visit and bless her. Having blessed her with the sign of the Cross, the Servant of God asked her if she was quite resigned to die. "Yes," she answered, "I am quite resigned to the Will of God ; still, I should like to live a little longer for the sake of my children." "Cheer up, then !" said Lawrence, smiling. "You will not die at present. Our Lord will restore you to health." The patient, overjoyed and full of confidence, then requested him to bless her little boy, who was thought to be suffering from a slight indisposition caused by worms. Looking at the child, he said : "Blessed soul ! You will soon be an angel in Paradise." The following day the mother was up, perfectly recovered ; the child went to join the blessed in Heaven.

Having completed the term of his Provincialate, Lawrence took leave of his brethren in Genoa, and turned his face once more in the direction of Venice.¹

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 309.

CHAPTER XIX

RETURN TO VENICE—PEACE-MAKER AT MILAN— POPULAR COMMOTION

- I. Under medical treatment—Providential assistance on the way to Venice—Edifying act of courtesy—Venetian crowds—Leaves for Verona.
- II. Battle caused by opposing claims to Duchy of Mantua—Lawrence prophesies a renewal of war—Appointed by the Pope to be peacemaker—Lawrence's influence with Don Pedro—Surrender of Vercelli.
- III. Visited by the great as well as by the populace—Official statement of popular enthusiasm—Large concourses of people visit his monastery—Secretly sent out of Milan.
- IV. Guardian's statement of the great inconvenience to his monastery—Lawrence learns from Heaven of his removal—Explanation of these commotions—Miracles—Cure of Plattus—Toso—Caimi.
- V. Ovation at Vicenza—Lawrence remonstrates—Roman enthusiasm.

ON the journey to Venice the Father was attacked so violently by gout in his feet and hands that he was constrained to stop at Mantua for medical treatment. When able to travel again, he had placed at his disposal the carriage of Duke Ferdinand, so that he might leave unmolested. As usual, the design failed. Immense crowds, crying out for his blessing, surrounded the carriage, which had to be drawn up near the city gates at the Governor's house, from the steps of which Lawrence gave the people his blessing. He then re-entered

the carriage, drawn by six horses, which set off at full gallop, leaving the crowd behind. Some distance out of the city he dismissed the conveyance, and continued the journey on foot. Through weakness, however, and the wretched condition of the roads after recent floods, he soon became exhausted, and had to be supported by his two companions, Father Ambrose of Florence, and Brother Michael of Bologna. The progress was slow, and they were overtaken by night. In this predicament (the night being pitch dark), he seems for a moment to have lost courage. "What shall we do," he asked, "if we cannot go any farther?" Then, turning to Brother Michael, he added: "Hurry on in front, and you will find a man with a light. Ask him to help us." The brother did as directed, and before long saw two men coming out of a cottage by the roadside, one of them carrying a torch. These willingly lent their services, and not before they were needed. On each side of the road was a deep ditch filled with water, and a short distance ahead a torrent ran across the road, into which they might have fallen in the darkness. This they were enabled to cross in safety by means of an improvised bridge, formed of tables which the good peasants fetched from the cottage. The two men accompanied the friars as far as Rovigo, where they arrived early next morning. At Este, the next halting-place, the Servant of God edified the religious community by an act of prompt obedience. On the morning of his departure for Venice, boatmen were engaged to be in readiness at a certain hour to take him and his companions. Lawrence was celebrating Mass when

the boatmen arrived, and, after waiting a long time, they began to get impatient. Fearing that the men would go away, the Guardian went to the altar and told the celebrant to finish the Mass without further delay. Lawrence, who was rapt in ecstacy, being recalled to his senses, did as commanded, and in a few moments was ready to start.¹

The excitement at Venice during this visit surpassed all previous records. Men burst open the doors of the monastery enclosure ; women, struggling and hustling, broke down the railings round the church ; and not only the monastery and the church, but the grounds and gardens, which are extensive, were invaded and filled by people. Lawrence at first steadfastly refused to show himself, and was moved from this attitude only by a formal precept of obedience imposed by the Guardian. When he did appear he had to be attended by a bodyguard of soldiers, who made a passage for him through the people, to whom he gave his blessing. All this commotion and publicity he heartily detested, and, seizing an opportunity of getting away, he gladly accepted from the Bishop of Verona an invitation to preach in his cathedral.

Again the diplomatic skill of the Friar was to be called into requisition. A dispute over the succession to the Duchy of Mantua gave rise at this period to a disastrous war. Vincenzo I. died February 18, 1612, and was succeeded by his eldest son, Francesco, who died the following December, leaving only a daughter, Maria, one year old. Of Francesco there were two surviving brothers, Cardinal Ferdinand

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 286.

and Vincenzo, created Cardinal afterwards, in 1615. On the death of Francesco, Ferdinand left Rome for Mantua, and seized the reins of government; but as his brother's widow, Margaret, sister of Charles Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy, was believed to be with child, he did not renounce his Cardinalate or assume the title of Duke till the following year. Ferdinand's conduct greatly incensed the Duke of Savoy, who claimed the succession for the infant Princess Maria, and the regency for her mother. As neither party would renounce its respective claims, war was declared. Savoy struck the first blow, invading Monferrato, and, having sacked Alba, took the Bishop prisoner. Charles Emmanuel, being married to Catherine, sister of Philip III., had reckoned on the support of Spain, but in this he was grievously mistaken. The Spanish Cabinet, won over by Ferdinand, instructed Francesco Mendoza, the Governor of Milan, to warn off Savoy, and in case of refusal to employ force. Diplomacy failing, Mendoza put a powerful army in the field, and compelled the Savoyards to raise the siege of Nizza della Paglia. At this juncture the Pope, the Emperor, and the King of France interfered, and peace was concluded in the Treaty of Asti. Lawrence was then Provincial of Genoa. The Duchess Placida Doria speaking to him about the peace just established, he remarked: "This is not peace; war will break out worse than ever." Such, in fact, was the case. The Spanish Cabinet refused to ratify the Treaty of Asti, and Philip, dissatisfied with Mendoza, replaced him by Don Pedro of Toledo, Marquis of Villafranca. The

new Governor came to Milan with secret orders to renew the war against Savoy, and it soon became apparent that he did not intend to abide by the terms of the Treaty. Oneglia and Marri, places seized by his predecessor, he declined to evacuate ; he raised fresh levies of soldiers, and finally threw an army into Piedmont, capturing the important city of Vercelli.

This second outburst of hostilities grieved exceedingly the paternal heart of Paul V., who at once took measures to reconcile the belligerents. The Pope despatched to Milan and Turin, as his Nuncio Extraordinary, Alessandro Ludovisi, Archbishop of Bologna, afterwards Gregory XV., who, however, found passions too inflamed to succeed in his peaceful mission. Then it was that the Holy Father, remembering the Capuchin, commissioned him to use his influence in the cause of peace. The Saint received at Venice the Papal message, and he immediately started for Milan, arriving about the beginning of Lent, 1618. The task proved a most difficult one. It is true that Lawrence was no stranger to Don Pedro, whom he had met at Madrid, and who held him in great esteem ; but, on the other hand, he found the Governor in no mood for compromise. So far the war had gone in Spain's favour ; the campaign was in full swing, and it was almost impossible to bring it to an immediate termination. Nevertheless, the Servant of God did not despair. Again and again he returned to the charge. He held long conferences with Don Pedro, made suggestions for the removal of obstacles, and urged every argument calculated to convince,

whether from a Christian or a political point of view. In the end Vercelli remained the chief bone of contention. At last the Saint, by his patience and prayers, prevailed on the Governor to surrender that city, and thus re-establish peace. Afterwards Don Pedro emphatically protested that he would never have given up Vercelli had he not been persuaded to do so by Father Brindisi.¹

The peace negotiations were followed with the keenest interest by the representatives of the chief European Powers. Many of these representatives visited Lawrence at the monastery, amongst others Archduke Leopold, son of the Emperor Ferdinand. Even Cardinal Frederick Borromeo, brother and successor of St. Charles, came to pay his respects, and before leaving knelt down and insisted on being blessed by the Envoy. But it was not only Ambassadors and other distinguished personages that were drawn to the monastery: the entire population of Milan and district flocked to catch a glimpse of the saintly Friar. The concourse assumed such proportions that the religious community and the civil authorities were at their wits' end how to control it. Some extracts from the "Milan Process" will help to form an idea of the situation. The facts related by the witnesses and the impressions made we reproduce as we find them.

"All classes of people," states an official of Milan, "went to see Father Brindisi, who was unanimously proclaimed as a man of extraordinary holiness. Such a reputation and such a concourse, I reckoned, was more than human—was, in fact,

¹ "Summary of Process," pp. 247, 252, and 253.

the work of the Holy Ghost, Who thus moved the hearts of men to have recourse to the said Father, so that, influenced by his sanctity, they might serve God with greater fervour and purity."

Count Giacomo Mandelli testifies as follows: "Father Lawrence Brindisi, during the Lent of 1618, was staying at the monastery of his Order, situated outside the east gate of Milan. My house being on the way to this gate, I observed how the whole city was stirred to visit the Father. I beheld that great concourse which seemed like a general procession of people going and returning. These were not the common folk only, but the first and noblest families of Milan. They went and returned with much devotion, and they spoke of the Father as a perfect servant of God, a man who was truly holy." Seeing this commotion, the Count made up his mind to go himself. "I found the monastery besieged by people. Notwithstanding the serious inconvenience caused to the Capuchin Fathers, who did their best to discourage them, the people continued to flock from all parts, filling the church and the square, and remaining there, resolutely determined not to leave without seeing the Father and getting his blessing. Hence the Superior of the Capuchins was obliged to command the Father to show himself for the consolation and satisfaction of the citizens. So great was the eagerness of everyone to see and to touch him that several knights and I myself were hardly able to prevent him being crushed and injured. The Capuchins, realizing the impossibility of putting a stop to the concourse, sent the Father out of Milan with all possible secrecy."

Often, we are assured, there were as many as 300 carriages stretching from Leone de Porta Orientale to the monastery.

Father Jerome of Cremona, the Guardian, describes the straits to which he and the community were reduced : “ For myself, I left nothing undone to stop the concourse. I had the gate of the monastery locked, and I used a secret gate leading on to the bastion. Finding that a Brother, through simplicity, had given certain individuals things belonging to the Father, I imposed on him a public penance, and forbade anyone else to do the like. The religious were in a manner imprisoned, and to keep back the crowds I posted German soldiers outside the monastery gate. The distress of myself and the community was such that I would have done anything possible and lawful to stop the concourse. Imagining that by satisfying the people they would leave us in peace and go back to their business, I commanded the Father to give his blessing from the pulpit in the church ; but it was all to no purpose, and so I decided to send him out of Milan.”

The place selected was the monastery of Melzo, a few miles from the city. Father Jerome had not communicated his decision to anyone, yet when he went to speak with Father Lawrence about leaving, the latter came out of his room to meet him, and said : “ I know why your Paternity has come ; I am ready to leave Milan at once.”

One of the above witnesses attributes the commotion to the action of the Holy Ghost, Who made use of

the Saint for the conversion and sanctification of souls. Another witness derived a similar impression from his own experience : " It seemed to me that the sight of him furthered in some way the salvation of my soul."

Numerous and stupendous miracles increased the excitement. Julian Plattus,¹ a Milanese nobleman, had for eight years suffered from a disease which reduced him to a skeleton. Every part of his body was affected. His headaches were intolerable ; he endured racking pains in his hands and feet, his arms, his legs, his sides ; the stomach refused food, and the little sleep he got was disturbed and unrefreshing. Remedies only made him worse. Going in a carriage to the monastery, he found Lawrence in bed with gout. At the sight of the invalid and the description of his sufferings, the Saint was deeply moved. " Three times," says Plattus, " looking at the crucifix, he prayed and put his hands on my head, meanwhile shedding copious tears. Then, kissing my head, he consoled me with these words : ' Courage, now ; put your trust in Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and our Father St. Francis, who will help you.' " The nobleman drove home feeling better. That evening he was able to sit at table with his family, and ate and relished his food. During the night he slept well, and, being freed from pain, he gradually regained his strength, and in two months was completely restored to health.

The next cure we select was instantaneous. Chevalier Gabriel Toso endured a martyrdom from pains in his legs, which he was obliged to keep in a

¹ " Summary of Process," p. 127.

cradle to obtain any relief. He could not stand without being supported by his servants, and his case was declared hopeless by the physicians. Being carried to the Capuchin church, he was laid down in front of the high-altar. Whilst he was there, Lawrence went into the pulpit, and with a crucifix blessed the assemblage that filled the sacred edifice. Toso, entirely freed from pain, walked home without assistance.

A mother describes the deplorable condition of her little boy, Christopher Caimi.¹ From the age of six the boy suffered from running sores that covered his body, and he became deformed in every limb. The head rested on the left shoulder ; the right arm stuck fast to the chest ; the feet were turned upwards, so that when he tried to walk he supported himself on the calves of his legs. Besides countless smaller ones, there were twenty-five large open wounds. One in the neck went down to the throat, and when the bandage was removed there came out a gush of wind. The best physicians and surgeons in Milan had exercised their skill in vain. Hearing of the Capuchin's miraculous powers, the poor mother took her disfigured offspring to the church, where she found the servant of God surrounded by a number of sick people. With the aid of neighbours who accompanied her she succeeded in drawing the Father's attention to the little invalid. "At the sight of him," she tells us, "Father Lawrence showed great compassion, and blessed him twice. When we returned home we watched to see what would happen. We first noticed that the head

¹ "Milan Process."

and neck straightened, then the right arm stretched out and moved freely; both feet resumed their natural position, and all the wounds dried up and healed. At this the neighbours cried out, 'A miracle! a miracle!' In a short time the boy was perfectly well." When the mother's evidence was taken, her son, now grown up, was employed every day in laborious work, and was enjoying excellent health.

When Lawrence journeyed back to Venice, the ovations along the route were almost continuous, but at Vicenza they reached their climax. The Capuchin monastery is outside the city, and, in the words of an eye-witness, "on his arrival all the inhabitants came out and surrounded the building. The authorities at Venice, fearing some mishap, sent a body of soldiers to keep order,¹ but the crowd forced the doors of the monastery, and made a rush for the cell of the Father, who had to lock himself in and remain there as a prisoner. Some, bolder than the others, procured ladders and mounted to the window of the cell. Much annoyed, the victim remonstrated with them: 'For God's sake, give over tormenting me! Go away!' The cloister, the dormitory, the garden, the church, were filled; people even climbed the trees, and seemed like a flock of birds that had alighted on the branches. Some gentlemen, with the help of the religious, managed at last to conduct the Father to the Refectory, that he might get something to eat." On this occasion the people went so far as to cut hairs off his beard and pieces off his habit and mantle.

¹ "Bavarian Process."

The citizens of Vicenza, however, were not the only ones who in their intemperate devotion forgot their manners. Even the Romans,¹ who are credited with being more staid and self-possessed than other Italians, once cut away a large portion of the Saint's mantle and part of his habit. We pass over the renewed excitement at Venice on the occasion of Lawrence's return, and shall here interrupt the course of our story to dwell on some special aspects of his life and character.

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 317.

CHAPTER XX

PATIENCE IN SUFFERING—DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AND TO OUR LADY

- I. How he endured an attack of gout—God allays his sufferings that he may celebrate Mass—Miraculous cure—Incredulous doctor.
- II. Devotion to Blessed Sacrament—Walks forty miles to celebrate—How he behaved at sea when unable to celebrate—The time he took in celebrating—How the Duke of Mantua attended his Mass.
- III. His gift of tears while celebrating—Miraculous handkerchiefs—Holy Child appears to him during Mass—His fervent thanksgiving.
- IV. Our Lord Himself miraculously gives Holy Communion to Lawrence and his companions.
- V. How he practised devotion to Our Lady. The effect of an image of Our Lady upon him.
- VI. Miracles wrought by him through Our Lady's intercession :
(1) Cures a girl ; (2) Our Lady herself addresses Lawrence ;
(3) Our Lady appears to him.
- VII. His fasts in her honour—How the non-observance of these fasts affected him in health—Special favours granted to him by Our Lady : (1) Knowledge of Hebrew ; (2) safety in battle ; (3) ecstatic effect of her name upon him—His devotion to her while he was travelling.

IN the foregoing chapters references have been made to Father Lawrence's sufferings from gout. We find the first mention of it during the Battle of Stuhlweissenbourg, and as time went on the attacks increased in violence and frequency, and till the end of his life he endured martyrdom from this cruel disease. Frequently he could neither stand nor move, but his patience was most edifying—never a murmur, nor a sigh, nor a gesture that betrayed the

least discontent. When the pain became exceptionally acute, he would cry out : " Praised be God and the Blessed Virgin !" Like holy Job, he sinned not with his lips, nor spoke he any foolish thing against God. Neither would he allow himself any indulgence, or as a rule accept any dispensation, or exchange his hard couch for a soft one. Often when his hands and feet were on fire, so that the gentlest touch was felt as a dagger-thrust, the crowds hustled him in their frantic efforts to get near and touch him, yet under the terrible ordeal he neither winced nor betrayed the slightest sign of impatience. What he must have undergone from this indiscreet devotion can be realized only by those who have had a similar experience. And he, who felt such pity and compassion for others, and healed all manner of diseases, this one, amongst the rest, seems never to have entertained any sentiment of pity or compassion for himself, or to have asked God to deal more kindly with him. God, however, did interpose by affording temporary relief in order to satisfy His servant's ardent desire to offer the Holy Sacrifice. Being laid up at Prague, and unable to leave his bed, Lawrence lamented, not his excruciating pains, but his inability to celebrate the Divine mysteries. One morning he requested the brethren to carry him to the private oratory and vest him for Mass. While being vested, the pains abated and gradually ceased, his strength returned, and he went through the Mass, performing all the ceremonies without support or assistance. As soon as he took off the sacred vestments he relapsed into his former helplessness, and had to be carried back

to bed. The same thing happened each of the following mornings as long as that attack lasted. In subsequent attacks, however violent, he was never prevented saying Mass, the Divine power taking away the pains and sustaining him at the altar. Evidence of this wonderful fact is supplied by witnesses from Genoa, Milan, Mantua, Bassano, Venice, etc.¹ Dr. Turca, who attended the Saint at Mantua, being told that he said Mass each morning, refused to believe it till he himself saw him celebrating. At Venice the doctor one evening found him so ill that, before leaving, he told the Infirmarian that Father Lawrence could not last over another day. The Brother, relying on past experience, confidently assured the doctor that the Father would say Mass as usual the next morning. The man of science shook his head and smiled at the Brother's simplicity ; but, calling early on the morrow to visit his patient, as he believed, for the last time, what was his surprise when informed by the porter that the Father was at the altar actually celebrating ! Still incredulous, the doctor went to the church and verified the porter's statement. What was the secret of this marvellous recuperation ? What but love, which, stronger than disease, gave vigour to his spirit and conquered his bodily weakness ?

Love for his Sacramental Lord assumed in Lawrence the intensity of a passion. We have seen him a youth at Venice, rapt in ecstasy after Holy Communion, and his devotion to the Blessed Eucharist increased with his years. Even before

¹ Local Processes of Beatification. "Summary of Process." pp. 68-71.

his ordination he would spend hours before the altar, immovable and unconscious of all around him. After his ordination, nothing could keep him from saying Mass daily, neither urgent business, nor fatigue, nor long journeys, nor serious illness — nothing, in a word, except sheer physical impossibility. Once, when General, he was travelling through a Protestant district of Switzerland, and, arriving at a certain place before noon on the Eve of St. Lawrence, Martyr, he said Mass, and having inquired of the Catholic inhabitants the next nearest place where he could celebrate on the Feast, he learned that it was forty miles distant. After taking breakfast, he walked twenty miles that afternoon, and the remaining twenty next morning, arriving in time to begin Mass before mid-day. On another occasion, being at sea and unable to celebrate, he ate nothing all that day, remarking that he was not entitled to the food of the body, as he had not received the food of the soul.

In the early years of his priesthood, Lawrence said Mass within the usual time, half an hour, or at most three-quarters of an hour; but as he advanced in age he extended the time to two, four, eight, sometimes to ten or even twelve, hours. His practice was to commence Mass as soon as possible after the midnight office, and often it was noon before he finished.¹ The duration of the Mass varied according to the days and circumstances. For instance, on Fridays and Saturdays the Mass usually lasted nine hours; still longer on the feasts of Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and his Patron Saints,

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 74. See Neapolitan Process.

St. Joseph, St. Lawrence Martyr, and St. Mary Magdalene.¹ For the last-mentioned Saint he had special devotion, because he was born on her Feast. If important and urgent business had to be transacted, the time he spent at the altar was much shorter, and when he celebrated in public and for the convenience of the people, he finished in the ordinary time. Whenever possible, he celebrated in a private oratory with only the server present, though others of the brethren would sometimes steal in, and also, occasionally, seculars, who could not well be denied. Once the Duke of Mantua was admitted, but after some hours, getting tired, he left before the Mass was over. On his last journey to Spain in 1619, the Saint landed at Monaco, and, by invitation of the Prince, stayed at the Palace. It was a Saturday evening, and Lawrence arranged to say Mass very early next morning. The Princess, wishing to be present at the Mass, stayed up all night, and hid herself in a room off the oratory, where she could see without being seen. As soon as the Father entered the oratory, he whispered to his companion: "The Princess is here." Unlike the Duke of Mantua, she remained for the whole of the Mass, which lasted six hours.²

Nor must it be supposed that the celebrant was naturally slow or awkward; on the contrary, he read with facility and without hesitation, and performed the manual acts briskly, though with exactness and reverence; but as he proceeded, he simply lost himself in heavenly contemplation. His ecstasy began at the offertory, and deepened

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 80.

² "Milan Process."

as he entered on the Canon. In this state his countenance expressed the varying emotions of his soul—joy, wonder, sorrow, tenderness, gratitude. Tears rolled down his cheeks and saturated several handkerchiefs. The Duchess of Mantua¹ obtained some of these handkerchiefs from the Friars, and wringing them over a vase, filled it with the liquid. At Monaco the Princess instructed her maid to prepare six handkerchiefs, to which the maid added another for herself. After Mass, all seven were found completely wet with the celebrant's tears. At times blood was found mixed with the tears, and it stained the handkerchiefs. This fact was verified by the doctor at Mantua. The handkerchiefs were reverently preserved as relics, and were afterwards instrumental in effecting miracles.

At Munich, whilst the Saint was celebrating Mass shortly after midnight, the brother who served saw at the consecration the oratory suddenly flooded with light, as if it were midday.² Looking up, he beheld a lovely child smiling and caressing the celebrant. At the spectacle the brother fell down in a swoon. After Mass, Lawrence asked the server what caused the noise—what had he seen? Being told of the vision, the Father asked the brother to pray that God might reveal to him why he alone had been granted such a privilege. The brother prayed as directed, but the answer he received affected the celebrant, to whom he was inspired to say: "My grace is sufficient for thee." Hearing this, we are told, Lawrence rejoiced exceed-

¹ "Neapolitan Process," and "Summary," p. 82.

² "Venetian Process."

ingly. Had the Servant of God, like St. Paul, been subjected to grievous temptation which for a time disturbed his usual equanimity ?

The appearance of the Saint during his thanksgiving after Mass is described as altogether extraordinary. He seemed to be all on fire, and would pant with the heat, even in the depth of winter. When he was thus transformed, the other religious often came out of holy curiosity to look at him. "His countenance," they tell us, "shone like that of an angel, and filled with joy and devotion all who beheld him."¹

We will conclude this subject with a relation of what occurred at Gratz in Holy Week. It was during Lawrence's first sojourn in Germany. The Church being still unfinished, a room in the new monastery served as a chapel, but the Rubrics did not permit Mass to be celebrated there on Holy Thursday. For the Commissary and his brethren it was a great privation to be without Mass on the anniversary of the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament ; but they consoled themselves with the reflection that they could receive Our Lord in Holy Communion. On Holy Thursday morning, however, it was discovered that all the consecrated particles had, by mistake, been consumed the previous day. Grievously disappointed, the religious applied themselves with much fervour to make up for their loss by a spiritual Communion. Whilst they were thus engaged, the chapel was suddenly illuminated, and there appeared the Divine Institutor Himself, bearing in His hands

¹ " Venetian Process ; also " Neapolitan Process."

a pyx from which He communicated the Commissary and his brethren. This signal favour, merited by the Saint's devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, is well authenticated, and has been a matter of constant tradition in the Province of Styria. A painting representing the scene, and executed by a contemporary artist, was long preserved in the monastery at Gratz.

Lawrence's devotion to the Mother of God, we are assured by his companion and confessor,¹ "know no bounds, and was beyond description. After Our Lord, his thoughts and affections were centred on the Divine Mother. She formed the subject of his conversation with all who came to see him, and he sought every opportunity of advocating devotion to her, and pronounced those blessed who proved themselves her faithful clients." To satisfy his own devotion, he obtained from the Sovereign Pontiffs, Clement VIII. and Paul V.,² the privilege of saying every day the Mass of the Blessed Virgin, a privilege of which he availed himself, except on great solemnities—as Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, or on feasts of certain Saints. On the altar where he celebrated he always had a picture of the Madonna, and during the Mass he would cast loving glances first at the crucifix and then at this picture. Knowing what would please him, the companions of this journey took care to have his cell furnished with a picture or a statue of Mary, and this was the first object that his eyes sought on entering the cell. The sight of it made him forget all fatigue and weariness.

¹ "Milan Process."

² "Summary of Process," pp. 63 and 67.

Before these images he would kneel and pray, shedding tears of tenderness, and the vehemence of his love would find vent in burning ejaculations : " Ah, my lady ! ah, my lady ! blessed is he that loves thee, and bears thee in his heart."¹ Often Mary was the theme of his sermons, as, for instance, during the Lenten course at Naples. His usual salutation was : " Blessed be Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary." In blessing the religious, he used those words from her office,² " Nos cum prole pia benedicat Virgo Maria " (May the Virgin Mary bless us with her holy Child), and with the same blessing he concluded his letters to great personages. In the blessing for the sick he introduced Mary's name : " Per sancta nomina Jesu et Mariæ liberet te Deus " (May God deliver thee through the holy names of Jesus and Mary). Temptations against purity he banished with the formula : " Per purissimam Virginitatem Jesu et Mariæ, liberet me Deus a spiritu fornicationis " (Through the most pure virginity of Jesus and Mary, may God deliver me from the spirit of fornication).

At Vicenza, whilst visiting a family, the Saint was shown into a room where one of the children, a girl of eight, was laid up with a violent fever, and in a state of delirium. Fixing his eyes upon her, he said :³ " If Magdalene will be devout to the most holy Virgin, she will recover." He then directed that the child should be allowed to get up. When dressed, she was brought to him. Taking her by the hand, he asked : " Magdalene, do you

¹ " Milan Process."

² " Summary of Process," p. 262.

³ " Vicenza Process," and " Summary," p. 199.

promise to be devout to the most holy Virgin?" "Yes, Father," she replied. He blessed her, saying: "May the most holy Virgin deliver and cure you!" Immediately the fever left her. In 1617 Lawrence was attended at Verona by a doctor,¹ who has left a long account of his patient's devotion to Our Lady. When the doctor visited him in his cell, the Saint would point to a small painting of the Blessed Virgin, and would say with great glee, "Eh, doctor, isn't Our Lady beautiful?" It is stated² that once Mary spoke to her client from her picture, whilst he was saying Mass in the crypt under the choir at Prague. When we visited this city in May, 1908, we were told that, according to tradition, Our Lady also appeared to him at the main entrance of the Hradschin monastery. A painting in the church and a fresco on the outside wall over the monastery door represent the apparition. A holy religious, Adam of Rovigo,³ testifies that one evening at Munich he saw the Blessed Virgin appear over the head of the Saint, who was absorbed in prayer. She was surrounded by light, and illuminated the whole room, which was situated beneath the Sacristy.

From his student days Lawrence fasted every Saturday in Mary's honour, and on the Vigils of her feasts he took only bread and water. Nothing except obedience could induce him to depart from this practice. To all who tried to prevail on him to give it up on account of sickness, work, journeys, etc., he would answer: "God forbid! God forbid!" For the encouragement of others he would recount

¹ "Verona Process."

² "Milan Process."

³ "Summary of Process," pp. 261 and 271.

what happened to him during his early life in religion. It was when cured by Our Lady at Oderzo that, as we have seen, he began the Saturday fast. Some time afterwards, by order of a kind-hearted superior, he interrupted it. But he soon became weak and emaciated, and by permission of the same Superior he resumed the fast, and had his health restored. Mary, on her part, obtained for him the most signal favours. To her he attributed his wonderful mastery of Hebrew. It was also to her special protection that he considered himself indebted for his safety amidst so many dangers, as, for instance, at the Battle of Stuhlweissenbourg. Speaking with his fellow-religious, he would often say, placing his hand upon his breast: "Well do I know what graces the Virgin obtains for her devout clients." In all necessities, difficulties, and troubles he had recourse to this heavenly advocate, who never failed him. The mere mention of her name threw him into an ecstasy, especially in the later years of his life.¹ Even when conversing with distinguished visitors² he would become suddenly absorbed, so that they could not get another word from him. They would then complain that they were deprived of conversation with the Father, because he was taken up with God and the Blessed Virgin. His companions state that in travelling, after the recitation of the Divine Office, he was in the habit of singing hymns to Mary; for instance, the "Stabat Mater," but more frequently that of Petrarch: "*Vergine bella che di sole vestita*" (Beautiful Virgin, who clothed with the sun).

¹ "Milan Process."

² "Summary of Process," p. 225.

CHAPTER XXI

PREMONITIONS OF DEATH—JOURNEY TO ROME AND NAPLES—NEAPOLITAN ENVOY TO SPAIN

- I. Foretells his death to the Friars of Venice and to his confessor.
- II. Miracle performed in Marches of Ancona — Duke of Bavaria's gratitude to St. Lawrence—How Lawrence was besieged at Naples—How he was prevented from visiting his native city.
- III. Reason of his summons to Naples—Misgovernment of the kingdom—Character of Duke of Osuna—Deputation of noblemen calls upon Lawrence at Naples—How he received them, and how they behaved in his presence—Presentiment of death—Writes to Duke of Bavaria.

FATHER LAWRENCE'S stay at Venice on his return from Milan must have been brief, since he had to attend the General Chapter held at Rome, June 1, 1618. At this Chapter he was for the fifth time elected Definitor-General. His strenuous life was now drawing to a close, and he knew that he should see his beloved Venice no more. Before his departure the brethren begged him to hasten back and spend with them his declining years. He only answered: "I shall die in the Province of St. Anthony." This answer consoled them, as the Venetian Province has St. Anthony as its patron, but so, too, has the Province of Lisbon, and it was of this latter, as the sequel proved, that Lawrence was thinking. At Padua he was met by Father Ambrose of Florence,

for many years his companion and confessor, and to him he confided that his death was near. "In that case," replied the devoted friend, "come back soon, that we may pass our last days together." "My dear brother," he rejoined in a tone of sadness, "we shall never see each other again in this world. When you hear of my death, remember me at the altar." They embraced for the last time, neither being able to utter another word. Unable to walk by reason of the gout in his feet, he made the journey to Rome on horseback. In the marches of Ancona, beyond Macerata, he met a number of people, amongst whom was a priest accompanied by his two sisters. These two, seeing him, began to howl and shriek, and throwing themselves on the ground, went through frightful contortions. The Saint commanded them to come near, and, both obeying, knelt beneath his feet in the stirrups. They were immediately freed from the evil spirits, and fervently thanked him for his charity. The priest, who looked on with amazement, exclaimed: "This must be a great servant of God, for I never suspected that these women were possessed."

After the General Chapter, Lawrence prepared to fulfil a commission he had received from the Duke of Bavaria. Maximilian, out of gratitude to his friend, had built a church in honour of the Madonna, and also a convent on the site of the house where the Saint was born. His Highness placed the money for the building in the hands of the Archbishop of Brindisi, but, owing to a rupture between his Grace and the citizens, the work was suspended. On September 3, 1607, the Nuncio

at Prague begs Cardinal Borghese to have appointed by the Pope an agent at Brindisi to take charge of the money, and carry out the work. Nothing, however, seems to have been done at that time, for we find the Nuncio writing again, May 4, 1609, urging the Cardinal to have the money handed over to two canons, or two reliable lay-persons of Brindisi, lest the Archbishop should die, and his relatives should claim the money, and then the intentions of the donor and the wishes of Father Lawrence would be frustrated. In reply to the Cardinal's letter, the Archbishop of Brindisi gives an account of the moneys received and of the work done, and names two canons who, with himself, have the custody of the funds (June 9, 1609). Eventually the church and the convent were finished, and were offered to the Capuchinesses, a branch of the Poor Clares. Several times the noble patron had expressed a wish that the Father should visit his native city and inspect the buildings, but now a pressing motive caused His Highness to renew the request. The good Sisters, whilst satisfied with the poverty of the convent, considered the church altogether too grand for their use, and steadfastly refused to leave their old quarters.¹ And, indeed, according to the detailed description given by Father Bonaventure, the church was truly magnificent, and in keeping with the princely character of its founder. To persuade the nuns to accept the Duke's gift could hardly have been an agreeable task to such a

¹ In 1619, by command of Paul V., thirty of the nuns took possession of the new church and convent. Ten nuns remained in the old convent till February 4, 1622, when they followed the majority to the new one.

lover of Franciscan poverty as Lawrence; still, to please his friend, he consented to go and see what could be done. He travelled via Naples, where he arrived late at night, and put up at the monastery of the Immaculate Conception. News of his arrival soon spread, and early next morning the church and monastery were besieged by excited Neapolitans, clamouring to see "the Holy Father."¹ As the crowds seriously inconvenienced the religious community, the visitor after a few days removed to the smaller monastery of St. Ephrem, in a quiet part of the city. The change merely caused the siege to be transferred from one monastery to the other. Here the situation became intolerable. "We were reduced," says the Guardian, "to such extremities that every hour seemed to me a thousand years till he left Naples." The Bishop of Nola, who came to see the Father and knelt down for his blessing, witnessing the popular commotion, remarked: "I verily believe that if SS. Peter and Paul returned to the earth, there could not be a greater concourse or greater devotion."² Lawrence's stay in Naples being no longer possible, he proceeded as far as Caserta,³ whence he proposed continuing the journey to Brindisi. At Caserta he was seized with a violent attack of gout, and was forced to wait till it abated. But God did not will that he should revisit his native city. Just as he was about to start, he received a letter from the Father Guardian of the larger monastery at Naples. Opening it, he read that, by order of the Cardinal Protector,

¹ "Neapolitan Process."

² "Milan Process."

³ "Summary of Process," p. 319.

he was to return to Naples at once. Turning to his companion, Father John Mary of Monteforte, he remarked : " I believe it is God's will that I should not go to Brindisi, since, having twice before set out, for the third time I am obliged once more to abandon the journey."¹

What had happened ? Affairs in the kingdom of Naples were at that period in a deplorable condition owing to the misgovernment of the Viceroy, the Duke of Osuna. The character and administration of this man are thus described by Muratori :² " He was of a most extravagant and ambitious disposition ; always planning new projects, and executing them at his own caprice ; he trampled on the nobility, violated the rights of the Church, laid heavy imposts on the people, and had scanty respect even for orders from the Court of Spain." Under him the laws were disregarded, and everywhere disorder, confusion, and violence reigned. Things had reached a crisis, and discontent had become so general and acute, that a revolution was likely to break out at any moment. In this extremity the deputies, assembled in the capital for the transaction of business, put their heads together, and petitioned the Viceroy for permission to send a representative to Philip III., in order to obtain a remedy for the public calamities. Osuna found himself between Scylla and Charybdis. If he granted the permission he would afford facilities for his own exposure ; if he refused it, he would run the risk of incurring the royal displeasure.

¹ " Milan Process, Summary," p. 319.

² " Annali d' Italia," vol. xv., A. D. 1618.

The former course, he concluded, would be the less dangerous, as he might devise means of preventing the journey of the representative. The consent of the Viceroy being granted, the next step of the deputies was to choose their man. Though they had many able and prudent individuals amongst themselves, they unanimously elected Father Lawrence, for whom they obtained an obedience from Cardinal Montalto, Protector of the Capuchins. Of all this the Father knew nothing, and was therefore surprised at his sudden recall from Caserta; but the will of the Protector he regarded as law, and, on receipt of the letter, proceeded the same day to Naples. Arriving late at the monastery of the Immaculate Conception, after reporting himself to the Guardian, he retired to his cell. Shortly afterwards the Guardian came to tell him that a number of gentlemen wished to speak with him on urgent and important business. Lawrence inquired what they wanted, and was informed that they would communicate their business only to himself. "Show them into the refectory," he said, "and I will see them presently." Coming down, he found eighteen gentlemen, heads of the nobility, who, as soon as he appeared, testifies an eyewitness,¹ "threw themselves on their knees weeping bitterly." Their spokesman explained the object of their visit, and besought him, for the love of God, of the Blessed Virgin, of His Catholic Majesty, whose kingdom was in danger, not to reject their petition. "When the Father heard what they wanted, he began to retire, excusing himself as too old and infirm, and

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 319 *et seq.*

begged them to make choice of someone else. But they insisted all the more, and wept so piteously that the Guardian, and the other Fathers, and myself, who were present, could not refrain from weeping with them. They then handed him the obedience from the Cardinal Protector. When Father Brindisi saw, on the one hand, the order of the Cardinal, and witnessed, on the other, the tears and entreaties of those gentlemen, he accepted the embassy."

All hope of again seeing Brindisi now vanished, for the Saint had a presentiment that this journey would cost him his life. Such presentiment he clearly expresses in a letter written before leaving to the Duke of Bavaria :

" Jesus, Mary.

" MOST SERENE PRINCE,

" I had already started to put into execution the pious wish of your Highness to visit the church and the convent which you built with royal magnificence. But on reaching Naples I was so violently attacked and tormented by the gout that I could not continue the journey. Afterwards, whilst gradually getting better and regaining sufficient strength to set out again, it pleased Heaven to raise a fresh obstacle to my plans, by inspiring the chief men in Naples and in the entire kingdom to charge me, on the part also of His Holiness, with an important commission to His Catholic Majesty. Convinced by evident tokens that God wills me to further their just designs, I have, without opposition, yielded to their entreaties, and have given up one good work

only to undertake a better. In going, I am animated with a lively confidence in the mercy of God, Who by this journey will put an end to the calamities of the kingdom of Naples, and likewise to the miseries of my life. I hope that in Heaven, where I, too, hope to be received during this same journey, He may bestow on your most Serene Highness the reward of your virtues, and that these may be perpetuated in your illustrious descendants. Jesus and Mary, bless us.

“BROTHER LAWRENCE OF BRINDISI.”¹

¹ “Summary of Process,” p. 277.

CHAPTER XXII

INTRIGUES OF THE VICEROY—NEGOTIATIONS AT LISBON

- I. How the Viceroy strove to prevent Lawrence from going on his mission—How the Viceroy was checkmated—Incidents of the flight: (1) The meekness of Vietri's horse with St. Lawrence; (2) miraculous cure of Mirabello; (3) spends the Feast of St. Francis with his brethren; (4) how by means of prayer he learned what to do in a dilemma.
- II. Further action of the Viceroy against St. Lawrence—Writes to Rome—Letter from the Cardinal Secretary to the Nuncio at Madrid—St. Lawrence criticized by certain ecclesiastical statesmen—Diplomatic dust.
- III. Lawrence's obedience is cancelled at Genoa—Action of Neapolitans and the King—Obedience rescinded—Journey to Lisbon—Lawrence at Belem—The Envoy in audiences with the King—The first audience and the King's behaviour—The second audience and the things discussed—The last audience—Moral and political advice to the King—Foretells the King's death.
- IV. Result of the Embassy—Recall of Osuna—Beginning of his trial in time of Philip III.—Reopening of trial and sentence of imprisonment for life on Osuna under Philip IV.

OSUNA was thoroughly alarmed, and not without reason, when he learned on whom had fallen the choice of the deputies. He knew well the regard in which Lawrence was held at the Court of Spain, and what influence he had with the King. Hence he determined to employ all possible means to prevent his departure. For this purpose he had all

the roads watched, and he posted guards at all the bridges, and to preclude escape by sea he ordered two armed vessels (feluccas) to cruise along the coast with instructions to board and search every craft they sighted, and, if they found the Capuchin, to bring him back alive or dead. Those who assisted in capturing him were to be rewarded with ten ducats a head. But all these precautions proved unavailing, for "there is no counsel against the Lord." If the Viceroy was awake, the Neapolitans were not asleep, and soon became aware of his sinister designs. About midnight, October 2, Count Francis Serra¹ went to the monastery, where he found the Father so disabled by gout in his hands and feet that he could scarcely move. Still, as time pressed, the Count, having disguised him in the uniform of the Viceroy's guards, mounted him on horseback, and conducted him to Barra, a few miles outside Naples. Here lived Serra's uncle, Charles Mirabello, who was expecting them. Without dismounting, Lawrence proceeded with Mirabello to a farm, where it was considered he would be safe for the present. His guide relates that, to avoid the Viceroy's spies, they kept to the byroads. These being in bad repair and the night dark, Mirabello walked in front to show the way. The horse, which belonged to the Duke of Vietri, was a mettlesome animal, and ordinarily was difficult to manage. So far he had behaved well, but the guide, afraid he might begin playing pranks, cautioned the rider to twist the reins round his arm, since the gout prevented him using his hands.

¹ "Neapolitan Process," and "Summary," pp. 110-112.

“Have no fear,” replied the Father; “leave him alone, he will go all right.” In fact, the horse continued as gentle as a lamb, though he gave Mirabello as much as he could do to manage him on the return journey. Another incident of that night is recorded by the same nobleman. Being the vintage season, the farmers let loose their dogs at night to keep away robbers. In passing a farm, the unfortunate Neapolitan was attacked by one of these dogs, and so badly bitten in the leg that he feared he could go no farther. “The pain was intense, and I cried out, ‘I’m crippled!’” Father Brindisi said, ‘Don’t mind, it’s nothing!’ The pain at once ceased, and no trace of wound or injury was left.” On arrival at the farmhouse, Father Lawrence was joined the same morning by Father John Mary of Monteforte, and Father Jerome of Casanuova, who were to be his travelling companions; also by the Father Guardian of Naples. To these he expressed his regret at not being able to say Mass that day,¹ and his determination not to forgo the privilege the day following, the Feast of the Seraphic Father. From this all tried to dissuade him, pointing out the risk of being captured by the minions of the Viceroy. However, his mind was made up, and he assured them that the Lord would take care of him, and of the interests confided to him. That night, therefore, he was again put on horseback, and taken to the nearest Capuchin monastery, where he offered the holy Sacrifice, and spent the Feast with the brethren. When darkness set in, he went with his companions to a secluded cove near Torre del Greco,

¹ “Summary of Process,” p. 113.

where, according to arrangement, a vessel awaited them.¹ A terrific storm was raging, and it was known that the vessels of the Viceroy were watching along the coast. To face the open sea in such a storm seemed courting certain death; to wait till daylight meant falling into the hands of Osuna. In this dilemma the Servant of God spent a few moments in silent prayer, then, turning to the sailors, he said: "Courage, men; launch out into the deep and fear nothing." The words were received as a prophecy, and without hesitation the sailors made boldly for the open sea. Next morning they found themselves off the Port of Terracina, whence they pursued their course to Vallettri. Here Lawrence landed, and was borne in a litter to Rome, reaching the Capuchin monastery late on Friday night, October 12. Early next morning he embarked again at Ripa, and continued the journey to Genoa. After a few days' rest at this port he proposed to resume the voyage in a Spanish vessel, but, as the event proved, he was delayed much longer than he had foreseen.

The Viceroy, besides the precautions already mentioned, brought pressure to bear on the Nuncio at Naples, and on the authorities at Rome. Lorenzo Morsi, secretary to the Nuncio, writes to an official of the Roman Curia:

"October 9.

"On Saturday the Nuncio informed His Excellency (Osuna) that the obedience for Father Brindisi was given by his Superiors without the

¹ "Neapolitan Process," and "Summary," p. 108.

knowledge of His Holiness, or of the Cardinal Padrone (Cardinal Borghese, Papal Secretary of State). He showed him also the substance of the letter written to the Duke of Vietri, from which His Excellency could see the goodwill of His Holiness, and of the Cardinal towards himself. Nevertheless, the Nuncio would be pleased if orders were sent to the said Father not to interfere in secular affairs, but to prosecute his journey (to Brindisi), more especially as the minds of the deputies and of the people appear to be somewhat calmed, and, if the Father does not go, perhaps no one else will be chosen."

From this letter it would seem that Father Lawrence's departure was not yet known. On October 17, 1618, the Cardinal Secretary informs the Nuncio at Madrid of the election made by the Neapolitan deputies. The letter continues :

"The Nuncio at Naples now writes that, according to report, this religious has started with an obedience, pursuing his journey by sea with great haste. . . . This conduct on the part of Father Brindisi is very displeasing to His Holiness, not only because he should, as a religious, have presented himself for the Holy Father's permission and blessing, but also because of the diffidence shown in going thus hurriedly, and, as it were, by stealth. . . . This, you are to understand, is for your own information, and I do not wish you to speak of it, especially to Father Brindisi. However, you are to manage by some means to make it reach the ears of Duke Uzedo, that he may protect the interests of Osuna."

The same day the Cardinal, in a long letter to the Nuncio at Naples, enters into details intended to convince the Viceroy that the Pope knew nothing of Father Lawrence's mission till it was too late. "The obedience," he says, "passed through the hands of Cardinal Montalto, who states that he was induced to give it in order to please the representatives of the deputies."

From the above correspondence it is clear that the Cardinal Secretary was most anxious lest Osuna should believe that the Pope was in any way responsible for the Father's journey to Spain. However, it is equally clear that Father Lawrence was given to understand that the Holy Father charged him with the mission, as stated in the letter to the Duke of Bavaria. In any case, the obedience from the Cardinal Protector left him no option. His haste in departing from Rome is possibly explained by the fact that the Viceroy's vessels were in pursuit, and, as a matter of fact, arrived in the Gulf of Genoa only a few hours later than his own. Hence we may regard the aspersions and insinuations against him in the correspondence as merely diplomatic dust thrown into the eyes of Osuna, through fear of the latter's resentment and revenge.

But though the Envoy had got beyond his reach, the Viceroy did not despair. It was known that Lawrence would call at Genoa, and the Cardinal Protector was prevailed upon to cancel the obedience for Madrid. The representations made to His Eminence caused him to believe that in doing so, to use Father Bonaventure's expression, he was rendering a service to God (*obsequium se præstare*

Deo). This second communication, which the Saint received at Genoa, and which directed him to await further orders, he accepted with the same resignation as he did the first. For the moment Osuna had triumphed, but the Neapolitans, acquainted with his latest move, found means of communicating with the King, who instructed His Ambassador at Rome to wait on the Cardinal Protector, and, if necessary, on the Pope, in order that Father Lawrence might be allowed to continue his journey. The royal pleasure being thus made known, a third obedience was despatched, ordering the Father to put the first into execution. Three months having been wasted through these miserable intrigues, the Envoy at last set sail with his two companions, and disembarked probably at Barcelona.

Hearing that the King was about to visit Lisbon, he hastened to Madrid, but arrived too late, as His Majesty had left two days previously. Consequently he was obliged to undertake the journey to Lisbon, which he reached in June, 1619. Portugal, though belonging to Spain, retained its distinct entity as a kingdom, and the Sovereign had to be crowned in the Portuguese capital. The coronation of Philip was about to take place, and whilst preparations were being made in the city, the Court resided at Belem¹ in the magnificent monastery of the Jeronimites. As yet there was no Capuchin house in or near Lisbon,² and Lawrence was entertained at Belem by his old friend, Don

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 320.

² The first Capuchin house was founded at Lisbon in 1647 ("Bullarium Capuccinorum," t. iii., p. 234).

Pedro. The first audience with the King was brief and formal, and took place in the morning; but so eager was His Majesty to learn the real state of affairs in Naples that after a few hours he sent for the Envoy, and received him with the greatest familiarity. He told him to dispense in future with all formalities, and call as often as he pleased. In this second audience, which lasted three hours, the Father explained the object of his mission; he described the tyranny of Osuna, the grievances of the Neapolitans, and represented the danger of Spain losing the two Sicilies. All this he confirmed with documents furnished him by the deputies. Other audiences followed, Lawrence on each occasion being at once admitted to the royal presence. In the last audience the Saint took the liberty to give His Majesty some salutary advice¹ for his personal conduct, and for the government of his vast dominions. He reminded him of the account that he would have to render to a higher power, and foretold that, though still comparatively young, he had not many more years to live. Philip, like a good Christian, profited by the advice, keeping a more watchful eye on his ministers, and preparing himself for the end common to Princes and peasants. The monarch died two years afterwards, at the early age of forty-three. The account of this final conference, with its effect upon the King, was related by Don Pedro to the General of the Capuchins, when the latter visited Madrid. What, it will be asked, was the result of the Embassy? Though the conferences were interrupted by the Envoy's illness,

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 357.

which terminated in his death, they were not fruitless. Osuna was recalled, and left Naples in June, 1620. Though his trial was commenced, the proceedings were suspended during the lifetime of Philip III., who held back from inflicting any further punishment on the ex-Viceroy. After all, the Spanish Government of Naples was generally so bad that Osuna's administration could only be considered some degrees worse than that of his predecessors. Under Philip IV., however, the process was reopened, and, notwithstanding the influence of powerful friends, the tyrant, being found guilty, was sentenced to imprisonment for life in the fortress of Almeda. Here he died of apoplexy in 1624.

CHAPTER XXIII

LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH—EMBALMMENT OF BODY AND REMOVAL TO VILLAFRANCA

- I. Prophetic announcement after Mass—The King's alarm—Instances of the devotion of noblemen to him—His pious practices during his illness—His humility—His message to the Father-General—Asks for the last Sacraments—Description of him in his last agony—Description of him morally and physically—Effect of his death on Kings and people—How the people sought relics—Miraculous state of preservation of the body.
- II. How Don Pedro stole the Saint's body—Miraculous signs appear on the approach of the body—How the Poor Clares received the body at Villafranca.

At Genoa, during the long and weary wait, Lawrence was confined to his bed with gout accompanied by fever, and, being in a weak condition, he overtaxed his strength by the journey, especially overland to Madrid and thence to Lisbon. And now, after the fifth audience with the King, dysentery set in, and daily increased in violence. Though spending most of the time in bed, he managed for the first five days to say Mass, which, however, he did not prolong beyond three hours. After Mass on the fifth day, he announced to his companions that this was his last illness. Don Pedro, hearing of the Saint's words, hastened to inform the King, who was surprised and shocked, as no one had taken a serious view of the case. His Majesty at once gave orders

that the Court physicians should attend the patient, and bestow on him the same care as they would on his royal person. These, indeed, proved most attentive, visiting Lawrence twice a day, morning and evening. Having carefully noted the symptoms, they came to the conclusion that there was no cause for anxiety. The patient himself, however, never wavered in his conviction that his complaint was beyond remedy. One day, when the physicians prescribed a very expensive medicine, he told them frankly that, though he would take it, he knew for certain it would do him no good. The favourable view of the doctors was shared by those of the household, and by all who came to visit him. To one of these, Count Francis Melzi,¹ a Milanese, who expressed the hope of his speedy recovery, the patient replied that he wished to die and to be with Christ—nay, moreover, he *knew* that he would die of his present illness.

Meanwhile the Court had removed into the city, and the coronation had taken place. Lawrence also was moved to Don Pedro's city residence. During the whole period of the illness, which lasted twenty days, the King and all the royal family manifested the utmost concern, and desired to be kept informed of the patient's condition. Don Pedro hardly ever left the sick-room, and every night before retiring he knelt down at the bedside for the Father's blessing. Don Balthasar Zuniga was also unremitting in his attentions, and sent one of his secretaries twice, and occasionally three times a day, to make inquiries.

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 326.

No longer able to say Mass, Lawrence made his confession almost daily, and each day received Holy Communion. In his sufferings he frequently repeated the ejaculation: "Praise be to God and Mary!" On July 21, having called his two companions, he told them that the end was near. Then, with great humility, he begged their pardon for all the trouble he had given them, thanked them affectionately for the comfort they had been to him, and consoled them with the prospect of an eternal reward. Then he asked them to go, after his death, to the Father-General of the Order, and beg his pardon, and through him the pardon of all the brethren for whatever bad example he, Lawrence, might have given. "Tell the Father-General," he added, "that this most holy cross which I wear was given me by the Duke of Bavaria, and His Highness wishes that after my death it should be placed with the other relics belonging to His Highness in the church at Brindisi. Take the cross, therefore, to the Father-General, and, when he so wills, go with it to Brindisi. Till deposited there, guard it most carefully." Addressing Father Jerome, he commissioned him that he should request the General to send Father John Mary to Bavaria, as he would be entrusted with a secret message for the Duke. Being then left alone with Father John Mary, the Saint confided to him, under the strictest secrecy, a message the nature of which has never transpired.¹

The following morning he announced to his companions that his last day had arrived, and begged to have the last Sacraments administered. Father

¹ "Summary of Process," pp. 321, 322.

Jerome celebrated Mass in the Oratory, and gave him *Viaticum*. The dying religious received his sacramental Lord for the last time with such ardent and tender devotion as drew tears from the spectators. After the ceremony he remained wholly absorbed in contemplation, with his eyes raised towards Heaven. After midday he asked for Extreme Unction, which was accordingly administered. Little by little his strength ebbed away, and he fell into his agony. The Prayers for the Dying were said by his companions, and at the holy Name he repeated it in a weak voice, and bowed his head. The family of Don Pedro appeared on the scene, and craved most earnestly for the blessing of the dying religious.¹ One of his companions, approaching the bed, implored him to leave his blessing to those present. Raising his eyes and stretching out his right hand, he made over them the sign of the cross. Then crossing his hands on his breast and closing his eyes, he began breathing like one in a quiet sleep. What followed we shall relate in the words of his friend, Count Francis Melzi: "On the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene I went to inquire about Father Brindisi, and being told that he was sinking, I determined not to leave him. When I entered the sick-room, I saw that the Father had commenced his agony. His face and his eyes were raised towards Heaven. I remained in the room all the time, and I never noticed in him the slightest sign of uneasiness or restlessness. Throughout he preserved his habitual gravity, recollection, and attention. A little before he expired I went to the left

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 323.

of the bed, and I beheld in his countenance, not without emotion, a peace and a calm that presaged the flight of his blessed soul to the bosom of God. In expiring he raised the left knee two or three times, as if trying to rise, and this was the only movement he made." He died about sunset, July 22, the day of his death being also his birthday. He had just completed sixty years of age, forty-four of which he had spent in religion.

Thus passed away one of the most remarkable men of his time, "a man honoured by Popes, esteemed by Princes, worshipped by the people. Possessed of all the virtues, he was humble without servility, magnanimous without ostentation, courageous without temerity. He knew how to reconcile action with contemplation in such a manner that his whole life was spent in the defence of religion and the welfare of his fellow-men, without ever losing sight of the Divine presence. Induced with power from on high, he removed all obstacles which human malice or the gates of Hell raised against his enterprises. The scourge of heretics and the terror of unbelievers, he inflicted greater defeats on the malignity of the one and the infidelity of the other than the armies of the most powerful Princes. In a word, he was the most serviceable, the most zealous, the most wonderful man which the Church produced in that age." To the above sketch of Father Lawrence's moral character, which we have taken from the "Life" by Father Bonaventure, may be added the following sketch of his physical appearance as supplied by contemporaries: He was tall and well-proportioned; his expression grave,

but tempered with kindness ; the forehead large and high ; the look keen and penetrating. A pleasant smile played about the lips, indicating perfect peace of soul. The beard was long and full, and in his latter years white as snow. The face was oval and strikingly spare. Altogether he was a most imposing personality, stamped by Nature as a leader of men.

Philip, at the announcement of Lawrence's death, was visibly affected, and his grief was shared by the other members of the royal family and by the whole Court. Indeed, in all the Courts of Europe where Lawrence was known the news was received with manifestations of lively sorrow. The Duke of Bavaria wrote : " I have lost my ablest counsellor, my wisest director, my dearest friend." Amongst the citizens of Lisbon the event aroused excitement that bordered on frenzy. Crowds flocked to have a last look at the deceased, but a look did not satisfy them. Each tried to secure some souvenir to be preserved as a relic.¹ The Father's Breviary, spectacles, habit, tunic, everything he had used, were appropriated. Count Melzi got a piece of the tunic and a cup ; Don Balthasar's servant obtained for his master a piece of the habit and some hairs from the beard. Bit by bit the habit disappeared, and the Capuchin Fathers had to beg another habit from their brethren, the Observantines. Besides the Breviary and spectacles Don Pedro procured by his foresight something still better calculated to keep fresh the memory of his friend. He commissioned the best painter in Lisbon to execute a faithful

¹ " Summary of Process," pp. 328-330.

portrait of the deceased, and this was satisfactorily done the night after his death. For the remainder of his life the devout Spaniard kept this portrait hung over his bed. We have stated that from the first the doctors did not consider the illness dangerous, and all along professed their confidence of recovery. Hence his death caused considerable surprise, and in certain quarters raised a suspicion of foul play; indeed, it was whispered that he had been poisoned,¹ presumably by an agent of Osuna. The suspicion was groundless, but to remove all doubt Don Pedro decided to have a post-mortem examination. For this purpose he addressed himself to a friend and confidant, Don Juan Ortiz, a naval officer, whom he requested to send some of the naval surgeons to perform the autopsy. These, however, objected, because fourteen hours had already elapsed since death took place, and in Lisbon at that season of the year decomposition should have set in eight hours previously. The same objection was raised by the civilian surgeons. At last Ortiz found a young practitioner who undertook the risk for the high fee of thirty gold ducats. All possible precautions were taken; the floor and walls of the room were washed with vinegar as an antiseptic, and the strongest essences were used to counteract the dreaded stench. But when the incision was made the most delicate fragrance permeated the room, and Ortiz, who was present, hastened to call Don Pedro from an adjoining apartment.² The latter, accompanied by the Court physicians, who had arrived for the examination,

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 333.

² *Ibid.*, p. 334.

came to the operating-room, and all perceived the delicious odour, which they agreed was more than earthly. No traces of poison could be detected, and the body was embalmed. The question as to the place of burial had yet to be settled. In Lisbon there were two Franciscan houses, one belonging to the Conventuals, the other to the Observantines, and each put forward its claim to the remains. While this dispute was going on Don Pedro executed a *coup de main*, which verified the proverb: "Duobus litigantibus tertius gaudet." With the consent of the King he arranged to have the body secretly conveyed to Villafranca in Galicia, where his daughter was a Poor Clare. From this town he derived his title: "Marquis of Villafranca." To divert suspicion he employed trusty craftsmen to make a small wooden oratory, with a leaden shell. The body being placed inside, the oratory was closed and securely fastened, and so expeditiously was the work carried out that the cortège left Lisbon on the night of July 23. Even the Capuchin Fathers were ignorant of what had been done till late the following morning. The journey of 300 miles occupied eighteen days. That the choice of the Saint's last resting-place was not displeasing to Heaven may be inferred from two phenomena which coincided with the coming of the body.¹ On the night of August 9 three sisters at the Convent of the Poor Clares beheld in the sky a large globe of dazzling splendour, which at intervals opened out and sent a shaft of light as far as the Convent. Not knowing what to think, they described what they

¹ "Villafranca Process de non Cultu," pp. 335-369

saw to the other Sisters. Very early next morning, the Feast of St. Lawrence Martyr, the bells of the parish church and of the other churches in the town began ringing of themselves, and awoke the inhabitants. During the day these prodigies were eagerly discussed on all sides. Towards evening a funeral party composed of soldiers was seen to arrive and make straight for the Convent.¹ Here it halted, and the officer in charge (Juan Ortiz) requested to speak with the daughter of Don Pedro. At the grille the Sister was handed a letter from her father, and read as follows :

“ MY DEAR CHILD,

“ I could not send you a more precious gift than that which I now send you. It is the body of the great Servant of God, Father Lawrence of Brindisi, who was General of the whole Order of Capuchins. He performed many miracles during the war which I waged on behalf of His Majesty against the heretics. He has even raised the dead to life, and of this I have reliable testimony. Recommending it to your veneration, etc.

“ D. PEDRO, ETC.”

“ LISBON,

“ *July 23, 1619.*”²

The Sister, naturally excited by the contents of her father's letter, called the Mother Abbess and

¹ “ Summary of Process,” p. 334.

² The heretics above referred to were the Calvinists, who fought for the Duke of Savoy. As regards the raising of the dead to life, Father Bonaventure frankly confesses that, besides this, no other evidence has been found.

the rest of the Community, in whose presence it was read a second time, to their great joy and satisfaction. They then went in procession with lighted candles to the door of the Convent, and received the precious treasure, which they deposited in the choir. Later, the body, being removed from the miniature oratory, and placed in a coffin, was transferred to a vault specially prepared beneath the choir, and there it remains to the present day.

CHAPTER XXIV

EXECUTION OF LAST WISHES—APPARITIONS

- I. Embalming of his heart—Reception of St. Lawrence's cross—Behaviour of the Duke of Bavaria at the news of Lawrence's death.
- II. Apparitions: (1) To the King; (2) to Melchior Dona, the artist; (3) to Brother Thomas of Bergamo; (4) to Brother Philip of Custoza; (5) to John Baptist Mugui of Milan.

THE two religious left at Lisbon were distressed to find themselves without the smallest souvenir of their late Superior. Remembering, however, that after the embalment the heart was buried in the parish church, they begged their host, Don Pedro, to secure it for them.¹ With the sanction of the Archbishop, Don Pedro had the heart secretly disinterred in the presence of the two Fathers, a surgeon, and a Genoese gentleman named Manfredino. Although buried twenty hours, it retained its freshness, and emitted the same fragrance as was perceived at the autopsy. The heart, having been embalmed, was divided into two parts, one for each of the religious. These, having nothing to detain them any longer in Lisbon, prepared for the return journey to Italy. Anticipating their request for an audience, the King graciously sent for them,

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 323.

and assured them that wherever they went they might count on his royal protection. Having taken leave of His Majesty and of their kind host, they first of all repaired to Villafranca, where rested the remains of their beloved brother in St. Francis. On reaching Rome they gave an account to the General of all that had taken place, and delivered the dying messages of his loyal subject. Next they directed their steps to Brindisi, taking with them the precious cross. At Bari, Father Jerome fell ill, and Father John Mary had to complete the journey alone. The Archbishop, at the head of a solemn procession, received the cross, which he deposited with the other relics in the Church of the Capuchinesses.¹ Father Jerome's half of the heart was handed over to the Mother Abbess. One other commission remained to be executed, and Father John Mary, regardless of fatigue, started without delay to visit the Duke of Bavaria. Maximilian, then fighting for Ferdinand against the rebels of Bohemia, was found by Father John Mary at Linz. The pious Duke evinced the most lively interest in the minutest details of Lawrence's last illness and death, and when the faithful executor added that the deceased had with his dying lips confided to him certain matters for His Highness, the Prince took him apart from the company present, and on his knees received the message. Before leaving Father John gave him a portion of the heart which he had brought with him.² Encouraged by the possession of this valued relic, the Head of the League fought with renewed

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 226.

² This relic is preserved in the Capuchin church at Munich.

vigour against the enemies of the Faith, and on November 20, 1620, won the decisive battle of Weissenbourg (White Hill), near Prague. Next day the Emperor entered the capital in triumph, and the Duke, going straight to the Capuchin Church, returned thanks for the victory which he attributed, after God, to the powerful intercession of the Saint.

Belief in the appearance of ghosts or disembodied spirits is as ancient and universal as the human race, and though in the majority of cases reported apparitions are the products of a lively imagination, there can be no question that many are so well authenticated as to leave no room for reasonable doubt. That the departed sometimes reappear upon earth is confirmed by Holy Writ, when it is recorded that Samuel returned and spoke to Saul.¹ We have on record five apparitions of St. Lawrence after his death.

His two companions, after visiting Villafranca, went to Madrid, where a gentleman whom they had met at Lisbon informed them that the Saint had appeared to the King, and recommended to him once more the interests of the Neapolitans. The gentleman had the account from His Majesty's own lips.

Melchior Dona, a Venetian artist, was requested by the Guardian of Mantua to paint a portrait of the deceased Father from a description given by religious who knew him in life. Dona testifies that he himself had never seen Father Lawrence, and had nothing to work upon except the verbal description.

¹ 1 Kings xxviii. 15 *et seq.*

Hopeless as was the task, he undertook to do his best. The result was a failure, for, on showing the picture to the Friars, these could recognize no resemblance to the original. "Then," he tells us, "I felt an inspiration to take the painting home with me, being confident that I would yet succeed, and in this I was encouraged by the Fathers, who promised to join me in praying for the accomplishment of my desire. On reaching home, before going to bed, I prayed to God and to Father Brindisi that I might be enabled to finish the portrait satisfactorily. Next morning I awoke at sunrise, and, lying in bed, it seemed to me that I was at the monastery, in the same room where I had been painting the previous day. Then I saw plainly before me the face of a Capuchin Father, all joyful, and the head encircled with light. From what I had been told I realized it was that of Father Brindisi. When the vision vanished I rose from bed, and, with the features vividly impressed on my imagination, I set to work and reproduced them on the canvas. The Capuchin Fathers, on seeing the finished portrait, at once recognized to their intense satisfaction the likeness of their departed brother."¹

A lay brother, Thomas of Bergamo, harassed by a terrible temptation to despair, had recourse to the Servant of God, under whom he had lived at Venice and Munich. Praying one night in the Capuchin Church at Vienna, the brother besought his former superior to enlighten him as to the state of his soul. "Having thus prayed," he says, "Father Brindisi

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 336.

appeared to me, and, casting myself at his feet, I said to him: 'Oh, Father, you are in Heaven.' 'Yes, my son,' he replied. I asked: 'What will become of me, Father, for it seems to me that I am damned?' Raising his hand, he said, 'No, my son,' and he repeated the words two or three times, and he added three or four times, 'Doubt not, my son,' each time placing his hand upon my head. He then disappeared. The vision took place after Matins, and henceforward I had no further uneasiness, but enjoyed perfect tranquillity of soul."¹

The next apparition was vouchsafed also to a lay brother. Philip of Custozza, a former companion of Father Lawrence. Suffering from a violent fever and a burning thirst, Brother Philip prayed thus: "O dear Father Brindisi, remember that I served you well when you were upon earth, and now I implore you, through your devotion to the Blessed Virgin, to obtain for me deliverance from this fever and thirst." Falling into a light slumber, the sick brother dreamt that the Saint came and presented to his lips a small bottle, saying: "Drink, my son." Philip drank, and awoke to find that thirst and fever had left him.²

John Baptist Mugui of Milan supplies a detailed narrative of his own experience: "In the year 1625, on the Vigil of St. Martin, I was so ill that I lost consciousness, and continued in that state during the night and the following day. In the evening I returned to my senses, and saw standing around the bed my daughters, who were weeping, because

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 338.

² "Vicenza Process."

they thought I was actually dying. Then I discovered that I had lost my speech, and I felt such acute pains, especially in the region of the heart, that I believed my last hour had indeed come. Distressed at the presence of death, and at the thought of leaving my daughters not yet settled in life, I turned over on my left side in order to reflect, and in doing so I caught sight of a small picture of Father Brindisi hanging over the bed, and near it a handkerchief used by the same Father, which we kept as a relic. All at once I was reminded of the sanctity and miracles of Father Brindisi, and in my heart began to invoke the holy Capuchin, begging him to help me in my extreme need. Looking up, I noticed over the bed to the left a small luminous cloud, and gazing on it, I distinctly saw the cloud come towards me and rest upon my chest. It then suddenly disappeared, and left me perfectly cured. Finding that I had recovered my speech, I turned round and asked for something to eat. Someone cried out: 'A miracle! a miracle!' It was John Baptist Soroldone. Shortly afterwards Giacomo Antonio Porro, an attorney, came to draw up my will, but I told him that I would go to his house, because I was now quite well."¹

¹ "Milan Process."

CHAPTER XXV

PROOFS OF SANCTITY

- I. Evidence of sanctity demanded by the Church.
- II. In Lawrence's case conclusive evidence of theological virtues: (1) Faith; (2) hope; (3) charity—Evidence of his charity to God—His confessor's testimony—Evidence of charity towards his neighbours—His considerateness of his neighbour.
- III. Evidence of the moral virtues: (1) Justice; (2) prudence; (3) fortitude; (4) temperance; (5) obedience; (6) poverty; (7) chastity.

FATHER LAWRENCE of Brindisi lived and died in the reputation of sanctity, and was already canonized by public acclamation. Although such popular canonization would in earlier ages have entitled him to the honours of the Altar, other conditions, laid down at a later period, had now to be rigidly and exactly fulfilled. The Church, it is true, is in such important matters illuminated and guided by the Holy Ghost, still, she neglects no human means of establishing the truth and precluding the possibility of error. Hence the proofs of sanctity are subjected to the closest and most searching scrutiny by experts, who allow nothing to pass concerning which there remains the faintest shadow of doubt. Some years ago a Protestant gentleman visiting Rome called upon a clerical friend, with whom in course of conversation he

discussed the question of modern miracles. The friend, who was a member of the Sacred Congregation charged with testing the truth of alleged miracles, handed the gentleman some documents containing proofs of miracles, submitted in the cause of a servant of God. After careful examination the Protestant expressed the opinion that the proofs were conclusive, and calculated to satisfy any reasonable person. "You will be surprised, then, to learn," replied the ecclesiastic, "that every one of these proofs has been rejected as insufficient."¹

For Beatification and Canonization it must be proved that the servant of God possessed all the theological and moral virtues, not merely in an eminent, but in an heroic, degree. As regards what are called *Charismatum dona*, such as prophecy, miracles, etc., these are not indeed necessary proofs of sanctity, since they are bestowed primarily for the sake of others, yet inasmuch as they enhance and confirm the personal holiness of the recipient it is usually required that at least some miracles should have been performed.

Let us now see how the case stands with regard to Father Lawrence. Did he possess the theological and moral virtues in an heroic degree, and was he endowed with the *Charismatum dona*?

THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES.

Faith.—No one who has followed Lawrence in his wonderful career can doubt that Divine Faith constituted the animating principle of his activity.

¹ Spalding's "Evidences of Catholicity," p. 155.

Faith in itself is internal, and falls not directly under observation ; it can be tested only by its profession and effects. From his childhood the Servant of God professed the orthodox Faith, and his life was one long series of labours for its propagation and maintenance. His apostleship in Germany, his controversies with the heretics, his preaching to the Jews, his establishment of the Order to perpetuate his work in the Imperial States, his share in the foundation and consolidation of the Catholic League, the part he took in the struggle between the Cross and the Crescent—all these were prompted by zeal on its behalf. For the Faith he gladly suffered persecution from Jews and heretics, and courageously exposed his life to danger. If he did not actually shed his blood in its defence, he certainly did not shrink from doing so ; nay, as we have seen, he ardently desired martyrdom. Often he spoke to his companions of the sad state to which Germany was reduced by contending sects, and he displayed real anguish and concern at the spread of error, and a burning zeal for the triumph of Catholic Truth.¹ What took the poor Capuchin out of his cell into the battle-fields and into the Courts of Princes ? The same zeal for the Faith that brought the old hermit from the desert into the streets of Constantinople. His Father's house was on fire, and he had come to extinguish it.

Hope.—The Man of Faith, realizing the infinite power and goodness of God, is buoyed up with the steadfast hope of attaining eternal salvation with all the means necessary and useful for that end. Hence

¹ “ Summary of Process,” pp. 44 and 49.

Faith, according to St. Bernard, is the measure of Hope.¹ Great was Lawrence's Faith, and great was his Hope. To him nothing seemed too much to expect from the power and the goodness of God. Once he understood that God willed him to undertake a work, he had no fear of failure, and in everything he succeeded through his reliance on Divine help. "These great souls," writes St. Bonaventure,² "embark on grand enterprises, because great is their trustfulness, and they achieve what they desire, because they place no limits to their expectations. God is pleased to confer His favours in proportion to the measure of their confidence. Of His graces, His mercies, His treasures, one receives as much as one hopes."³

Charity.—The charity of Lawrence was a flaming fire that burned ever brightly in his heart, and spread its glow over his countenance, endowing him with that mysterious fascination which attracted the people, and excited in them devotion and compunction. Charity means union with God as a friend, and in the midst of the most distracting and engrossing occupations the Saint ever kept his eyes fixed on the beloved object, like our Guardian Angels who, attending us on earth, always see the face of Our Father in Heaven. Could anything surpass his zeal for God's glory, for the salvation of souls, for the welfare of the Church? And what is that zeal but charity in action? This virtue it is that explains his devotion to prayer and contemplation, and his fondness for holy conversation, since one

¹ "De Passione."

² Serm. 33 in Cant.

³ See "Summary of Process," p. 104.

delights to speak with a dear friend, and to sound his praises to others. Father Ambrose of Florence¹ often had to visit him in his cell to get letters signed or to hear his confession, and Lawrence instructed him that if on knocking he was told to wait he should go away and not disturb him. "On such occasions I frequently heard him discoursing with someone inside. If I asked afterwards who was with him, he would only reply: 'Ah, simplicita!' Sometimes, going into his cell, I found him shedding tears so copiously that for several minutes he could not compose himself. Very often when I gave him letters to sign he blurred them with his tears, so that I used to say to him in jest: 'How do you expect me to seal these letters?' I also warned him, especially at Confession, that his sight, already weak, would be seriously impaired by this weeping, and that he had better weep in his heart only. Invariably the same reply came: 'Ah, simplicita!' So assiduous was he in prayer that on a journey, being rapt in spirit, he would return no answer when I addressed him. He recited the office with extreme devotion, and evinced by sighs, which he could not repress, how entirely he was taken up with the contemplation of the Divine mysteries."

"The pure of heart shall see God," and from the same religious we learn Lawrence's extraordinary purity and tenderness of conscience. "Between six and seven years I heard his confession at least twice a week, and I can say with truth that I never found matter of even one wilful venial sin." During the Saint's last illness, as stated, he confessed nearly

¹ "Summary of Process," p. 232.

every day, so anxious was he to appear immaculate in the eyes of his Beloved.

The love of our neighbour is inseparable from the love of God. It has the same motive and the same formal object, the material object alone being different. Innumerable instances might be adduced to show the sincere love which Lawrence entertained for all men without exception. "He was on his guard against offending anyone; to all he was kind, affable, respectful; he did everything that lay in his power to oblige others in their spiritual, and even in their temporal, necessities. As Superior, he governed with loving-kindness, and no one ever left him without being consoled."¹ For aged and deserving subjects he had special consideration and solicitude. When elected General, he wanted a preacher to take his place at Prague, and could think of no one more suitable than Father Matthias of Salo, who was then at Milan. But, because this Father was seventy years of age, and had worked hard in his day, the General, after exposing the need of his services, would not command or ask him to accept the appointment. "I do not wish," he writes, "to impose a burden on an old Father who is entitled to some little repose."² When the good religious volunteered for Prague, Lawrence made every possible provision for his comfort on the journey. Catholics, Protestants, Jews, were dear to him, and for any one of them he would have given his life; he longed after all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.³ In reproving and correcting he made the

¹ "Summary of Process," pp. 246 *et seq.*

² July 31, 1602.

³ Phil. i. 8.

guilty feel that he distinguished between the sin and the sinner. Was he not the peacemaker of Europe, and did he not, knowingly and willingly, hasten his death to obtain justice for an oppressed people? The very sight of suffering and sorrow made his heart bleed, and it was to relieve suffering and sorrow that he wrought so many miracles. How admirable, too, and inexhaustible his patience with those who came to him at the most unseasonable and inconvenient times! Surely charity in the Servant of God was eminent and heroic.

MORAL VIRTUES.

Of Lawrence's *justice* and *prudence* little need be added to what has been already said. As a *just* man he faithfully fulfilled his duties towards God, towards himself, and towards his fellow-men. In his administration and in his delicate and difficult negotiations he exercised prudence by selecting the fittest and most efficacious means of attaining his ends. On his fortitude and temperance we shall dwell more at length.

Fortitude avoids the two extremes—cowardice and rashness. The Saint possessed both moral and physical courage. It was moral courage that braced him to meet the Rabbins in public disputation, and to champion the cause of Catholicism against such men as Polycarp Laiser. When he encountered contradiction or opposition he never lost heart, dismissing the unpleasant incident with his usual exclamation, "Ah, simplicita!" Who but a man of unbounded courage would have attempted such

herculean tasks? Nor was he wanting in physical courage. What more striking proof of this than his behaviour on the battle-field? Once under a painful operation on the head (cauterization) he neither flinched nor winced, nor betrayed any sign of the torture he must have endured.¹

Temperance checks and regulates the lower appetites, which must be kept in subjection to reason by bodily mortification. Such mortification Lawrence practised from his childhood, and from the time that he entered religion he scrupulously performed the penances prescribed by the Rule and Constitutions. Even after fatiguing journeys, and whilst preaching Lenten courses, he was accustomed to rise for Matins at midnight. He took the discipline every night, no matter what his state of health. He ate sparingly, chiefly bread and vegetables, and his ordinary drink was wine well diluted with water; but so carefully did he conceal his abstemiousness that it was not noticeable.² This austerity, instead of relaxing, he increased as he advanced in age.

Humility is the surest test of sanctity. One would naturally suppose that the most likely people to be humble are those most deficient in natural and supernatural endowments. Experience teaches the contrary. Pride we are not so surprised to discover in the highly gifted, in whom humility, when possessed, shines out with the greater lustre. Lawrence was one of the highly gifted. From a natural and supernatural point of view he stood out as one of the greatest men of his period. His gifts

¹ "Summary of Process," pp. 273 *et seq.* ² *Ibid.*, p. 283.

and his accomplishments were acknowledged and appreciated by his contemporaries, and must have been known to himself. But what were his sentiments? Had he any self-complacency? No; he loved the truth, and, convinced that whatever he had and did belonged to God, he neither acted, nor spoke, nor thought, as if anything belonged to himself.¹ Meek and humble of heart, he lived like the other religious, without pretending to exceptional treatment or deference. So far from showing off, or boasting of his achievements, he endeavoured to hide them as much as possible, and never referred to them, except in case of necessity or utility. Extraordinary heavenly favours he concealed even from his intimate companions, who, out of holy curiosity or for their own edification, used all their ingenuity to discover them.² Nor was his humility merely external; it was deeply rooted in his mind and heart. How otherwise account for those copious tears which he shed in Confession, though the confessor could hardly find matter for absolution? Father Ambrose sometimes remonstrated with him: "Father, why do you afflict yourself so much? Leave that to those who have serious sins." "Ah!" he would reply, "I know well my obligations, and I know also that I do not fulfil one hundredth part of them." To exercise himself in humility he delighted in performing menial work, such as washing the dishes, even when he was General. Of this we have evidence from Switzerland. The applause and the honours, so agreeable to others, caused him real pain and distress. After

¹ "Summary of Process," pp. 293 *et seq.* ² *Ibid.*, p. 301.

making his escape from popular ovations, he was often found in his cell weeping bitterly. At Milan, in the midst of the struggling crowds, who tried to get near and touch him, he was observed to be quite insensible to all around him, and those who touched his hands declared that these felt lifeless and cold, like those of a corpse.¹ Far from being the breath of his nostrils, popularity stifled him. This virtue of humility distinguishes all true servants of God. The more favoured they are of Heaven, the more vile they appear in their own eyes, and the deeper they bury themselves in the abyss of their own nothingness.

Obedience is the daughter of humility. He who realizes that he has nothing of his own, and has received everything from God, acknowledges his utter dependence and his duty of submitting to the Divine will. To the fulfilment of this will Lawrence devoted his life. Nothing could have been more exact than his observance of the Rule and Constitutions, and, as St. Francis wished, he left himself like a dead body in the hands of his Superiors, without whose permission he would do nothing. At Milan Princess Stigliano, accompanied by other noble ladies, begged to see Father Lawrence, but the Guardian expressed his disapproval, and nothing could induce the Saint to go to them. His answer to the Guardian at Naples was characteristic. The church being crowded all day with people, most of them excitable women, the Guardian proposed that Father Lawrence should receive in his cell some of the more sensible and self-possessed men. "My dear Father Guardian," he replied, "I am ready

¹ "Milan Process."

to do whatever you wish ; but your Paternity must decide, as I will do nothing but what you command.”¹ The same spirit of perfect indifference is displayed in his answer to the Neapolitan deputation :² “ Gentlemen, I am not in a fit state to undertake this business, but, if sent by my Superiors, I will go even unto death.” And to death he went. What induced him, who hated popular applause, to show himself to the people and go amongst them ? Nothing else but the command of Superiors. Late one night at Milan certain noble persons, amongst them several ladies, came to the monastery, and with much persistence begged for the Father’s blessing. “ Being persons of rank,” naïvely confesses the Guardian, “ the porter spoke to Father Lawrence’s companions, that they might prevail on him to go down to the church. The Father reproved his companions for carrying such a message, and steadfastly refused to go. A member of the Community, seeing that these people were still waiting, and would be much disappointed, came and asked me to use my authority in commanding Father Brindisi to bless them. I reprimanded this religious for interfering, but, getting out of bed, I went to Father Brindisi, and told him to do what was requested, as an act of mortification. Without a word and with all humility he got up and went down to bless them.”

Poverty is the foundation and sublime prerogative of the Franciscan Order, and St. Francis had nothing more at heart than the faithful observance of this virtue. To encourage his children, the

¹ “ Summary of Process,” p. 288.

² *Ibid.*, p. 276.

Seraphic Patriarch promised, on the part of God, that the world—that is, the faithful in the world—would always supply their necessities. Lawrence, the loyal follower of Francis, was a model of poverty. He wore an old and patched habit, even at Court; his cell was scantily furnished, and his fare was meagre in the extreme. His zeal in fostering poverty amongst his brethren, in rooting out abuses, and maintaining its splendour, we have witnessed during his administration as General. In travelling he preferred to spend the night in the cottages of the poor, though at the palaces of the rich he would have been a welcome guest.

Chastity overcomes the concupiscence of the flesh and gives us a resemblance to the angelic spirits. Lawrence's purity was truly angelic. He was pure in mind and heart and body, and this virtue he protected with all possible safeguards. Although he had frequent occasion to converse with ladies of every age and condition, young, beautiful, fashionable, noble, whom he met at Court and elsewhere, he was always most modest and circumspect, and he spoke with them only so much as necessity, utility, or politeness demanded. "He seemed to be quite insensible to sex," remarks the annalist.¹ Chastity shone in his very countenance, and to the last he retained the charm and innocence of childhood. It was this love of purity that caused him to entertain the tenderest affection for little children. As his contemporaries describe him, "he seemed not so much a man as an Angel from Heaven."

¹ "Annales Capuccinorum," t. iii. "Summary of Process," pp. 291 *et seq.*

CHAPTER XXVI

PROOFS OF SANCTITY (*continued*)

- I. His gift of discernment of spirits.
- II. Prophecy regarding (1) the House of Mantua ; (2) extinction of the House of Gonzague.
- III. Miracles : ninety-seven during life, sixty-three after death.
- IV. Power over demoniacs—How he sometimes humbled the devils—Instance at Montagnana—Example of his power in the case of Mary Ranetti of Bassano.
- V. Miraculous power of curing bodily ailments—Instances of miraculous *actio in distans*.
- VI. Means employed in healing—Cures of Jerome Triulzi—Of Father John Mary—A selection of the most interesting of his miracles.

ST. PAUL¹ enumerates the various gifts distributed by the Holy Ghost to divers persons, according to His good pleasure. All of these gifts seem to have been bestowed on Lawrence, as our readers can judge for themselves. Two instances of *discerning* the secrets of the heart may be mentioned. When he was Provincial of Venice, a young man came to see him. “My son,” he said,² “you have committed a fault ; take care to cleanse your conscience, lest God punish you.” “Father,” replied the youth, “tell me what I have done that I may correct it.” “Have you not told a falsehood and perjured yourself ?” The culprit was amazed, and, confessing his guilt, sincerely repented. The other instance

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 4.

² “Summary of Process,” p. 234.

is perhaps still more remarkable. A Milanese gentleman,¹ supposed to be married, had been living for a long time in concubinage. As this man was kneeling with a friend in the crowd, Lawrence in passing put one hand upon his head and gave him a severe look. then, tapping him on the cheek, said : “ Be a good man in future.” The gentleman, surprised, said to his friend : “ Is it possible that the Father knows my evil life ?” Nor was this all. From the moment that the sinner’s head was touched by the Saint’s hand it seemed to be on fire, till the woman was put away.

Prophecy.—The most striking and famous prophecy made by the Servant of God regarded the State and the reigning family of Mantua. The prophecy appears to have been uttered during the course of a remarkable sermon, preached in a city the name of which is omitted by the biographers. According to their account, the city was the residence of a Prince, whose Court had fallen from its former state of pure morality, and was given over to the most scandalous vices and excesses. Now Muratori² informs us that such precisely was the condition of Mantua under Vinenzo I. Lawrence took for his text those words of Isaias : “ I will give children to be their Princes, and the effeminate shall rule over them.”³ Applying the text to the city and its ruler, he dwelt on the scandals and crimes in their midst, and foretold with clearness and confidence the misfortunes that would overtake them. Such is the report of the sermon.

¹ “ Summary of Process,” p. 242.

² “ Annali d’ Italia.”

³

Elsewhere, however, without reference to the occasion, it is stated as a notorious fact that the Saint prophesied the extinction of the House of Gonzague and the disasters that would fall on the State. At the time of the prophecy the House of Gonzague was one of the most powerful and flourishing in Italy, but in 1627 it suffered extinction in the person of Vincenzo II., and, before Lawrence's death, Mantua had been devastated by war.

Miracles.—All who sincerely accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be prepared for miracles in the Church. The powers which Christ Himself exercised He communicated to those who were to continue His mission : “ In My Name they shall cast out devils ; they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover.”¹ Nay, the disciples were to perform even greater wonders than He performed : “ Amen, amen, I say to you, he that believeth in Me, the works that I do, he also shall do, and *greater* than these shall he do.”²

The path of Father Lawrence was strewn with miracles, so that hardly a place which he visited was not the scene of one or more. Ninety-seven miracles wrought during his life, and sixty-three after his death, are recorded in the Process of Beatification. Many others, not included in the Process, are known to have taken place, the evidence for which, Father Bonaventure affirms, he had before him whilst writing the “ Life ” in 1783.

That the Saint had power to cast out devils is evidenced by the cases we have selected. In St. Lawrence's day cases of possession seem to have

¹ Mark xvi. 17.

² John xiv. 12.

been very common, and we wonder whether, if he were now living, he would detect any unrecognized by others, as happened near Macerata. Is it likely that the evil spirits are less powerful and less active in the twentieth century than they were in the seventeenth? In exorcising, the Servant of God sometimes, to humiliate those proud spirits, placed his foot on the neck of the sufferers, repeating the words of the Psalmist: "Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk."¹ At Montagnana a woman interrupted his sermon and disturbed the congregation by her howls and shrieks. "Silence, thou accursed of God!" shouted the preacher, and the woman became perfectly quiet. Meeting him afterwards in the street, she called out, "You are a holy Father," and then ran away. He commanded her to come back and be silent. She obeyed, and threw herself on the ground before him. Having put his foot on her mouth, he said in a kind tone: "Arise, my daughter." When she got up, he whispered some words which she alone could hear, and allowed her to go, entirely freed from the evil spirit.²

Mary Ranetti, of Bassano, possessed for eighteen years, had a mania for eating all sorts of filth and rubbish—mortar, ashes, etc. Friends dragged her to the Capuchin church, where she broke out into horrible yells. When Lawrence appeared, she fell flat on the floor. "Go out!" he cried in a tone of authority; "go out of this body, thou wicked spirit!" "No," was the defiant response, "never so long as she lives." Three times he put his foot on the woman's throat, and, repeating his command,

¹ Ps. xc. 13.

² "Summary of Process," p. 315.

forced the devil to depart. A large assembly witnessed the spectacle.

The Servant of God cured all manner of complaints and diseases—epilepsy, paralysis, dropsy, fever, insanity, cancer, gout; he restored sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and made the lame to walk. The handkerchiefs saturated with his tears, shed during Mass, possessed the same virtue as those that had touched the body of St. Paul.¹ Some of the cures were effected instantaneously, others gradually, like the case of the blind man in the Gospel. Occasionally he healed at a distance. Melchior Cremesa of Melagnano met him at Lodi, and implored him for a blessing on behalf of his son, who was suffering from an incurable disease. The blessing, conveyed through the father, restored the son. A written blessing, sent to the sick, had a similar effect. By wearing such a blessing on his person, Nicholas Cesena, a victim of excruciating pains in the head and frightful hallucinations, was healed in mind and body. The Duchess Placida Doria had a son in the last stage of a malady for which she had unsuccessfully tried every known remedy. In her affliction and despair of human aid, she had recourse to Lawrence, at that time Provincial of Genoa. To her entreaties he returned the laconic answer, “È fatta.” The boy got well, and the expression “È fatta” was interpreted to mean that the favour was granted. The means employed for healing were simple. Generally he made the sign of the Cross and touched the sick with his hand; sometimes he imparted the blessing with the wonderful

¹ Acts xix. 12.

cross ; occasionally he recited the prayers of the Ritual ; and, not infrequently, he used a formula composed by himself, the same that he sent to Nicholas Cesena.¹

After his death fresh miracles manifested his continued power with God. Jerome Triulzi,² a Milanese, contracted tertian fever in an aggravated form, and, by advice of the doctors, received the last Sacraments. One of the doctors, James Philip Corneo, remembering the many cures effected by Lawrence at Milan, thought of invoking this wonderful physician. " Seeing that human remedies were useless, I gave a picture of Father Lawrence of Brindisi to the invalid, advising him to recommend himself to that blessed Father. He took it, as I could see, with great devotion, and manifested signs of praying as I told him." So far the doctor. What follows we have from Triulzi : " When the doctor gave me the picture, I begged the blessed Father Brindisi to obtain for me from God life and health, and promised to recite every day, in his honour, a *Pater* and *Ave*, and to visit a Capuchin Church. Immediately I felt better, and relieved of my restlessness. That night I slept, and, on waking, found myself entirely cured. Next morning I was about to get up when the doctor arrived, and ordered me water to drink. Knowing that I was perfectly well, I asked for wine, and the doctor, seeing that my recovery was not imaginary, but real and complete, allowed me to have it."

From among the many miracles reported from Villafranca we cull the following as the most inter-

¹ Appendix II.

² " Milan Process."

esting.¹ It reminds us of the virtue that went out from the bones of Eliseus.² In 1680, Diego Valcarse, five years of age, and his little sister, were playing together in the Convent of the Poor Clares, whilst the mother conversed with the nuns. Chasing each other, as children will do, all over the house, they ran upstairs to the top corridor, and the little fellow, climbing the banister, overbalanced himself, and fell from a great height to the stone pavement below. The nuns, at the noise, ran to the spot to find the poor child apparently quite dead. In their distress they thought of their heavenly patron, and, picking up the limp and motionless form, carried it to the vault, laying it full length on the coffin. Kneeling around, they implored the Servant of God to have pity on them. Noticing no sign of life, one of the Sisters remarked to her neighbour: "Ah, he is already dead." The child sprang to his feet, and, seeing the Sisters in tears, he said, smiling: "Why are you crying? There's nothing the matter with me." Not a wound, nor a bruise, nor a mark of any kind could be found upon him, and he walked home with his mother and sister. Neither did he experience any after-effects. When grown up, he became a priest, and died as Canon of the Cathedral at the age of forty.

We now come to the two miracles examined and approved by the Sacred Congregation in view of the Beatification. The subject of the first miracle was Eugenia of Apuzzo, a Neapolitan,³ for whom, being somewhat indisposed, bleeding was prescribed

¹ "Villafranca Process."

² 4 Kings xiii. 21.

³ "Neapolitan Process."

by the physician. The surgeon, opening a vein in the arm, accidentally cut an artery, from which the blood spurted violently, and could not be stopped. Cold water, bandages, etc., were tried in vain. Eugenia, losing her strength with her life blood, stood face to face with death. Suddenly she bethought herself of a handkerchief used by Father Lawrence, which she had in the house, and sent a neighbour to fetch it. The relic being applied to the wound, the blood stopped instantaneously, and not a drop or a stain was left on the handkerchief. Eugenia herself, the surgeon, and Peter Ciosso, who was present, testified on oath to the above facts. Here is the Decree of the Sacred Congregation :

“Constare de primo miraculo, videlicet : instantaneæ sanationis Eugeniæ de Apuzzo a vulnere arteriæ phlebotomo scalpello inflictio, loco incisionis venæ hepaticæ.”

The second miracle was the cure of Clare Corsaga of Milan, who had cancer in the breast. Two Capuchins, paying her a visit, encouraged the woman to invoke the intercession of Father Lawrence. She commenced exercises of devotion in his honour. For three consecutive Saturdays she fasted on bread and water, and visited the Capuchin Church. By the time these devotions were finished the cure was complete. The doctor who attended her gives his statement of the case. He first describes his treatment of the disease, and then gives the reasons for his conviction that the cancer was incurable. All known remedies had failed,

the cancer was open and ulcerated, the woman was old and withered (“*Vecchia e di complessione adusta*”). The decree approving the miracle is as follows :

“*Constare de secundo miraculo in tertio genere perfectæ sanationis Claræ de Corsaghis ab ulcere interno ex tumore canceroso aperto.*”

CHAPTER XXVII

BEATIFICATION AND CANONIZATION

- I. Preparations for Beatification—Beatification delayed—Approbation of St. Lawrence's writings—Delay owing to death of Cardinal Pico—Cardinal of York now made *Ponent*.
- II. The royal Cardinal places his house at the disposal of those taking part in the "cause"—Solemn promulgation of the Papal decrees approving of the miracles.
- III. Circumstances attending the Beatification.
- IV. Canonization: how it differs from Beatification—Miracles described—Process of Canonization delayed by the French Revolution—Resumed in 1873—Ceremony held in Vatican, 1881—A great Franciscan.

SCARCELY five years had elapsed after Father Lawrence's death when the Emperor Ferdinand, and Maximilian, Duke of Bavaria, petitioned Urban VIII. for his Beatification. The Pope cordially entertained the petition, and directed local processes to be opened by the Ordinaries in various centres—Venice, Milan, Naples, Vicenza, Genoa, Bassano, Verona, Albenga, Brindisi, Villafranca. The depositions taken in these processes were duly forwarded to Rome, and the Cardinal of St. George, Peter Mary Borghese, was appointed *Ponent* to examine the documents. On reporting favourably, he was authorized to introduce the Apostolic Process on the heroic virtues and the miracles *in specie*. The Cause was following the

usual course, when Cardinal Borghese died, but no one was then appointed in his place. Meanwhile new regulations, issued by Urban VIII., altered the procedure. One of these required an interval of fifty years between the death of a servant of God and the opening of the Apostolic Process. A much longer period elapsed before any further step was taken in Father Lawrence's Cause, for it was not till September 25, 1724, that Cardinal Pico della Mirandola was nominated *Ponent* by Benedict XIII. The reason of the delay is not apparent, as other members of the Capuchin Order had, meantime, been beatified or canonized—St. Felix of Cantalice, St. Seraphin of Montegrano, St. Joseph of Leonessa, and Blessed Bernard of Corleone. Petitions for the promotion of the Cause had been pouring in from the most eminent and influential personages in Europe—Philip V. of Spain and his wife Isabella, James III., legitimate King of England, and his wife Clementine Sobieski, etc.

The Servant of God, it was known, had left several works in manuscript, and these had now to be examined by learned theologians. As the writings were kept in the Capuchin archives at Venice, the Patriarch of that See received instructions to have them forwarded to the Sacred Congregation. The examination took nearly ten years. The works were declared to contain nothing against faith or morals, and were approved by a Decree dated February 13, 1734, which granted faculties to proceed *ad ulteriora*.

The next step was to comply with the Decree of Urban VIII. *de non cultu et de fama*, and for that

purpose a fresh Process was opened at Villafranca. This established the reputation of sanctity, and the fact that no public worship had been rendered to the Venerable. Cardinal Pico died in 1743, and the Cause was again suspended till Benedict XIV., on March 16, 1748, appointed, as *Ponent*, His Royal Highness Henry, Cardinal Duke of York, who was also Protector of the Capuchin Order. To him was reserved the glory of conducting the Cause to a successful issue.

The decision of the Villafranca Process *de non cultu* having been approved, the *Congregatio antepreparatoria* was held at His Royal Highness's Palace, May 5, 1761, when the Theological and Cardinal Virtues, as practised by the Servant of God, were examined. On January 24, 1767, the *Congregatio preparatoria* took place at the Quirinal, where also, on August 8, 1769, was held the *Congregatio generalis* in the presence of Clement XIV. The Decree, declaring the virtues *heroic*, is dated the 15th of the same month.

Finally, the Decrees approving the two miracles were issued June 29, 1775, and January 14, 1783, respectively. These Decrees were solemnly promulgated in St. Peter's, January 18, 1783, in the presence of His Holiness Pius VI., of the Cardinal Duke of York, Cardinal Giovanni Archinto, Prefect of the Congregation of Sacred Rites, Monsignor Erskine,¹ Promoter of the Faith, many prelates,

¹ Monsignor Thomas Erskine was son of Colin Erskine, and grandson of Sir Alexander Erskine, who lived and died in Rome, exiles for the Stuart Cause. Thomas, being early left an orphan, was placed by the Cardinal Duke of York in the Scots College.

and a large body of Capuchin Fathers. Afterwards the Most Rev. Father Erard of Radkersbourg, General of the Capuchins, thanked the Pope on behalf of the Order. His Holiness's reply concluded with these words: "As Innocent III. beheld the Seraphic Father, St. Francis, upholding the Church, we pray that this Servant of God, who faithfully imitated the glorious Patriarch, may, in like manner, defend the Church, continually exposed to persecution, with the same zeal which, during life, he displayed for the Catholic Faith."

The way being now cleared for the closing acts, the *Congregatio Tuto* was held March 20, when the Promoter of the Faith formulated the Decree of Beatification. This was confirmed by the Pope, April 17, and the ceremony was fixed for June 1. St. Peter's was magnificently decorated for the occasion. On the façade above the grand loggia hung a gigantic banner with a representation of the Blessed in glory. Beneath were the arms of Pius VI., of the Roman people, of the Cardinal Duke of York, of the Chapter of St. Peter's, and of the Franciscan Order. Inside the Basilica were other appropriate pictures. One represented the Blessed leading the Imperial troops against the Turks. The inscription ran :

"Beatus Laurentius a Brund. angustis Austriæ rebus Hostes Christiani nominis erecta cruce deterret."

The General of the Capuchins presented His Holiness with a painting, in which the Blessed is

In January, 1803, he was created Cardinal Deacon of Santa Maria in Campitelli, and he accompanied Pius VII. to Paris, where he died, March 20, 1811.

exhibited recommending the interests of the Church to the Duke of Bavaria, surrounded by his Court. Underneath were the words :

“ Beatus Laurentius a Brundusio pro tuenda Religione adscitur a Maximiliano Duce Bavariae, a Paulo V. Pontifice Maximo legatus, perfecta re bene ac feliciter, Principum vota ac expectationem explevit.”

“ Pio VI. Pontific. Maximo ”

“ Minores Capuccini D.D.D.”

His Holiness, having graciously accepted the painting, handed it to His Serene Highness Charles Theodore, the Elector Palatine and Duke of Bavaria. This Prince came to Rome purposely in order to testify his gratitude towards the Blessed for the benefits conferred on his house and his states.

The Brief of Beatification permits the public cult of the Beatified, veneration of the relics, and representations with the halo of sanctity. The feast was fixed for July 7, and the Office and Mass were granted to the Capuchin Order, the cities of Villafranca, Lisbon, and Brindisi.

Beatification is not the last word of the Church. It *permits* the cult, but does not *decree* it. The title of *Blessed* is given, and the relics may be exposed for the veneration of the faithful, but may not be carried in procession, whilst the Feast with the Mass and Office is restricted to certain persons and places. Canonization substitutes the title of *Saint* and removes restrictions. The relics may be carried in public procession, churches and altars may be erected under the patronage of the canonized, and

the Feast may be celebrated throughout the Church. The Process of Canonization is neither so long nor so complicated as that of Beatification, the only condition required being the establishment of two miracles, performed after the date of the latter.

Petitions for the Canonization being made to the Holy See, Pius VI., on December 22, 1784, appointed a Commission to proceed with the Cause. Processes were in due course instituted in Rome and at Cervera, Catalonia, to investigate two alleged miracles, the description of which may find a place here :

In 1785 a Roman boy, Peter Paul Friggeri, five years of age, became afflicted with a large swelling on the left knee. The result was acute pain, preventing the child from walking, and, after a while, confining him to bed. Giacomo Giusti, the doctor, tried to reduce the swelling, which, notwithstanding, increased, and spread to the other parts of the leg. An abscess formed, and, after consultation with Dr. Carlo Austine, was lanced by Giusti. More serious symptoms appeared, and the parents were informed that caries of the bone was to be feared. Such, in fact, turned out to be the case, and for several months the poor child suffered terrible agony. Both doctors told the parents that human skill could do no more. One day the Capuchin Questor, Brother Valentine of Cadore, called on his rounds, and, hearing the sad story and seeing the pitiable condition of the boy, advised having recourse to Blessed Lawrence. On November 1, 1786, the mother carried the little martyr to the Capuchin Church in the Piazza Barberini, and one of the Fathers applied to the affected part the relic of the

Blessed. The cure was instantaneous. When the bandages were removed, the swelling had disappeared, and no sign of disease remained, only the scars of the wounds made by the lance. These were covered with red skin, and presented the semblance of rose petals. From that day the boy put on flesh, went to school, and enjoyed perfect health.

Angela Trull of Cervora suffered for years from blood-poisoning, which eventually broke out in a rash, first on her legs, and then all over her body. The pustules, becoming confluent, formed large ulcers, which discharged putrid matter, and the doctors feared gangrene. Losing the use of her legs, she became helpless, and remained in bed. The external symptoms made their appearance in May, 1785, and it was now September. A neighbour, Maria Teresa Llorach, encouraged the sufferer to try what Blessed Lawrence would do for her. The invalid began a Novena in his honour, and, at its conclusion, she got up, and with the help of crutches managed to go downstairs as far as the kitchen. Here, tired by the exertion, she sat down, and fell asleep at the table. On awaking she set out on her crutches for the Capuchin Church, being assisted by her friend's husband, Magino Llorach, a shoemaker. Progress was necessarily slow, but at last the church was reached. There, before the altar of the Blessed, she prayed, and, with many tears, implored his intercession. Rising to leave, she felt the bandages burst and her strength return. She walked home without the crutches, and on the way met her son, who could hardly believe his eyes. The doctor, coming to pay his ordinary visit, was

going upstairs to her bedroom. "Where are you going?" shouted a voice behind him. "You can turn back, for I am quite well." On examination the doctor verified the fact for himself. Some years afterwards, when the evidence was taken, she submitted to another medical examination, and was certified to be free from all traces of her former complaint.

In consequence of the French Revolution the Process of Canonization was stopped, and remained in abeyance till 1873, when Cardinal Bilio was appointed *Ponent*. The *Congregatio ante-præparatoria* took place at His Eminence's residence on January 11, 1877; the *Præparatoria* at the Vatican on August 16, 1878; and the *Generalis* under the presidency of Leo XIII., on December 16, 1879. At this the two foregoing miracles were approved. The Decree that the Canonization could be proceeded with was published on September 11, 1881, and on December 8, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the ceremony was held in a large hall of the Vatican. About nine hundred persons were present, amongst others Archbishop Stonor and several English visitors. The Capuchins were represented by the General, Father Egidius of Cortona, Father Amadeus of Orvieto, Postulator of the Cause, Most Rev. Fidelis Suter, Archbishop of Ancyra and Vicar Apostolic of Tunis, etc.

From the address of the Holy Father we take the following extract :

"The Canonization of Saints is always a subject of joy to the Catholic Church and her visible Head. The memory of Blessed Lawrence, towards whom we have from our youth cherished sentiments of

tender affection and special devotion, is most opportunely revived amongst the people of the present age. This great servant of God, under the humble garb of St. Francis, possessed the choicest endowments of Nature and the loftiest gifts of grace. His unceasing and marvellous labours, undertaken solely for the benefit of others, shed a splendid lustre on the Seraphic Order, and, indeed, on all the religious Orders. which, though persecuted and vilified by the impious of our day, deserve the gratitude of humanity. The Roman Pontiffs had no hesitation in confiding to the sagacity of Blessed Lawrence the most difficult and delicate missions, and he, on his part, acting in the name of Christ's Vicar, and impelled by the most ardent charity, undertook long and wearisome journeys, penetrated into distant regions, studied the needs of the various countries, and, making himself all things to all men, caused to be felt, wherever possible, the beneficent influence of his Apostolic zeal. With diplomatic skill he won over to his views governors and rulers, who deemed it no disgrace to hearken with docility to the counsels of the Friar, and were happily enabled to form amongst themselves those holy alliances which, though chiefly directed against the enemies of the Faith, wonderfully consolidated the security and tranquillity of their own dominions. Wherefore, in raising to the honours of the altar this great Franciscan, we are comforted by the hope that, through his aid, nations and Princes may listen to the voice of the Church, and, returning to the path of righteousness, may escape the dangers that menace them with irreparable ruin."

APPENDIX I

LIST of the works by St. Lawrence which are preserved in the archives of the Capuchin Monastery at Venice :

1. Dogmatic Dissertation against Luther and Laiser (Latin), Notes in Greek and Hebrew. 2 vols. in quarto.
2. Sermons for Lent (Italian). 2 vols. in quarto.
3. Sermons for the Sundays (Italian). 3 vols. in quarto.
4. Sermons for Advent (Italian). 2 vols. in quarto.
5. Sermons on the Gospels (Italian). 1 vol. in folio.
6. Panegyrics of Saints (Italian). 1 vol. in folio.
7. Discourses on the Blessed Virgin (Italian). 1 vol. in folio.
8. Exposition of First Eleven Chapters of Genesis (Italian). 1 vol. in folio.
9. Reply to the Pamphlet of Laiser (Italian).
10. Exposition of the Prophecy of Ezekiel (Italian). 1 vol. in quarto.
11. Four Letters on the Perfect Observance of the Seraphic Rule (Italian). 1 vol. in quarto.
12. Treatise on Preaching for Beginners (Italian). 1 vol. in quarto.
13. Plans and Matter for Sermons (Italian). 1 vol. in folio.

The little "Commentary" was found in the Capuchin Monastery at Bergamo.

APPENDIX II

BLESSING USED BY ST. LAWRENCE

PER signum et virtutem sanctæ Crucis, intercedente Virgine Maria, benedicat tibi Dominus et custodiat te ; ostendat Dominus faciem suam tibi et misereatur tui ; convertat Dominus vultum suum ad te, et det tibi pacem, reddatque tibi optatam sanitatem. Per Christum Dominum nostrum.

Per signum sanctæ Crucis sanat te Jesus Christus, qui sanat omnes languores et infirmitates, sanatque omnes oppressos a diabolo. Per Signum sanctæ crucis benedicat tibi Jesus Christus cum Virgine Maria. Amen.

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