

who, desiring to devote himself to the service of God, out of his estates founded a monastery near that city, which he governed with great sanctity. The purity of his soul had never been sullied by any crime, and the sweet odour of his sanctity diffused a love of virtue in the hearts of those who approached him. He watched whole nights in prayer, and passed sometimes several days together without eating: bread and water were his usual fare. He conducted his religious in the paths of perfection with sweetness, prudence, and charity. In this amiable retreat he enjoyed a calmness and happiness which the great men of the world would view with envy, did they compare with it the unquiet scenes of vice and vanity in which they live. But, to crown his virtue, God permitted him, with seven of his monks, to be apprehended by the pursuivants of King Sapor, in the thirty-sixth year of his persecution. He lay four months in a dungeon, loaded with chains; during which lingering martyrdom he was every day called out to receive a certain number of stripes. But he triumphed over his torments by the patience and joy with which he suffered them for Christ. At the same time, a Christian lord of the Persian court, named Nersan, prince of Aria, was cast into prison, because he refused to adore the sun. At first he showed some resolution; but at the sight of tortures his constancy failed him, and he promised to conform. The king, to try if his change was sincere, ordered Bademus to be brought to Lapeta, with his chains struck off, and to be introduced into the prison of Nersan, which was a chamber in the royal palace. Then his majesty sent word to Nersan, by two lords, that if, with his own hand, he would despatch Bademus, he should be restored to his liberty and former dignities. The wretch accepted the condition; a sword was put into his hand, and he advanced to plunge it into the breast of the abbot. But being seized with a sudden terror, he stopped short, and remained some time without being able to lift up his arm to strike. The servant of Christ stood undaunted, and, with his eyes fixed upon him, said: "Unhappy Nersan, to what a pitch of impiety do you carry your apostacy. With joy I run to meet death; but could wish to fall by some other hand than yours: why must you be my executioner?" Nersan had neither courage to repent, nor heart to accomplish his crime. He

strove, however, to harden himself, and continued with a trembling hand to aim at the sides of the martyr. Fear, shame, remorse, and respect for the martyr, whose virtue he wanted courage to imitate, made his strokes forceless and unsteady; and so great was the number of the martyr's wounds, that they stood in admiration at his invincible patience. At the same time they detested the cruelty, and despised the base cowardice of the murderer, who at last, aiming at his neck, after four strokes severed his head from the trunk. Neither did he escape the divine vengeance: for a short time after, falling into public disgrace, he perished by the sword, after tortures, and under the maledictions of the people. Such is the treachery of the world towards those who have sacrificed their all in courting it. Though again and again deceived by it, they still listen to its false promises, and continue to serve this hard master, till their fall becomes irretrievable. The body of St. Bademus was reproachfully cast out of the city by the infidels: but was secretly carried away and interred by the Christians. His disciples were released from their chains four years afterward upon the death of King Sapor. St. Bademus suffered on the 10th of the moon of April, in the year 376, of King Sapor the sixty-seventh.

Monks were called Mourners by the Syrians and Persians, because by their state they devoted themselves in a particular manner to the most perfect exercises of compunction and penance, which indeed are an indispensable duty of every Christian. The name of angels was often given them over all the East, during several ages,(1) because by making heavenly contemplation and the singing of the divine praises their great and glorious employment, if they duly acquit themselves of it, they may be justly called the seraphim of the earth. The soul which loves God, is made a heaven which he inhabits, and in which she converses with him in the midst of her own substance. Though he is infinite, and the highest heavenly spirits tremble before him, and how poor and base soever we are, he invites us to converse with him, and declares that it is his delight to be with us. Shall not we look upon it as our greatest happiness and comfort to be with Him, and to enjoy the unspeakable

(1) See Du Cange's Glossary of the Greek Language for the middle ages.

sweetness of his presence? Oh! what ravishing delights does a soul taste which is accustomed, by a familiar habit, to converse in the heaven of her own interior with the three persons of the adorable Trinity! Dissipated worldlings wonder how holy solitaries can pass their whole time buried in the most profound solitude and silence of creatures. But those who have had any experience of this happiness, are surprised with far greater reason how it is possible that any souls which are created to converse eternally with God, should here live in constant dissipation, seldom entertaining a devout thought of Him, whose charms and sweet conversation eternally ravish all the blessed.

B. MECHTILDES, VIRGIN AND ABBESS.

THE two holy sisters, SS. Gertrude and Mechtildes, were countesses of Hackuborn, cousins to the Emperor Frederic II. and born at Islebe, in Upper Saxony. From seven years of age Mechtildes had her education in the Benedictin monastery of Redaresdorff, or Rodersdorff, in the bishopric of Halberstade, secularized and yielded to the elector of Brandenburg at the peace of Westphalia in 1648. She lived always a stranger to the vices and vanities of the world, and from her infancy practised obedience with such cheerfulness, that she was always ready to perform every command of her superior. Though often sick, she denied herself the use of flesh-meat and wine, and studied to retrench every superfluity. She endeavoured to conceal her virtues as industriously as others labour to hide their most heinous sins. She made her religious vows in the same house, and while yet young was removed to Diessen near the lake Ambre in Bavaria, where she was appointed superior of the monastery of that name, which seems to have been, at that time, of the Order of St. Benedict, though it has long been a house of regular canonesses of St. Austin's Order. It was founded in 1132 by Bertkold, Count of Andechs, and afterwards endowed with great revenues by St. Otho, bishop of Bamberg. This monastery Mechtildes rendered a perfect school of all virtues, and knowing that a strict discipline and a steady observance of rules are the means by which religious persons are to attain to the sanctification of their souls in their state, she taught