

and the prospect of the abyss of eternity into which he is stepping fills his mind with alarms and dread which no tongue can express. If he dies insensible, his situation is but the more desperate and unhappy; for, alas! in the moment in which the miserable soul leaves the body, no tongue can express her horrible calamity. We ought to invite heaven and earth to weep over her; or rather adore God who is terrible in his justice, and stop our tears which can no longer avail such a soul. She is from this moment eternally and irretrievably lost. She is abandoned by God and his angels, and given over a prey to merciless devils, who, insulting, cry out: Let men on earth crown the carcass with pomp, epitaphs, monuments, and panegyrics, whilst it is made a feast for worms and maggots; and the soul is our victim, as the body also will one day be. How happy were the martyrs, who by their torments purchased themselves joy, secure peace, and eternal glory at their death.

ST. JANE FRANCES DE CHANTAL.

WIDOW AND ABBESS.

Her life is written by Dr. Henry de Maupas du Tour, bishop of Puy, in 4to., also in 12mo. by Mrs. Louisa de Rabutin, who was married first to Monsieur de Daletz, and after his death to Monsieur de la Ravière. This work has been often by mistake ascribed to her father, Roger de Rabutin, count of Bussy, famous for several juvenile loose productions of false wit, and more deservedly for his edifying repentance, by which he endeavoured to repair that scandal, and to live sincerely to God, after he had forsaken the court. See also her life compiled by Marsollier, canon of Usez; and the lives of the first mother-superiors, and several other nuns of the Visitation, published in four volumes, in 4to. by sister De Chaugy, at Annecy, 1659.

A. D. 1641.

THE father of St. Jane de Chantal was Benignus Fremiot, one of the presidents of the parliament of Burgundy, famous for his loyalty to Henry IV., in opposing the league; also for his great piety, and the modesty with which he refused the dignity of first president, by which he showed himself the more worthy of that honour. By his lady, Margaret de Berbisy, he had three children, Margaret, who was afterwards married to the count of Effran; Jane, who was born at Dijon, on the 23d of January, 1573; and Andrew, who died archbishop of Bourges. The president Fremiot was left a widower by the death of his lady, whilst his children were yet in their infancy; but he took

such pious and prudent care of their education that no assistance or instructions were wanting for forming them in the most perfect sentiments and practice of every religious duty, and for introducing them into life with advantage. Jane, who at her confirmation was called Frances, profited by them above the rest, and was most tenderly beloved by her father, who gave her in marriage when she was twenty years of age to the Baron de Chantel, chief of the family of Rabutin, then twenty-seven years old, an officer of distinction in the French army, and highly in favour with King Henry IV. The marriage was solemnized at Dijon, and a few days after she went with her husband to his seat at Bourbilly. She found a family, which, by the absence of the master, had not been much accustomed to regularity, which she made it her first care to establish. She was very attentive to see that all her domestics were every day present at evening prayers; and at mass on Sundays and great holidays in the parish church, on all other days at home. Regular hours were assigned for meals, and every employment and duty was discharged with great order, she being sensible that this is an indispensable part of virtue, to which few things are more fatal than the confusion of a disorderly life or family. During the frequent absence of her husband, who was obliged often to attend the court or the army, she scarcely ever admitted any company, and never stirred abroad, knowing how much this virtue is both the duty and the delight of a good wife, in order to watch over her servants, children, and domestic concerns, and to shun the snares of dissipation, levity, vanity, love of trifling, and much loss of time, which insensibly sap the very foundations of a virtuous life, and strike at the roots of a Christian spirit. Neither did she indulge herself any time in sloth, or ever find any part of her time a burden, as those ladies so often do, who, living in a perpetual round of empty amusements, are sometimes cloyed with insipid pleasures, sometimes wearied with continual noise and hurry, or ruffled by mortifications and affronts, always sick in solitude, restless and impatient in their pursuits, longing for, and condemning every thing in its turn; one hour dissolved in ease or vain joy, another devoured by melancholy; the continual jest of their own foolish pride and caprice, and a prey by fits to every spi-

ritual passion: True virtue is constant, uniform, and always calm, tasting in itself solid joys. A fervent soul which looks upon every moment of time as infinitely precious, embraces and improves it with an eagerness which never flattens, and inspires vigour even under the severest trials of spiritual dryness. This pious lady employed all her leisure hours either at her work or in the daily long exercises of prayer and pious reading which she prescribed to herself. These devotions she at first much abridged when her husband was at home, at which seasons her house was usually full of company.* But, afterwards

* To make a round of amusements or idle visits the business of life, is to degrade the dignity of a rational being, and to sink beneath the very brutes. Anciently not only amongst the Hebrews, who enjoyed the light of faith and religion, but also amongst the Gentiles, queens and empresses are always found in Homer and other writers at their looms or distaffs, or busy in their domestic concerns, never idle, or at play. Augustus Cæsar wore no other clothes than such as his wife and daughter had spun or made with their own hands. Nature stands in need of relaxation for the exercise of the body and unbending of the mind; but this may be so contrived as to be useful and serious. At least it ought never to swallow up too much of our precious time. It is not to be expressed how much any passion for trifling amusements unsettles, enervates, and debases the mind, and unhinges the whole frame of the soul; how strong an aversion to business, and how torpid a sloth it generates; also what loathings, and how much emptiness, fickleness, and bitterness, everywhere attend and pursue it. When through a degeneracy of soul many shrunk first from a serious turn of mind, they chose diversions which were martial and laborious. To the dregs of corruption in manners was reserved the invention of slothful games and amusements. Cards, the modish diversion of this age, were first discovered at the French court in the fourteenth century. F. Daniel (*Diss. sur l'Origine du Jeu de Piquet, trouvée dans l'Histoire de France, published in the Mémoires de Trevoux, an. 1720*) thinks in the reigns of Charles VI. and VII. For the names and numbers of the cards admirably agree, by elegant allusions, to the persons and transactions of that time. Mr. Bullet, professor at Besançon, to whom the *Mémoires sur la Langue Celtique* have acquired an immortal reputation, published, in 1757, a pamphlet entitled, *Recherches Historiques sur les Cartes à Jouer, avec des Notes Critiques*, wherein he corrects several mistakes of FF. Menestrier and Daniel on this subject, and demonstrates that cards were invented four or five years before the death of Charles V., and that they consist of military allusions. Even the queens have a relation to the combats of chivalry, in which the ladies had a great share. This game was soon after introduced in England, as appears from the word *knave*, for valet or servant; which it then signified with us, as appears from Wickliff's New Testament, kept in Westminster library, &c., where we read, *Paul, the knave of Jesus Christ*. Games at cards, in which chance is chiefly predominant, fall under the censure of games of hazard, which the laws of religion and natural justice capitally condemn. Those games at cards in which dexterity and skill prevail, can only be tolerated or allowed when the play is not deep, and there is no danger either of losing much time at it, or of contracting an attachment to it.

repenting of this loss of time, and always finding the spirit of piety much impaired in her by that dissipation and amusement or play, beyond what necessity might excuse, she resolved, in 1601, no more, upon any such pretence, to curtail her usual exercises; and from that time she so contrived matters as neither to omit any of her devotions, nor to be wanting to any office which charity, courtesy, or other duties of her station in the world required of her. The Baron de Chantal was a nobleman of strict honour, and very religious. Nor was any thing which the world could afford wanting to this pious couple to complete the happiness of the married state. But God, who would reign alone in the heart of our saint, prepared it for himself by the most sensible sacrifice.

The baron, in complaisance to a friend who was come to see him, went out one day a shooting; and, as he had on a coat which resembled the colour of a deer, his friend, mistaking him for one behind the bushes, shot him in the thigh. He survived this accident nine days, during which time he received the holy sacraments in the most edifying sentiments of resignation and piety, and caused his pardon of the person by whom he had been shot to be recorded in the registers of the parish church, strictly forbidding any one to prosecute or bring him into trouble. He expired in the arms of his disconsolate lady, who was left a widow at twenty-eight years of age, with one little son and three daughters; besides which she had buried two children in their infancy. Her grief was not to be expressed; yet she bore it with such a heroic constancy and resignation, that she sometimes said she was surprised to see herself receive so grievous a shock with so great contentedness and equanimity. In her desolate state, offering herself to suffer whatever crosses God should be pleased to lay upon her, she made an entire sacrifice of herself to him with the most perfect resignation, and a vow of perpetual chastity. In the depth of this affliction she found an extraordinary comfort and joy at the thought that she was now at liberty to give herself more perfectly to the divine service; and she repeated to God, *Thou hast broken my bonds, and I will sacrifice to thee a victim of praise.*(1) The more authentically to testify her perfect forgiveness of him who had been the cause

of her husband's death, she studied constantly to do him every good office in her power, and stood godmother to one of his children. According to the rules laid down by St. Paul, St. Ambrose, and other holy fathers, to sanctify the state of her widowhood, she proposed to herself a new plan of life. A considerable part of the nights she spent in tears and prayers. She redoubled her alms, distributed all her rich clothes among the poor, making a vow not to wear any but what were made of linen; she discharged most of her servants, giving all of them honourable recompenses; fasted much, lived retired, and divided all her time between the instruction and care of her children, her prayers, and her work. Such was her fervour, and so ardent her desire of living perfectly to God alone, that she wished she could hide herself in some desert, to be more removed from all worldly hindrances. She declared in confidence, that had not her four little children been a tie upon her, too fast for her conscience to get clear of, she believed she should have fled to the Holy Land, and there ended the remainder of her days; and it was her earnest and continual prayer, with many tears, that God would free her from whatever could hinder her from loving and serving him, and that he would conduct her to a truly holy spiritual guide, by whom she might be instructed in what manner she might in all things best accomplish his adorable will. She then received in her devotions many heavenly favours. One day, while she was earnestly begging our Lord to bring her to a faithful guide who should conduct her to himself, she saw on a sudden a man of the same stature and features with St. Francis of Sales, in a black cassock with a rochet and cap on, just as he was the first time she saw him afterwards at Dijon. Another time, being in a little wood, her soul was in a rapture, and she desired to get into a church that was near, but all in vain. Here it was given her to understand that divine love must consume all the rust of self-love in her, and that she should meet with a great many troubles both from within and without. Upon recovering herself, she found her heart in wonderful joy in the Lord, insomuch that to suffer for God seemed to her the food of love on earth, as his enjoyment is in heaven.

When the year of her mourning was expired, her virtuous and tender father Fremiot sent for her to his house at Dijon,

where she pursued much the same manner of life, except that she sometimes received visits from certain grave ladies who were of an advanced age. A year after this she was obliged, by the affairs of her family, to go with her children to Montelon, one league from Autun, to live with her father-in-law, the old Baron de Chantal, who was then seventy-five years of age. Her patience was there put to a continual severe trial by the perpetual frowardness of the old gentleman, and the imperious carriage of a peevish housekeeper, whose authority was absolute in the family. Jane never let fall the least word of complaint, nor discovered the least sourness in her looks; and her compliance in every thing was cheerful and agreeable. But she gave most of her time to prayer, and on Sundays went to Autun which was three little leagues off, to assist at sermons. It happened in the year 1604 that St. Frances of Sales came to preach the Lent at Dijon, upon which occasion the devout widow made a visit to her father Fremiot, that she might have the opportunity of assisting at the sermons of that celebrated preacher, and eminent servant of God. The first time she saw him she was much taken with his saintly deportment, and was persuaded he was the spiritual director she had long begged of God to send her, to conduct her soul in the most perfect paths of his holy love. Before she spoke, the bishop knew her from a former vision, in which God had manifested to him this future vessel of his grace. St. Francis dined frequently at her father the president Fremiot's house, and by hearing his familiar discourse, she conceived a great confidence in him, and felt extraordinary sentiments of devotion kindled in her breast. It was her earnest desire that she might be allowed to lay open to him the interior state and dispositions of her soul; but she was hindered by a scruple on account of a vow she had made, by the advice of an indiscreet religious man, her director, not to address herself to any other than to himself for spiritual advice. She, however took great delight in hearing St. Francis's discourses. One day the good bishop seeing her dressed better than usual, said to her: "Madam, would not your head-dress have been neat without this lace? and your handkerchief been good enough without fringe?" The devout widow hereupon cut the fringe off upon the spot, and the lace at night. The bishop, who knew that nothing is

little that is done with a desire perfectly to please God, was much delighted with her ready obedience.

The perplexities about her indiscreet vow, the resolution of which St. Francis referred to others, being at length removed, she made several confessions to him, and a general one of her whole life. At the same time she suffered severe interior trials by desolation of soul, and alarming anxieties about her conduct, under which she received great light and comfort by the wholesome councils of St. Francis. By his advice, she so regulated her devotions and other exercises of virtue, as to conform herself in her exterior to the will of others, and to what she owed to the world whilst she lived in the houses of her father and father-in-law. This conduct charmed every one, and made them say: "Madam prays always, yet is never troublesome to any body." She rose at five o'clock, always without a fire, and without the attendance of a maid. She made an hour's meditation; then called up her children, and went with her family to mass. After dinner, she read the holy scripture for half an hour; at evening catechised her children and some others of the village; read again, and said her beads before supper; retired at nine o'clock, said evening prayers with her children and family; after which, she continued a long time in prayer alone. In the employments of the day, and even in company, nothing seemed to interrupt the attention of her soul to God. She mortified her taste in whatever she ate, yet without showing it; she wore a hair-cloth, coarse linen, and very plain clothes; visited the poor who were sick in the neighbourhood, watched whole nights by the bedside of those who were dying, and among other distressed helpless persons, maintained one that was covered with ulcers, which she used to dress with her own hands. The constant sweetness and mildness of her temper showed how perfectly she had already mortified her interior, and subdued her passions. This proved her devotion to be solid, and rendered it amiable to men, as it was perfect before God. St. Francis, whom she visited from time to time at Annecy after his return thither, often admired the entire disengagement of her heart from all earthly things, and the fervour and purity of affection with which she sought in all things the will of God. Every morning she renewed her firm purpose of

loving and seeking the holy will of God alone in all her thoughts and actions, desiring always to die to herself and to all creatures, that she might live only to God, and making an oblation of herself to him without reserve. For a token of this total dedication of herself to him, she wrote on her breast near the seat of her heart the holy name of Jesus.

The more her soul strove by self-denial and assiduous prayer to raise itself above the world, and its low concerns, its wings expanded and unfolded themselves, and she discovered new charms, and a greater light in the heavenly truths of religion, which then seemed to have been folded and shut up before. The better to apply herself to these great means of improving her heart in the divine love, she began to entertain thoughts of renouncing the world. When she had disclosed this inclination to St. Francis, he took some time to recommend the matter to God, and at length proposed to her divers religious Orders. Her answer only was, that she desired to embrace whatever state he judged most conducive to the divine honour. He then mentioned his project of forming a new establishment of a congregation of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary. The pious widow embraced the proposal with extreme joy; but the excessive grief of her aged father and father-in-law, the tender age of her children, and the situation of the affairs of her family, raised great obstacles to her design, and gave her much to suffer. No one who lies under any obligations of justice to others, can, without first discharging them, lawfully embrace any state incompatible with them. Such circumstances point out what it is that God requires of a soul, and in what state or means her perfection is to be sought. Some pretended the obligation which Madame de Chantal owed to her children could not be complied with, unless she remained with them in the world. St. Francis evinced, on the contrary, that in a cloister she would be able to watch over their education with no less vigilance, and perhaps, even with greater advantage to them, than by continuing always with them; and this, which it was her indispensable duty to provide for, she engaged herself still to do. After many violent struggles, this consideration of prudence being settled, her aged father and father-in-law gave their consent; but this they did with such floods of tears as would have shook

a constancy less heroic than hers. This conflict was a great sacrifice especially in one of so dutiful and tender a soul; but the love of God, which was her only view in this action, triumphed over the sentiments of nature; and the same motive obliged her friends themselves at length to approve her resolution, though it cost them so dear.

Before she left the world she married her eldest daughter to St. Francis's eldest nephew, the young Baron de Thorens, which match was esteemed by all her friends very honourable and advantageous. Her two younger daughters she determined to take with her; and the one died in a short time in her arms; the other she afterwards married to the Count de Toulonjon, a nobleman of great virtue, prudence, and honour. Her son, the Baron de Chantal, was only fifteen years old, and him she left under the care of her father, and of excellent tutors, and showed that his affairs required no longer her presence, except to superintend his education, which she engaged to do, and promised for that purpose still to visit him, which St. Francis likewise engaged that she should do. Her reasons had perfectly satisfied her father, father-in-law, and uncle the archbishop, who had long opposed her resolution; nevertheless, though they agreed that her design was a call of heaven, and neither against the rules of prudence nor any other duty, yet the tenderness which nature inspired, raised a fresh storm when the time of her parting came. Taking leave of her father-in-law, the old Baron de Chantal, at Montelon, she fell on her knees, begged his pardon if she had ever displeased him in anything, desired his blessing, and recommended her son to him. The old gentleman, who was in his eighty-sixth year, appeared inconsolable, and tenderly embracing her, wished her all happiness. The inhabitants of Montelon, especially the poor, who thought that in her they lost their all, expressed their grief by tears and loud lamentations. She made them all a short exhortation, and recommended herself to their prayers. Thus she took leave of them, and being accompanied by the Baron of Thorens, his lady, her second daughter, and her son, and others, dined at Autun; but called on the way to engage a good religious man to omit nothing in helping her father-in-law to save his soul, and he kept his word. At Dijon she bade adieu to all her neigh-

bours; then casting herself at the feet of her aged father, she besought him to bless her, and to take care of her son, whom she left with him. The president, feeling his heart oppressed with unutterable grief, and bathed in tears, said: "O my God! it is not for me to oppose your designs. It will cost me my life. To you, O Lord, I offer this dear child; receive her, and be you my comfort." He then gave her his blessing, and lifted her up. Young Chantal, her son, ran to her, clasped her about the neck, and by the most endearing expressions, endeavoured to prevail with her to alter her resolution. When he was not able to gain his point, he threw himself across the door. The holy widow stepped over his body, but returned again, shedding some tears. With a serene countenance she again took leave, checking the emotions of nature by reflecting that her resolution having been judged, after the most mature deliberation and advice, to be the call of heaven, it was her duty to follow it, and a happiness and pleasure to make to God an entire sacrifice of all that was most dear. Her journey to Annecy was prosperous; but she conducted the Baron de Thorens and his lady to their seat, saw them settled, then returning to Annecy, laid the foundation of her new institute at Annecy on Trinity Sunday, 1610, the holy bishop having provided there a convent for that purpose. Two other devout women took the habit with her, and were joined soon after by ten others.

The Cardinal of Marquemont, archbishop of Lyons, having persuaded St. Francis to change the plan of this congregation so far as to make it a religious Order, that it might be rendered of a more lasting continuance, the pious widow and her companions made their solemn vows in his hands. The holy founder would have the two sister virtues of humility and meekness to be the basis of this rule. "In the practice of virtues," said he to our saint and her religious sisters, "let humility be the source of all the rest; let it be without bounds; make it the reigning principle of all your actions. Let an unalterable meekness and sweetness in all events become by habits natural to you." He gave them excellent instructions on the great duty of prayer, that heavenly exercise being the chief fruit and end of religious retirement. Speaking of the adorable sacrifice of the altar, he said to St. Jane, "The mass is the sun of spiritual exercises,

the heart of devotion, the centre of our divine religion. Unite your heart in it with the church triumphant and militant, which joins itself here in one body with Christ, its sacred head, through him to drawn down by a holy violence the mercy of the Father upon us." He inculcated to his spiritual children the necessity of mortifying the senses; for the flesh having been partner in the sin of our first parents, and continuing to be so in the revolt against the spirit, it is to be chastised, subdued, and crucified; and the senses being the avenues of the soul, are the instruments by which the passions are inflamed, and these never can be governed, unless those inlets be strictly guarded and curbed. Hence the obligation of exterior mortification is so strongly inculcated in the law of the gospel; neither can any one hope to obtain the mastery of his interior, and to possess or govern his soul without this extrinsic succour. Yet St. Francis did not enjoin by this rule any great austere-rities, that it might be accommodated to the weakest constitutions, and might be less liable to the danger of pernicious relaxations creeping in under the cloak of frequent dispensations. But then he pointed out a constant crucifixion of the senses by little denials; for he had observed the dangerous mistake of some, who, professing austere rules, are so far strangers to the spirit of their institute, and of their holy founders, as to flatter themselves the extraordinary rigours they practise are to be compensated by other indulgences. Whilst under this pretence they allow themselves many liberties, they in a great measure forfeit the advantages of their other mortifications, and the senses, by being sometimes indulged with excess and delicacy, remain headstrong and untamed. Some degrees of relaxation on certain occasions are reasonable and necessary in all states; but a loose is *never* to be given to the senses in eating and drinking, or in any other point. If the rule prescribed by St. Francis was in this respect milder than many others, and seemed more easy in practice, he, on the other side, allowed no mitigation in the essential interior mortification of the will and the passions. Many have the courage to renounce exterior things, as St. Gregory observes; but very few can find in their hearts truly to die to themselves. For want of this, many who are virtuous and devout in appearance, will be found to have heaped

up nothing but false virtues, and often in their very fasts and prayers to have offered sacrifices which were abominable in the sight of God, because infected with the stinking poison of self-love; nor is it enough to banish self-will in greater vices so long as it is suffered still to fortify itself in smaller inordinate attachments. The least of these is a tie which fastens the soul to the earth, and an obstacle to the reign of the pure love of God in her. This lesson St. Francis strongly inculcates to his spiritual daughters. "We must die," said he, (1) "that God may live in us. It is impossible to procure the union of our souls with God by any other means. These words seem hard; but they are followed with others of incomparable sweetness, that by this death we are united to God." He taught them, that the principal means by which we are thus to die to ourselves, are perfect obedience to superiors, and entire resignation to the divine will, so as never to ask, never to refuse anything in diet, or such temporal things; never to be disturbed or uneasy in any concerns. "You ask," said he again, (2) "what I desire should remain most deeply engraven on your mind. Ah! what shall I say to you, my most dear daughters, but these two words: Desire nothing, refuse nothing. For this document compriseth the perfect doctrine of indifferency of the will. Behold, the little Jesus in the crib refuseth nothing, cold, poverty, nakedness, the company of beasts, all the injuries of the season, and whatever his Father permitted. Neither did he refuse those little comforts which his mother offered him. Even so we ought to receive equally all that Providence shall permit to befall us," &c.

By these excellent maxims did our saint regulate her conduct, and she never ceased to inculcate the same, both by word and example, to her religious sisters. She taught them by humility to love and receive well reprimands and correction; for our souls are spiritually sick, and must rejoice to be pared and cut, to receive their polish, suffering cheerfully the fire and the lancet of humiliations and mortification. The greatest mark of true humility and perfect virtue is, if a soul loves to be humbled and corrected. St. Jane exhorted her nuns to complete in themselves, by a devout spirit of prayer, the work which they

(1) Entert. 20.

(2) Ibid. 21.

began by humility, obedience, and self-denial. She instructed them to repeat acts of divine love, a hundred and a hundred times a-day, by ejaculatory aspirations, by them darting their affections towards God, and continually offering to him their hearts and all their actions. Being scrupulously exact in the least circumstances relating to the divine service, she taught all under her care the same spirit of religion. Once hearing a noise made in a chamber under the chapel whilst the blessed sacrament was exposed, to repair that fault, of irreverence, or inadvertence, she at dinner asked pardon of God for her sisters, kissed their feet, and dined on the floor, which is an ordinary humiliation and penance in many religious communities. When some of the sisters did not rise instantly at the toll of the bell for the divine office, she gave a public reprimand with many tears, saying: "If we reflect that it is the voice of God which calls us to pay him our homage, we should not loiter one moment." But a detail of her admirable lessons, and the edifying instances of her charity, meekness, and all virtues, would be too long for this place, but may be read in her life written by the Bishop of Puy, and again by Marsollier. Soon after she had made her religious profession, she desired to make a vow of doing in every action what she thought most perfect or most pleasing to God; which she did with the approbation of St. Francis, who said he knew the constant fervour and perfection of her soul in labouring always to accomplish such a vow, which never can be allowed, except to persons in whom the most perfect habits of fervour have taken the deepest root.(1) This saint was afflicted with frequent painful sicknesses, and suffered for some time many grievous interior trials from a scrupulous fear of offending God. But it appears from the state of her interior, as she laid it open to her holy director, that she frequently received extraordinary consolations and favours from God. Her sickness seemed to her physicians sometimes to proceed from the ardour of the divine love with which she was consumed. In one of her letters to St. Francis, she said: "The whole world would die of love for so amiable a God, if I could make it feel the sweetness which a soul tastes in loving him."

The affairs of her children, after the death of her father, and

(1) See Collet de Voto, S. Teresa, and S. Andrew Avellini's lives.

the foundation of many new convents at Lyons, Grenoble, Bourges, Dijon, Moulins, Nevers, Orleans, and Paris, obliged her often to leave Annecy. The very same year that she took the habit, upon the death of her pious father, she went to Dijon, and staid there some months to settle her affairs, and place her son in the academy. She afterwards procured his marriage with Miss Mary de Coulange, a beautiful, virtuous, and rich young lady. At Paris she met with a violent persecution; but God strengthened and comforted her under it; and by the example of her astonishing meekness and patience, rendered her the admiration of those who had been her most bitter adversaries. She governed her convent at Paris for three years, from 1619 to 1622. In the following year, the death of St. Francis was a grievous affliction to her, which, nevertheless, her perfect resignation to the divine will made her to bear with unshaken constancy. It was her happiness to bury his body with great honour in the church of her convent at Annecy. Her son having prepared himself for battle, by devoutly receiving the sacraments, was killed fighting against the Huguenots, in the isle of Rhe, in 1627, and in the thirty-first year of his age, leaving a new married lady, with a daughter not a year old, who was the celebrated Madame de Sevigné.* St. Jane received this afflicting news, which drew tears from strangers, with such an heroic fortitude and entire submission to the divine appointments, as astonished those who were with her. Upon any sudden affliction she used to offer her heart to God, saying: "Destroy, cut, burn, whatever opposes your holy will." Her daughter-in-law de Chantel was snatched away in 1631, leaving her only daughter five years old. The very next day after she had received this melancholy news, she heard that of the death of her son-in-

* This daughter, Mary of Rabutin, heiress to her family, was afterwards married to Henry, marquis of Sevigné, and has left to the latest posterity an authentic monument of her lively and agreeable genius, good taste, and judgment in the easy, genteel, and spirited style of her letters, full of wit and dignity, and an unrivalled model of a familiar epistolary style, especially in her letters to her beloved daughter, the Countess of Grignan. The letters which she did not write with her own hand, but only dictated, are in every respect much inferior to the former; and those who added the latter volumes to the two first, have, by serving the booksellers, injured the world and her memory, and passed a gross imposition upon the public. The best edition of her letters, is that put out by Ferrin in 1734.

law, the Count Toulonjon, whom she most tenderly loved, and who died at Pignerol, of which he was governor. Our saint neglected nothing to comfort the young widow her daughter. Exterior trials, how severe soever, were light in comparison of the interior anguish, darkness, and spiritual dryness which she sometimes experienced for a considerable time, as appears from several of her letters, quoted by the bishop of Puy. Good God! how adorable are the designs of your providence! You suffer those souls which are most dear to you seemingly to lose themselves in labyrinths, to wander in mists and darkness, amidst various disturbances of mind. Yet these are certain and direct paths to happiness; and with infinite wisdom do you make them lead to yourself, the source and centre of all light. So sweetly, through your mercy, do all things work together to the good of your elect. This saint was in return often favoured with extraordinary consolations.

By all her trials, and by her constant love and practice of the most heroic humility, patience, meekness, charity, and obedience, she laboured assiduously to overcome herself, and to gain and maintain an absolute ascendant of the superior part of her soul over the inferior. She never ceased inculcating to her religious sisters the necessity of continually renouncing and dying to ourselves, out of a great desire of pleasing God; for by this is the servant of God styled the strong woman, because she courageously and earnestly puts her hand to the most difficult task of conquering and subduing herself. "Our Saviour," said the saint to her nuns, "has annexed the prize of his love and of eternal glory to the victory we gain over ourselves. Your intention in coming to the visitation is to disunite yourselves from yourselves, in order to be united to God. It is a little field, where, unless one die to oneself, there will be no reaping of fruits. You can only upon this condition be spouses of Jesus Christ, that by crucifying your judgment, your will, and your inclinations, you may become like to him. This spouse of your hearts makes you climb up, and draws you after him to the top of Mount Calvary, where, crowned with thorns, he suffers himself to be stripped, nailed, despised, and afflicted with a thousand and a thousand unspeakable sharp torments. It is your part to continue there with him, endeavouring to imitate him

by an entire conformity in two points. The first is, to get clear of yourselves, and with constancy aspire to perfection. We come from the world rough, unpolished, and full of evil inclinations, which we must labour to cut away. Unless we strike off these irregularities, we can never square with him, who is perfect and holy. The second point is, to suffer your hearts to be mortified, pared, and bent as is thought expedient, by obedience, and an entire resignation of yourselves into the hands of those who direct you, with perfect simplicity. Let them or the hand of God strike where you feel it most. If you resist, you cannot become the spouses of Christ crucified, nor attain to perfection. On the contrary, if in good earnest you abandon and renounce yourselves, you will find an incomparable sweetness in God's service, and it will be your delight to trample on self-love for the advancing of the kingdom of grace. It is the reward God promised to the conqueror. "I will give them a hidden manna," says he; which upon the first tasting it, will give them a loathing of all the delights which the whole earth affords. But take notice, that you must conquer before you can taste this manna; for it is not afforded to the cowardly, but reserved for souls of valour, courage, and resolution, that are absolutely determined to sacrifice all, without reserving any thing for themselves; they who leave nothing alive, but kill every evil inclination, will have a title to all. But this violence ought to be sweet and gentle, though firm and constant. O my children, kill boldly and courageously your enemy. By its death you will gain peace and life. I know one who has made an unspeakable progress by this method of overcoming himself in every respect; he is advanced in his way in a little time much further than many others less resolved in the business of self-denial." On another occasion, our saint bitterly deplored the blindness and misery of many souls who practise exercises of devotion; but being of an unmortified and self-conceited temper, reap little benefit, but rather fall more easily into pride, and imagine they are in a state to which they are utterly strangers. Being once consulted by letter about a religious person who seemed to live in great virtue, and to receive extraordinary graces, she wrote back: "You have sent me the leaves of the tree; send me likewise some of its fruit, that I may judge of it; for I matter

not the leaves. Now the fruits of a good heart which God waters and nourishes with his grace, are a total forgetfulness of itself, a great love of humiliations, and an universal joy and satisfaction in every body's good."

Thus did our excellent directress of souls in the paths of virtue study first to draw them from themselves, and to vanquish in them all inordinate attachments and evil inclinations, in order to carry them towards God; to whom souls which are perfectly disentangled from earthly things, are wonderfully united by divine love, and its main source and vital action, a spirit of prayer. As to the manner of holy meditation or prayer, she advised that persons be instructed how to excite pious affections, and form good resolutions in that exercise; but would have them allowed to follow these affections according to their own devotion, and the motions of the Holy Ghost. She exhorted strenuously to perseverance, and if distractions molest us, to make a prayer of patience, humbly and lovingly begging God to be our support, and to inspire us with a desire of loving and praising him, and the like. To pray always is a lesson she often repeated to her religious, saying, that the heart ought to be praying and loving while we are at our recreation, work, speaking, or resting; which is the meaning of the spouse, when she says: "I sleep, but my heart watcheth." In a time of spiritual dryness, when she found her heart dull in its inward operations, she wrote a prayer made up of various acts of love, praise, thanksgiving, compunction, and supplications for herself, friends, enemies, sinners, the dead, and whatever she desired to ask of God; and this paper she carried day and night at her neck, having made this amorous compact with our Lord, that as often as she pressed it on her heart, it should express her intention of repeating all these acts with the utmost fervour of which she was capable. Of the same nature is a desire by repeating Amen, to assent to, and join in all the acts of love and praise, which the heavenly spirits and all God's servants on earth offer without intermission, and in the supplications of the latter. A pestilence raged violently two years at Annecy. The duke and duchess of Savoy endeavoured several ways to engage our saint to provide for her safety by flight. But she could not be induced to abandon her

dear flock ; and by her exhortations, alms, and prayers, exceedingly alleviated the public calamity in that city. Her whole community was by a singular providence preserved from the contagion. In 1638 the duchess royal of Savoy called her to Turin, to found there the convent of her Order. She was soon after invited to Paris by the queen of France, and to her extreme mortification, was treated there with the greatest distinction and honour imaginable. In her return she fell ill of a fever, with a peripneumony or inflammation of the lungs, by which she was detained on the road in her convent at Moulins. There it was that, having received the last sacraments, and given her last instructions to her nuns, she, with wonderful tranquillity, died the death of the saints on the 13th of December, 1641, being sixty-nine years old. Her mortal remains were conveyed with great honour to Annecy. Among several visions of her glory, St. Vincent of Paul, who had been her confessor at Paris, was favoured with one, about which he consulted the bishop of Paris, a judicious monk, and some other learned men. Though he carefully concealed the divine gifts and favours, yet for the glory of this great servant of God, he left an authentic verbal process of this vision, but as of a third person. In it he says he had never been favoured with any vision relating to the glory of any other saint, and that he had always the highest opinion of the sanctity of this pious lady. He tells us, that upon the news of her sickness he was praying for her with great earnestness, when he saw a little shining ball, as it were, of fire rising from the earth, and meeting in the air another larger ball of fire ; both which mounted up to the heavens, and buried themselves in an immense bright fire, which, as an interior voice told him in a very distinct manner, represented the divine essence, and the other two balls the souls of blessed Jane Frances Chantal, and St. Francis of Sales. Soon after he heard of her death, and was struck with a sudden apprehension lest she might have committed some venial sin in some of the words she had spoken to him, though he always regarded her as a person accomplished in all virtues, and one of the most holy souls he ever knew. In this fear he prayed for her with greater fervour than before, and he was that instant favoured with the same vision a second time. From that moment he was

fully persuaded to the certainty of her glory.(1) Several miracles are related by the bishop of Puy to have been performed by her, some whilst she was living, others through her intercession, and by her relics after her death. Among others, he mentions a young nun at Nemers, in the county of Maine, who had been struck with a palsy, and confined to her bed seven weeks in the most deplorable and helpless condition; but was on a sudden perfectly restored to her health, and the use of her limbs, by invoking this servant of God, who was then lately deceased. Whilst the community was singing the *Te Deum* for this miracle, another nun, who was grievously afflicted with sickness, and whose legs were swelled to an enormous size, begged the like favour through the intercession of this saint, and found herself no less suddenly sound and well, so that the choir sung a second *Te Deum* in thanksgiving immediately after the first. Several other miracles were proved before commissaries, and declared authentic in the process of her beatification, which was performed, and the decree published, by Pope Benedict XIV. in 1751, who commanded her name to be inserted in the Roman Martyrology. Clement XIV. by a decree, 2nd September, 1769, fixed her feast on the 21st of August.

The favourite maxims which this saint inculcated to her spiritual children regarded humility, meekness, and charity. "Humility," said she,(2) "consists in this, that when others humble us, we humble ourselves still more; when others accuse us, we add to their accusations; when we are employed in mean offices, we sincerely own it is more than we deserve; when we are cast by, we are well content. A religious person cannot give a more evident mark of pride and incapacity, than to think herself capable of anything. Did we but know how strangely those souls affront the Spirit of God who raise themselves, or make ostentation by vanity, we should be ready to pray that fire might fall from heaven upon us, rather than to be guilty of this vice. I wish I could engrave this maxim with my blood. I could wish my lips were bored with a hot iron, on condition that the mouths of the religious might be always shut against the least word that breaks in upon humility." The

(1) Collet, Vie de S. Vincent, t. 1, l. 4, p. 342.

(2) See her maxims in her life by Maupas and Marquillier.

saint will have mildness to be so perfect by our assiduity in practising it with the most heroic dispositions, that it becomes, as it were, the natural and constant frame of our souls, which no provocation must ever disturb. Our saint had a wonderful address in tempering corrections and reproofs with such tenderness and charity, as to give no one uneasiness; also in concealing and bearing all personal injuries, and in repaying slanders, curses, and affronts with blessings and favours. Her exhortations to her sisters to bear with one another's burdens, and to suffer nothing ever to cool the sweetness of their charity towards every one, were most pathetic and earnest; and she often put them in mind in what school we are educated. "With whom," said she, "did Jesus Christ converse? With a traitor, who sold him at a cheap rate; with a thief, who reviled him in his last moments; with sinners and proud Pharisees. Ah! shall we, at every shadow of an affront or contradiction, show how little charity and patience we have!" She was ever inculcating how enormous the sin of speaking against one's neighbour is; especially where there is the least shadow of envy or spite: and she often repeated, that whoever were guilty of it, deserved to have their tongues cut out; wishing, that by the loss of her own she could prevent this foul sin ever happening among her religious sisters.

ST. RICHARD, BISHOP OF ANDRIA, CONFESSOR.

THIS saint was an Englishman by birth, and turning his soul to God with his whole strength from his infancy, was careful so to spend the most precious time of his youth as to ground himself early in rooted habits of abstinence, humility, prayer, and all other virtues. In the mean time he applied himself to the study both of the liberal and sacred sciences, taught the latter for some time with great applause, and took holy orders. With a view to his spiritual advancement he left his own country, and travelling into Italy, led a most holy retired life, till the reputation of his learning and extraordinary sanctity filled the whole country. The pope having been long acquainted with his qualifications and virtue, at length promoted him to the bishopric of Andria, in Apulia. All Italy was at that time miserably distracted by domestic feuds and factions. Richard, by his pru-