

ness, justice, and mercy ; but it also exerted the most powerful influence upon their wills. A spirit of the most sincere and profound compunction and humility was created in them, with a perfect contempt of the world, and all earthly things, and an entire disengagement of their hearts from all inordinate attachment to creatures. The fire of pure and ardent charity was also kindled in their hearts, which consumed all the rust of their passions; and purged their affections. From these virtues of humility and charity, which Christ declares to be the foundation of his spirit in a soul, arose an unalterable meekness, peace, fortitude, and constancy, with the whole train of virtues. Thus, by their conversion to the faith, they were interiorly changed, and became quite new men, endued with a temper truly heavenly, and animated with the spirit of Christ. The light of faith spreads its beams upon our souls. Why then has it not produced the same reformation and change in our wills and affections? This it cannot do whilst we refuse to open our hearts to this grace, and earnestly set not ourselves to remove all obstacles of self-love and the passions. Yet, till this change be wrought in our affections, we are earthly, strangers to the spirit of Christ, and want the mark of meekness and charity, by which those are to be known that belong to him. A Christian is not a mere name, or empty profession ; it is a great and noble work ; a work of difficulty which requires assiduous application, and continual pains ; and in which the greater our endeavours and advances have been, with the greater ardour do we continually strive to advance higher towards perfection, saying with St. Paul, *Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect ; but I follow after. I count not myself to have apprehended ; but this one thing I do : forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I press towards the mark, to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*(1)

ST. GERARD, ABBOT.

THE county of Namur gave birth to this saint, who, being nearly related to Haganon, duke of Lower Austrasia, and

(1) Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14.

educated in the military service, was preferred young to one of the most honourable posts in the household or palace of Berenger, the sovereign count of Namur, whose court was one of the most splendid in Christendom. An engaging sweetness of temper, and a strong inclination to piety and devotion, gained him from the cradle the esteem and affection of every one, and his courtesy and universal beneficence gave the greatest charms to virtue, and made it shine forth by his whole conduct in the most amiable light. He proportioned his profuse alms to the utmost extent of his large revenues and estates, and knew no imaginary necessities which serve so often for pretences to withhold charities, being sensible that a man gains nothing by putting a cheat upon his own soul; for it is the truth that will judge us, which can neither be altered nor weakened by the illusions of the passions, or by the false prejudices of men. God blessed his fidelity by pouring forth abundantly his choicest graces upon him. Gerard was enriched by him with an extraordinary gift of prayer, and by this he obtained all other graces. Such was his ardour and affection for this heavenly exercise, that he seemed to pray everywhere, and at all times. One day, as he returned from hunting, in which diversion he had accompanied his sovereign, whilst the rest went to take some refreshment, he privately stole into a retired chapel at Brogne, which was part of his own estate, and remained there a long time in devout prayer. He found so much interior sweetness in that heavenly exercise, that he rose from it with extreme regret, and said to himself: "How happy are they who have no other employment but to praise the Lord night and day, to live always in his sweet presence, and to consecrate their hearts to him without interruption!" To procure this happiness for others, and this incessant tribute and honour to the supreme majesty of God, he founded in that place several canonries and prebends, and built there a fair church in 918. The earl, his sovereign, who, from the experience which he had of his prudence and virtue, placed in him an entire confidence, sent him to the court of France upon an important commission. At Paris, leaving his attendants in the city, he retired to the abbey of St. Denis, where he was exceedingly edified with the fervour and solitude of the holy

monks, and earnestly desired to dedicate himself to God in that place. For the execution of this design the consent of his sovereign was necessary ; which, upon his return to Namur, he extorted from him, though with great difficulty. His uncle Stephen being bishop of Tongres, he went thither to receive his blessing and advice, and having settled his temporal affairs, went back with great joy to St. Denis's, to make the sacrifice of himself at the foot of God's altar. During his novitiate he spared no mortification and self-denials that he might begin more perfectly to die to himself : without which condition our virtues themselves are often false or imperfect, being tainted with self-love ; for, in the most holy functions, men often seek to please themselves rather than God, and gratify some subtle inordinate passion. When we seem to propose no other aim but God's glory, the deceitfulness of self-love is even more dangerous, because less capable of discovery. So long as this principle of self-love resides and is cherished in the heart, it prompts us to conceive a secret opinion of our labours, and to seek an unwarranted delight in our endeavours. This shows itself by our want of perfect humility and meekness, both towards others, and towards ourselves ; by a secret fretfulness, sourness, or discouragements into which we sometimes fall. This source must be cut off, otherwise it will easily creep into and debase the purity of our affections, and intention in our religious exercises themselves, and will be an insuperable bar to our progress in divine love, and in the perfect union of our affections to God in holy prayer.

Gerard, after his religious profession, laboured every day with greater fervour to carry on all Christian virtues to their noblest heights, and especially those of humility, meekness, penance, obedience, and devout prayer, the main helps by which divine charity is to be made daily more pure and perfect in a soul. Gerard began his studies from the first elements, and went through them with incredible patience and assiduity. Five years after his profession he received priestly orders, though his humility was not to be overcome in this promotion without great difficulty. When he had lived ten years with great fervour in this monastery, in 931 he was sent by his abbot to found an abbey upon his estate at Brogne, three leagues from

Namur. He had no sooner settled this new abbey, but finding the dissipation of receiving visitants, and of the charge of a numerous community, to break in too much upon his retirement, and to interrupt his prayer, he built himself a little cell near the church, and lived in it a recluse. God, some time after, called him again to the active life for the greater advancement of his glory, and Gerard was obliged to take upon himself the reformation of the regular canons at St. Guilhain, six miles from Mons, in which house he established the holy order of St. Bennet, of which he became one of the greatest ornaments and propagators. At the request of Earl Arnold I., surnamed the Great, whom the saint had miraculously cured of the stone, and whom he had engaged to take up a penitential course of life, which he held to his death, the general inspection and reformation of all the abbeys in Flanders was committed to him; and he introduced a new and most exact discipline in eighteen monasteries, namely, St. Peter's at Ghent, St. Bavo's, St. Martin's at Tournay, Marciennes, Hanon, Rhonay, St. Vaast's at Arras, Turhoult, Wormhoult at Berg, St. Riquier's, St. Bertin's, St. Silvin's, St. Samer's, St. Amand's, St. Ame's, and St. Berta's; all which houses honour him as their abbot and second patriarch. The monasteries of Champagne, Lorrain, and Picardy also chose him for their general master and reformer; those especially of St. Remigius of Rheims, of Mouson, and of Thin le Moutier call him to this day the restorer of their discipline, and of the Order of St. Bennet. No fatigues made the saint abate anything of his ordinary austerities, nor did his employs seem to interrupt the continual sweet communication of his soul with God. When he had spent almost twenty years in these zealous labours, and was broken with old age, he travelled to Rome, and obtained of the pope the confirmation of all the reforms which he had made.* After his return he made a general visitation of all the monasteries that were under his direction; which when he had finished, he shut himself up in his cell, to prepare his soul, by the most fervent

* His example inspired many others with the like zeal. In 1079, two noblemen, named Sicher and Walther, founded the rich abbey of Anchin, near Douay, in a place where St. Gordon, a holy hermit, had served God with great edification.

exercises of the pure love of God, to go to receive the recompense of his labours, to which he was called on the 3rd of October in 959. The abbey of Brogne is now united to the bishopric of Namur, erected by Paul IV.; but the church of Brogne still possesses the treasure of his relics, and retains his name, which is mentioned on this day in the Roman Martyrology, and others. See his exact life in Mabillon, Act. Bened. t. 7.; also Gramaye in *Historia et Antiquitatibus comitatus Namurcensis*, p. 72; Bie, the Bollandist, t. 2, Oct. p. 220, 320.

THE TWO EWALDS, MM.

Soon after St. Willibrord with eleven companions in 690 had opened the spiritual harvest in Friesland, two brothers, both priests, of the English nation, followed their example,* and went over into the country of the ancient Saxons in Westphalia, in Germany, to preach the gospel to blind idolaters.* They had travelled into Ireland, to improve themselves in virtue and sacred learning. Both were called by the same name, Ewald or Hewald; but, for distinction's sake, from the colour of their hair, the one was called the Black, the other the White Ewald. The first was esteemed more learned, in the holy scriptures, but both seemed equally to excel in the fervour of devotion and holy zeal. The old Saxons in Germany were at that time governed by several petty princes, who in time of war joined their forces, and cast lots who should command the army in chief, and him the rest were bound to obey; and, as soon as the war was over, they were all reduced to their former condition. The two brothers arriving in this country about the year 694, met with a certain steward, whom they desired to conduct them to his lord. All the way they were constantly employed in prayer and in singing psalms and sacred hymns, and every day offered the sacrifice of the holy oblation, for which purpose they carried with them sacred vessels, and a consecrated table for an altar. The barbarians observing this, and fearing lest the preachers might prevail upon

* Old Saxony, in the age of Charlemagne, lay betwixt the Rhine, the Yssel, and the Wesel, where are now the bishoprics of Munster, Osnaburgh, and Paderborn, and the county of La Mark. See Cluverius in *Germania Antiqua*, l. 3. D'Anville, &c.