LIFE OF
SAINT GERARD MAIELLA,
LAY-BROTHER OF THE CONGREGATION OF
THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER.

BY THE.
REV. O. R. VASSALL-PHILLIPS, C.SS.R.
PRIEST OF THE SAME CONGREGATION.

R. & T. WASHBOURNE, LTD.
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Sive enim mente excedimus, Deo:
sive sobrii sumus, vobis. Caritas
enim Christi urget nos.
ii Cor. v. 13. 14.

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There was a mortal, who is now above
In the mid glory: he, when near to die,
Was given Communion with the Crucified,—
Such, that the Master's very wounds were stamp'd
Upon his flesh; and from the agony
Which thrill'd through body and soul in that embrace,
Learn that the flame of Everlasting Love
Doth burn ere it transform.

Card. Newman,
Dream of Gerontius.
To the
Most Sacred Heart
of Jesus.
PERMISSU SUPERIORUM

Nihil Obstat.
T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.,
Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur.
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Nihil Obstat.
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CHAPTER I.

HIS CHILDHOOD.

About fifty miles south of Naples the traveller will come upon the picturesque little town of Muro. Nestling snugly amidst the Apennines, it looks down from the mountain slopes upon a wide expanse of fertile plain, which stretches away beneath its walls.

Muro is an Episcopal See. Like most Italian cities, it is rich in religious houses.
Here especially the children of St. Francis are to be found in large numbers. You may mark their humble homes, as they rise in unadorned simplicity, beside buildings of great architectural beauty.

It was in this pleasant spot, favoured alike by nature and grace, that God was pleased to place the cradle of Saint Gerard. His father was a man of lowly birth, a tailor by trade, but full of piety and virtue. Upon this worthy man—Dominic Maiella was his name—Heaven bestowed first two daughters and then a son, the story of whose short but marvellous life we are about to present to our readers. This boy was born on the sixth of April, in the year 1726, and was baptized by the name of Gerard on the very day of his birth, in the cathedral of his native city.

God is wonderful in all His Saints. Yet it is true that these His chosen servants show forth His Goodness and Wisdom in widely differing ways. This must necessarily be the case, since widely different are the purposes that they are designed to effect in the varied story of the Church's warfare. According to the need, so is the gift bestowed. Some of the greatest of the Saints have mirrored the Divine Perfections by
the spotlessness of their souls in the ordinary discharge of everyday duties. Their virtues were heroic, but it was not necessary to their vocation that they should receive many extraordinary prerogatives. Others on the contrary have preached the Infinite Power of God, even on the housetops, by the marvellous miracles that He has enabled them to perform, or rather that He has Himself deigned to perform at their prayer and through their instrumentality. To this latter class belongs our Saint Gerard.

His life was one long wonder. In him God seems to have delighted to stultify the shallow eighteenth century in which his lot was cast. The long series of his miracles furnish by themselves a sufficient answer to the sneer of infidels, not merely of his own time, but also of the present day.

It is idle to proclaim theoretically, that something cannot take place, to those who have seen it actually occur before their very eyes. Thus no man who watched the doings of Saint Gerard could doubt the possibility of miracles, for Gerard worked miracles all his life through, and that continually and often under circumstances of much publicity. For this reason alone the story of his life is full
of useful teaching for a materialistic age. It breathes the supernatural as its native air. In the world, but never of the world, he seems a visitant from the everlasting shores, come for a little while to dwell in our midst. Such a life as his tells silently of the Invisible Presence which ever governs all we see around us. It is meant to burn into our minds and hearts in letters of fire the remembrance of the Sovereignty of God.

In writing this little sketch of Saint Gerard, we can only state some few of his miracles. Should any one wish to study in detail the proofs on which they rest, we would refer him to the testimony adduced in the Processes of his Beatification. If evidence such as this, given on oath by a mass of witnesses in every way worthy of credence, be rejected as inconclusive, it is hard to see what would be accepted as satisfactory,

In Gerard's early childhood Our Lord was, in His wonderful condescension, pleased to make free with him in ways most strange and lovely. Thus we are told that, when he was but five years old, he went one day to a chapel in a hamlet called Capotignano, a little more than a mile outside of Muro, where is venerated an image of Our Blessed
Lady holding the Divine Child in her arms. No sooner had the boy knelt down to say his prayers, than He who tells us that His delights are to be with the children of men, seemed to descend from His Mother’s arms, a smile upon his lips, and commenced to play familiarly with little Gerard. Then after a while the Holy Child gave Gerard, as a pledge of his love, a tiny loaf of exceeding whiteness.*

When Gerard reached home, he was, as we may well imagine, brimming over with innocent happiness. Without delay he brought his wonderful present to his mother in the gladness of his heart. She was naturally much surprised, and asked the boy who had given him the bread.

“It was,” he answered, “the Child of a beautiful lady with whom I have been playing.”

For many succeeding days this miracle was renewed. Drawn by the heavenly attraction of the Divine Child of Bethlehem, each morning Gerard went to the shrine of

* Miracles, however extraordinary, are not, as a general rule, isolated in the lives of the Saints. Thus it is interesting to note that we find a miracle very similar to this, recorded in the account of the early childhood of Blessed Hermann Joseph.
Capotignano, and each morning did the prodigy recur. On one occasion his sister Bridget followed him at a safe distance, and was an eye-witness of the magic scene.

In later years after he had become a Redemptorist, when this same sister came one day to see him, Gerard said to her with his usual simplicity:

"Now I understand that it was the Infant Jesus who used to give me those beautiful little loaves."

"Very well," replied his sister with a smile, "let us then go and visit Him once more."

"No," said Gerard, "for now I can find Him everywhere, whenever I please."

This holy child, already so dear to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, was not seven years old, when already his soul yearned for the Bread that cometh down from Heaven. One day during Mass the little boy felt a secret inspiration to go up with the people and receive Holy Communion. The priest, seeing that he was hardly more than a baby in appearance, passed him by. The child went back to his place in the church, the tears flowing down his cheeks. But the next night the great Archangel St. Michael
came to console him, bearing the body of his Lord. This miraculous Communion was, doubtless, one of the great reasons for Saint Gerard’s life-long devotion to the Prince of the Angelic Hosts.

Sent to school at an early age, Gerard’s virtues soon made him very dear both to master and boys. All wondered at his extraordinary piety. His devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to Our Blessed Lady increased day by day. At this period of his life, we are told that, during the solemn time which elapses in the Holy Mass between the Consecration and the Priest’s Communion, the Infant Jesus often appeared to the boy’s enraptured gaze upon the Altar.

His, however, was no morbid or unreal devotion. This was proved by his constant and unfailing charity, the one touchstone of all true sanctity. Full of the love of God, and ever anxious to help those in trouble in any way he might, Gerard grew daily in grace, until at the age of ten his confessor permitted him to go every other day to Holy Communion. After his death his good mother speaking of the childhood of her dear son, expressed herself as follows:
"My child found his only pleasure in the church, on his knees before the Blessed Sacrament. He used to remain there so long that he would forget the dinner-hour. In the house, young as he was, he prayed all day. He was born for Heaven."

Happy mother of such a son!
CHAPTER II

HIS APPRENTICESHIP TO A TRADE.

WHEN Gerard had left Muro and was living in a boarding-school hard by, he received the news of his father's death. His mother now found herself in somewhat straitened circumstances, and was compelled to remove her son from school. She apprenticed him to a tailor called Pannuto. Here the holy boy gave himself heart and soul to his work, but was careful at the same time to correspond faithfully with the inspirations from on high, which drew him irresistibly to the interior life.

Oftentimes, whilst his fingers plied the needle, his spirit was rapt in God. Already from time to time he was ravished in ecstasy.

It was also his custom to hide himself underneath the work-table in order the more freely to pour forth his heart, unobserved
by men, in fervent prayer. His master, Pannuto, loved him, and, recognising his virtues, would not check these extraordinary impulses of Divine Grace. But this was not the case with the foreman, a person of violent temper, who could not understand our Saint. One day he dragged him from the place when he was praying, and belaboured him with blows.

"Strike, strike," cried Gerard, "well you may; you have cause enough."

On another occasion this tyrant struck the victim of his brutality with such violence that he fell swooning to the ground. Suddenly Pannuto appeared on the scene and demanded an explanation. The foreman did not know what to reply, but relying, as the event proved with good reason, on Gerard's unfailing charity, he stammered out:

"He knows: let him tell you himself."

The Saint meekly replied with perfect truth that he had fallen off his tailor's table, keeping to himself the cause of that cruel fall.

Gerard had even after this to suffer unceasing insults and blows from his savage tormentor. He bore them all with a smile,
forgiving his persecutor, in whom he recognised the unsuspecting instrument of the Will of God. Well did he know that these sufferings were intended to be the great instrument of his sanctification by forming in him the Christian character; by making him more and more gentle, meek, humble, and forgiving—in a word, rendering him more and more like Christ his Lord, Who, when He was reviled, answered not again, and gladly endured unspeakable indignities at the hands of sinners.

Meanwhile, God was preparing a respite for his servant. One day Pannuto followed him secretly to the church, and was there entranced by the spectacle that met his gaze. After having prayed for some time with great fervour, Gerard performed an act of mortification and humility that is much practised by the people of southern Italy,—an act which St. Alphonsus used to encourage them to perform in reparation for the blasphemy that is unfortunately too common amongst impulsive Neapolitans. He prostrated himself, kissed the ground, and drew his tongue along the pavement until he came to the foot of the Altar. He was then immediately ravished in an ecstasy.
This scene made a lasting impression upon Pannuto. Amazed to see his young apprentice admitted by God to such a lofty state of contemplation, thenceforth he venerated him as a saint, and dismissed his persecutor.

At this period, Almighty God was pleased to work the following great miracle through Saint Gerard. The servant of God was one night with his master's son guarding his vineyards against possible thieves. In order the better to enkindle his devotion towards the passion of Our Lord, Gerard made a cross, surrounded it with some lights, and commenced to chant the *Miserere*. Suddenly some ricks of straw took fire.

Pannuto's son cried out in alarm.

"It is nothing," said Gerard, and, as he made the sign of the cross, the fire was at once extinguished.

Our Saint was still in Pannuto's service, when, on the Feast of Pentecost in the year 1740, he received the Sacrament of Confirmation at the hands of the Bishop of Lacedogna, acting on behalf of the Bishop of the diocese. At this time Gerard was fourteen years of age. Henceforth he would
seem to have contracted a most intimate union in the depths of his soul with the Holy Spirit of God. A special devotion to the Holy Ghost was always one of the marked characteristics of his piety.

Whenever in future life his advice was asked on any subject, he was accustomed to invoke first the aid of the All-wise Spirit of God. This pious habit was no doubt the source of the unfailing prudence of the counsel that he gave,—sometimes in cases of no ordinary difficulty.

On finishing his apprenticeship with Pan-nuto, his mother placed him in the house of another tailor named Vitus Mennona. Here he was remarkable for his great spirit of prayer, obedience, and charity, so that his master acquired a veneration for the servant of God which lasted until his holy death. In his old age Mennona used to journey to the Redemptorist house where Gerard was living, and would there pour forth his soul, speaking with the greatest enthusiasm of the virtues of the holy Brother.

But the young lover of the Crucified thought himself too comfortable with the good Mennona. He felt an irresistible
attraction to the Religious Life. Accordingly, presenting himself at a Convent of Capuchins in the neighbourhood,—where he had an uncle, a Father Bonaventure, a theologian of distinction,—he craved admission as a Postulant for the habit of St. Francis. But his youth and the wretched state of his health caused him to be refused, the superiors judging that his request came rather from a passing movement of fervour than from a divine vocation.

That he might somewhat console his nephew for this refusal, Fr. Bonaventure gave him a new suit of clothes, which, as we read, he sadly wanted, and then sent him away. At the very door of the convent he happened to meet a poor beggar in rags, who asked an alms for the love of God. Touched at the sight of his misery, Gerard at once took off his new clothes, and gave them to the poor man. Fr. Bonaventure, however, on being told this, did not quite like the way that his present had been treated, and sent for the culprit to express his displeasure.

"O my dear uncle," said the Saint, "do not, I entreat you, be put out with me. The beggar to whom I gave your clothes needed
them far more than I did. Had you yourself seen that poor brother of Jesus Christ, you would have been the first to give them to him."

Fr. Bonaventure could say no more. He thanked God in his heart for having taught his nephew thus to love the poor, so dear to our Divine Lord.
HAVING been refused admittance into their Order by the Capuchins, Saint Gerard determined to wait some clearer call from God, and meanwhile to labour more assiduously than ever at the work of his sanctification. With this end in view, he engaged himself as servant to a gentleman whose temper was so notoriously ungovernable, that no one could live a month in his employment. In the life of labour and humiliation, which now opened out before his path, Gerard's heart rejoiced, for thus could he imitate Him, the Lord of Heaven, Who appeared as a servant for our sake. Indeed, the thought of the humility and meekness of our Blessed Saviour in the midst of His dread sufferings was his one comfort in his new surroundings.

He was only sixteen years of age, and the poor boy was the butt for all the concen-
trated spleen of his ill-humoured master. Multiplied orders, reproaches heaped upon him without cause, interminable scoldings, threats that he would be turned out of the house, such were the lot of Gerard from the very commencement. People wondered how he could bear it all, but he used to say gently, that his master was his best friend, and that for his own part, he had no other thought than that of remaining faithfully in his service.

He lived a life of the greatest personal austerity. His ordinary food was dry bread. A few vegetables he looked upon as a luxurious banquet. Everything that he could save from the food provided for his own meals he used to give to the poor. All his spare time he was accustomed to pass in the presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

It was at this period that it pleased God to reward the fidelity of His servant by another great miracle. One day his master having gone out for a walk, Gerard locked the door of his apartments, carried off the key, and proceeded to fetch some water from the well in the public square. While leaning over the kerb, by some mishap the c
precious key slipped from his grasp and fell into the well below.

“What will my master say!” cried he in uttermost consternation, “what a state he will be in!”

One first moment of dismay! Then, from the very bottom of his heart he asked the help of God. Suddenly there came an inspiration. Running quickly to the Cathedral sacristy, he flew back with a little statue of the Infant Jesus in his hands. The bystanders, who were witnesses of the scene, waited all expectation to see what might come next. Amidst a general silence Gerard addressed Our Lord with much simplicity, begging Him to restore the lost key.

Soon he was seen to tie the statue to a string. Down it went lower and lower into the well. For an instant all was suspense. Then behold once more the statue reappeared, bearing the key in triumph to its happy owner! No wonder that such a miracle as this was talked of for many a mile all the country round. Even to this day they will point out to you the well, which, in memory of the marvel, was henceforth to be known to all as Pozzo Gerardiello or Gerard’s well.
Our Saint had been now three years in the service of this hard taskmaster, when suddenly the tyrant died. Far from experiencing any feeling of relief, he mourned his loss as that of the best of friends and benefactors. So eager was he always to suffer for the love of Christ.

Saint Gerard now determined to return home and practise his trade of tailor. He was kept busily occupied during the day. A great part of the night he spent in the Cathedral in presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Indeed his was already a life of the most heroic sanctity. Knowing well that almsdeeds and fasting are the wings that waft our prayers to Heaven and make them acceptable in the sight of God, he divided all the money he received into three equal portions. One part he gave to his mother for the support of the house, another he devoted to the poor, and the remaining third was a loving alms for Masses, wherewith to comfort the Holy Souls in Purgatory.

He also redoubled his corporal penances, taking the discipline with great severity, and in general treating his body with the utmost rigour. At this time, thinking constantly of Jesus Who allowed Himself to be
as a fool in the court of Herod, Saint Gerard feigned madness in the streets, and rejoiced when he was treated with contumely as a simpleton by the boys of his native town. Truly love—the love of the Saints for God—is strong as death and stronger than life itself. Gerard would, had it been possible, have set the whole world ablaze with the fire of charity that God had enkindled in his own affectionate heart. Oftentimes he would, as though constrained by some uncontrollable impulse, call out to his mother, his sister or his friends:

"Come! let us go together and visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Is He not there, our Prisoner of Love?"

The Sacred Heart of Jesus drew Gerard's heart very close to Itself.

To this burning love for Our Blessed Lord, he joined the tenderest devotion to Mary, the gentle Mother of God. When he found himself before one of the images of Our Lady, he could hardly tear himself from the spot. He loved to say again and again:

"The Madonna has stolen away my heart, and for my part I have made her a present of it."
Once when they were celebrating at Muro a novena in honour of the Immaculate Conception, Gerard remained for a long time on his knees in fervent prayer before an image of the sinless Queen of Heaven. Then suddenly in sight of all the people he rose, and, like St. Edmund of Canterbury long centuries before, placing a ring on the finger of the statue, cried aloud:

"See, I am espoused to the Madonna!" Thus would he publicly proclaim that he had consecrated the pearl of his virginity to the glorious Virgin Mother.

Gerard was now twenty-two years of age, when, at length it pleased Divine Providence to open for him the door to the Religious State.

In 1749 the Redemptorist Fathers gave a mission at Muro. Gerard had already, in the previous year, expressed his longing to enter the Congregation of the most Holy Redeemer as a Lay-brother; and now he renewed his entreaties with even greater earnestness than before.

However at first the same fate that befell him with the Capuchins came to test his confidence in God. Father Cafaro, Rector of the House at Iliceto, was among the
Missioners at Muro. He noticed the delicacy of Gerard's appearance, and thought him to be but ill-suited for the hard life of a Lay-brother. On this ground he felt himself bound to meet our Saint's petition with a positive refusal.

Meanwhile Gerard's mother and sister on their side, were by no means idle. They shrank from the very idea of losing him, and as they knew that, notwithstanding the obstacles he had encountered, he was far from giving up his project in despair, they locked him up, as they thought safely, in his room. But the prisoner cut up his bed-clothes and with their help let himself down from the window, leaving behind a note to say that he had gone away to make himself a saint!

He now pursued the Redemptorist Fathers to a place called Rionero, where they had gone to give a mission, and renewed his request in the most humble and touching manner possible. Once more refused, he exclaimed:

"Do but try me. This is all that I ask. You can send me away afterwards if you please."

Seeing that they were still determined not
to accept him, he threw himself on his knees and, crying bitterly, declared that if he were refused admittance into the Convent, he would be found every morning outside its doors begging alms with the poor. This firmness of purpose touched Father Cafaro to the heart. He made up his mind to give Gerard the trial he craved so earnestly. Accordingly he sent him to Iliceto with a note to the acting-superior of the House in which he said simply:

"I send you a useless Brother."

St. Alphonsus has written the life of Father Cafaro, and left us his testimony to the exceptional sanctity of the great servant of God whom he knew so well. But even Father Cafaro could not foresee how warmly God would espouse the cause of the new postulant. That frail frame was to be so strengthened, that, in the discharge of the daily duties of his laborious state, he should always prove one of the most useful members of any community to which he might be attached. But this in the future.

For the moment he was only "a useless Brother."
CHAPTER IV.

HIS NOVICIATE.

GERARD, duly armed with Father Cafaro's little note of introduction, proceeded in all haste to the Redemptorist House at Iliceto. Situated in a solitude rather more than a mile outside the little town, this convent had originally been built by the Blessed Felix of Corsano for the Augustinians, but it had been abandoned by them some time before it was accepted by St. Alphonsus as a home for his Religious. The House was always very dear to the holy Founder, who loved it especially because of an ancient and miraculous picture of the Blessed Virgin, venerated under the title of Our Lady of Consolation, which was preserved in the church attached to the convent. It was here that St. Alphonsus wrote his first book, the well-known Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and it was here that Gerard was
to spend the greater part of his short Religious Life.

He had hardly been a few days in the house before it became evident that the new Brother was a model of every virtue. As soon then as the Father Rector returned home, he was told that the postulant whom he had sent to Iliceto, far from being "useless," as he had feared would be the case, was on the contrary the greatest blessing to the whole Community. Gerard was soon after this admitted formally into the Noviciate, and given the holy Habit of Religion.

Never, surely, had there been seen a more fervent novice. If his life in the world had been most admirable, his life in the cloister was still more so. According to the testimony of the other Brothers, he managed by himself to do the work of four. At the same time, none knew so well as he how to unite the contemplative to the active life, by making every external occupation one long prayer, an act of unbroken homage to the Majesty of God.

He never forgot Who was the Master that it was his privilege to serve in the Religious
State. The convent in which he dwelt was in his eyes the Palace of the great King. In the sunshine of His real Presence in the midst of His Own, Gerard found the supreme happiness of his life, and his loyal heart rejoiced to do fealty to his Lord not only in word but also in deed, "in much patience, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, in sweetness, in the Holy Ghost, in charity unfeigned." *

For a short time he was employed in the garden. This kind of manual labour must have been strange and hard enough for the young tailor. But he never complained. On the contrary, he used to do the work of others in addition to his own, saying with a smile on his face:

"Let me do it. I am the youngest. Do you please rest yourselves awhile."

The more humble the nature of the duty assigned to him, the better was he pleased. Deeply rooted in humility, he had taken labour for his bride, and was never happy when separated from her. We may say at once that this was one of the most marked characteristics of Saint Gerard's sanctity throughout life. His at

* II Cor, vi. 4 seq.
least was no dreamy, useless, or unpractical existence.

The mysterious mastery that we shall see him exercising again and again over the inanimate creation and the hidden forces of nature, God seems to have given to Saint Gerard, as to St. Francis and to many of his first children, in reward for the purity of heart by which they almost returned to that state of "Original Justice," when Man, before sin had torn the sceptre from his grasp, was in very truth Lord of all creation. But this perfect purity of spirit, this undimmed clearness of vision, which was theirs in such perfection that, for them, Nature seems to have raised her veil that thus she might disclose the powers of the unseen world behind her, could be purchased only at the price of a complete self-mastery, and heroic mortification of all that is merely of this earth earthly, and of the senses sensible. This recovery, at least in part, of the rightful dominion in the Universe, which Man lost in the beginning by his first great Fall, is one of the unforeseen consequences resulting in God's goodness, from the austerity of the Saints, often to their own confusion—an austerity that sometimes appals us
by the dread determination of its ceaseless self-crucifixion.*

It may be asserted without any fear of exaggeration that amongst all the Saints hardly will one be found more austere or more devoted to corporal penances than was Saint Gerard Maiella; yet at the same time he well understood that the austerity which holds the first place before God, and which is most acceptable in His sight is the austerity that leads us to the faithful discharge of the duties of our state, always sparing others whenever possible, never sparing ourselves. Well did he know that without this vivifying spirit, issuing forth from the Heart of Jesus, the mortifications even of the Baptist in the desert, or of St. Simeon on his pillar would have been as sounding brass or a tinkling symbol.†

* Thus St. Paul writes: "Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies." II Cor. iv. 10.

† An all-embracing, all-pervading spirit of self-sacrifice—the mortification of the whole being, not only of the pleasures of sense, but much more of the will, for the love of God and man, is the dominant note of Christian asceticism. This it is that differentiates it from the purely external austerities of the Fakir or the Dervish, which too often are but an emanation of the subtle spirit of pride and contempt for the rest of men, by which they are held in bondage. The asceticism
Saint Gerard always remain,—especially no doubt for those called like himself to the Religious State, but also for all who will study his life—a most perfect model of hardworking charity. Those who "live laborious days," as did Brother Gerard, and who like him are ever kind to all they meet, will become like him dear to God and dear to their fellow men.

So great in truth was his meekness, so devoted and self-forgetful his life, that it used of the Saints derived all its energy from an insatiable longing, that grew with their growth in its power and intensity, to become more and more conformable to the Likeness of the Crucified Lover of our race; it was animated not merely by a desire to safeguard personal salvation, but also by the knowledge that thus they might help effectually those—their brothers and their sisters in the world-wide family of God—for whom Jesus had shed His Precious Blood. If St. Paul tells us that he chastised his body lest he might after all become a castaway (I Cor. ix. 27), in another place he writes, "I fill up in my body those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, for His Body's sake, which is the Church" (Col. i. 24). The law of love must ever be also the law of self-immolation in behalf of the beloved. The false asceticism of fanatics is the fruit of a dark unlovely pessimism that withers all it touches. Sane asceticism, on the other hand, that which alone we see blessed and canonized by the Church, is the inevitable outgrowth of the only perfect optimism,—springing from the Heaven-seat Faith in a world saved by sacrifice on the hill of Calvary through the Death of the Son of God for man.
to be said of him in the Noviciate: "Either this Brother is a fool, or he is a great Saint." Verily Gerard was a Saint indeed, captivated with the holy folly of the Cross of Christ.

Saint Gerard was not long left in charge of the garden. Soon he was given the more congenial office of Sacristan. We may easily imagine with what joy he undertook duties that brought him so continually into the immediate presence of that Lord, Who was the only love of his heart. Fifty years after the death of the holy Brother, people still spoke with admiration of the care which he lavished on all that related to the House of God. The taste with which he adorned the altars, especially on great Feasts, was the subject of general admiration. His whole heart was in his work. His one thought was to beautify the place where Jesus dwells, his one great trouble that any should be found to neglect visiting the Most Blessed Sacrament.

For his own part, every spare moment was spent before the Tabernacle. Father Tannoia, the venerable biographer of St. Alphonsus, tells us that once he chanced to be in a part of the church where he could
not be seen by anyone, when he observed the holy Brother pause and kneel down before the altar. Then he commenced, as it were, to wrestle with himself, as though he would fain steal away from some powerful attraction. After some moments of effort, as if he were still unable to escape, he—thinking that no one else was present—cried out aloud:

"O Lord, let me go, I pray Thee. I have work that I must do."

Then obedience and duty triumphed in his soul. He tore himself away from the embraces of his God. Such is the love of the Saints for Jesus hidden in the Most Holy Sacrament.

Hand in hand with the love of Jesus goes the love of Mary His Blessed Mother. The zeal of Saint Gerard, worthy son of St. Alphonsus, to spread abroad confidence in the Holy Mother of God, literally knew no bounds. Not content with fasting rigorously during the novenas that precede her feasts, it was his invariable custom to spend the last night, as a vigil of devotion, in prayer before one of her images or pictures. He was never more happy than when arranging some grand procession in
honour of his heavenly Mother; and by every means in his power he strove to propagate her "healthful worship."

The Saints set much store on things which to the thoughtless seem of but small account. Thus we are told that it was one of Gerard's great delights to distribute far and wide rosaries and scapulars of Our Blessed Lady. He knew well that, where the rosary is said devoutly, there the Sacraments will be frequented, and the people will grow in the fear and love of God, while the pious wearing of the holy scapular is the pledge of the special protection of that dear Mother, who never will permit any of her faithful children to die at enmity with her Divine Son.

Thus, full of love for Jesus and Mary, the holy Brother seemed more like a seraph of heaven than an inhabitant of this dull earth of ours. So evident to all was his extraordinary sanctity, that St. Alphonsus gladly shortened in his behalf, the time ordinarily required as a period of probation for a Lay-brother in the Congregation, permitting him to be admitted to Profession on the 16th of July, in the year 1752.

Inexpressible was the joy of his heart.
Henceforth he belonged exclusively to God, his Saviour, to whose perpetual service he had bound himself by the golden chains of the Holy Vows. Henceforth, dead to the things of time, he was to live for God alone. Stripped of all things earthly, and nailed to the cross with Christ his Master, he offered himself, without reserve, as an oblation to the Most High. His sacrifice was accepted and repaid a hundredfold by Him Who never permits Himself to be outdone in generosity. God looked into the heart of His son, saw that it was empty of self, and filled it, even to overflowing, with the gift of His holy love.
CHAPTER V.

HIS EXTRAORDINARY GIFTS.

SOME little time before Saint Gerard's Profession, Father Cafaro ceased to be Rector at Iliceto. He was succeeded by Father Fiocchi. It was during Father Fiocchi's Rectorate that the holy Brother commenced the long series of prodigies, terminated only by death, which entitle him to rank in the splendour of supernatural endowments with such marvellous Saints as St. Joseph Cupertino and Christina the Wonderful.

Some of the events that we are about to relate are indeed of an astounding character, but they all rest upon incontrovertible evidence: they all, or almost all, can be paralleled in the Lives of the Saints, and they all preach, in a tongue that the most obtuse can hardly fail to understand, the Sovereign Power of the Lord our God, Who was pleased in this mysterious manner to exalt, even here below, His humble and faithful servant.
One day when Gerard was out walking with two young countrymen, they came upon a church dedicated to the Holy Mother of God. The Saint at once welcomed the opportunity of speaking to his companions on the incomparable dignity of Our Blessed Lady. Scarcely had the sweet Name of Mary fallen from his lips, than his countenance appeared aflame, and he seemed as one transfigured. Then taking a pencil and a piece of paper he wrote something and threw it into the air, as though it were a letter addressed to the Queen of Heaven. A vigorous bound accompanied this singular action, and immediately there ensued what is called by writers of Mystical Theology the Ecstatic Flight.* His companions suddenly saw him raised from the ground in their presence and miraculously carried through the air for more than half a mile.

Gerard came down to earth again only to

* For an exhaustive and scientific discussion of this interesting subject the reader is referred to the classical work on Mysticism by the well-known German philosopher Görres. He treats the whole question of ecstasies and the various phenomena that may accompany them—including that of the Ecstatic Flight—with a wealth of illustration that will hardly be found elsewhere. (See Part I, Book iv., especially chapters xix, xxi, xxii, xxiii.)
work a fresh miracle, this time a miracle of charity and healing. On reaching the door of his convent, he found awaiting his return a young man with a gangrened leg. This poor sufferer had with great difficulty been brought to Iliceto that he might there in person recommend himself to the prayers of the Servant of God, the fame of whose sanctity had been now widely noised abroad. No sooner did he see Gerard than he cried out sobbing that he could no longer labour for his daily bread, and was thus compelled against his will to lead the life of a beggar. Touched to the heart, the Saint asked to see the diseased leg. It was swathed round and round with bandages.

Saint Gerard carefully removed the wraps and perceived at once that the flesh was being eaten away by a frightful cancer. Then calling to mind the example set him by great Servants of God who had in their own day performed this same miracle of charity, he applied his lips to the wound and commenced to suck forth all its venom.

Our Lord is not wont to leave such heroism as this without its due reward.

"Confidence in God, my brother," cried the Saint; "you will soon be well again."
He then carefully dried the sore place, and bandaged it with clean linen. At that moment the pain ceased. The young man, full of thankfulness and joy, cast himself at the feet of Gerard to thank him for his great goodness, calling him a saint from on high and an angel-messenger sent by God's loving-kindness to His children. But the holy Brother would have no thanks. The thanks were due to God alone. Let him show his gratitude by leading a truly virtuous life for the time to come. However, the poor man was not to be stayed. When next morning he found that his leg was perfectly healed, he proclaimed his wonderful cure to all he met, so that the whole town soon rang with the news.

It was not so long after entering the Congregation that Brother Gerard, though Sacristan at the time, was directed to see to the wants of four young clerics who were making their Retreat in the house in preparation for ordination. In the discharge of this duty he went one day to the strangers' refectory to prepare the table for dinner. Now, in this refectory, hung a picture of Our Lord represented as the *Ecce Homo*. The moment that Gerard's eyes met those of his
Divine Master, they were immovably fixed; his arms became extended; his body was motionless as a corpse. He remained, as though lifeless, in the position in which he had been overcome by the visitation of God, a fork in one hand, a napkin in the other. Soon a second Lay-brother appeared on the scene. Noticing that the table was not yet laid, and that Gerard did not stir, he commenced to call him, but in vain. There was no answer, no sign of life. He was then naturally somewhat alarmed and called some other Brothers to the spot. They all likewise began to try and awaken Gerard. All was to no purpose. At last the Father Rector was summoned. He shook the Servant of God by the arm, and gave him an "Obedience" to come to himself.

In his ecstasies, obedience was the only force that could recall him to this earth. So soon as obedience spoke, the ecstasy always ceased. This is the infallible sign of the good spirit, the one test by which the gift of God may be discerned from its diabolic counterfeit. On this occasion, in order to preserve Gerard in deep humility, and to guard him with the greatest security against all danger of delusion, the Father Rector gave
the holy Brother a sharp rebuke, and told him to get to his work at once.

Saint Gerard, dumbfounded at being thus discovered, whilst in the unrestrained enjoyment of the intimacies of Heaven, accepted the reproof with joy. Blame he always looked upon as his due. In his own sight he was not worthy to be allowed to speak to God in lowly prayer, still less to be rapt in ecstatic contemplation. This he never coveted or sought in any way. But it would have been entirely beyond his power to withstand either in body or soul the imperious operations of the Holy Spirit of God. He could but leave himself as a passive instrument in his Creator's Hands.

This was not the only occasion that a mere glance at some representation of the Passion sufficed to throw him into an ecstasy. One Good Friday, the first after his Profession, a large picture of the Crucifixion was carried through the streets of the little town of Corato. Now Gerard chanced to be in Corato at the time, and when, in the course of its appointed route, the Procession entered the Benedictine church, it passed by the spot where he was on his knees in prayer.

At the thought of the sufferings of our
Most Holy Redeemer, thus vividly brought before his sight, Saint Gerard was seized with an uncontrollable transport of heavenly love. He swooned away in ecstasy, and—in presence of all the assembled people—was raised off the earth a considerable distance above the ground, his gaze fixed steadfastly the while on the sorrowful Countenance of his Crucified Saviour.

As David danced before the Ark of the Ancient Covenant, so did Gerard, living under the New Law, sometimes manifest his joy in the far deeper consolations with which he was favoured by his Lord. A blind beggar came one day to the Convent, playing the flute and asking an alms. Gerard requested him to play the Italian air set to the words of the hymn written by St. Alphonsus, beginning thus:

"Tis Thy good pleasure, not mine own,
In Thee, my God, I love alone;
And nothing I desire of Thee
But what Thy goodness wills for me—
O Will of God! O Will Divine!
All, all our love be ever Thine.

No sooner had the minstrel commenced, than an inebriation of heavenly love over-
came Saint Gerard. He suddenly commenced to dance and bound in the air, repeating over and over again:

'Tis Thy good pleasure, not mine own,
In Thee, my God, I love alone.

Then all at once he raised himself from the ground with the rapidity of an arrow going straight to its mark, his eyes turned towards Heaven. He remained for some time absolutely unsupported in mid-air in an ecstasy of love.

On another occasion, in the course of conversation with Father Strina, a man well-known for his devotion to the Divine Infant, Gerard said to him jokingly:

"You have no love for the Divine Infant."

"And you," retorted Father Strina, "you have no love for the Madonna."

This was too much for Saint Gerard. On the instant, taken out of himself by heavenly love, and strengthened with a supernatural strength, he seized on the astonished Father Strina and began to dance with him round and round, raising him from the ground with the ease with which one would raise a wisp of straw.

Thus was this humble Lay-brother, while
yet detained on earth in the body of this death, freed from that control of the senses over the spirit, of matter over the freedom of heavenly contemplation, which ordinarily weighs poor mortals down beneath its weight during their sojourn here below. Gerard soared to Heaven, not only on the wings of the prayer of faith, but, by a rare privilege, he oftentimes carried his body with him in his upward flight.

Another grace bestowed upon our Saint was his knowledge of events which had passed at a distance, and concerning which he had no natural means of information. He was thus supernaturally apprised of the tragic death of the Priest who had baptised him in infancy. This worthy ecclesiastic having been assassinated in the streets of Muro, Gerard, on the very day of the murder, told the sorrowful news to three of his fellow-citizens. Let one of them tell the story in his own words.

"I was at that time pursuing my studies in Naples," he writes, "and Gerard used often to come in the evening, and we would say our Rosary together. One night he seemed quite sad and crushed with despondency. I asked him the reason of his trouble."
"'My dear Pascal,' was his answer, 'I am grieved to think that our Archpriest has just been assassinated.'

"'Assassinated!' I rejoined, 'that is out of the question. It is only a few hours ago that I received a letter from home. They would have told me if *that* had happened.'

"However, Gerard persisted that there was no doubt about the fact, and I heard afterwards that the murder had been committed the very day on which he had assured me of its occurrence."

By a divine light he often read the secrets of hearts. Even when at a distance from his Superiors he was oftentimes acquainted with their unspoken thoughts, whenever these had any reference to his own conduct. This marvellous gift was repeatedly manifested during the course of his life. It was first discovered by his Rector, Father Fiocchi, in the following manner. He had sent the wonderful Brother with a document to Lacedogna. Gerard had already proceeded some distance on his way, when Father Fiocchi remembered that he had forgotten something of importance in his letter.

"What a pity," he said to himself, "that I cannot bring Brother Gerard back."
This expression of his Superior's will, purely mental though it was, sufficed for our Saint. Almighty God was pleased mysteriously to reveal it to His servant, who at once retraced his steps. On his return to the house Father Fiocchi asked him in surprise what had made him come back so soon. Saint Gerard said nothing, but only smiled, thus causing the Rector to understand that he was there in obedience to his secret wish.

Henceforth, whenever Father Fiocchi desired to give Gerard an order, if he was not with him at the time, he gave the command silently in his own mind. This was enough. He was always obeyed as though he had spoken aloud.

On one occasion the Father Rector was conversing at Melfi with the Bishop of the diocese on the life of extraordinary sanctity that was led by Saint Gerard. The Bishop had heard of the holy Brother before, and for some time had been desirous of forming his acquaintance. He now said that he would gladly send a special messenger to bring him to the Palace.

"That will not be necessary," said Father Fiocchi; "I have but to tell him mentally to come, and he will soon be here. Your
Lordship will thus see how far his obedience reaches, and how specially he is favoured by Almighty God.

At the same moment in the Convent, far away at home, Gerard understood of a sudden that his Father Rector desired his presence. Accordingly, having obtained the necessary permission, and given his reasons for going to the Father in charge of the House, he set off for Melfi. On arriving at the episcopal Palace, he found the Father Rector with the Bishop. Father Fiocchi pretended to be displeased at his coming, and asked him stiffly what brought him there.

"It was your Reverence's wish," simply answered Gerard.

"What!" exclaimed Father Fiocchi, "my wish! I never wrote to you and I sent you no messenger."

"Nevertheless," was the reply, "nevertheless your Reverence was pleased to give me a formal obedience to come to you. The Bishop wishes to speak with me. Alas! who am I that any one should wish to speak with me! I am only a worm of the earth, a sinner, a poor wretch who have the greatest need of all the mercy of God."
Under normal circumstances a Redemptorist Lay-brother hardly ever sleeps outside his convent walls, excepting in those countries where a Brother accompanies the Fathers to do the domestic work of the house in which they may be lodging during the time of Mission. Saint Gerard, however, was to be exception to the ordinary rule.

God had called him to the heights of contemplation, and infused into his soul the most sublime lights on the deepest mysteries of our holy religion. He was endowed with the spirit of prophecy. The future was often unrolled as an open scroll before his eyes. Nothing, however seemingly impossible, was refused his prayer. He worked miracles of healing almost as easily,—with as little effect,—as others discharge the ordinary functions of life. All these gratuitous gifts of God were not designed to be hidden in a napkin. They had been bestowed upon him more for the sake of others than for his own. He was to be as a beacon-light, proclaiming to the tempest-tossed mariner, cast on the billows of life's angry ocean, the closeness of God, in the midst of the storm,—the nearness of the unseen haven of everlasting rest.
Thus Divine Providence arranged that for the remainder of his life Saint Gerard should be much in the busy haunts of men. The house at Iliceto was in such poverty that it became absolutely necessary, unless either the Foundation was to be abandoned altogether, or the community be exposed to the danger of dying of starvation, that an appeal should be made for outside help.

In this emergency Gerard was sent out by his Superiors to "quest," that is, to solicit alms for the support of his Convent. Everywhere he was received by the people with open arms. All had the warmest of welcomes for him, wherever he went. It was felt that when Gerard visited a house, there came by his side a blessing to abide where he had rested, as a gracious Presence—even after his bodily departure—the blessing of the peace of God which he brought, to remain with faithful souls who responded to his appeals, in the Name and for the Love of Jesus Christ.

Indeed, his coming excited such enthusiasm among the warm-hearted people of southern Italy that the only difficulty was to restrain their generosity within due bounds. Ladies wished to give him their ear-rings.
Men, who had nothing else, desired to cut the very buttons—often so valuable in Italy—off their clothes that they might give unto the Lord and His Servant that which cost them something. As he passed along his way, people knelt to receive his benediction, and cried out to one another:—

"The Saint—the Saint is coming! Here is the Saint!"

Still Brother Gerard's humility remained as profound as ever. Unmoved by the applause of men, he reposed all his confidence in God alone. No breath of pride was suffered to dim the lustre of his virtue—no uprising of self-complacency permitted to cloud the serenity of his childlike spirit. Through the light that he received from above, his own nothingness was never absent from his sight. Considering the abundance of the divine gifts which had been lavished so freely upon his soul, he marvelled at what he deemed his base ingratitude. Like St. Francis of Assisi, he looked upon himself as the last and least of men, and found his peace in his own abjection.

Deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit humiles. Esurientes implevit bonis, et divites dimisit inanes.
He hath put down the powerful from their seat, and hath exalted the lowly and the meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away.
CHAPTER VI.

HIS JOURNEYINGS TO AND FRO.

FEW years after the holy death of Saint Gerard, a Lay-brother belonging to some Mendicant Order, was out "questing" for his Convent. While going his rounds one day in the company of two Priests of the locality, he entered the house of an old lady who was nearly blind. When she asked who her visitors might be, and what was the object of their visit, one of the Priests replied that it was a Brother come to beg an alms for the support of his Monastery. Whereupon the good old lady got up at once and walked as quickly as she could across the room, saying:

"O my dear Brother Gerard, let me, I beg of you, kiss your hand!"

The astonished Brother had now of course to explain matters. It was a case of mistaken identity. Brother Gerard had died some time previously.
"Brother Gerard dead! Brother Gerard dead!" cried out the old lady in dismay, "O! he was indeed a great Saint."

She then related how the holy Servant of God had once visited her house in a time of general dearness. For her comfort he had foretold that she would be able with the one bushel of meal, which yet remained in her store, to provide for all the wants of her family until the next harvest. Everything happened exactly as he had promised. Contrary to the laws of human possibility, this meal held out with but little visible diminution until the season of plenty arrived. Once more it was made manifest that what is impossible with men, is possible with God. Indeed, not only did it amply suffice for the needs of the whole family and of several workmen as well, but there even remained some over and above after all their wants has been provided for. This the mistress of the house remembered that she had been able to sell. She now gladly and gratefully gave the Brother a liberal alms in memory of the Saint, who had been her great benefactor.

If the mere recollection of Gerard thus provoked charity after his death, we may easily imagine his influence during life.
Wherever he went he won the affection and confidence of the people by the kindness of his heart and his wonderful miracles, while at the same time he often gained the greatest sinners for God by disclosing, to their amazement, secrets of the past which they believed known to no mortal man.

Not long after his Profession he returned to his native city of Muro, there to collect alms for his Convent. At Muro he stayed with one Alexander Piccolo, a watchmaker by trade. The son of this man one day fell down in the street in a fit. He was stunned by his fall and carried into a neighbouring house in a state of unconsciousness. The people thought that he was dying. Loud were the cries of grief that rent the air. As soon, however, as Saint Gerard appeared upon the scene, all was changed. Quietly saying that it would be nothing, he knelt down and made the sign of the Cross upon the boy's forehead, who that instant was seen to rise without delay or difficulty from the ground, restored to a perfect state of health and strength, amidst loud exclamations of grateful wonderment from the crowd, which had gradually gathered round.

When looked at in the light of Faith,
far more wonderful than any bodily cure, is the conversion of a soul to God. There was in Muro a notary, named Peter de Rubertis, who had been guilty of a homicide which was known to God alone. He had in his orchard a specially fine cherry-tree. The better to guard his property, he used to keep watch over it himself. Now, one evening, coming upon a thief in his garden, he let him off with threats as to the consequences should he be found marauding a second time. However, he soon caught the same man again. Once more he restrained his anger. But when emboldened by impunity, the thief returned anew, it was too much for de Rubertis to bear. In his fury,—whether more or less accidentally or deliberately is not clear,—he assaulted him with fatal results, and then buried the dead body in the orchard. As this tragedy occurred during the night, the missing man was never traced, and his murderer was not brought to justice. He kept his dread secret locked up in the inmost recesses of his own breast. From God he could not hide it, but he was mad enough to conceal it from the Priest of God even in the Sacred Tribunal of Penance. For years he had
made bad Confessions, and lived in a terrible state of sacrilege, until God, in His great mercy, brought him one day into contact with Saint Gerard. The holy Brother looked at the poor man intently, and then said to him without more ado:

"Sir, your conscience is indeed in a sad state. You will have to make your Confessions all over again, beginning from the time when you killed that man near the cherry-tree, and then buried him in your orchard. You have never told it yet in Confession."

The guilty man was thunderstruck. On his return home he told all to his wife, who made the whole story known after his death. Meanwhile his soul had been won by the Saint. He hastened to approach the Sacraments in good earnest. No longer was he a sacrilegious trifler with holy things. A real penitent, he hastened to make a good Confession, and thus regained the peace of mind that had not been his for many a year, and which in all probability never would have been his again, had it not been for Brother Gerard's charity.

For three years the Servant of God was
passing and repassing through the kingdom of Naples on his appointed rounds, everywhere persuading the greatest sinners to turn away from vice, and lead a life of virtue. We cannot here do more than select two or three of the tales of wonder that embellish the story of these journeys with a beauty all their own. Saint Gerard was deeply steeped in the true Franciscan spirit, and we find him, like St. Francis and St. Antony, often calling to his aid the services of his "brothers the animals," who, whenever there was question of causing sin to be avoided, or of teaching some deep spiritual truth, seemed almost to be endowed for the moment with the gift of reason at his word.

On one occasion he noticed that the horse he was riding—for Gerard's journeys, according to the custom of the time, were usually made on horseback—had lost its shoes. So he went to the nearest forge and asked to have the beast re-shod. His task performed, the blacksmith claimed an exorbitant sum in payment. Now Gerard had made a Vow of Poverty. The money that was demanded of him was not his to give. Besides, he wished to teach the man a
wholesome lesson. So he deliberately told the horse to take the shoes off again, that there might be nothing for which to pay. The animal stepped forward, shook its hoofs, and lo! the shoes fell to the earth. The blacksmith was struck mute with astonishment. But after a few moments, as he saw the figure of Saint Gerard, riding away on his unshod steed, and gradually disappearing in the distance, he called out loudly:

"Gerard, Gerard, will you come back for one instant?"

Brother Gerard, however, was not thus to be brought back. He proceeded quietly on his journey.

The Servant of God had but to call the little birds, and they would come flocking round him and perch on his hand. We are told that the young nephew of a certain Priest, Don Salvatore by name, had a bird given to him which he kept in a cage in his room. Gerard, pitying it in its unnatural captivity, opened the cage and let it fly happily away. But as the child began to cry bitterly at the loss of his pet, Gerard went to the window, and called out:

"Come back, little bird, come back, the child is crying. He wants you."
Back came the little creature, obedient to the voice of Gerard, who restored it to its owner.

On another occasion, when on his way to Corato, the Saint met a small farmer who was in great distress. The field-mice were destroying all the produce of his land, on which he was absolutely dependent for the support of his family. Saint Gerard's tender heart was filled with compassion for the sad condition of these poor people. Accordingly, he asked the farmer whether he would prefer the mice to die,—or would he have them go elsewhere?

"Let them all die," was the decisive answer that came without a moment's hesitation.

"Very well!" assented Gerard.

He then raised his hand, and made the sign of the Cross in the direction of the field. That same instant its surface was strewn with dead and dying mice. Amazed at the wonderful sight that met his view, our farmer, beside himself with delight, went full haste into Corato, spreading the news far and wide that a great Saint would soon be in the town.

We will now relate a miracle of another
kind. The holy Brother once went into a strange house, and asked for something to eat. He begged it, he said, as an alms for the love of God. The poor woman, to whom this appeal was made, had not so much as a morsel of bread in the house. Like the widow of whom we read in the Scripture story, she had only a handful of flour. This she had just brought home from the mill. So she told Saint Gerard that having nothing for herself, she had nothing to give away.

"What! you have nothing, and that bin is all full of bread!"

"It is empty," persisted the woman; "I have not so much as a piece of bread in the whole house."

Gerard, however, persuaded her just to raise the lid of the bin. There was no room for doubt about the matter. It was indeed full of most excellent bread!

We will conclude this chapter with the quaint account that has been handed down to us of a famous conversion effected by our Saint. He was going home to Iliceto, after having been for some time absent, collecting alms in the neighbourhood. His cloak was patched, his habit old and short. His
hat was a marvel of poverty. Altogether the appearance he presented seemed sufficiently weird to a young man whom he chanced to fall in with on the road. The thought suddenly flashed across his mind that Gerard could be no other than a wandering gipsy. Dreaming of little save the acquisition of gold and silver, it also occurred to him that he had met an adept in Occult Science who was searching for a hidden treasure.

"O! if I could only share his secret," he thought within himself, "then perchance I might also share his treasure."

Straightway he accosted Gerard.

"Perhaps, Sir," he asked bluntly, "perhaps you are a wizard?"

"Perhaps I am! Perhaps I am not!" was Gerard's reply.

Confirmed in his singular misunderstanding by this evasive answer, the young man now boldly made his request.

"If you are searching for a treasure," he said, "I am most ready to help you. Let me offer you my services."

"But," questioned Gerard, "are you a man of mind and a man of courage to boot?"
“Little do you guess all that I am,” answered the stranger eagerly, and then followed the sad tale of a life of sin, with the final avowal that it was full six years since the unhappy being had last approached the Sacraments.

“Well, well,” chimed in Gerard, “you then, without a doubt, are the very man for whom I will now most gladly seek a treasure. Only do as I bid you, and the treasure is yours.”

So together they walked, deep in conversation, until at last they reached a forest thick with brushwood. Gerard was the first to enter. His companion, full of suppressed excitement, thought that now his desires were on the very point of being realized. When at last they were in the midst of a tangled copse, the Brother took off his cloak, slowly and mysteriously laid it on the ground, and then beckoned to his new friend to advance. The young man began to quake and tremble with fear. Every shadow cast by the trees seemed to be a living form; every moment he expected to behold an apparition of the Prince of Darkness. Gerard saw that his opportunity had arrived. Suddenly he
took out his crucifix, and holding it up before the eyes of the astonished lad, said gently:

"Yes! I promised you a Treasure. Behold it here! The Treasure of all treasures. The Treasure which you have so madly bartered for the wages of sin."

The hour of grace had struck. The poor boy was touched to the quick. He burst forth into bitter sobs. Gerard, seeing him thus pierced with sorrow for having offended Our Blessed Lord, pressed him lovingly to his heart. He then brought him home to the Convent, where he kept him several days, and induced him to make his peace with God by a good Confession of the evil past.

Truly a wizard indeed!
CHAPTER VII.

HIS VISITS TO THE WORLD.

The supernatural gifts of Saint Gerard and his great reputation for sanctity caused frequent applications to be addressed to his Superiors that he might be permitted from time to time to visit friends of the Congregation in various towns of the locality. Such visits are, as we have already observed, contrary to all custom. But every law has its necessary exceptions. Thus in this case, after great difficulties had at first been raised, the desired permission at length was freely given. On the one hand, the position of the applicants in many instances was such that it would have been hard always to refuse them; on the other hand, even the strictest Superior might well shrink from the responsibility of keeping Brother Gerard within convent walls, when the good of souls outside seemed to cry aloud for his presence in their midst.
Indeed, it is not too much to say that Gerard sanctified every spot which he visited. His coming was like a Mission for the people. The house that was privileged to receive him as its guest was daily besieged by persons drawn from all classes of society. Crowds might be observed at all hours gathered round about him and hanging eagerly on the words that fell from his lips. Such, as we may again and again observe in the annals of the Church’s story, is the mysterious, magnetic attraction of the Saints of God upon the souls of men.

Strange as it may sound, not only lay-people, but Priests and even Bishops vied one with another in their anxiety to obtain the advice of this lowly Lay-Brother. Saint Gerard was frequently consulted both on the personal perplexities of individual consciences, and also on abstruse questions of dogmatic theology. Advice, wise, clear, and always most practical, he refused to none who sought his aid. On the most sublime mysteries of our holy religion he spoke as one inspired, for he was in truth a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. He had also received that which is known as the gift of “infused knowledge” in abundant measure.
Those who listened to the burning words of this poor Brother, uneducated in secular learning, but so deeply versed in the wisdom that comes from Heaven, could only praise God Who had hidden His Divine secrets from the wise and prudent to make them known to the pure and simple of heart. That Gerard was a great Saint could be doubted by none who were conversant with his unearthly ways and heavenly endowments. He appeared to live in an atmosphere of marvel. The very air he breathed seemed redolent of the supernatural. Strong men would tremble, awe-stricken at the nearness of the all-knowing Spirit of God, as Gerard read the inmost recesses of their hearts. Ofttimes it was known by the result that the future had been even as the present to his illumined gaze. To work miracles through love for his fellow-creatures, out of heartfelt compassion for them in their various trials and afflictions was as his daily bread.

Yet it was not this rich accumulation of divine gifts that struck the imagination of men or appealed to their highest and noblest feelings so forcibly, as the spectacle of the Christ-like Virtues in recompense for
which those gifts were given. An emissary of Satan can disguise himself as an Angel of Light, and may even counterfeit the miracles of the Saints, but humility, sweetness, voluntary poverty, charity, peace,—these are unmistakable in their origin, and these, exercised in an heroic degree, were conspicuously the graces that adorned the beautiful soul of Gerard. Dear to God and dear to man, none could resist his gentle sway, and great were the conversions that he worked for Jesus Christ his Master.

Corato, his native city of Muro, Castelgrande, Melfi, are the names of the places where his stay would seem to have been productive of the most permanent results. These little towns, according to trustworthy testimony, were altogether changed by his presence in their midst.

God was pleased to show by a manifest sign on his first entrance to Corato that He was with His servant Gerard. It had been arranged by his Superiors that he was to stay in the house of a gentleman named Papaleo. As the Saint had never been to Corato before, he had no idea where his host lived. So he let the bridle fall loosely on his horse’s neck, and abandoned himself
into the hands of Divine Providence. The faithful animal went on quietly until it came to the house of Papaleo, when it entered the courtyard.

"Can you tell me where Don Papaleo lives?" asked Gerard, on seeing that they had come to a standstill.

"Why, Brother, here you are," was the answer he received. The Saint then dismounted, thanking God the while.

He was summoned to Castelgrande in order to put an end to a terrible feud which was the scandal of the town. Some years previously a young man had been killed in a quarrel. His parents cherished a hatred, dark and deadly, towards him whom they regarded as the murderer of their son. After two interviews, Gerard at length succeeded in persuading the poor father to sacrifice his desire of revenge, and even to promise that he would be publicly reconciled with the man who was guilty of his son's death.

Meanwhile, full of gratitude to God for his success, Gerard was called away on other business to Muro. What then must have been his pain and dismay on returning after a few days to discover that in his
absence all his work had been completely undone. To all appearance once more it was useless to interfere. All prospect of reconciliation had seemingly vanished into the grave of buried hopes. Matters were even more serious than they had been before his first arrival on the scene.

The man's wife, infuriated at the news that her husband had promised to forgive the enemy of his house, had brought him the blood-stained garments of their dead child, which she had always carefully preserved. Then in a terrible paroxysm of mingled grief and rage, she had appealed to the unhappy father—by all the memories which that sight recalled—was he going to be so base as to make friends with the murderer of their poor boy? Yes, she continued, well might he gaze at that blood. Still did it cry aloud to heaven for vengeance—a vengeance upon which alas! it had not yet been hers to feast her eyes. Pardon such a wretch! Never, to her dying day!

These wild and wicked words had their effect. To his grief, Gerard recognized the fact that the last state of that man in the sight of God was far worse than his first.
He had steeled himself sternly against every appeal that could be made. It seemed quite useless to speak to him. Forgive he would not. His anger was implacable.

Still the Saint was not to be refused. He knelt down before the injured parents, laid his Crucifix on the ground by his side, and asked them were they prepared to trample on their Saviour's Wounds. This they do who will not forgive. All, however, was as yet in vain. Their hearts were touched indeed, but not conquered until the Servant of God struck another chord. Would they not make this sacrifice for the sake of the son they loved so well. Let them offer it up in suffrage for the relief of his poor soul—God, he promised them—it had been revealed to him from above—would most surely accept such an offering. Let them freely forgive the murderer, and then have five Masses offered for their dear child—this would suffice in satisfaction for the debt he still owed the Justice of God for his past sins. By closing their hearts to the claims of mercy and Christian forgiveness, they—his parents—were at the same time taking out of their own hands the power to help the poor boy
who—Gerard knew it—was even then in Purgatory.

This was enough. Now at length the victory was won. The father and mother could resist no longer. They generously performed everything that was asked of them. A reconciliation was happily effected between the family of the murdered man and that of the murderer, complete forgiveness extended by the injured ones to him who had so cruelly wronged them, and both families ever afterwards united together in the bonds of Christian friendship, to the edification of the whole locality. We may add that this great miracle of grace—for such it might rightly be called—was, in God’s Providence, worked by the Holy Spirit to the glory of Saint Gerard at Castelgrande, the very place where in youth he had permitted himself, out of love for the despised Jesus, to be mocked by the boys as a fool in the public streets.

To return to Gerard’s flying visit to Muro. Our Lord had made use of His Servant’s visit to that city to secure the salvation of another soul that was in the most imminent danger of perishing everlastingly. There lived in Muro at the time
a woman called Catherine Zaccardi, the wife of a jeweller of the place. She had been for several years at enmity with God. Gerard had more than once stayed in her house on previous occasions, but had never until now spoken to her on the sad state of her soul. Indeed, her sins were known only to herself and to the great Searcher of hearts. During this visit, however, the Saint had a special revelation concerning her secret sins and approaching death. He did not hesitate a moment. Taking his hostess aside, he entreated her with all earnestness to make a good Confession without delay, and thus prepare to meet her Sovereign Judge, for her days on earth were numbered. He bade her remember that, unless she laid bare to the physician of her soul the sins that until then were hidden in the recesses of her guilty conscience, she must lose the sight of God for all eternity. Catherine enjoyed perfect health when God in His Goodness sent her this solemn warning. Shortly afterwards, however, she was attacked by a dangerous malady. In a few months she was dead.

Saint Gerard had paid several visits to Melfi, and was already well known in that
place, when in the year 1753 the Bishop asked Father Fiocchi to preach a public Novena in the Cathedral. He requested also, as a special favour, that the holy Brother might accompany his Rector and remain with him while the spiritual exercises lasted.

Numerous are the accounts that have been left to posterity of the wonderful conversions operated by Saint Gerard at Melfi. At the wish of the Bishop, any particularly hardened sinners were entrusted to the care of the Servant of God. He spoke to them so winningly and so wisely as at once to change the most hardened hearts. God was with him, and no one could resist the power that spoke by his lips. He then conducted his prisoners of love to Father Fiocchi, who gladly heard their confessions and reconciled them with Our Lord. He likewise rescued several secret sinners from the snares of Satan through the supernatural light by which he was able to read even in the inmost depths of the soul.

In the year 1843, ninety years after the visit to Melfi, a very old man, now nearly a hundred years of age, was able to give the following testimony before the commission
appointed to take evidence with a view to Brother Gerard's Beatification.

"I was a mere child," he deposed, "when Gerard came to Melfi. To the young people, who used to flock around him, he was accustomed always to dwell on the love of God, at the same time urging them to fidelity in the performance of their religious duties. He would usually finish his little discourses by some such words as these: 'We understand one another then, do we not? We are going to give ourselves up altogether to the good God.' He then signed our foreheads with the sign of the Cross, and gave us little pictures of Our Lady of Seven Dolours. He was most mortified. . . . . Charitable and kind towards the poor, he was wont to rob himself of food in order to be able to give to the needy. Once I saw him deprive himself even of his shoes and stockings to hand them over to a beggar. But that which was most remarkable in him was his zeal for the conversion of sinners."

The conversion of sinners. Of a truth this was the one consuming passion of Saint Gerard's heart.
CHAPTER IX.

HIS CHARITY DURING AN EPIDEMIC.

Perhaps there was no spot in all Southern Italy where Gerard was better known or held in higher esteem than in the little town of Lacedogna. Here for three long years he had served the hard master whose violent temper had so exercised him in the practice of virtue. Here he had lived, in the sight of men and angels, a life of heroic sanctity, even before his entrance into Religion. Here was "Gerard's Well," recalling by its very name the great Miracle of the Bambino, worked in reward of Gerard's faith.

Whenever, therefore, the Servant of God had occasion to visit Lacedogna, he was received with open arms by its inhabitants. And now the little city was in sore distress. A terrible pestilence had invaded its streets. Panic and dismay reigned supreme, while not a few recognized in the visitation, which had come upon them so suddenly, the
Divine punishment for notorious scandals that existed in their midst. There was a general demand for Gerard. He, it was felt, could stay the anger of God.

The Bishop of the place accordingly represented his own desire and that of his people for the visit from the holy Brother, with the result that the Saint was sent by his Superiors to Lacedogna. Saint Gerard took up his abode with an excellent Christian called Constantine Capucci. This good man and his family were filled with enthusiasm at the sight of the virtues of their guest; especially were they moved by the austerity of life which nothing could hide, and by his exceeding charity.

Every day great numbers of persons, Priests and laymen, flocked to Capucci's house in order to seek the advice of his holy visitor. Ever full of affability, he was accessible to all. No time was kept by him as his own. His one desire was to be of service to his fellow-men. Nor were signs and wonders absent. God glorified His Servant before the world, that hearts might be the more docile in his hands.

On one occasion Gerard was with his host and a large number of friends in the
picture gallery of the house. Suddenly he went into an ecstasy and was transported off his feet to the level of a picture of the Holy Mother of God that was hanging upon the walls. Then remaining for some time supernaturally raised in the air, beside himself with love, he cried aloud:

“How beautiful she is! How beautiful! How beautiful is Mary!”

As he spoke, he covered the picture with rapturous kisses. We may easily imagine the holy confusion he must have experienced when, on coming to himself, he discovered to his dismay that quite a large assemblage had thus become witnesses of the divine favours of which he was the recipient.

The first person to be cured at Lacedogna was a Priest, Canon Saponiero. He had received the last Sacraments and was given over by the doctors, when Saint Gerard brought him back from the very jaws of death. This worthy Canon has himself left us an account of his cure. After describing the complicated nature of his maladies, he proceeds as follows:—

“I thought myself on the point of appearing before the Judgment Seat of God. Having heard of the arrival of the holy
Brother, I had myself recommended to his powerful prayers. What was not my amazement when he sent me word that my illness would not be of long duration, and that all I needed for recovery was complete confidence in God. I might then still hope, and when he visited me the next day, I cried out, 'Praised be the Lord.' He answered me, 'Rejoice, you are cured.' Then he came close up to me and made on my forehead the sign of the Cross. At once I found myself perfectly well. I should have risen that moment, had he not enjoined upon me to wait for the morrow. Glory be to God, and to his servant."

By the sign of the Holy Cross he cured many other persons. Thus he succeeded in restoring to her former state of health a young girl called Lella Cocchia, who for some months previously had been the victim of a terrible form of madness.

Saint Gerard knew Lella of old. On one of his former visits to Lacedogna she had come to him inconsolable with grief, and asked him about the soul of her mother, for whose recent death she was then mourning. The Saint had received a divine light by which he was able to tell
her that her mother was in Purgatory, but that she would be delivered if her daughter would offer forty Communions for her eternal repose. She did as she was asked, and after making the Communions, her mother appeared to her, thanked her, and told her that she was on her way to Heaven.

Gerard remembered all this, and was grieved indeed to hear of the poor girl’s afflicted state. He went straight to her house. On his arrival, according to his usual custom, he made the sign of the Cross, and at once she recovered the use of her reason. The recovery was both complete and permanent.

Such favours as these, published as they were throughout the city, were most effectual in persuading all to listen to the spiritual admonitions of God’s holy Servant. It was said of him that he had but to look at a sinner and he could do what he pleased with him. Soon the whole face of the little city was changed. Scandals disappeared. The grace of God triumphed on every side. We will here mention one of the most remarkable of the conversions effected at this time by Saint Gerard.
There was a man dying at Lacedogna whose conscience was loaded with sins. Standing on the threshold of eternity, he had rejected the advances of Priest after Priest who had had the charity to proffer him the consolations of religion.

The whole town was horror-stricken at the spectacle of his obduracy. As everything else had failed, Gerard was at length brought to his bedside. Having first cast one glance at the sick man, he immediately fell on his knees, and, turning to Her whom we all love to salute as the hope of the hopeless, said aloud one Hail Mary. He then rose and turned to address the poor sinner. But grace had already done its blessed work. Gerard’s look, Gerard’s voice—above all, Gerard’s prayer, had won the day at last. Satan was driven, routed from the field. The dying man asked earnestly for a Priest, and was happily reconciled with his Eternal Judge.

Whilst he was at Lacedogna, many sick persons were brought to the Saint from Bisaccia, a little town in the immediate neighbourhood, that, if it so pleased God, they might be released from their maladies. But such inhabitants of Bisaccia as were
suffering from the prevalent epidemic could not bear the journey to Lacedogna. Gerard, on his side, had the heart of a mother for the sick and miserable. He could not listen to the tale of so much suffering, and remain untouched. Accordingly, in deference to repeated entreaties, he went to Bisaccia. Although he could not remain there for any length of time, his stay, short as it was, proved to be full of blessings for the people of the place. Many were the sick persons whom he restored to health. A case which deserves especial mention is that of Bartholomew Melchior. Shortly after his marriage this poor man fell into some species of consumption. One effect of this illness was that he seemed to have almost lost the right use of his reason. He was given over to an evil spirit of gloom and dark despair that settled on him like a cloud of darkness. The unfortunate being had been taken by his friends to a shrine of St. Antony. But the great St. Antony in Heaven had remained deaf to their appeals wishing to reserve this work of mercy for a Saint on earth. As soon as Gerard looked on the poor sufferer, he addressed him cheerfully in a tone of confidence:
"It is nothing, my friend, it is nothing."

He then said a few prayers, his hand gently resting on the head of Bartholomew, who was cured on the spot. Once more he was a man sound both in mind and body.

The epidemic had now abated its violence, and Gerard returned quietly to Iliceto, having accomplished his appointed work after the manner and with the power of a Saint. Virtue had gone out from him, for he walked with God and was perfect.
CHAPTER IX.

HIS GREAT TRIAL.

"Ave the charity to pray much for me. I stand in great need of prayers."

Thus wrote Saint Gerard, in the spring of 1754, to a Priest with whom he was on terms of intimacy. The next day he was to leave Iliceto for Nocera, the residence of St. Alphonsus. A most cruel accusation had just been made against his good name, and the Holy Founder had summoned him into his own presence to meet it as best he could.

It would seem that St. Alphonsus never gave full credence to this odious calumny, but as yet he knew but little of Gerard, and the evidence against him appeared to be overwhelmingly strong. When the poor Brother arrived at Nocera, he was at once acquainted with the nature of the charge that had been brought against his character. He listened to all without a word, though, of course, he would have been
perfectly free to justify himself had he so pleased.

The rule which forbids a Redemptorist to defend himself when reproved, was never intended to apply to such circumstances as these. But the servant of God thought of his Vow, always to do that which is most perfect, and determined, in honour of the silence of our Blessed Lord under false accusation, not to say one word in answer to the abominable calumny with which he was assailed. However, his failure to meet, or even deny the charge seemed like a tacit acknowledgment of guilt. St. Alphonsus was not slow to express his sorrow and indignation. He deprived Gerard of Holy Communion, and forbade him in the strictest manner possible to have any dealings whatsoever with the outside world. The humble Brother bowed his head in meek submission. He accepted all as his due, and never spoke a syllable in self-justification.

On the affair becoming public property, as was soon enough the case, several of the Fathers of the Community, who were well acquainted with Gerard's virtue, begged him to clear himself.
“There is a God in Heaven,” was his answer, “He will provide. Would you then deprive me of the opportunity of suffering something for His sake? It is He Who wills that I should endure this humiliation. Ought I not to accomplish His good pleasure? Let God do that which is pleasing to Him. For my part, I desire nothing save that which He desires.”

During this season of terrible trial, Saint Gerard redoubled his austerities in order to obtain in more and more abundant measure the help from God of which he stood in such sore need. His most fervent prayers were those offered for his calumniators. No word of complaint was ever allowed to cross his lips. Not for one moment did he lose his inward serenity of spirit. Forbidden to approach Holy Communion which had hitherto been the one great joy and support of his life, he used to say gently to those who compassionated him:

“It is enough for me to have Jesus Christ in my heart. The Lord wishes to punish the coldness of my love. He flies away from me, but I possess Him within my soul by His grace. Never will I lose Him there.”
On being urged to ask permission from St. Alphonsus to go once more to Holy Communion, he hesitated for a moment, but only for a moment.

"No," he said, "I must needs die in the winepress of the Will of my God."

Another time he said to a Priest who begged him to serve his Mass:

"Leave me alone and tempt me not. Did I serve your Mass, I should snatch Him out of your hands, as you stand at the Altar."

No other trial that could have been devised would have been comparable to this trial,—the loss of Holy Communion. It was as though the sun had suddenly gone down in the Heavens, ceasing to shine upon his earthly life.

Still there were great consolations. God tempers the wind for the shorn lamb. Kind friends who trusted him throughout with a true-hearted and loyal trust, which was proof against the most untoward appearances, wrote him letters of affectionate sympathy and encouragement that he could not fail to value highly. But the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, was Himself His servant's supreme Consoler in this his hour of dire distress.
During the years of his triumphs, when ecstasies and miracles were habitual with him, when he was held in the universal esteem of his fellowmen, and regarded by all who knew him as a marvellous Saint, he was being purified the while in the crucible of terrible interior sufferings. Men called him the spoiled favourite of Heaven, and he all the time, though they knew it not, was a prey to mysterious trials, known in all their intensity only to the greatest of God's chosen servants.

The fear lest, in punishment of that which his tender conscience deemed his infidelities to grace, he should be cast away from the Presence of the Divine Majesty for all Eternity, haunted him by night and gave him no peace by day. A darkness that could be felt enveloped his soul. Would it truly ever be his to see the Beautiful Face of Jesus Christ? Would it ever be his to stand with Prophets and with Martyrs, with the Forerunner of the Messias, with Virgins and with Confessors, with the Apostles of the Lamb, with the great Foster-Father of our Lord and the Immaculate Mother of God herself, in the Ranks of the Redeemed round about the Throne of
the Eternal? Dared he raise his hopes to such a height as this? And then there came from Satan a dark temptation—the full anguish of which can only be realized by those who love God with the love of the Saints—the temptation to despair. Never for one moment did he yield, though the onslaughts of the enemy seemed to rend his very heart in twain.

"As the gold is tried in the fire, so is the acceptable man in the furnace of tribulations."

But now that he was in deep disgrace, even with St. Alphonsus his father, now that many looked upon him askance, as upon a hypocrite who had been found out,—now was the time of Divine Compensations. Light and grace flooded his soul with heavenly joy. God seemed once more to speak face to face with His faithful son. The sensible consolations of his childhood were once more renewed. In a different form, indeed, but none the less truly were they his again. He seemed almost to enjoy the unveiled vision of his God.

Deprived, as we know through no fault of his own, of the true Bread of Life that God in His wondrous love bestows on the
wayfarer, lest journeying painfully through the weary desert of human miseries, he faint beneath the burden and heats of the day,—deprived of the Blessed Eucharist, Gerard feasted by faith with the Saints above on the Divine Essence Itself, to which he was united more and more closely each hour that passed, drawn ever upwards even to the heights of sublimest contemplation. He was asked one day how he could live without Communion. He replied immediately:

"I recreate myself in the Immensity of my God."

Thus did he himself experience the truth of the maxim which we find in one of his letters.

"Only suffer for God, and your very sufferings will bring you Heaven on earth."

So true it is that they alone are happy with a perfect happiness, who do the Will of God with a perfect freedom, and a perfect service, even as it is done before His Throne on high.

After a time, as Gerard still made no sign, St. Alphonsus sent him to Ciorani, in order to give him a complete freedom of conscience, in case he might wish to go to
Confession to a stranger. We thus perceive that he still rested under grave suspicion, and that in the one quarter where he must have felt suspicion the most keenly. A fortnight was spent by Saint Gerard at Ciorani. He was then again removed to another house, and allowed to go to Holy Communion once a week.

But the clouds were soon to break. The wretched calumniators of his innocence were at length touched with remorse. They wrote to acknowledge that their statements had all been a tissue of lies composed at the instigation of the enemy of mankind.

St. Alphonsus was overwhelmed with joy. He immediately recalled Gerard to Nocera, and declared that the virtues which he had practised during this time of trial, were in themselves enough to prove him to be a great Saint.

The Holy Founder once asked Saint Gerard why he had not said so much as one word to prove his innocence.

"Father," answered Gerard, "does not the Rule forbid us to excuse ourselves?"

St. Alphonsus was touched to the heart.

"Well, well!" he replied, "may God bless you, my son."
On another occasion he said to Gerard:—
"You must have been grievously disturbed in your mind at not being able to receive Holy Communion."

"No! indeed, Father," was the reply,—worthy of a Saint,—"since Jesus Christ did not wish to come to me, how could I be discontented."
CHAPTER X.

HIS LETTERS.

One of the most remarkable features in Saint Gerard's life is his intimate and continual association with various communities of Religious Women. He reformed at least three Convents by his unaided efforts, and the Acts of his Canonization prove that he was unceasingly occupied with the spiritual interests of Nuns. We find him keeping up the closest relations both with whole communities and with individual sisters, visiting them repeatedly, giving conferences at the grille, writing them long letters—in a word, discharging all the functions of a Director of souls, and, it may be added, of a Director, who seemed to have plenty of leisure at his command.

Now this is undoubtedly a very striking fact. That, ordinarily speaking, it is not the vocation of a Lay-brother to undertake the direction of consciences, whether of Nuns or Seculars, is obvious and cannot be gainsaid.
All that can be urged in explanation is that, in Saint Gerard's case, his conduct was the result of an extraordinary attraction of Divine grace, proved to be such by his humility and obedience, and countersigned by the approbation both of Bishops, who so warmly invited him to visit Convents over which they exercised jurisdiction, and of his own Superiors, who gave him the necessary permission. Greater security no man can ever have on earth than the security which comes from an interior call to some work of zeal—the Voice of God within us—together with the sanction of lawful authority—the Voice of God without us. He who possesses the latter is saved from all possibility of delusion with regard to the former.

Such a security was in the highest degree that of Saint Gerard—one of the most obedient and humble of men.

In order the better to understand his spirit, we will let him speak for himself.

He was much devoted to the Carmelite Nuns at Ripacandida, of whom we read so often in the life of St. Alphonsus. Two of Gerard's most marvellous ecstasies had taken place in the parlour of this Convent,
—one of them in the presence of the whole community to which he was discoursing at the time on the Love of God. He was venerated by all as a great Saint. We need not, therefore, be surprised to find that, when a new Prioress was elected, she begged Saint Gerard for some directions that would aid her in the discharge of the duties which had just devolved upon her. The Servant of God immediately complied with this request, and sent her a long document, from which we will proceed to make some extracts.

Since the Prioress holds the place of God Himself, she ought to fulfil her office with the greatest watchfulness, if she wishes to be pleasing to our Divine Master, Who has chosen her to govern in His stead. She needs great prudence, and in all things should direct her course according to the Mind that is in Christ Jesus. Her heart should be embalmed with the sweet perfume of all the virtues which she will communicate to her subjects. They ought to advance to perfection simply by treading in the footsteps of their Mother. The Superior will never lose sight of her own lowliness and insufficiency, remembering that God has raised her to the position which she occupies, of His mere Goodness, since there are
so many others who would acquit themselves more perfectly than she. Thus, abasing herself in her own eyes, she will have compassion on the faults of others. She will discharge the duties of her office in the spirit of love, and will never look upon it as too painful to be endured. Considering that God from all Eternity has destined her to be in authority, let her day by day strive to be a better Superior, keeping herself always united to the Divine Will, and holding her position with a total indifference, and without the slightest attachment.

In cases of difficulty she ought no doubt to get the best advice within reach. But having once made up her mind, she must propose to herself the Glory of God as the end to be attained, and carry out her resolves without any human respect, even though she had to shed the last drop of her blood. For the love of God she must trample self-love under foot.

The Superior ought often to say to herself: "God wishes me where I am. I ought then to do His Holy Will in all things. As a duty I will watch over all my daughters; I will be the servant of all. I must give each one advice, light, consolation. To others I should assign that which is best, keeping for myself that which is worst, in order that I may please God. In a word, everywhere and in all things I must suffer in order to be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ, my heavenly Spouse."
The mind of a Superior should be like a wheel, always in motion, that she may provide for the needs of her daughters. She will love them all dearly, but only in God, without showing any preference to one rather than to another. Remembering that Nuns can provide nothing for themselves excepting in accordance with Holy Obedience, she ought to forget herself completely, and devote all the gifts that God has given her to their service. If any presents should be sent into the Convent from outside, let her provide for the wants of all her children before she thinks of her own.

She ought to put them all at their ease, particularly any who may be in danger of failing in confidence towards her. To do this she must win their hearts. She will therefore be affable in her manner, even when she feels it to be most difficult, and must continually strive to overcome herself in this respect—always with a view to please God. Unless she acts after this fashion,—unless she shows a mother’s love to those who are suffering from temptation, their disturbance of mind will go on increasing. It may even throw them into despair. At least they will be prevented from advancing in the Love of God by the feeling that they are being slighted or misunderstood. This is a weakness to which women are subject.

The Saint then continues to speak of the firmness and sweetness, but especially the
sweetness with which corrections should be made, and concludes thus:—

Such a correction is, in my opinion, well calculated to induce an imperfect Religious to have recourse with much confidence to her Superior, who may thus be able to rescue her from her tepidity, and restore her to the path of perfection. We also gain more by sweetness than by harshness. Harshness brings trouble, temptation, obscurity, and spiritual sloth in its train. Sweetness, on the contrary, gives peace and tranquillity. It disposes the soul for union with God. If all Superiors were to follow these Rules, all subjects would become Saints. It is the want of prudence that causes so much trouble in certain Religious Houses. Where disturbance reigns, there reigns the Evil One; and where Satan reigns, there God is not to be found.

It was to these Carmelite Nuns, whose Prioress received this striking admonition, that Gerard had written some few years previously:—

How earnestly do I desire that all the dear Sisters should dwell for ever in the Wounded Heart of Jesus, and in the afflicted Heart of the Blessed Virgin. It is in these Hearts that there is to be found all sweetness. In these Hearts may we find our Rest.
On one occasion he wrote thus to the Mother Prioress:—

Believe me, my very dear Mother in Jesus Christ, that notwithstanding my unworthiness, I pray continually to the Lord for you and for your Community. The whole object of my prayers is to obtain that you may be perfect spouses of the Divine Master and true lovers of His Most Holy Will. I say it in all truth, I never find myself in the Presence of our Lord without seeing you in His Most Sacred Heart, and then I offer to God for you and all your daughters that Sacred Heart, all covered with Wounds for our sake.

Let us now see how Saint Gerard wrote to a Novice who, as he heard, was tempted against her vocation:—

My dear Sister in Jesus Christ, I tell you in the Name of God that you ought to keep yourself in a firm and holy peace, for all this tempest is the work of the Evil One, who is striving to induce you to leave your holy home. My child, be on your guard. Satan is full of cunning and envious hatred. He would prevent you from becoming a Saint. For this reason your perseverance causes him the greatest anger. We all of us have experienced his assaults against our Vocation, but God only permits them in order to test our faithfulness. Take comfort then. Offer yourself always to Jesus
without reserve, and He will not fail to come to your assistance. How is it possible that your love should forget how many times you have promised Jesus Christ to be His spouse for ever. If then you have so ardently desired this title of spouse of the Divine Master, why renounce it now? . . . . . . . Go on your way therefore in all freedom of soul. Be bright. Love God with all your heart. Offer yourself often to Him, and rout the powers of Hell. One last word. Pray for me. I do not forget to pray for you.

This letter produced its effect. The Novice was for ever delivered from her temptations, and became an excellent Religious.

From these short extracts we may form some conception of the general tone of Saint Gerard's letters to Nuns, a great number of which have been preserved to us. They all breathe charity, sweetness, loving kindness, and are all pervaded with a heavenly unction. His was the gentle spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord.

It was not only to Religious Women that Gerard wrote letters of consolation and advice. Many Priests sought his aid, and he ever regarded it as his greatest privilege to be able to help those whom God
had anointed to be the helpers of His people.

Saint Gerard wrote the following to a Priest who consulted him in his perplexities:—

With regard to your scruples about your past life, since you have already made, as I am well aware, on several occasions, a serious examination of conscience, be at rest and trouble yourself no more on this subject. Your doubts arise simply from the wiles of Satan. The Devil is striving, by means of the storm that he has raised within your soul, to make you lose peace of conscience. Be careful then not to give ear to his suggestions, regard this inquietude as a real temptation, and keep yourself calm that you may be able to go forward in the way of Perfection.

As for the scruples which have reference to the Confessional, I assure you with all sincerity that this is likewise a temptation. The Enemy wishes to make you abandon this occupation which concerns so nearly the Glory of God, and for which you have been chosen from all eternity to the great good of your own soul. In the Name of God, do not give way to any such temptation. If your Reverence were to cease hearing Confessions, your spiritual life would suffer the greatest loss, and in eternity God would not bestow upon you the magnificent reward which
He is preparing for you if you are faithful. To abandon the Confessional would be the same thing for you as not to do the Will of God, for the Will of God (I say it again) for you is that you should labour with the greatest zeal in His Vineyard. Do not permit yourself to be further troubled concerning any mistakes which you may commit through inadvertence in the exercise of your Ministry. It is enough that your will should be unswervingly bent on not offending God. For all else, commit yourself to the good keeping of Divine Providence.

Here is a letter written by Saint Gerard to a Redemptorist Father who had asked his advice in his interior trials:

I am rejoiced and indeed consoled, Reverend Father, at the dealings of Almighty God with your Reverence. I am quite confident that He will grant you the grace to triumph over all your spiritual enemies. Courage, then! Fear nothing, but rather rejoice. The Lord is certainly on your side, and He will never abandon you. Your Reverence has doubts concerning your past confessions. This is a little trial which God sends you, to give you an opportunity of suffering something for His sake. You tell me that you are yourself responsible for all. You could not think otherwise without your anxiety immediately disap-
pearing. It is thus that the Divine Majesty acts towards the souls whom He loves, permitting them to be persuaded that all comes from their own remissness. If your Reverence once felt that all your sufferings came from the Hand of God, where would be the suffering? You would then find in those very sufferings a Paradise of delights. After all, even if we have some little faults, and even though we do fall sometimes, let us remember that the Saints themselves were flesh and blood. Trust in God, my dear Father, and hope in Him. In your charity, recommend me to Jesus Christ, and His Most Holy Mother Mary. I beg of Them to bless us both
CHAPTER XI.

HIS WONDERFUL LIFE AT NAPLES.

The Redemptorist Fathers were from an early period in the history of their Congregation, in possession of a small residence in Naples;—it had been bestowed upon them by the brother of St. Alphonsus, so that they might have a home of their own, where they could break the journey when passing through the city from one Mission to another.

Father Margotta, the Procurator General of the Congregation, shortly after the triumphant vindication of Saint Gerard’s character, was sent to take charge of this little house. He was a man of exceptional holiness. Well acquainted with the Saint, he had written to him most kindly in his late trouble, and now he begged, as a special favour, that he might be given him as his companion during his stay in Naples.
“Yes,” said St. Alphonsus, “take him with you. It will be some compensation to him after the trials which he has borne so generously.”

Father Margotta and Saint Gerard for some months lived together at Naples a life of wonderful sanctity. They were alone, and thus enjoyed the greater liberty to give full vent to their fervour in the heroic service of God. Understanding one another thoroughly, they used to exercise their ingenuity in discovering fresh means whereby they might spur each other on in the practice of virtue. Father Margotta once asked Gerard what he had got ready for their dinner.

“The dinner which your Reverence ordered this morning,” was the smiling answer; “that and nothing more!”

There was, it appeared, no dinner whatsoever prepared that day, for none had been ordered! The Saint knew doubtless that Father Margotta would be rejoiced to share his fast.

However, it was not always with Father Margotta that he had to deal. A Laybrother, Francis Tartaglione by name, was sent by his Superiors to pay them a visit at
Naples. The morning after his arrival, he and Saint Gerard both went out. It was Gerard’s duty to cater for the mid-day meal. Before he had as yet bought anything, he came upon a wretched huckster selling matches in the market-place. Sad, indeed, was the story of want and misery that he poured into the sympathetic ears that were now open to his tale of woe. He was—so he declared—absolutely dying of hunger. For Gerard to empty his slender purse into the poor man’s hands was the work of a moment. He accepted some of his wares in exchange for the money, and then bent his steps homewards in all peace of mind. Meanwhile, Brother Francis had also returned to the house, and when Gerard appeared, he asked him at once what he had got for dinner.

The servant of God replied with a sly glance:

“God is all that we need: we want nothing more.”

“That is all very well,” retorted Brother Francis impatiently, “but how about the dinner?”

Before him on the table lay the store of matches.
"What may those things be?" he continued in amazement.

"My dear Brother," answered Gerard, "I am sure that we shall find them very useful."

He then told the story of his adventure in the market-place. Poor Brother Francis' discomfiture was complete. He was entirely disarmed and had not a word to say. Charity, we all know, is the Queen of Virtues; still, try as he might, he could not help feeling that he needed his dinner badly enough!

Soon Father Margotta joined them. Saint Gerard told him at once all that had occurred, saying simply that in the absence of his Superior, he had assumed his permission to give the poor man an alms.

"But," said Father Margotta, noticing with some amusement the disconsolate appearance of Brother Francis, "tell us, please, what we are to have to eat to-day?"

"God will provide," was the only reply that he received. A few moments after, there was heard a ring at the bell.

"Perhaps that is our dinner," remarked Father Margotta, with a smile.

Brother Gerard and he went together to
the door. Father Margotta had prophesied! There, before their eyes, stood a servant with a basket full of eatables! She had just been told by her mistress to take a present to the Redemptorists, though she merely knew them by name. We may be sure that Brother Francis never forgot how God thus set the seal of His Divine Approval upon Saint Gerard’s charity.

During the first few weeks of his stay at Naples, the holy Brother gave himself up without let or hindrance to the practice of prayer and contemplation. His duties in the house being very slight, the greater part of the day was at his own disposal.

Father Margotta said Mass every day in the Church of the Oratorian Fathers. After Mass Gerard used to spend the whole morning, hidden away in a corner, generally stretched as though lifeless on the pavement. He also visited with great assiduity any Church in which the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for the Forty Hours’ Adoration.

But throughout Saint Gerard’s life we see how irresistible was his attraction for works of charity. This soon manifested itself at Naples. No great length of time
had elapsed before he was well known in the city. Every day he was to be found in the public hospitals, ministering to the sick, after the example set him by his Holy Father St. Aphonsus; in the lunatic asylums consoling the poor inmates with his sweet kindness; in the big shops winning the hearts of the young men there employed to the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. Great were the conversions that he thus effected, and numerous were the sinners whom he led to the feet of Father Margotta, that they might be absolved from their sins in the Sacrament of Penance.

As usual his sanctity was illustrated by the gift of miracles. One of the most wonderful that he ever performed belongs to this period of his life. It has been attested on oath by a large number of eye-witnesses. Standing one day by the Bay of Naples, he noticed a great crowd of men and women. They were rending the air with their piercing shouts of terror. A storm had suddenly arisen with great violence. A boat was on the point of sinking beneath the waves. Full of compassion for these poor people, and relying upon the protecting Arm of Him Who
quelled the storm of old, and caused St. Peter to walk upon the face of the waters as upon solid earth, Gerard made the sign of the Cross, and then advanced unhesitatingly into the sea.

"In the Name of the Most Holy Trinity," thus did he adjure the frail craft which was going down before his very eyes, "stay where thou art, I command thee."

That moment the boat remained motionless. Gerard advanced, seized it, as he might have caught a lily floating upon the surface of the Bay, and brought it to the shore. Then, in presence of the assembled multitude, without his clothes being so much as wet, he stepped out of the sea on to dry land.

The people in enthusiastic wonderment cried out:

"A Miracle! A Miracle!"

Gerard himself in his humility ran away, as though he had committed some great crime, and hid himself in a shop until nightfall. When Father Margotta asked him afterwards how he had managed to draw in the boat, he answered simply:

"Father, to God all things are possible."

The renown of this miracle caused Gerard
to become known in every part of Naples. He could not appear in the streets without men and women calling out as he passed:

"There goes the Saint! The Saint who saved the boat."

The little Redemptorist House was daily besieged by persons of all ranks, eager to speak to the holy Brother, and obtain his advice in their troubles and difficulties. But the more he was exalted among men, the more earnestly did Gerard set himself to discover fresh means of self-abjection.

When he first went to Naples he used, sometimes alone, sometimes with Father Margotta,—who seems to have been almost as greedy of humiliations as himself,—to mix with the beggars at the door of the Oratory. Then with the other poor people he would ask an alms of the charity of the sons of St. Philip. This wonderful act of humility was of course forbidden, directly it came to the ears of higher Superiors at a distance, but Gerard soon found other means of advancing in holy humility.

Thus, one day, on opening the door, he received the following message:

"The Duchess of Maddoloni wishes to see Brother Gerard."
As he saw that the servant evidently did not know him by sight, he replied in all seriousness:

"I am afraid that I cannot bring you that Brother. To tell you the truth, he is only a simpleton and a fool. People, as I find, are strangely mistaken about him here at Naples. Please tell the Duchess so from me."

This lady had wished to see Saint Gerard that she might obtain at his hands the cure of a sick child. When the servant brought back the answer that he had received, she knew at once that it could have come from no other than the Saint himself.

Early the next morning she went to the Church of the Holy Spirit, where she knew that she would be sure to find Saint Gerard. As soon as she saw him come in, she went up to him and begged of him to obtain from God the recovery of her child.

"There," said Gerard, turning his eyes to the tabernacle, "there dwells the Giver of all good gifts."

"It is from you and from him," replied the Duchess, "that this grace on which I have set my heart must come."
Gerard bowed to her, and promised to pray for her child. The poor mother was still in the church when her maid came in quickly to tell her that the little girl had been suddenly cured. It was subsequently ascertained that the cure took place at the very moment when our Saint had promised to recommend the child to God.

Ladies living in the world were far from being the only persons to seek the help of Saint Gerard. In Naples, as elsewhere, Priests and Religious vied with one another in the eagerness with which they strove to obtain his advice, until at last his Superiors felt bound to interpose.

It might be dangerous, even for Gerard,—a Lay-brother by vocation,—thus to be made the idol of a great city. Again, it was hardly conducive to the calm, which should pervade a Religious House, that the little Redemptorist Residence should become a centre of attraction for crowds of eager visitors, anxious even at the most inconvenient hours to see the marvellous worker of Miracles, with whose fame all Naples was ringing. Accordingly, after a stay of about four months' duration in the capital, Gerard was, to his own great con-
tentment, attached by St. Alphonsus to the House of Caposele, and thus restored once more to the ordinary Community life of a Redemptorist Lay-brother.
CHAPTER XII.

HE IS CALLED FATHER OF THE POOR.

SAINT GERARD, on reaching his destination, was given the office of porter. Remembering that fidelity to the duties of one's state is the surest means of sanctification, the holy Brother said smilingly, but in all earnestness, that the key which now opened the Hall door must also one day open wide for him the gates of Paradise.

Perhaps, next to the office of Sacristan, none could have been more congenial to Gerard than that of porter, for in this capacity it was his lot to provide for the necessities of the poor, who sought relief at the Convent door. Throughout life he had been noted for his charity to those in need. With vivid faith he saw in them the Person of Our Lord Himself, and was accustomed to say that the poor were the Visible Christ, even as the Blessed Sacrament the Christ Invisible.
“Our house at this time,” writes Father Tannoia, “was besieged with beggars. The holy porter had the same anxiety for their good that a mother has for the well-being of her children. He possessed the art of always sending them away satisfied, and neither their unreasonableness nor their deceitful tricks ever made him lose patience.”

He was doubly anxious to assist such of them as were sick. If they were too ill to come themselves, and sent their children for food, he did all in his power to supply their wants to the full. He knew them all, and, when he went out, used to visit them in their own homes.

Those who had seen better days, who were now in need, but were ashamed to ask openly for relief, were before all others the objects of his solicitude. We are told that he supported whole families of this class. Funds never seemed to be wanting to him for any good work. He hoped in God and was not disappointed.

There was a general failure of crops in the year 1754 with the result that there was great want throughout the country. By the end of December, two hundred poor persons, men, women and children, came
daily for alms to the Convent door. Their state was rendered all the more pitiable from an exceptionally hard winter which added to this distress that was already sufficiently great. Under the circumstances the Father Rector gave the porter full powers.

"I charge you," he said, "to provide for the wants of these poor people. Their fate is in our hands. If we do not help them, I do not know what is to become of them. Take anything that is in the house, and do with it as you think best."

Thus given a free hand, Gerard threw himself with the utmost devotedness into the work. It was a cold winter and they were well-nigh naked. Relying on the general permission that he had received, he went to the Community wardrobe, laid hands on everything he could find, and had clothes made for his poor clients. During all that inclement season, he kept nothing for himself but an old worn habit. His cloak and everything he could possibly spare he had long ago given away.

Indeed the cold that year was excessive, so that oftentimes he would light a fire in the hall, in order to warm the shivering creatures who would gather round it, bless-
ing God and Brother Gerard. The sight of the little children whom their parents sometimes brought to the Convent, all benumbed with cold, touched him to the quick. Tears of compassion coursed down his cheeks as he took their poor little hands and chafed them in his own, remembering the love of Jesus for innocent children.

But it was not enough to clothe the naked; it was necessary also to feed the hungry. This would have been impossible had not Divine Providence again and again come to Saint Gerard's aid. He who fed five thousand men with five small loaves showed once more that His arm was not shortened. Everyone, both in the Community and outside of it, knew that bread multiplied miraculously in Gerard's hands.

Thus, a young Redemptorist cleric related that once he was watching the distribution of food by the marvellous Brother, when, to his utter amazement, he observed that directly the baskets were emptied they were immediately refilled, without any human being placing in them anything more whatsoever.

Oftentimes this miraculous multiplication of food was witnessed by a large number of
other persons, as well as by those of his own household.

He had, with the help of the other Brothers, prepared a little feast for his poor people, a sumptuous dish of maccaroni, loved by every true Italian. They thought that enough had been prepared and to spare, but there were more guests than Gerard had anticipated. It became clear that the supply would run short. Everyone felt uncomfortable excepting the Saint. He went on quietly giving everyone an ample helping, and wonderful to relate, when all were satisfied, there was still maccaroni left upon the dish. It had been multiplied before their very eyes.

One day Saint Gerard gave away every morsel of bread in the house, so that not so much as a single loaf remained for the Community supper. When the Brother who had charge of the baking discovered this, he was, as may easily be imagined, in a great state of concern, and went off to the Father Rector to complain. The Rector sent for Gerard, and blamed him in the presence of the other Brother for what he had done, especially as it was now too late in the day to buy bread in the town.
“Fear not, Father,” replied Gerard, “God will provide.”

Then turning to the Brother, he added: “Brother, let us go and see, perhaps there is still some left.”

“No,” the other said impatiently, “there most certainly is not. If you like, I will let you see for yourself.”

Gerard followed him to the bread-chest. “Now,” said the Brother before raising the lid, “now you will find that there is not a crumb to be seen.”

With these words he opened the chest. Behold it was quite full.

“God be ever blessed,” cried out Gerard, and immediately ran away to the church, there to thank the goodness of his Lord.

“O!” gasped the other Brother to the Father Rector who had just appeared on the scene, “Gerard is a real Saint. To think that I should have ventured to complain of him! When I left this place to go to you, I assure your Reverence that there was not one loaf left, not one, and now the chest is full. God must have done this.”

“Yes, it is God Who has done it,” answered the Rector. “Let us then leave Gerard alone, for of a truth Our Lord is pleased to play with him.”
Sometimes Almighty God deigned even to create bread for His Servant that so he might relieve the poor. There are two recorded instances of this.

Laurence Miniello, an artisan of the neighbourhood, could not find food for his two young daughters during the general distress. Accordingly he sent them to Gerard, whose charity he knew to be unfailing. One day they happened to arrive rather later than usual. The Servant of God had finished his distribution, and had nothing left to give them. He was greatly grieved at their disappointment. Then pausing to think, he turned away, went inside the Convent for an instant, and came back with two little loaves of bread in his hand, still piping hot. The children could hardly believe their eyes. He had been only away a minute. They knew that no one could have given him these loaves, which were indeed of a different size and shape from those baked in the Convent. They fully believed them to be miraculous, and told their father all about it on their return home.

This same marvel was repeated on behalf of a respectable woman, who, pressed by
the pangs of hunger, took her place one day at the door. Overcome by shame, she did not like to ask for relief, and held back bashfully from the crowd. After having finished the usual distribution of food, Gerard went away, pretending not to see this person. He thought that she had not come out of any necessity, but from curiosity, as did many of the inhabitants, to watch the wonders which so often took place. On being told the real state of the case, the Saint was deeply moved.

"Why, why," he said, "was I not told before?"

Then he reflected a minute, went back into the house, and immediately returned to take out of the folds of his habit a little loaf, quite hot, as if it had just come out of the oven. As in the case of the loaves given to the children, it was of a much finer quality than the bread in the Convent. Besides, it was found that the oven was cold, and that the fire had not been lighted all the day.

Thus was Gerard wondrously enabled during that hard winter to provide for the wants of the starving people of Caposele. He was in truth the Father of the Poor.
CHAPTER XIII.

WITH FATHER MARGOTTA AGAIN.

ITH the spring, the bitterly cold weather passed away at Caposele, and plenty once more smiled upon the land. Meanwhile, Father Margotta at Naples was always asking to have the holy Brother with him again, and, as it might be hoped that the excitement caused by Gerard’s miracles had by this time somewhat subsided, St. Alphonsus did not hesitate to accede to his request. Father Margotta, who was visiting the Convent of Caposele, took Brother Gerard away with him. On their way to Naples, business took them to Calitri, Father Margotta’s native place.

As our Saint was unknown here, for some few days he was left in peace, and allowed to satisfy his thirst for prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. But it was not long before a woman arrived at the house of the Parish Priest, with whom the two Redemptorists were staying, and asked for Brother
Saint Gerard Maiella.

Gerard. She was from Bisaccia, the little place where, as it will be remembered, the Servant of God had displayed so much charity and worked so many miracles during an epidemic. Her object in her present visit was to obtain the cure of a relation who was seriously ill. On being told that Gerard was out, she said that she would await his return. When he came in, she threw herself at his feet, and in a voice broken with sobs, begged of his charity the favour on which her heart was set. Saint Gerard listened to her with his usual kindness, consoled her in her trouble, and assured her that it would be done unto her even as she wished.

Naturally enough the people of the house could not understand this scene at all, and on the appearance of Father Margotta, the whole story was related with much merriment for his special delectation. Their surprise may be imagined when they were told that their amusement proceeded from their ignorance of the gifts which God had bestowed upon his companion. In order to clear Gerard from conclusions injurious to his good sense and humility, which otherwise must have been drawn from his late
conduct, Father Margotta proceeded to recount the tale of his virtues and miracles.

It was enough. Soon Calitri was all agog with excitement about the marvellous wonder-worker whom Divine Providence had sent amongst them.

An excellent medical man of the locality, Giovanne Cioglia by name, was very ill. He had received the last Sacraments, and been given up by the doctors. Saint Gerard was invited to go and see him. At first he refused. In this refusal he persisted, until Father Margotta brought his authority to bear in the matter. The Saint then went as he was told. Finding the patient unconscious, he made the sign of the Cross upon his forehead, when immediately the sick man recovered the use of his senses, and found himself restored to perfect health. The bystanders cried out, "A Miracle!" but Gerard answered simply:

"Behold what obedience can do!"

A lady of Calitri discovered the sanctity of the Servant of God in a singular manner. One day she had a violent headache. Happening to be in the Priest's house, she saw Saint Gerard's hat in a corner of the room.
“Let me see,” she said, half in earnest, half in jest, “whether this Brother is the Saint that people say.”

She then put the hat on her own head. Immediately she was freed from her headache.

This fact being noised abroad, some persons managed to induce Gerard to accept a present of new shoes. They kept the old ones as a relic. These shoes of Brother Gerard were for many a lent year from house to house in Calitri, and numerous were the cures that God granted to sick persons who used them with faith, imploring the powerful intercession of His Servant Gerard.

When Father Margotta’s business was accomplished at Calitri, he went straight to Naples. On returning once more to the spot that had been the theatre of so many of his marvels, Saint Gerard was more careful than ever to keep himself as far as possible in the back-ground and avoid anything that might bring him again without absolute necessity into prominence. One day he was speaking with a friend outside the church of the Holy Spirit, when two ladies came up to him.
“My dear Brother Gerard,” said one of them with tears in her eyes, “come, I beg of you, and cure my poor child.”

At first he refused, but unable to resist a mother’s prayer, he said:

“Very well, but I must first go and get permission.”

When on his visit the child was cured, it was to Obedience that he gave the glory.

If in Saint Gerard’s gentle character there was any trace of severity, that was not reserved for himself, it was directed towards imposture or pretence, which his soul detested. Near the Redemptorist residence, a beggar took his stand each day to ask for alms. To all appearance his was a sad case. He hobbled along on crutches, and one of his legs was wrapped round and round with bandages. Gerard, however, knew that he was a good-for-nothing wretch, who, through laziness, was imposing on the charity of the people. So he told him several times to move away. But as all was useless, at last the Saint tore the bandages off his limbs by main force, and said with great severity:

“You are a swindler and a cheat. If you wish to save your soul, cease mocking God and deceiving men.”
The cripple was a cripple no longer. He ran away as fast as he could go, using both his legs, and leaving his crutches behind him.

After some six weeks spent at Naples, Father Margotta was ordered by his Superiors to make a new foundation in the diocese of Benevento. Thus he and Saint Gerard were again to be separated. Gerard returned for a short time to Calitri, where a Mission was at the time being preached,—then back again to Caposele. At Calitri he worked innumerable conversions. If the Fathers were kept busy during the whole Mission in hearing the confessions of the people, he was occupied in preparing sinners for the worthy reception of the Holy Sacraments. This work we know was one especially dear to his loving heart. The zeal for the House of the Lord had eaten him up,—zeal for that spiritual Temple which is formed by the Holy Ghost in the souls of men.
CHAPTER XIV.

HIS LAST JOURNEY.

NEW buildings were at this time in course of erection at Caposele, and immediately after his second return from Naples, Saint Gerard was appointed clerk of the works.

At first sight it might have been thought that the extremely delicate state of his health, and his marked attraction for the contemplative life would have rendered him unsuited for this occupation. His superiors, however, knew well that—as the Apostle reminds us—genuine "piety is useful for all things;"* while Gerard, on his side, in the true spirit of his vocation, had long since learned to unite the activity of Martha with the repose of Mary, and never hesitated to leave his Master's feet to do his Master's work: He was, as usual, indefatigable in his new office. Ever at the post of duty, he did not know what it was to spare himself. He saw to everything,

* 1 Tim. iv 8.
provided for everything, was to be found everywhere. While Gerard was superintendenting the progress of the building, nothing could fail, for God was with him.

One day the Rector told him that he had come to the end of his resources. He had no more money with which to pay the workmen.

"Write a letter, Reverend Father, to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament," was the holy Brother's suggestion.

The letter was written, and Gerard himself was commissioned to lay it before the Throne of Grace and Mercy. Accordingly he hastened into the Church, the petition in his hand, placed it upon the Altar, and then with a familiarity, in which love for once triumphed over reverence, ventured to knock softly at the door of the Tabernacle and say:

"Behold, O Lord, our prayer! Now it is for Thee to answer!"

On Saturday the wages had to be paid. The whole of the preceding Friday night Saint Gerard spent in the church, imploring Our Lord to come to his aid, and to that of the Community. His confidence did not fail of its reward. At break of day
he knocked a second time at the Tabernacle door, entreat ing the Divine Prisoner of Love not to forget his children's needs. He had not yet come down the steps of the Sanctuary, before he heard a ring at the Convent door. Hastening to the hall, he found there two bags full of money, which he took with much thankfulness to the Rector. Once more, all that the Superior could find to say was, that Gerard was the spoiled child of Divine Providence.

However, it was clearly not right to tempt Almighty God by neglecting the step required by common prudence. Unless the buildings were to be left in an altogether unfinished condition it was necessary that money should be raised without further delay.

Therefore, after the Archbishop had granted the necessary permission, it was determined to send two of the Lay-brothers on a "questing" expedition through the Diocese.

The Father Rector straightway thought of Saint Gerard as the most suitable person that he could hope to find for this delicate office. But the Saint's health was so shattered, and the heat of the Italian dog-days
threatened to be so excessive that his Superior hesitated. However, he sent for the holy Brother and asked him how he would be able to bear the fatigue of the proposed journey. There was no delay about the answer;—he was ready, he said, for anything. Still the Father Rector was not satisfied. Laying his hand on Gerard’s head, without speaking a word, in his own mind he formed the sentence:

“In the Name of the Most Holy Trinity, I wish that you should be well, and that you should go and make this quest.”

Gerard looked at the Rector and smiled. On being asked at what he was laughing he replied:

“Your Reverence speaks, and yet you do not speak. You wish me to be well and to make this quest—I will be well and I will make the quest. Yes, O Lord, I wish to be well. I wish to obey.”

Thus he started, obedience on his lips, obedience in his heart.

From the very commencement, miracles cast a halo round his path. The first village in which he made an appearance was called Senerchia. Here they were just on the point of completing the construction of a
new parish church. The villagers were in great trouble about some large chestnut trees that were required as timber for the roof. They had been duly felled, but no efforts could drag them down from the neighbouring mountain, where they were lying uselessly on the ground.

"Take courage," cried Gerard, when he heard of this difficulty, "the church belongs to God, and God will see that it is finished. Let us go to the mountain."

On his arrival the Saint knelt down to beg the blessing of Heaven. Then attaching his handkerchief to one of the largest of the trees, which was so heavy that neither oxen nor buffaloes had been able to move it, he cried out:

"In the name of the Most Holy Trinity, O creature of God, I order thee to follow me."

Then to the amazement of all the spectators he dragged it, alone and without effort, down to the valley. The rest of the trees were likewise without further obstacles successfully brought to the church.

Other marvels followed fast. A poor mother was dying in pains of childbirth. Saint Gerard's help was implored in her
behalf. He prayed for her and saved her life. This is the first time that he is recorded to have assisted a woman in such a necessity, but since his holy death, again and again has his intercession been asked that some mother might be preserved from imminent danger, and her child be safely brought to the cleansing waters of Baptism. Numerous votive offerings around his shrine attest that his aid has not been sought in vain. "Some Saints can help us in one trouble, others in another," writes St. Teresa in a well-known passage. This seems to be Saint Gerard's special prerogative in Heaven—to help women, about to become mothers, who are recommended to his kindly care, and to bring them safely through their dreaded travail.

A few days after his arrival at Senerchia, when praying in the old church of the place, he was suddenly raised from the ground, as though by an invisible force, and remained for some time suspended in mid-air without support. The story was carried into the village by those in the church, and a number of people hastened to see him in this miraculous state. Henceforward the whole parish venerated him as
a Saint. This veneration greatly increased after his death.

Evidence was given, in the cause of his canonization, that all the inhabitants of Senerchia had chosen Saint Gerard as their special Patron, and that it was the custom of everyone in the place to add a Pater, Ave, and Gloria to their ordinary morning prayers in order to thank the Most Holy Trinity for all the wonderful gifts and graces bestowed on this great Servant of God.

From Senerchia Gerard wrote to the Archpriest of Oliveto; Don Angelo Salvatore by name, to give him due notice of his intended visit.

"Your Reverence has long wished to make the acquaintance of the sinner who is writing to you, and now your wishes will be gratified." Thus did he finish his letter.

These words greatly astonished the Priest. He had indeed long desired to know one about whom he had heard so much, but this he had never told to any living being.

The Saint's stay at Oliveto was rendered noteworthy by many marvels; of these we can only mention one. On the very day
of his arrival, as it was dinner-time and Gerard had not yet come down, his host went to look for him. To his amazement he found his guest in his room, rapt in ecstasy and raised from the ground. He went away and returning after some time found the holy Brother still in the same supernatural condition. At last Gerard appeared at dinner. He did not know that he had been seen in ecstasy, and remarked politely that he trusted that his visit might give no trouble to anyone, but that everything would go on just as usual, exactly as if he were not staying in the house at all. Don Salvatore afterwards marked on the wall of the room the exact height to which he had seen the Servant of God raised in the air.

From Oliveto Gerard resumed his journey. At a place called Vietri a woman of abandoned life came up to him and asked him, as a sort of joke, to give her a picture of the Blessed Virgin.

"Here is one," was the reply, "but do you look to the affairs of your soul, and recommend yourself seriously to Our Lady, for you have but a few days to live."

His words came true. This woman young and well when he spoke, was at-
tacked with sudden illness on her return home. Mindful of the warning of a Saint, she at once sent for a Priest, made her peace with God, and died in excellent dispositions three days afterwards.

In the little town of Auletta there was a young girl who, from her infancy, had been unable to walk a single step; she had been obliged to lie on her back all her life, a helpless invalid. When Saint Gerard saw her, his heart was filled with pity.

"It is nothing," he cried, "the child can walk perfectly."

Then he called her to him. "Come to me, my child."

That moment she leaped up—she was able to walk as well as anyone in the room. The bystanders cried out in wonderment:

"A miracle! a miracle!"

Covered with a holy confusion, the Servant of God ran away to hide himself. He sought refuge in the house of a Priest, who has left posterity an account of the whole incident. The people, however, pursued him, exclaiming:

"The Saint! where is the Saint?"

Whereupon Gerard made his escape in all
haste by a back door and left the place without further delay.

This cure was radical in its effects. Several years afterwards there was pointed out to a Redemptorist Lay-brother, passing through Auletta, the girl who had been given the use of her limbs by the famous Brother Gerard.

In his humility a fugitive from the applause of men, our Saint next turned his steps to the village of San Gregorio. Here he received hospitality from the Parish Priest, to whom he was personally unknown. But it was impossible for Saint Gerard's light to remain for any length of time hidden under a bushel. The day after his arrival, a visitor called at the house. Suddenly, as they were engaged in conversation, Gerard turned abruptly to the Priest with the strange question:

"Reverend Father," he asked, "can you tell me this: If any one had made up his mind to commit a great sin, and then afterwards, through the Grace of God, were to repent and relinquish his criminal design, would that man, I would ask, be still bound to tell his bad intention in confession, even though he never put it into execution?"
The Priest answered the question according to ordinary theological principles, and was much surprised at its apparently motiveless nature. However, a moment after his visitor in stupefaction took him into another room, and said:

"Are you aware, Father, that you have a Saint at present in your house? I am the man of whom he spoke just now. At the instigation of Satan, I was going to commit a certain sin, when suddenly remorse seized me, and I checked myself at the very edge of the abyss. I tell you this to my own confusion and to the glory of your guest."

We now come to the beginning of the end. A severe haemorrhage compelled Gerard to stay his course at San Gregorio. He knew that it was the herald of death. Already at the commencement of the year he had said to Dr. Santorelli, the medical man, who, as we have already seen, was much in his confidence:

"This year I shall die of consumption."

"How can you know that?" asked the doctor.

"I have begged the favour of Our Lord," replied Gerard, "and He has granted it to me."
"But why do you mention consumption, rather than anything else?"

"Because that complaint will leave me most to myself," answered the Saint.

A short time before, he had told a Lay-brother that he had asked Our Lord to allow him to die of consumption, with no one near him at the end.

This heroic prayer was now about to be granted.

The Doctor at San Gregorio did not think much of the attack, and contented himself with bleeding his victim. On the 22nd of August, Saint Gerard seemed well enough to leave for the neighbouring hamlet of Buccino. That same evening a new haemorrhage came on. Two doctors were hastily called in, and once more prescribed the universal panacea of eighteenth century physicians for all the ills that flesh is heir to. He was bled anew and ordered to return without delay to Oliveto, where the air was thought to be better suited to his precarious state of health. At Oliveto he went to the hospitable house of his friend, the Archpriest, Don Salvatore, and thence wrote the following letter to his Father Rector:—
I wish to inform your Reverence that while kneeling in the church at San Gregorio, I began to spit blood. I told a doctor what had occurred. After examining me, he said several times that this haemorrhage came from the throat, not from the chest, and assured me that there was no cause for anxiety. He then bled me, and I seemed to have quite recovered. However, last night at Buccino, as I was lying down, the same thing happened as at San Gregorio. Two doctors were summoned at once and prescribed a second bleeding. . . . . They ordered me to return immediately to Oliveto, partly on account of the climate, and partly that I might consult the celebrated physician, Don Joseph Salvatore. He is not at present at home, but his brother, the Archpriest, assures me that he will return this evening. I beg your Reverence to tell me what to do. Do you wish me to return to Caposele? If so, I will come back immediately. Should you, however, desire me to continue the quest, I will raise no difficulties. My chest really appears to me to be in a better state than when I left home, and my cough is no worse. Send me a strong Obedience and all will go well. I am very sorry to disturb your Reverence, but do not be alarmed. My dear Father, it is nothing. Recommend me to God, that He may cause me to do His Holy Will in all things.
CHAPTER XV.

THE END DRAWS NEAR.

The news of Saint Gerard's illness was received with the greatest consternation at Caposele. The Father Rector wrote to him without delay, telling him to remain at Oliveto as long as his kind friends there desired to keep him, and his own health required. He also sent him a companion in the person of a Lay-brother called Francis Fiore.

When this Brother arrived at the Priest's house, he was himself so ill with a violent fever that he could not even mount the stairs to visit our Saint. He had to be put to bed at once on the ground floor. Gerard was then told by the physician, Don Joseph Salvatore, of the illness of the newly-arrived Brother Francis.

"Will you have the kindness to tell him from me," said the Servant of God, "that through obedience he must drive away the
fever, get up, and come to pay me a visit. Our duties are marked out for us, and I cannot spend my time in nursing a sick man."

The doctor looked amused, and hesitated about delivering such a message. However, as Saint Gerard insisted, he went downstairs to his second patient. The instant Brother Francis heard what Gerard had said, he rose and went to pay him a visit as he had been told. When the Saint saw him, he said with a gentle smile:

"What a state of things! We have been sent out to make a quest, and you allow yourself to catch a fever! Be obedient, and see that it does not come back again!"

Then turning to the medical man he said: "Would you have the kindness just to feel his pulse."

To his utter astonishment, the doctor found that the fever, which had been raging a few minutes before, had now entirely disappeared. Seeing the Archpriest and his brother lost in amazement, Gerard said simply:

"This astounds you. No doubt it looks like a miracle. In reality, it is only an effect of obedience."
Indeed, miracles were heaped on miracles during these closing weeks of the Saint’s life. Thus one of the Archbishop’s brothers went into his room one day to ask his advice on a matter that was troubling him, and found the Servant of God in prayer before a Crucifix and raised off the ground. He thought it better to leave him in peace, but as he was closing the door, Saint Gerard turned round and spoke to him.

“Don Philip, I know what you have come about. Have no scruples about such and such matters that are disturbing your conscience. Leave yourself in the Hands of God’s Providence.”

These words corresponded exactly to the needs of Don Philip’s soul.

Oliveto heard more than one prophecy at this time fall from the lips of the Saint. Thus as he was going away from a certain house, he happened to leave his handkerchief on a chair. A young girl noticed it, and handed it to him.

“No,” said Saint Gerard, “do you keep it yourself. Perhaps one day it will be of use to you.”

As a matter of fact, when, in years to come this girl, now married, was in her first
confinement, she was at the point of death. She then invoked her Holy Patrons, but experienced no relief, until in her extremity she thought of Brother Gerard's handkerchief. As soon as this was brought to her, the baby was safely born and all went well. The witness who has recorded this fact concludes his statement with the following words:

"My grandmother jealously guarded this Relic. Eventually it came into my possession, but there now only remains in my hands a tiny shred, for I have been obliged, in order to satisfy the devotion of the Faithful, to cut it up into little bits for distribution."

After eight days had been thus spent, full of marvels, at Oliveto, Saint Gerard thought it right to go back to Caposele. He grew daily worse rather than better, and it was quite evident that it would be impossible for him to continue the quest for which he had been sent out of his Convent. Under these circumstances, the Archpriest and his brothers could not interpose any obstacles in the way of his return, and all was arranged for his departure. Before leaving Oliveto, never to
see it again in this world, the Saint went to say farewell to the family of Don Angelo Pirofalo, whom he held in high esteem. His last words to these friends were in themselves miraculous, and spoke of his approaching death.

"Look sometimes," he said to them, "towards the Convent at Caposele. As long as you see a white cloth floating from a window there, so long you will know that I am still alive. When it disappears, you will know that I am dead."

We should remark that Caposele is more than ten miles from Oliveto, and thus it would be, naturally speaking, quite impossible at such a distance to distinguish the Convent windows. Notwithstanding, Saint Gerard's prediction was fulfilled to the letter. During the rest of his life the mysterious signal was clearly visible at Oliveto. It vanished only at his death.
CHAPTER XVI.

HIS LAST ILLNESS.

On reaching Caposele, Saint Gerard went straight to bed. He was indeed very ill. Reduced to a skeleton, he already looked the picture of death. The haemorrhage was almost continual, and a complication of maladies caused him much pain. In the midst of his sufferings he lost none of his customary tranquillity of spirit. To suffer together with Jesus, under the eyes of His Blessed Mother Mary, had been the longing of his whole life. So now his one request was, that a large Crucifix and a picture of Our Lady should be placed by his bedside. His gaze was ever on the figure of his Crucified Lord, and from time to time he broke forth into loving exclamations.

"O my Jesus, I suffer much, but it is for Thee Who art dead upon the Cross for love of me. It costs little to suffer, when one suffers for Thee"; or again, "My
Jesus, Thou didst die for me. I wish to die to please Thee."

One day the Father Rector found him, as it seemed, in his last agony. All the colour had left his face. His pallor was like that of one from whom life has already departed. Suddenly his eyes fell upon the Crucifix. He at once seemed as a man transformed, his face kindled, his cheeks were flushed anew as though in health. The Rector asked in astonishment the meaning of this sudden change. Gerard sighed, and simply said with much animation:

"O Father, great is my longing to be united to my God."

On the door of his room, the Saint had written in large characters, so that they might be ever before him, the words—

"Here is done that which God wills, as God wills, and for as long as He wills it."

His devotion to the Holy Will of God seemed to grow in intensity every day. The Father Rector once seeing his great suffering, asked him if he was perfectly conformed in all things to the Divine Will.

"Yes, Father," replied Saint Gerard in all simplicity; "I think that I am conformed to It. I say to myself that my bed repre-
sents God's Will for me and that on my bed I am nailed to the Most Adorable Will of my God. It even seems to me that the Will of God and myself have become One, so closely are we united together."

He made an equally touching remark to his doctor, who had asked him if he wished to live or to die.

"I do not wish to live," answered Gerard, "nor do I wish to die. I only wish that which God wishes. To say the truth, I should wish to die that I might be united with Him, but at the thoughts of death, I am afflicted at the remembrance that as yet I have suffered nothing for the love of Jesus Christ.

The Saint had many visitors from outside the Convent walls to his sick-room. They were nearly all witnesses of marvellous scenes. Thus one of them, Canon Camillus Boggio, wrote a letter, in which he stated that he visited Saint Gerard almost every day, and often found him rapt in ecstasy. The Canon noticed that as soon as ever the Holy Brother came to himself he turned his heart to God in fervent prayer.

Meanwhile, as Gerard grew visibly worse, it was thought wise to give him the Holy
Viaticum. The whole Community was gathered round his bed, and Father Buonamano, in the enforced absence of the Father Rector, brought the Most Blessed Sacrament. At the approach of Him Who was the only love of his heart, Saint Gerard had himself raised in the bed in the most respectful attitude that was possible; then before his Communion, he burst out into affections of love and confidence towards Our Divine Lord. After Communion, he begged to be left alone. The next day he was much worse. To his other ailments was now added a persistent dysentery, which reduced him to a great state of weakness. It was thought that he would hardly pass the night. But a great change was soon to take place.

Father Fiocchi, who was still Saint Gerard's Director, on hearing of his dangerous illness, sent him an Obedience not to lose any more blood, and to recover his health. This note was given to the Saint. He read it and then placed it on his breast. Shortly afterwards Dr. Santorelli arrived to pay his usual visit. Seeing the paper in the holy Brother's hands, he asked what it was that he was claspingso tenaciously.
“It is,” answer Gerard, “a letter from Father Fiocchi. He orders me not to spit any more blood.”

“And what do you mean to do now?” continued the physician.

By way of reply, the Servant of God said to the Infirmarian:

“Brother, will you take away that basin. I shall not need it any more.”

Nor did he, but the dysentery still continued.

“What is the use,” asked Santorelli, “of the one trouble ceasing, if the other is to continue?”

The Saint then remarked that the Obedience which he had received did not extend to the dysentery; whereupon the good doctor hastened for one of the Fathers, who asked Saint Gerard how he could have no scruple at only obeying by halves, since it was clear that Father Fiocchi intended him to recover altogether.

“In that case, Father,” said Gerard, “I will obey in everything.”

When the medical man came again in the afternoon, the Saint told him that he would get up next day. As the doctor could not help smiling at this, he added:
“Yes, to-morrow I shall get up, and if you like, I am ready to eat something now.”

The physician hesitated, fearing lest he might hasten his death. However, on seeing him so confident, he began himself to have some hope. He was a man of strong faith, and had often been the witness of marvels worked by Saint Gerard’s power with God. A basket of peaches had just been sent to the sick Brother, and the Infirmary had placed them on the table.

The doctor looked at them and said:

“If you promise me that you will execute the Obedience that you have received, you may eat one of those peaches.”

Gerard took one immediately,—and a second, and a third. Santorelli then left him, but not without some anxiety. His apprehensions were groundless. Next day, the feast of Our Lady’s Nativity, the holy Brother got up as he had said that he would, and resumed his usual place in the Community. When he appeared once more at dinner in the Refectory, the inspired saying of the Wise Man must surely have been in the mind of every one who saw him.

“The obedient man shall speak of victories.”
This is a Divine Promise, and perhaps never before had the words been verified more wondrously than in this recovery of Saint Gerard from the very brink of the grave. But the Saint well knew that it was only for a few short weeks that the time of his pilgrimage was to be prolonged. When one of the Brothers expressed to him the joy of all at seeing his health apparently re-established, he replied at once that God had so disposed it for His Own greater Glory, and in order to show the value of Obedience in His sight, but that in a short while he would be in Eternity. All through the month of September he was getting weaker and weaker. When October came, he was like a ghost in appearance, and evidently could not hold out much longer. On the fourth day of the month he met his friend the doctor, and told him that he had fulfilled the Obedience which had been given him, but that he knew that his end was approaching fast, and that his case was hopeless. The next morning he was forced once more to take to the bed from which he was never more to rise.

Meanwhile during his short period of convalescence, he had been supernaturally
acquainted with the happy death of Sister Mary Celestine Costarosa. It was to this Nun that the first vision concerning the foundation of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer had been vouchsafed by God. Her friendship with Saint Gerard was of old standing, and now her entry into the heavenly country was made known to him from on high. It was the fourteenth of September, and one of the Lay-brothers, Stephen Sperduto by name, noticing that there was something unwonted about his look that day, asked him the reason.

"Know, my dear brother," answered Gerard, "that this very day at Foggia, the beautiful soul of Sister Mary Celestine has winged its flight to Paradise. She has gone to receive the reward due to her great love for Jesus and Mary.

Soon afterwards the news arrived that the holy Sister, whose name must ever be linked with that of St. Alphonsus in the Annals of the Congregation, had in truth departed this life at the very time indicated by Saint Gerard.

Another revelation of a similar nature followed shortly afterwards. A painter living at Oliveto, a relation of Don Salva-
tore, had to go to Caposele on business. Before leaving home, he went to see the Archpriest, to find out whether he had any commissions for the convent. The next day he arrived at Caposele early in the morning. Gerard opened the door for him, and said at once:

"The Archpriest is plunged in grief, for his father has just breathed his last."

"It is not possible," replied the painter, "I saw the old man in his son's house last night. He was then in excellent health, and desired to be kindly remembered to you all."

The Saint insisted that he was just dead from a stroke of apoplexy.

"In that case," said the painter, "I must go home to pay him the last respects by being present at his funeral."

"Yes, go at once," answered Gerard, "and tell the Archpriest that he may be quite happy about his excellent father. He has saved his soul."

Thus were the secrets of the other world opened to the gaze of the faithful servant who was himself so soon to enter the golden portals of the City of his King.
CHAPTER XVII.

THE DEATH-BED OF A SAINT.

The last ten days of Saint Gerard's life, stretched on a bed of intense pain, were days of great suffering, but of perfect conformity to the Divine Will. They were spent in unbroken communion with God. When at last his weakness made vocal prayer difficult, he begged the Lay-brother who was with him as Infirmary to suggest Acts of resignation, of love, and above all, of contrition, that he might at least follow them in his heart. This Brother one day asked him if he had any scruples or temptations now that the end was so near. Gerard replied without hesitation that he had through life ever kept Our Lord in view in all his actions. He said that he had had no other desire than to do God's Will in everything, and that therefore he now died in peace and free from anxiety.

On the twelfth of October, three days
before his happy death, he was suddenly rapt in ecstasy, and heard to cry out with great joy:

"I see our blessed Father Latessa entering heaven."

Father Latessa, we may here state, had died only eight days before. This was the last time that the secrets of Paradise were unveiled for Gerard's eyes this side the grave.

The day after this vision was rendered noteworthy by a most consoling favour. A distinguished ecclesiastic had come to see him, together with his old friend, Don Joseph Salvatore, the physician from Oliveto. They brought with them a young peasant, to whom they had promised that he should see a great Servant of God. When they arrived at the Convent, all three went upstairs to the sick room. Notwithstanding his curiosity, the young villager did not venture to go in, but stood shyly at the door, where Gerard could not possibly see him.

The holy Brother knew, however, at once that a stranger was there, and had him called inside. Astonished at hearing himself summoned by name, the lad went in and glanced at first with a certain
timidity at one whom he had heard described as a Saint. Then he grew bolder and cast his eyes round the room. They soon fell upon a harp which chanced to be there. He had never seen anything of the kind before, and was evidently puzzled at the meaning of the object. Saint Gerard noticed his surprise with much amusement, and asked him to play them something. Everyone laughed at this proposition, but Gerard insisted. At last he induced the boy to place his fingers on the instrument, when lo! sounds of the most ravishing music were heard at once. Asked how he could thus play untaught, the young countryman owned that whilst he touched the harp his fingers seemed to obey some irresistible direction.

Surely we may well believe that it was an Angelic visitant who enabled our Saint thus to receive a foretaste of the celestial harmonies.

The harp which had given forth these heavenly strains, to gladden Saint Gerard's gentle spirit, lingering yet on the shores of earth, was carefully preserved in the family of the Santorelli, who had loved him so well and so faithfully.
Two days later, on the Feast of his great Patroness St. Teresa, Gerard was to give up his soul to God. That morning very early he received a visit from his faithful medical attendant.

"My dear doctor," he said, on seeing him, "mind you recommend me to-day with all your heart to St. Teresa, and go to Holy Communion for me."

That he might keep a souvenir of this his last Communion before his eyes even to the end, after he had again received the Holy Viaticum, he asked for the Corporal on which the Blessed Sacrament had just rested, and placed it on his heart, where it remained until all was over. He then plainly stated that he would die before midnight.

"To-day," he said, "you are having a recreation day in honour of St. Teresa. To-morrow you will have another."

To understand this prediction we must know that the Feast of St. Teresa is one of the recreation days assigned to Redemptorist Communities by their Rule, while St. Alphonsus wished that the day after a death should also be always observed as a day of recreation in the house where it
occurred. The Holy Founder tells us that though we must naturally grieve for the loss of the Brothers whom we have loved during the years of our Religious Life, still we should rejoice supernaturally at the thought that they have fought the good fight, and that, their labours past, they have now gained "the beautiful crown," which, to quote his own words, he assures us that "Jesus has prepared for those who live in observance and die in the Congregation."

Saint Gerard, then, knew well that the next day the Community would be rejoicing in the Lord at his happy passage to Him, "Whom, not having seen, he had ever loved, in Whom always, though he had seen Him not, he had believed, that he might rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorified, receiving the end of his faith even the salvation of his soul." *

"Help me to put on my Habit, Brother," he said to the Infirmarian who was attending him, "for I shall die to-night. I wish to say the Office of the Dead for my own soul."

As the solemn hour drew near when he was to appear before the dread Tribunal

* I St Peter, i. 8, 9.
of Eternal Justice, his humility was more and more clearly marked. He was ever repeating the most heart-felt Acts of Contrition, in accents of tenderest love that brought tears to the eyes of all who heard him. Shortly before the end, he raised himself up and repeated the Miserere, after each verse repeating the touching words of the royal penitent: "Tibi soli peccavi et malum coram Te feci; a peccato meo munda me."—"Against Thee only have I sinned, and done evil before Thee. Do Thou cleanse me from my sin."

Thus do the Saints prepare for the first sight of Jesus Christ their Sovereign Judge.

The exact moment of his departure had been revealed to him. In the evening he asked the time. On being told that it was six o'clock, he said that he had just six hours more to live. At this moment the doctor came into the room. Notwithstanding his patient's great weakness, Santorelli did not think the end so near, and even fancied that he seemed a little better than he had been in the morning. As he was leaving, Gerard, contrary to his usual custom, asked him to remain; but as he said that he had other sick people to visit
the Saint did not press him further. Next day the good doctor was much distressed. He understood then, when it was too late, that the wonderful Brother had wished him to be present at his last moments.

Towards seven o'clock a messenger arrived from Oliveto. The Archpriest was in difficulty about a chapel that was being built in his parish in honour of Our Lady of Consolation. There was something the matter with the limekiln. He wrote to ask Gerard's prayers that all might go well. The Father Minister read the letter in Gerard's presence. Before he said a word as to its contents, the Saint said quietly:

"Tell the Archpriest to shake some of the dust from the tomb of St. Teresa, which I will send him, over the limekiln. The accident that he anticipates will then be warded off."

The Archpriest did as was advised by Saint Gerard, and Our Lady's chapel was built without any further mishap.

No one seeing the keenness of perception, and perfect possession of all his faculties which he still enjoyed, would have imagined the agony to be so near. About eight o'clock he seemed momentarily dis-
turbed, and said several times very earnestly:

"O my God, where art thou? O my Lord, show Thyself to me."

The Brother who was with him, asked him if there was anything that disturbed his conscience.

"Why do you speak to me of disturbance of conscience?" he replied quickly.

Shortly afterwards this same Brother said to him:

"My dear Brother, we have always loved one another. Will you remember me in the presence of God?"

"How could I ever forget you?" answered Gerard.

Between ten and eleven o'clock he fainted away. On coming to himself he appeared very much agitated, and cried out:

"Quick! Brother, quick: drive away those wretched creatures,—what are they doing here?"

The Brother could only conjecture that they were evil spirits allowed, for his greater merit, to make their last fruitless onslaught on the dying Servant of God. The trouble, whatever it may have been, lasted but a few moments. Very soon his countenance
regained its wonted calm, and, suddenly kneeling on his bed, he exclaimed:

"Behold the Madonna! Let us pay her homage."

Our Lady had doubtless willed, in her loving kindness, to give her faithful child a foretaste of heavenly bliss. She, the beauteous Dawn, that ever heralds the rising of the Sun of Justice, would thus gladden that chamber, dark with death, by the brightness of her coming before the breaking of the perfect day. It was the answer to a life-long prayer. Jesus had visited him that morning in the Most Holy Viaticum, and now his Mother Mary was by his side. Death was not death for Brother Gerard. It was rather a sweet repose, a falling to sleep on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, beneath the smile of the gentle Virgin Mother. As we think of such an end to life's hard battle as this of Gerard, the aspiration rises almost involuntarily to our lips, that we may learn with him so to love Jesus and Mary here below, that in our time of greatest need, Jesus and Mary may be with us as They were of old with Their servant Gerard.

About half-an-hour before midnight, he
asked for something to cool his throat. The Infirmanian went for some water, but as the refectory door was locked, he was away for some little time. On his return, he found the Saint facing towards the wall, and thought that he was sleeping. A few minutes afterwards he saw him turn round and heard him give a deep sigh. Then he knew that the last agony had already commenced. The Father Minister was summoned at once, and arrived just in time to give Absolution to the holy Brother as his soul was passing away to God Who made it.

The Community, reassured by the Doctor, had gone to rest as usual after night prayers. Thus was fulfilled Saint Gerard's earnest prayer that he might be conformed to the Image of his Lord even to the end, and might pass away almost alone, unaccompanied by any words of human consolation.

He was in the thirtieth year of his age, and the seventh of his Religious Life, having been professed only a little more than three years.

It was on the feast of St. Teresa, in the year 1756, that Gerard died. His feast is now kept on Oct. 16th, the day after the anniversary of his happy and glorious death.
CHAPTER XVIII.

GLORIFIED IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH.

GERARD had scarcely breathed his last when he appeared to a lady who had held him in great veneration during his life. He was, on the occasion of this first apparition after death, still clothed in his Religious Habit, but shortly afterwards he was seen by her again, now resplendent with the Light of everlasting glory.

"O!" he said, "how liberally does God reward the small sufferings that we endure for His sake on earth!"

He also appeared at the same time in another place to a Redemptorist Father named Peter Petrella, to whom he revealed some of the happiness which he enjoyed in Heaven.

About three hours after the death of this great Servant of God, the Superior of the house, moved no doubt by a divine impulse, determined to ask of God a supernatural
sign of his sanctity. Taking his right arm, he said aloud:

"Gerard, you were ever obedient during life, I now command you in the Name of the Most Holy Trinity, and in that of the Blessed Mother of God, to give us the proof we ask."

He then made an incision in one of his veins, and at once there gushed forth a copious flow of ruby blood. The members of the Community, full of joy, hastened to collect it in a basin, in which they plunged linen cloths, afterwards to be distributed as precious Relics to the favoured friends of the glorious Brother.

When at break of day the sacristan went to announce the death to the neighbourhood, instead of tolling a funeral peal, he rang forth a joyous chime. On being blamed for this, he stated that he had been forced thus to act by an interior impulse that had overcome him when his hand was on the bell-ropes. People came flocking in from all sides, as the news of Brother Gerard's departure from this world spread through the country round.

Early in the morning his body had been carried to the church, and it was at once
surrounded by an eager throng of persons drawn from all classes of society. In their anxiety to obtain some memorial of the Saint they began to cut off pieces of his habit, and even of his hair, until it became necessary to set guards to restrain the enthusiasm of the Faithful. During the two days that Saint Gerard’s remains were in the church, the pious visitors were reckoned not by hundreds but by thousands. There was a constant flow to and from the catafalque of those who had come—many of them from great distances—to do honour to the humble Lay-brother whom God had been pleased to raise to such a pinnacle of sanctity.

The funeral took place on the 17th of October. Before finally consigning the body to the tomb, the Superior of the house again opened a vein, and again there gushed forth the red blood that spoke of life rather than of death. Gerard was indeed living still, living and reigning before the Throne of God in Heaven, and men should thus be reminded by stupendous miracles that even the earthly casket of his pure spirit was one day, through the transforming power of the Life-giving Flesh of
Jesus Christ, to share in the fulness of the bliss unspeakable that had already been given to his soul, and should be his for endless ages.

On the very day of the interment, the Superior, foreseeing that Gerard would one day be venerated upon our altars, caused a public notary to draw up a formal document embodying the wonders that had taken place between his death and funeral. Besides the Fathers and ten Lay-Brothers of the Community, ten of the inhabitants of Caposele were called to give evidence. All gave their testimony on oath, and the notary made a report, which is to be found in the Process of his Beatification.

Gerard had hardly passed away before it pleased Almighty God to give signs of his power in Heaven. Father Petrella, to whom it will be remembered that the Saint had appeared shortly after his death, was one day asked to pray in an especial manner for a great sinner living at Caposele. He answered:

"I will give Brother Gerard an Obedience to go and find him out and make him enter into himself."

The next day this poor man came in a state of great terror to the Convent, saying
that Brother Gerard had appeared to him, and spoken to him with great severity. He then went to Confession with signs of the most sincere repentance.

A Redemptorist was once speaking to a certain Marchioness of Granafé, about the simplicity of Saint Gerard’s religious obedience.

“Tell me no more about him,” she cried out, “I see clearly that he was only a holy fool!”

“I pray God,” replied the Redemptorist, “that you will never be obliged to have recourse to one whom you call ‘a fool.’”

Two months had not passed before this lady was attacked by a dangerous illness, and given up by the doctors. In her extreme need she turned to Brother Gerard, and said:

“If you really are the Saint they say, show it, and I will contribute to the expenses of your Beatification!”

Scarcely had she made the promise, than she was completely cured.

Out of the vast number of miracles that Saint Gerard is related to have worked after his death, we will now select the four regarded by the Holy See as proved beyond
all reasonable possibility of doubt, and accepted as such for his Beatification.

Joseph Santorelli, grandson of the doctor who attended the Saint with such loving care during his last illness, had a most dangerous attack of typhoid fever. His death seemed so imminent that his relations had actually made all the arrangements for his funeral. It occurred to them, however, to place on his head a picture of Brother Gerard, when immediately, to the stupefaction of all present, the sick man sat up on his bed, completely cured. The Saint had appeared to him, and said:

"Get up without any fear."

In the year 1849, Teresa Deheneffe received a dangerous cut in her left side. For three years the wound got gradually worse. At last the doctors had to perform a very dangerous operation, but it was of no avail. Two days after the operation, they pronounced the case to be hopeless. Her Confessor then recommended her to make a Novena to Brother Gerard. At the close of the Novena the bandages and plasters fell off of themselves. The medical men found the sore place healed up, with no trace of any scar, although the evening
before it had been a gaping wound, hideous to behold.

The year after this miracle, Ursula Solito was attacked by a frightful cancer, and given up by the doctors, who advised her to receive the Last Sacraments. A picture of the holy Brother was shortly afterwards placed upon her head, and the attendants prayed to him with much fervour. In a few moments she complained that she had received a blow in the front of the cancer, and that she was suffering acute pains. Soon, however, she fell asleep. On awaking she found the doctors round her bed. They examined her with amazement. She was perfectly cured.

"O," she said to them, "it is not you who have cured me. It is Brother Gerard!"

In the year 1867, Laurence Riola, a boy ten years of age, was given over by the most distinguished physicians of Naples. The child then begged Brother Gerard to cure him. He fell asleep, and dreamed that he saw a golden ladder resting on his head and reaching up to Heaven. He saw the holy Brother coming down this ladder with a crucifix on his left arm. He touched the child, who at once woke up to find himself quite well again.
Saint Alphonsus, on his bed of death, had pressed to his lips the picture of Saint Gerard. The Holy Founder had wished himself to introduce the cause of the Beatification at Rome. This, however, was, for a variety of reasons, impossible.

It was not until the year 1843 that sixty witnesses were examined on oath at Muro, the place of his birth, and ninety-four at Caposele, where he had died, concerning the virtues and miracles of Brother Gerard Maiella. This sworn testimony was sent to Rome, and in the September of 1847, Pope Pius IX., of glorious memory, at the prayer of the king of Naples, of forty-seven Archbishops and Bishops of that Kingdom, and of many other persons of distinction, signed the decree by which his case was formally brought before the Apostolic See.

Thirty years later, in the presence of a large number of Bishops, who had come to the Holy City to celebrate his Episcopal Jubilee, the Sovereign Pontiff solemnly declared that this Venerable Servant of God had practised the Christian Virtues in a heroic degree.

Pius IX. went to his everlasting reward the following year. It was reserved for his
successor, the great Leo XIII., to inscribe Gerard's name in the white roll of the Beatified.

The sacred ceremony of his solemn Beatification took place with great pomp on Septuagesima Sunday, the 29th of January, 1893, the fifth anniversary of the Beatification of another son of St. Alphonsus who has since been canonised, Clement Mary Hofbauer.

The following two marvellous cures were recognised as certainly miraculous by the present Holy Father, Pius X., on the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady 1904, in view of the canonisation of the wonderful Brother.

In August, 1893, Valeria Baerts of St. Trond, in the diocese of Liège in Belgium, was dying. She had reached the last stage of some malignant fever, together with meningitis. All the signs of approaching dissolution had already appeared, and the doctors were waiting for the end, which, as they said, was very near. It was in this extremity that Valeria's mother applied a relic of Saint Gerard and begged him to cure her daughter. When the medical men returned to the room they found her in her normal state of health.
In the year 1896, a boy named Vincent de Geronimo, aged fifteen, was studying in the Seminary of Compsano, when he fell ill. The illness increased daily until his danger became extreme. The skill, diligence, and assiduity of the doctors, even of the most skilful, were of no avail in giving him any alleviation; all the symptoms, indeed, showed that death was certain. A relic of Saint Gerard was laid on the breast of the sufferer, when he immediately fell asleep and wondrous to relate, awoke perfectly cured.

After these two miracles had been, according to the invariable practice of the Holy See, rigorously examined, and approved by the Pope, there was no further obstacle in the way of Gerard's canonisation, which was solemnised in St. Peter's, on December 11th, 1903.

"De stercore erigens pauperem, ut collocet eum cum principibus, cum principibus populi sui."

Ever since he has been enrolled in the catalogue of the canonised saints, the cultus of Saint Gerard has spread marvellously throughout the Catholic world, and he has worked miracle upon miracle in favour of his clients, conferring both temporal and
spiritual favours of the most extraordinary character upon those who invoke his aid.

Of these we can only relate one or two of the more recent, that have taken place in our own country.

In July 1906, a Miss Mumford of Aigburth, near Liverpool, had been a confirmed invalid for years, suffering from a spinal complaint and had to walk on crutches. She prayed earnestly that Almighty God would grant her, through the intercession of Saint Gerard, that she might be able to dispense with her artificial supports—for a complete cure, she would not ask. She was then blessed with the relic of Saint Gerard, and was able at once to walk without crutches, and has never used them since. Recently she went on a pilgrimage to Lourdes in thanksgiving to God.

In December 1907, Mrs. Sullivan of 75 Chatterton Street, Liverpool, gave birth to a child. An hour or two afterwards she was seized with internal hæmorrhage. Two doctors were called in and declared the case to be hopeless. The hæmorrhage, they said, would certainly return. The parish priest, Father Jeanrenaud of the Oratory of Saint Philip Neri, Maryland Street,
was then sent for. On his arrival the poor women was in a comatose state. He said some prayers to Saint Gerard, and blessed her with the relic. Twice in the evening he repeated his visit, each time invoking the Saint and blessing her with the relic as before. The next morning she was perfectly well. The doctors were amazed and declared that it was beyond all doubt a miracle. She is now a healthy and strong woman.

One marvel more remains to be related. The ecclesiastical authorities having ordered that all the Relics of the Servant of God should be officially examined, Gerard's tomb was opened for the first time on the 26th of June, 1856. It was then noticed that a mysterious oil oozed forth in such abundance from the brain and bones as to fill up more than one basin. This wonderful Manna—as the Italians call it—was carefully preserved in handkerchiefs and napkins, and was the source of many graces conferred upon the sick who used it with faith, imploring the powerful intercession of God's holy Servant, Gerard.

On the eleventh of October, the body of the Saint was again examined by eccle-
siastical authority in presence of two doctors. They found the bones more or less damp, but as this could be attributed to the humidity of the soil, it attracted but little attention. They were dried with all due care, and then placed in a chest lined with white silk. Four hours later, the chest having been opened, it was discovered that a kind of white oil, shedding a sweet fragrance, was coming forth anew from the holy Relics, and resting like drops of dew upon the silk lining. After a short examination, the physicians drew up an official report of this occurrence, which in their opinion was beyond the laws of nature.

"It is needless," writes an eyewitness, "to state how much joy this event has caused us. It is without doubt a presage of the favours which the holy Brother will bestow upon those that honour him."

In the course of one of his characteristic and most beautiful addresses, Pope Pius IX. once paid the following testimony to Saint Gerard's sanctity:

"Even as St. Alphonsus, by his sanctity, zeal and learning, was a wonderful example for his children, so Gerard by his simplicity of heart and marvellous obedience was a
perfect model for those of his own condition—the Lay-brothers. The austerity of his life made him a victim agreeable to God. He sought the Lord with all his heart, and made his dwelling-place in God, even as God dwelt in him."

Thus spoke the Pontiff, signalizing Gerard's virtues rather than his miracles. With these words of the Vicar of Christ, we may well draw our little work to a conclusion.

Gross indeed would be his error who, in considering Saint Gerard's life, should dwell only on the marvels by which it is illumined, without pausing to admire the interior perfection of soul, to which those marvels gave some external testimony. Simplicity of heart, obedience, self-denial, union of the affections and the will with God,—these are virtues that we are all called upon to practise in our measure and degree.

It is, however, to those of his own state of life, to men called to that holy Vocation, which Gerard treasured as the very apple of his eye, that he will ever be, in a most special way, a patron and a model. To all Lay-brothers he is a bright example, but particularly to those of his own beloved Congregation. As they go about their
daily duties, they may remember that what they do now, he did once. There is no office of a Redemptorist Lay-brother that was not discharged by Saint Gerard Maiella. He was at different times, tailor, gardener, cook, refectorian, sacristan, infirmarian, carpenter. He had learned at Naples to make crucifixes, and afterwards employed himself at this work in his leisure moments at Caposele. He was clerk of the works during the progress of the Convent buildings. He went on Mission with the Fathers to attend to their wants. All these duties he performed with equal care, knowing that all were the Will of God for him.

Divine Providence has then given him to us as a great Saint, who rejoiced in the careful discharge of humble offices, knowing that nothing is really small that is done with a single eye for the glory of God. The Brothers whom Saint Gerard loves with a deep fraternal love, may ever remember to their comfort, that their work, of little account in the eyes of men, is that by which he became so great in the eyes of God; while it was his charity—the virtue which all who would save their souls must practise—that made him so dear to the
Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and also to those—his brethren here below—whose lives grew sweet and pleasant through the fragrance of his heavenly and also of his human loving-kindness.
PRAYERS FOR NOVENA IN HONOUR OF
SAINT GERARD.

1st Day.—S. GERARD, ever full of faith, obtain for us, we pray thee, that believing firmly all that the Church of God proposes to our belief, we may strive to secure through a holy life the joys of eternal happiness. *Hail Mary.*

*V.* Pray for us, O Blessed Gerard.

*R.* That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

LET US PRAY.

O Almighty and Everlasting God, who didst draw to Thyself the Blessed Gerard even from his tenderest years, making him conformable to the Image of Thy crucified Son, grant, we beseech Thee, that imitating his example we may be made like unto the same Divine Image, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

2nd Day.—S. GERARD, most generous Saint, who from thy tenderest years didst care so little for the goods of earth, obtain for us that we may place all our confidence in Jesus Christ alone, our true treasure, who alone can make us happy in time and in eternity. *Hail Mary, with V. and Prayer as above.*
3rd Day.—S. GERARD, bright Seraph of love, who despising all earthly love, didst consecrate thy life to the service of God and thy neighbour, promoting God’s glory in thy lowly state, and wert ever ready to succour the distressed and console the sorrowful, obtain for us, we beseech thee, that loving God, our only good, and our neighbour for His sake, we may be hereafter united to Him for ever in glory. 

Hail Mary, &c., as above.

4th. Day.—S. GERARD, spotless lily of purity, by thine angelic virtue and thy wondrous innocence of life thou didst receive from the Infant Jesus and His Immaculate Mother sweet pledges of tenderest love; grant, we beseech Thee, that we may ever strive manfully in our life-long fight and thus win the crown that awaits the brave and the true. 

Hail Mary, &c., as above.

5th Day.—S. GERARD, model of holy obedience, who throughout thy life didst most heroically submit thy judgment to those who represented Jesus Christ to thee, thus sanctifying thy lowliest acts, obtain for us from God cheerful submission to His holy Will and the virtue of perfect obedience, that we may be made comformable to Jesus, our Model, who was obedient even unto death. 

Hail Mary, &c., as above.

6th Day.—S. GERARD, most perfect imitator of Jesus our Redeemer, do thou, whose greatest
glory was to be humble and lowly, obtain for us that we too, knowing our littleness in God's sight, may be found worthy to enter the kingdom that is promised to the humble and lowly of heart. *Hail Mary, &c., as above.*

**7th Day.**—S. GERARD, unconquered hero, most patient in suffering, do thou, who didst glory in infirmity, and under slander and cruel ignominy didst rejoice to suffer with Christ, obtain for us patience and resignation in our sorrows, that we may bravely bear the cross which is to gain for us the crown of everlasting glory. *Hail Mary, &c., as above.*

**8th Day.**—S. GERARD, true lover of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, do thou, who didst kneel long hours before the Tabernacle, and there didst taste the joys of Paradise, obtain for us, we pray thee, the spirit of prayer, and an undying love for this Most Holy Sacrament, that receiving frequently the Body and Blood of Jesus, we may daily grow in His holy love and merit the priceless grace of loving Him even to the end. *Hail Mary, &c., as above.*

**9th Day.**—S. Gerard, most favoured child of Heaven, to whom Mary gave the Infant Jesus in the days of thy childhood, and to whom she sweetly came before thou didst close thine eyes in death, obtain for us; we beseech thee, so to
seek and love our Blessed Mother during life, that she may be our joy and consolation in this valley of tears, until, with thee, before the throne of God, we may praise her goodness for all eternity. Amen. Amen.

So I hope, so may it be. Hail Mary, &c., as above.